

AWAKENING AND
INVITING CALLS:
TRACTS
(WITH VARIOUS SERMONS ADDED)

by
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SOLDIERS

You come to sojourn for a little while in this your county's capital. Swiftly the hours of your stay will fly. But in this little space, much good or evil you may learn and do. Your feet will tread the upward or the downward road. Heavenward or hellward you will daily move. Better or worse you will go hence—better or worse you will leave others. But oh! how vast the difference! Accept this welcome as a proof that you have friends who long to guide you to the better way.

Parade and drill are over for the day. The time is vacant. Let us then converse. I cross the threshold of my main design by simply asking, what is the purpose of this visit? Why have you left your quiet cot—your fields—your homestead—your familiar work? Why have you changed your rustic garb for the red coat? Why are lowing herds, and bleating flocks, and vocal groves, abandoned for the noise of fife and drum? Why are the cart and plough exchanged for musketry and guns?

I expect you nobly to reply, that duty calls and you obey.

If I inquire what duty? You will reply, perhaps some foreign foe may threaten to invade, or civil tumult may disturb our peace, or ruffian violence may cause alarm—to

be in readiness for defense you must learn the military art, and all the warlike training of the camp—England should boast a peasantry well disciplined in arms and skilled to fight for Queen—for country—for home and all our hearts hold dear—peace is secured when none may dare to break it—a ready soldiery prevents attacks. Thus, zeal for our native land impels to preparation. I listen and approve. A patriot loves a patriot's ardent spirit. I honor bravery in our country's cause. If occasion called, I doubt not you would heroically face the cannon's mouth—the sword's sharp point—the charging cavalry—the battle's din—and all the horrors of the deathful scene. You would advance with life in hand to screen these shores from wrong; and if you fell, your wounds would be in front.

Brave man! who will not say, God bless you! who will not strive to recompense! Urged by this feeling, I come forth to offer counsel which, if heeded, will bring great reward. I warn, then, there is a cause of nearer dearness than our country's weal—an aim more glorious far than England's defense—a foe more deadly than invading men—a Captain more worthy to be loved and served than earthly leader—a prize more precious than the hard-won medal—a crown which pales and trifles diadems—a victory more brilliant than arms can win, or trumpets can proclaim. Surely your heart beats high at this bare mention. To win you to adopt this cause, let me detail it in these several heads.

I. "THE ENEMY."

II. "HIS ATTACKS."

III. "THE CHRISTIAN'S CAPTAIN."

IV. "THE IMPLEMENTS of CHRISTIAN WARFARE."

"THE ENEMY."

A mighty foe meets you at every turn. You never move, but by your side he walks. No place excludes his entrance. Unseen, like air, he floats around you. I thus introduce the devil to your notice—that awful and accursed spirit, who, rebelling against God, and breathing hatred of our race, by his malignant craft has filled this earth with sin, and misery, and death. I warn you of his dread hostility, his nearness, and his arts.

He has his blinded votaries, who ridicule his being—jeer at his name, and think it brave to treat him as a joke. Be not so foolish. No battle is a jest, much less a battle in which souls may perish. The Bible speaks not of him in light terms. He and his legion are portrayed as "principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this world." It names him "prince of this world"—"god of this world." The picture is lifelike—for his sway is world-wide, and crowds yield him the homage of their hearts.

Trifle not when all his perils are so close. Mark how adroitly he entwined his chains around the parents of our race. He met them while strong in innocence—unweakened by corruption, and quickly laid them low. What are the annals of mankind, but hideous stories of his cruel triumphs, and his murderous deeds. Of woman-born

the God-man only has escaped his wounds. Then trifle not. He is in earnest. Be you in earnest too.

He wars with cunning equal to his might. Ages of success have taught him how to lead on his troops—what ambushes to lay—how to advance, and how to feign retreat—what weapons to apply—what snares to hide. When all seems peace he springs upon his prey. Suddenly unwary feet are caught. Unguarded bosoms soon yield to his assault. Then trifle not.

He knows the weak part of your heart. He sees what gates are open. No opportunity is lost by him. No place—no age—no circumstance deter him. Against youth—manhood—and old age—against the healthy and the sick—the joyous and the sorrowing—unsparingly he plots. Without one sign of fear he dares the God-man to the conflict. He who respected not the Son of God, will not be scared by anything in you. Such is a faint picture of the foe. Oh! trifle not.

II. "HIS ATTACKS."

Particulars best specify his work. Minute directions are safeguards. General counsel is as an arrow without aim—rejected by a blinded heart, as suited only to another's case. Let me then approach more closely, and by details unmask the enemy's attacks.

(1.) UNCLEANNES.

Scripture, well knowing his prevailing bias, calls him the unclean spirit. Uncleaness is his hellish element—the life in which he loves to live. In this character he here will severely tempt you. Will he not use this day some guilty comrade to entice to filth! Will he not urge some wretched wanton to lead you to lust's vilest haunts!—Will he not entice your steps to paths in which polluted pitfalls are concealed! The easy slope will seem most gay with carnal joys. Youths follow—fall—and rise bespattered with disgusting mire. He shows, or seems to show, some pleasing flower. They pluck and find a serpent beneath each leaf! The sting is poison—misery— disease— decrepitude and shame. These wounds are frequent seeds of life-long anguish. The smart attends the victims to the grave.

But there it ends not. It is written—"He who is filthy, let him be filthy still." Rev. 22:11. Could you but hear the wailings of the lost, your ears would ring with unclean victims cursing unclean tempters. How many hiss at the seducing Balaam!

If my words fail to check, oh! heed a voice from heaven. "Hearken unto me now therefore, O you children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not your heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she has cast down many wounded—yes, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Prov. 7:24-27. And again, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the

body— but he that commits fornication sins against his own body." 1 Cor. 6:18.

Say not these sins are little. Can that be little which endangers souls, and calls down wrath from God? Say not a little sip from the enticing cup will satisfy— I will not drink again. Vain man! Indulgence is the fuel of this fire. The stone in motion soon descends with speed. How huge a ball soon swells from rolling snow! Say not the devil enlists my passions on his side. Doubtless such is his effort. But yield not. Resist him, and his batteries are silenced. I deny not that traitors in the camp will aid him, but I denounce him as a coward, who will flee when you oppose. You are a soldier—will a soldier let a coward beat him?

(2.) DRUNKENNESS.

Behold the devil in another form. He sets the open door of beer-houses before you. He shows the entering crowd and asks, Why should not you go in? He tells how round the table the merry laugh, the lively converse, and the cheery joke abound? He whispers, Care stands without; pleasure within holds joyous court; to drink is to be happy. This is a dexterous attack. But listen not. It is all false. He is a liar, and these words are lies. He is a murderer, and this is a murderer's aim. Let common sense speak out. Have you not seen a drunkard? Is he a happy man? No beast is so degraded. Creation's vilest reptile is not lower. Where is his reason—God's dignifying gift to man? Its light is quenched—each mental faculty is marred—each power is

crippled—consciousness is extinct—the vacant eyes deceive—the ears distinguish not true sound—the tottering feet keep not straight path. If tongue can speak, it stammers folly, ribaldry, or oaths. Ah! wretched sight! Can that poor object be a man? Is he not rather some foul fiend in human guise, escaped from hell! Would you be such? Then stop! Take not the first step towards this end.

Would you go hence to make a drunkard's home? Picture the scene. Poverty, and filth, and misery, in each form, sit there. The wife ill-used—downcast—heart-broken—may toil, but toils in vain. The children naked—famished and diseased—fret at an empty table. Wages, if earned, supply the means to aggravate the thirst. The drunkard, a curse to self and all around, soon totters to a drunkard's grave. Would you so live and die? You shudder at the thought. Then flee the beer-house door! Let not the devil triumph, and hell sneer, because you add another drunkard to the drink-slain.

(3.) WICKEDNESS OF TONGUE.

The unclean spirit is especially foulmouthed. As such he wars against you. He will draw near to stab your soul, through ill-use of your tongue. In his school dunces learn that speech defiled with oaths is a fine mark of independent spirit. How many dream that it is brave to curse, to bluster, and blaspheme? Be not deceived. What, though it be an all-pervading vice! He has no strength who cannot climb the downward stream. He is a trembling reed, who cannot stand against a common habit. He is

more foolish than a fool, who sells his soul for that which is no gain.

The clear commandment of our God forbids vain utterance of His holy name. Threats, barbed with ruin, strive to stop offence. Is it wisdom—is it courage, by cursing to incur God's curse! All sin is folly—but in the list of sins, this surely is the silliest. Where is the pleasure! What sense is gratified! What appetite receives meal! What semblance is there of the slightest gain! Who ever found a grain of profit in blaspheming talk!

Venture not thus madly to incense your God! Use not the tongue, which gives us place above the beasts, and is the glory of our kind, to taint the very air with pestilential sounds, and to invoke just vengeance on your heads.

Wear not this uniform of Satan's slaves. All who adopt it proclaim themselves his fools and tools. Learn rather to revere the name, which is above all names. Never use it but in prayer—in praise—in godly converse—as in his hearing—as at heaven's gate—in deepest sense of its high sanctity.

Akin to cursing is obscenity of talk. The filthy jest and unclean ribaldry are language taught of hell. Tightly bar the portals of your lips. Guard also the ear-gate. Hearing tempts to utterance. We learn to speak by listening to words. Men are apt mimics of the wicked one. Be deaf, then, that you may be dumb. Pure ears are parents to pure tongues. Hearts, too, are barrels of explosive powder. A

wicked word cast by a wicked comrade may quickly cause combustion. Be on your guard. Let not the devil slay you through your tongue.

III. "THE CHRISTIAN'S CAPTAIN."

Say not this warfare baffles hope. A giant enemy appears in giant strength. How weak am I! How can I stand—unarmed—alone! I need some leader skilled to give command—some captain, whom I can love and trust—some voice to cheer me on.

True! what you ask is needful. Without such aid a soldier is a feeble reed; a ship without a helmsman; as chaff, the sport of every wind. But all this aid in boundless fullness is at hand. God, who says 'Fight', presents a Captain to you. While I now cry, 'Behold Him', may the Spirit give you the eye to see—the heart to love—the readiness to follow.

He is well-known—well-tried. His name—His fame resound throughout the world. His noble deeds ring trumpet-tongued in every land.

Behold Him. He is the blessed Jesus—God's co-eternal and co-equal Son—the Lord of hosts—the Captain of Salvation. He bears "upon His vesture and on His thigh, a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." Rev. 19:16. All monarchs and all heroes are a flimsy shadow before Him. It must be so, for they are creatures of His hand. He is the hero of innumerable fights. He never lost a

battle yet. He never lost a man. His cheerful followers give Him their whole hearts, and laud Him with extolling breath, and boast and glory in His name. At His command they readily advance—they march—they charge—they mount the breach—they scale the fortress—they face all foes—they laugh at forlorn hopes—their cry is 'Onward!', and their shout is 'Victory!'

His arm is mighty in almightiness, therefore invincible is His troop. When I regard His might, it overtops the heavens. When I regard His love, it seems to overtop His might. If words cannot depict His power, so they are weak to tell His tenderness of heart. His soldiers are the purchase of His life laid down—the ransomed of His blood. This day He sends His messenger to sound these tidings in your ear. Let all that He has done for you secure your confidence. Come, follow Him. Come, enlist as His true soldier. He gives no promise of inactive life. He tells not of inglorious ease. His soldiers always move on battlefields. But service is their joy. And thus to fight is glorious victory.

IV. "IMPLEMENTS OF THIS WARFARE."

You say you cannot fight unarmed. This Captain knows it, and provides full armor. It is framed of heavenly metal—terrible to inflict wounds—and armor against opposing arms. It has been often proved; and never known, when boldly used, to fail. Let me display some pieces of this armor, and may you learn their value by their use! Out of Scripture shall each thought be brought.

(1.) SWORD.

A sword is needed and prepared. There is none like it. It bears the name "Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Eph. 6:17. It has no scabbard. None, who wield it, ever lay it down. No enemy can wrest it from the hand. Keen is its point. No age can blunt it. It is ever bright and sharp. Satan trembles at its glittering edge. In Jesus' hands it vanquished his assaults. Its virtue lives for ever. "It is written" boldly and skillfully applied is quite omnipotent.

You gain this sword by studying the Bible—the armory of God—the gift of gifts—a light for pilgrim-feet—a lantern for your paths—a chart for travelers—a compass for your voyage—a lively comrade for your side—a well of comfort for each hour—a pillow for the weary head—a staff to strengthen toiling limbs—a cordial when the spirits droop—a counselor in all distress—a word in season for each station and all ages. Store well your memory with its mighty truths. When Satan comes, and come he will, brandish this sword. Quickly he will flee. Pursue him and give wounds to his often-wounded back.

(2.) SHIELD.

To the sword a shield is added. In ancient camps no warrior could stand without this guard. Worn on the arm, it was upraised or lowered against battering blows. Thus it gave full defense. As such defense, it is now offered for your aid. The devil ever watches to aim blows. His barbed

arrows fly in ruthless showers. Unprotected, you will be unmercifully pierced. Be wise, take up the shield.

It is the "shield of faith," Eph. 6:16. As such it is divinely framed, and comes directly from above—the Spirit's workmanship. Thus its protective power is complete. Its name shows its material. Faith constitutes its essence—that grace, which sees with open eye the blessed Jesus and His perfect work—His sin-atonement blood—His wrath-appeasing death—His endurance of the law's curse in the transgressor's place—His resurrection from the grave, the sign of ransom paid—His seat at God's right hand to intercede, and claim fulfillment of the everlasting covenant. This grace flies instantly to Him—and never pauses until sheltered in His wounds. When it is lively and in active use, temptations tempt in vain. Let Satan's every dart be hurled, forked with the fire of hell, they strike this guard, and hissing fall extinguished, quenched, and harmless.

The case is clear. Faith makes us one with Christ. Can He be wounded? Can they be harmed who are enwrapped in Him? Let faith be exercised and you are safe. But rest not with its meager measure. Pray earnestly and cease not, "Lord increase our faith." Its presence brings life to the soul. Its rich abundance makes this life replete with joy—assured of final victory. Thanks be to God for such a shield!

(3.) HELMET.

Are your heads left exposed? Oh! no. The Captain crowns His troop with head-defense. Their helmet, too, descends from heaven— invulnerably wrought. Its crest is the "hope of salvation." 1 Thess. 5:8. All hope is bright—lively—sustaining. The heart is glad, in which it dwells. It ever sees approaching good and smiles. It eyes a calm beyond each storm—a light behind each cloud—a better time in rear of evil days. How joyous, then, is the good hope, which has salvation as its prospect—which feasts on promises of heavenly bliss—and ante-dates fulfillment nearing as each moment flies!

Mark the Christian warrior seeking the fight, thus happily equipped. Let all temptations deluge like a flood—he strides above them with thoughts in the high heavens. Can base desires draw him down, while eyeing pleasures at God's right hand! What are the baubles of this world to him? He has prospect to walk beside his Captain—clothed in white clothing—decked in pure righteousness. Can he defile his hands by pitch of filthy sins! This hope must cleanse. "Every man, who has this hope in Him, purifies himself even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3. Beloved, put on this hope. Look onward—forward— upward— heavenward. Enter the fight, knowing "the hope of His calling"— "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." "Hope to the end." The head thus helmeted can never be laid low.

(4.) THE FLAG.

Shame on the soldier who loves not his flag! While it waves high, his buoyant courage mounts. Where it

precedes, he follows with undaunted step. The spirit cannot sink with this in view. The Christian Captain lifts aloft a flag. This banner is His "Love." Song 2:4.

Hearts burn like fire, while this ensign is unfurled. It tells that Jesus loves with love unchangeable—free—full—without beginning—without end—with love so vast, so real, that gladly He died to rescue and to save. Soldiers gazing on this flag, shout gratefully, "we must love Him, who thus loves us—through life—in death, we must serve loyally—His friends are our friends—His foes our foes." Let Satan now assail. The flag will cheer, and you will not give place.

Let me add, His soldiers never march with silent lip. Prayer is their constant utterance, and joyous praises are their chorus. They hold incessant converse with their Lord. They tell Him all their needs and cares. They keep back nothing from His listening ear. Answers descend—thanksgivings in return arise. Thus Asa fights to conquest—"Lord it is nothing with You to help, whether with many, or with those who have no power. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God. Let not man prevail against You." 2 Chr. 14:11. Mark the order of Jehoshaphat's array. "He appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever." 2 Chr. 20:21. As they thus prayed and praised, the foe was gone. Similarly wrestle with God, and you will outmatch the devil. These cries

bring heaven to the help. The Captain of Salvation answers with victory.

May the Spirit of the Lord most High smile blessings on this effort to train you for conquest! Oh! heed my counsel. Take up these arms so ready for your use. Be resolute—manly—lion-like—devoted—valiant—heroic. Short is the service of this camp. A brief campaign will bring you to the end—the end which has no end. No words can truly paint it, for no thought can comprehend.

I might most rapturously tell of a crown of life, which fades not away—a crown of glory in the heaven of heavens—a hymn of triumph ever swelling

without pause—a welcome to the presence of your God. I might describe all labors past—all foes subdued—all victory obtained—all prizes gained. But this is to 'paint the rose'—to gild the sun—to decorate the starry sky—to bring perfume to flowers—to teach new notes to nightingales. The reality—the grand reality! it must be tasted to be known. But this reality may be yours, through grace. I wish you this happiness—this victory—this triumphant glory. I cannot wish you more. Thus may this drill add to salvation's sons, and heaven's loud songs!

"We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin—the world—and the devil, and to continue

Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."—
Ministration of Baptism.

SOLDIERS OF CHRIST, ARISE.

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on;
Strong in the strength which God supplies,
Through His eternal Son.

Strong in the Lord of hosts,
And in His mighty power;
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

Stand, then, in His great might,
With all His strength endued;
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The armor of your God—

That, having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
You may behold your victory won,
And stand complete at last.

YOUNG MEN

I plead no small authority for this address. The blessed Jesus used the pen of John to warn the Asiatic Churches. Apostolic letters form a precious portion of God's word. In thus writing, then, I move in heavenly track. But hallowed means, without the Spirit, cannot ensure success. May He give His wonderworking aid! Then these weak words may sow a glorious crop.

Give me your youthful ears. I come with feelings most deep, most true, most lively. Personally, indeed, I cannot claim knowledge of each separate case. But lack of acquaintance prevents not warm affection for you, as a class. Paul ardently avowed his "great conflict," his throes of agony for those who never saw his face. (Col. 2:1). Love for one's country is real as love for individuals. Christian philanthropy expands wide arms, and zealously casts bread on many waters. Strangers have sought and won the souls of strangers. Therefore, turn not from me because I am unknown.

I am alive to your many claims on sympathy—they are real, strong, peculiar. Allow me to unfold them. Though young, you have commenced an endless course. Your bodies are the caskets of inestimable treasure. You have received, and must retain, imperishable life. Count—but

count you cannot—the days of eternity; they are the period of your being. You must exist concurrent with all time. The sun of heaven can never set. The darkness of hell can never see a dawn. In this light, or in this gloom, you must rejoice or wail. But which? ah! which? The rapid path of this brief life conducts you to a changeless home. If in your little day you become one with Christ, His heaven is yours forever. If you continue aliens to His grace, you pass to all the miseries of a graceless doom. Can I see your vessel commencing such voyage, and not inquire, Have you the pilot and the chart? Fellow-immortals, in this letter read the yearnings of my heart, that you may reach the harbor which is endless joy.

The present morning will, probably, decide the future day. Tastes now acquired will grow with your growth, and strengthen with your strength. Impressions deepened on the yielding tablet often prove to be indelible. The path now chosen will, probably, retain your steps; to advance will be most easy, to recede how hard! Scripture emphatically asks, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Look at that aged tree; its slant shows how the sapling-twigs were bent. Habits and customs now taking root will scarcely be uprooted. Streams at their source may be directed. The rolling river, who can turn? Your present bias may be unchanging. Pause, then, I pray you, and consider which threshold are you crossing—under what captain are you now enlisting? This is the time to listen to the tender cry, "Those who seek Me early shall find Me." Yield now to the Spirit, and He will seal you to the day of redemption.

Thus I call you to your watch-tower. Beware! for a malignant eye intently marks you. Your deadly foe knows well his opportunity. Experience has taught him the time most favorable for his trade. His every net is spread to entrap careless feet. His snares are mainly laid for novices. He sweetens his intoxicating cup to suit the inexperienced taste. He knows what doors will yield to a slight touch—what baits will catch unwary prey. Your present age is too often thoughtless, and secure; therefore his most crafty arts will cluster round your path. He is aware too that chains now riveted will hold you fast; that false maxims now imbibed will obtain the power of truth; that baneful principles now ingrafted will be written as on a rock.

Therefore, his main struggles are on the battle-field of youthful hearts; here he has gained most signal triumphs, and firmly reared his frightful throne. This, then, is the moment when faithfulness should hasten to your rescue. Clasp tenderly your hands, I would guide you from his ways of ruin. If you resist in the name of the Lord, you are safe. Say, then, will you resist, or will you yield! Awake and face, like men, this foe. Guilt makes him cowardly. Stand firm, and he will flee. Tempt he may—tempt he will—but to compel, he has not power. The outcome, which is life or death, now trembles in the balance. Turn from him. Look upwards to your gracious Savior. He will tread Satan under your feet shortly.

My pen moves eagerly, because my hopes are warm. Thoughts of Jesus—the ever-living, the ever-loving—

encourage me. If Satan be strong, Jesus is Almighty. The cry of faith will bring Him swiftly to your side—and all the hosts of heaven obey His bidding. Enlist beneath His banner, and you conquer. You cannot fail. Sure victory is yours. He will equip you in the whole panoply of God. On your heads He will place the helmet of salvation. Heads so defended cannot descend to hell. If you join the flock of the Good Shepherd, the faithful promise is your heritage—"My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them Me, is greater than all; and none are able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John 10:28, 29.

When, then, I sketch your perils, my object is to awaken, rather than discourage. Your tender years are healthy blossoms, and not seared leaves. Life's dawn is often the dawn of grace. Scripture sweetly tells of youthful hearts surrendered to the Lord. The early piety of Joseph, Samuel, David, Josiah, Daniel, and others, gild the earlier story. Timothy and Titus shine brightly on the later page. The evening calls of Manasseh and Nicodemus flash as rare meteors. Yours is the age sparkling with conversions. No marvel Jesus loves His own with everlasting love. His delights are with His children. It is His joy to dwell in them, and to have their hearts as His abode. Hence He sends forth His Spirit to win them early to His faith and service.

Let me not be here mistaken. No circumstance of time or place binds the free Spirit. Salvation is of sovereign grace. "The wind blows where it wills—so is every one that is

born of the Spirit." "It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." But still encouraging annals record, with clear intent, how lovingly the Spirit breathes upon the young. All soils are not adapted for all seeds; gems are not found in every quarry; flowers will not bloom in uncongenial climates. Thus, old age is not the frequent receptacle of grace. But you are young; therefore, hope views you hopefully. My friends, confirm my hope. I beg you, blight it not.

While I grant that difficulties—baffling human effort—raise barriers against all conversion—while I allow that Omnipotence alone can soften any heart— while I read that the very power of God, which brought again Christ Jesus from the grave, must energize to quicken a dead soul (Eph. 1:19, 20), still hope's liveliest pinions hover over you.

There is hope; because your hearts are warm, affectionate, and tender. You are disposed to love what shines as lovely, and to turn with repugnance from the vile and odious. Thus when Christ in all the charms of His most glorious beauty is commended, and Satan in all his loathsome hideousness is exposed, you quickly feel how sweetly the One attracts—how frightfully the other scares. Your glowing frame of mind aids me, when I call you to love the One, and to abhor the other.

Kindness now melts you. You meet friendliness with friendship. Hardness repels you, and dislike begets dislike. Hence when I tell how Jesus loves our race—how His

heart yearns to support us—how He endured all agony to save; and when I show Satan, in contrast hating with deadliest hate—using all deceit and malice to destroy—ever warring against happiness, and having hellish joy in man's endless misery; I pause, expecting your grateful, generous response. Surely you will return Christ's love with all your love. Surely you will recoil with horror from the horrid fiend.

Again, the trampling feet of life-long sin have not yet hardened you as a battered highway. Passions indulged and lusts caressed have not expelled the blush of shame. You are not as rocks devoid of soil. You are not impenetrable as ice congealed. Therefore I burn with hope, that this good seed may gain admission and take root.

Conscience in you is not yet seared. Your eye is not perverted to mistake evil for good. Unvitiating taste discriminates the bitter and the sweet. An inward voice tells you which is the broad and which is the narrow road. Will not this counselor endorse my warning!

But let me add, that this hopeful period will rapidly depart. While I speak, its sands decrease. Tremble, lest old age should overtake you in a Christless state. Bitter is the anguish, which laments, "I stifled convictions in my youth, and now I cannot turn—it is too late."

Dear friends, my zeal is strong to save you from such woe.

Other motives in long train constrain me. Smile not incredulous, when I name your present influence. Do not think that you are unknown—unnoticed. You are not the worthless chaff on which feet regardlessly tread. You are not vile weeds which no hand gathers. You live not as they on whom no eye is fixed. You move not as they whom none are quick to follow. Some comrade—some friend—some neighbor—some younger member of your house will surely adopt your ways. You may be slow to think it, but you are a guide. Your example may be life or death. Whether you soar to heaven, or sink to hell, you will not go alone. Believing this, most earnestly I pray that many in heaven may call you blessed—that none in hell may, hissing, point at you.

But soon youth expands into manhood. Parents depart—their children take their seats. You, whom I now seek to train, may soon train others. The family will call you head, and yield obedience to your rule. Shall the household be Christian or worldly! Shall they be Christ's jewels or the devil's chaff! Shall they be precious heirs of life, or brands of fire unquenchable! Under God, this may depend on your present choice. Give yourselves now to Christ, and from you shall flow "rivers of living water." Once truly His, you will be His forever, and in every station, every condition—parent, friend, neighbor—you will allure, attract and lead to heaven. Do you marvel if, feeling this, I thus entreat you!

I hasten to the sum and substance of my strong desires. I pray you to become Christian, not in name only, but in

heart and soul, in reality and truth. A name to live is easily assumed. Barren profession may consist with inward death. Trees may be fresh in leaf and yield no fruit. But give yourselves in vital earnestness to serve your God in Christ. Cast yourselves humbly at the Savior's feet. Open the portals of your hearts, and entreat Him to come in. Plead with Him His own assurance, which cannot change and cannot be recalled, "Him that comes unto Me I will never cast out." Plead His office. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." Plead your need; undone in self, you perish without Him. Plead the sincerity of your wish—your rejection of all other hope—your conviction of deep sinfulness—your knowledge of the power of His blood—your firm resolve to flee all other lords—your willing surrender of body, soul and spirit to His easy yoke—your steadfast purpose to hold Him by the hand of faith, until His blessings come. Act thus, and if the Gospel-page is true—and it is God's truth reaching above the heavens—your salvation is begun. Go on—go forward, and you will ever bless the day, when you gave ear to this address.

As a shield against all error, as a sword repelling every foe, as a magnet attracting to all good, let me now present the Word of God. Ascend this rock, and you may defy all surging waves of evil. The fortress is impregnable. At this momentous crisis, such counsel presses to the forefront. The aged, worn-out world seems to be tottering to its end. Old foundations are crumbling to decay. There is, indeed, much stir and bustle; but, amid all this restlessness, the thoughtful eye discerns weakness, decrepitude, senility.

The main distemper is lack of reverence for Scripture. Poor dotards dream that they possess some inward light far brighter than the rays of heaven. Pride scorns to sit, as Mary, at the Savior's feet. Conceit denies that God is wiser than the creature man. It is free thought, we are told, to handle Scripture as some mocking cheat; it is brave reason to ridicule old truths, sanctioned by centuries of faith, and with the reverence of ages.

Young men, spurn these deluded drivellers. Surely your honest minds will scorn them. They exhibit, as bright discoveries of their wit, nonsense culled in exploded schools of skeptic thought. They crouch as slaves to by-gone infidels, and reproduce the oldest blasphemies. Believe me, there is no new deceit. The Father of lies has long since done his worst. He may repeat, but can no more invent. Their utmost genius is to dress anew the dolls with which old deists trifled. Turn from them as you would be saved, and give all reverence to the clear old Bible. Worthy it is, indeed, of all your confidence and all your love. Fix deeply in your minds that it is God's authoritative voice speaking from His highest throne. Be assured that every word, in its first form, came from the Holy Spirit. This is the motto written on its brow—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." If this be true, then all is true. If this be false, the whole foundation of the fabric sinks, and faith totters without a resting-place. But the witness is true. Cling, then, to the Book, as the sure anchor of your hopes. Let no one rob you of life's dearest treasure. The noblest intellects have counted it to be their highest wisdom to do homage to its supremacy. From age to age

the holiest of earth's sons have reposed with joy beneath its shade, and gathered fruit to life eternal. Make it, then, your chosen pleasure-ground. As you read, delights will swell until they exceed all bounds. Unfailing gleams of new and noble thoughts will brighten. You cannot exhaust the treasures of this mine. Fresh gems will ever sparkle. Each will outshine what was before admired. "Let, then, the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."

You anxiously desire to be well educated. "In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3.) Steeped in the Bible, you will be wiser than all skeptic sophists; you will rise to a pinnacle of elevated character, and soar magnanimously above the littleness of this little world.

But approach not with crude feet; for it is holy ground. It is no common volume which common intellect can master. The Spirit, who supplied the contents, has affixed His seal. He only can unloose. Read, then, with hearts craving His light. Read, too, with earnest search for the true riches of the sacred page. The Savior Jesus is the hidden wealth. His testimony is its true spirit. Unless you find Him, you find little. If He shines forth, you bask in the light of life. Let me beseech you then, read, pray, and be wise; read and receive salvation.

It borders on sacrilege to descend from this height to lower level. But let me not omit its fascinating charms for intellect. You have desire to be well versed in the best writings. Here your most glowing wishes will be gratified.

Here the noblest thoughts live in the noblest language. The historic annals—mighty in the mightiness of truth—stride in majestic purity of style. The enraptured poetry soars on the loftiest wings of dazzling sublimity. Do pastorals delight you! The book of Ruth is touching in all the simple loveliness of rural scenery. Does tragedy entrance you! Job's grand severity is thrilling with varied and heart-stirring incidents. To be brief, the odes are melting melody; the narratives are pictures of real life; the traits of character disclose the secret workings of the heart. In beauty, pathos, and majesty, the Bible pales all other writings, as the mid-day sun blots out the canopy of stars. Bring forth the finest specimens of human pen, they dwindle into nothingness beside the Book divine. Do you doubt? Read constantly, and you will soon confess that its excellences far surpass report.

But this is inferior ground. Read, and you will gain far more than intellectual pleasures. You will acquire inward conviction, which nothing can gainsay, that heaven's own truth pervades the Book. Placing your hand on your responding heart—in face of every wile of every skeptic, of every sneer of every worldling, of every doubt of silly witlings,—you will each one avow, "I feel, I know this volume to be true. It talks to me as man could never talk. It speaks to me as God alone can speak. It supplies comforts, which earth can never give. It fills with joys, all redolent of heaven. It chains unruly passions. It sanctifies the inner man." Happy this day, if I thus win you to luxury of thought, and rich reception of renewing truth.

I speak more earnestly, because other friends, most anxious for your weal, regard such counsels as, at least, indiscreet. They decry such study as too stern, forbidding, and severe for your dawning minds. They would lead you through worldly talk to love the world. They present, as congenial to your present taste, the froth and frivolity of daily news and modern gossip, and fiction's silly tales. Is it the perception of your state to regard your minds as only fit for childish toys! To encourage worldliness is not the road which leads to heaven. Let folly be the food of fools. Young eagles' eyes are turned at once toward the sun. Men learn not to climb heights by loitering in a plain. Show your manly nerve of mind by grasping at once the best, the wisest, the most bright of thoughts. Your life is nursery for the palace of the King of kings. Let present discipline fit you for such converse. Be persuaded. Cease to be triflers, and make the grand, the noble, the glorious Bible your chief study.

The present crisis demands another counsel. You enter life, when perils cluster round the Church of our forefathers. We boast that England's glory is the glorious Reformation. Forever blessed be our God for that bright day! Then, mighty heroes marched forth, as giants, waving the banner of the Word, and shouting, "The just shall live by faith." The thralldom of Rome's iron yoke was snapped. Men marveled that they had so long been fettered, blinded, oppressed. Before bold, wise, undaunted, holy preaching, the Dagon of ignorance, superstition, blasphemy, idolatry, fell low. Happy crowds flocked to the standard of pure truth. Many of these nimble champions sealed their

witness with their blood. From martyrdom's charred embers the tree of Christian liberty sprang up. It ever since has lived; and, by God's blessing, may it ever live in England's soil! Sometimes, indeed, its leaves have been less verdant, and its branches have not vigorously spread—"We all do fade as a leaf." But Popery, with all its ceaseless arts, has never yet regained its wrongful sway.

But now, we see the hapless day, when many minds view with complacency, or something worse, this deadly foe. This backward look is our disgrace—our folly—and our grievous sin. It is sad proof, that imbecility is doing in our midst its weakening work. The shame of shames is that many preachers are thus in league with anti-Christ. Hence my main fear for you. Your confiding minds are slow to think that fatal error can tarnish pulpits, in which reformers stood—and sons of the Reformation profess to stand. But you must observe, that, stealthily, new ways are creeping in, and outward attractions—many and strange—are striving to bewitch the senses. Mark these things well, and probe their tendency.

It is good, when churches revive in all the garbs of decency and pure taste. It is good, when services are solemn; devout, and warm. In all we do for God zeal cannot work too zealously. Hearty reverence commands respect. But turn aside—flee as from a plague-spot—when you see soul-slaying error lurking in ornaments and rites. Remember Christ is the first and last—the sum and substance of heaven-taught religion. In Him true worshipers assemble, pray, and praise. In Him true

preachers preach. To Him they point. All ceremonial is an empty husk, which leads not to Him. Spiritual sight will soon grow dim, if it sees nothing but officiating show. Suspect the ministry in which Christ is obscured, His Gospel half concealed, and outward means raised to the place of justifying faith. This is priestcraft plotting for supremacy. This is declivity towards Rome.

While many minds thus tremble for our Church, let me look hopefully to you. Be true, I pray you, to yourselves, your country, your family, your Church, your Savior, and your God. As you would live happy, beloved, useful—as you would die honored, peaceful, blessed—as you would serve your generation well—as you would meet with confidence your coming Judge—as you would hear the glorious welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant"—as you would enter into your Lord's own joy—as you would sit beside Him on His throne—as you would share the triumphs of those "who overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of His testimony," enter the best of services, be good soldiers and servants of the Lord Jesus, be genuine, be firm, be manly, be consistent, be heroic for His holy truth. It gloriously shines in the Word—it is vividly embodied in our Articles—it was preached by the noble army of our martyrs—it was sealed in their still speaking blood. Let it be the health, the strength, the radiance of your lives!

Accept this exhortation from one who prays, "God bless you."

HIRING FAIRS

For a few moments let me crave your ear. I am no stranger to the purport of your visit. I know why you stand jostled in this throng, courting the craze of an ill-mannered crowd. My present plan, however, leads not to comments on this faulty fair. My purpose is not to remonstrate or upbraid. When I view this concourse, compassion stifles all reproach. Austerity is silent and tenderness desires to speak. Kindness prevails, while sterner feelings stand aside. Others will this day address you, seeking their own ends. Let me be heard, whose only object is your good. Though unknown, I truly wish you well.

Your conduct claims some measure of excuse. You are misguided by a long-lived custom. You have been taught that servants' places are thus statutably gained. Perhaps your parents and their parents, too, have boldly done what you now boldly do. That this traffic is un-English and most evil, no thoughtful man can possibly deny. But I cast not the total blame on you. Censure, today, shall not depress your heart. You must not, therefore, turn away. I wear no frowns. I point not to the shame and mischief. A present opportunity is before me, and Christian zeal is warm to use it. If God be pleased to bless my words, you may obtain the best of friends, and join the service of the best of masters.

Your look is now inquiring. You seem to say, these words imply intention to do hiring work. Exactly so. Such is my errand. Intent on this design, I look around, and fix my eye on you. But, understand, I seek no servant for myself.

I bear commission from another. My Master sends me, and I am prompt to do His bidding.

Do you reply—This mode of dealing is not common—it is unusual thus to hire—but curiosity is roused, and gladly would I ask some explanation! Does fame commend your Master? What is his repute?

Gladly I comply. He is great, rich, kind, good, noble. There is none like Him in all the county, or in all the world. His spacious mansion contains many servants. Multitudes wait at His gate. They all receive much care, and bless God for their lot. They work, indeed; for none are happy who live idle lives; but in their work they find delight. Their wants are all supplied. He pays good wages now, and when they have fulfilled their tasks, they are enriched beyond their utmost hopes. But this is meager praise. He is, indeed, far better than this poor account. Not one, who ever became His, would leave His service for all the treasures which this earth can give.

In His household there is room for you, and I this day invite you to this choicest place. I think I hear you say—This is, indeed, a grand account. But where can this Master dwell? He surely is no native of these parts; and, as

I cannot break home-ties, His place, though tempting, is no place for me.

Stay—stay! I call you not to emigration, or to distant lands. No lengthy voyage conducts to His abode. At any moment you may reach His presence. No distance separates, if you consent. Peculiar license, too, pervades His house. While you serve Him you may still work in a contiguous farm. You may abide, surrounded by home-friends, and still call Him your Lord.

Your look is now amazed. You suspect that my mind wanders, or my words mock. You think I surely trifle—and, to convict me of wild talk, you ask— What, then, is His name?

Your question helps me, and I thank you for it. With eager joy—with holy pride, I give the glorious name. He is the Lord Christ Jesus—the only-begotten Son of God—Very God of Very God—Heir of all things—Emmanuel God with us—the only Savior of a sin-lost world. I could add more, and leave much more untold—but a full catalogue of all His names at present might perplex and weary you.

But, ah! how is it now! your look is changed—awkward—downcast. The name has checked your gaiety. You seem half-frightened—ill at ease—and anxious to depart. But pause, dear friend, my message now shall not be long. I perceive, at once, that you have knowledge of this name; and that you clearly catch my purport, and my wish. But tell me, why you now no longer smile. Whence your

averted timid look? Do I not read aright your fear that the service of Christ Jesus would nip the pleasures of life's prime, and doom your youth to dismal gloom!

For this alarm I am not unprepared. It is the common artifice of Satan. It is the widespread net, towards which the giddy float. It is the poisoned cup which youthful lips sip thoughtlessly. It is the pillow of delusion, on which so many sleep to wake in hell. What! Christians sad! At once I contradict the falsehood. When Satan said—"You shall not surely die," did he speak truth? When now he whispers, Christ's servants mope in cheerlessness, he equally deceives. No, I am bold to step to higher ground. I fearlessly proclaim that there is no spark of lasting happiness apart from this great Lord. While every mother's child in Satan's service is an enslaved drudge, His followers feast at banquets of delight—and quaff an overflowing cup—and sing on the highest heights of joy—and walk in holy liberty.

You raise your eyes wondering—incredulous. You marvel what strange utterance will follow. Well! Let me call you a witness on my side. Looking you in the face, I ask—Is happiness your state? Probably you often laugh and sport. It may be so. But masks of mirth may hide unpeaceful hearts. Do no intruding thoughts put merriment to flight? In pleasure's giddy whirl are there no misgiving pauses? An inward voice will whisper—This life is wrong. A cloud of gloom will darken noisy gaiety. You must confess this picture to be true. Though now you are so gladsome, perhaps you have felt pain and sickness. Where

was your gladness then! It left you with a mocking sneer. But if you yet are free from malady's sharp touch, still some neighbor's groans—the passing bell—an open grave—a train of mourners—the pulpit's warning—the thought that you may be the next to die, have caused a shudder. Then the remembrance of judgment after death—of wrath so righteously deserved—of the wages due to sin—of the fire which ever burns—of the worm which ever gnaws—of the unending torments of the lost, has thrilled with terror through your aching bosom. If solid happiness were your abiding portion, it would exclude such gloomy guests. Honest conscience cannot but assent that worldly hearts are like the troubled sea, which knows no rest. You are not happy.

But, heed my bidding, give yourself to Christ, and your peace shall flow as a river, and your joy sparkle as the sunlit sea. Mark His invitation. It is rich in promise—"Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The motto on each servant's brow is, "Happy are You, O Israel."

I watch your countenance, and I read its stare. You think I overstate. You know some neighbors, famed for their love of Christ, who writhe in pain, and are brought low by losses—poverty—distress. You perceive that Christians soar not above trouble's reach. Mark me, I say not that union to Christ will guard your body from all pain, and keep back the ever-flowing tide of tears, and bar the door against sorrow and affliction. Far otherwise. My all-wise Master knows the need of chastening discipline.

Thus love corrects, and seemingly is often harsh. A gracious scourge repels from perils—drives from destruction's path—restrains the straying feet. But in these trials there is wondrous gain. Troubles give life to dormant promises—darkness issues in clearer light—in every storm God is a present stay.

Consult your pious neighbors. They will gratefully confess that in their keenest pains they have found supports of supporting grace. Their experience confirms the word—"I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Question those conversant with hospitals, infirmaries, and scenes of saddest woe. True testimony has often told that greater peace is seldom seen than by the suffering Christian's bed. The words of Sheba's Queen may be applied to Christ—"Happy are your men, happy are these your servants which stand continually before you, and that hear your wisdom." I have persuasion that your heart responds—Yes! God's children are thus blessed. Theirs is the happy lot. But you have lurking thoughts that this household admits none but the holy and the sanctified. You are conscious that your state is sadly different. Ways of unrighteousness detain your feet. Your light heart is steeped in worldly-mindedness, and has no taste for gospel-walk. Spirituality is not your life.

Do you thence infer that entrance is forbidden, and that rejection waves you off! Would you delight to hear that this objection is a cruel cheat! Take, then, assurance of its utter emptiness. It is a noble feature in this Lord's fame—

"He receives sinners." His command is, "Preach the gospel to every creature." He bids His servants to go into the highways and hedges, and to compel the outcasts to come in. His mansion is peopled with rejoicing crowds, who once were light and trifling as you are. All His servants strayed afar off, until they yielded to His call. His gates are never closed against a humble applicant. But is there readiness with you? Will you renounce the devil and his works, and all earth's sinful vanities! I distinctly warn you that His easy yoke requires your entire heart. You must be wholly His, or wholly toil in Satan's slave-house.

But can you hesitate? Wisely make trial of this gracious Lord. All whom He receives He wondrously transforms. The heart of stone will soften. A heart of flesh will take its place. He will renew in you a right spirit. New affections— new desires—new hopes—new tastes—new prospects—new delights—will sprout as blossoms on a summer tree. Old things will pass away; all things will become new. The present desert of your mind will bloom as Eden's lovely garden. The inward blank will be replete with precious, elevated, enchanting thoughts. You will find conversion to be a heaven-wrought change from wretched slavery to noble freedom—from doubts to peace—from blindness to clear sight—from low estate to heavenly heirdom. Will you not come and drink this happy cup?

Why do you yet so seriously sigh? Do I detect a lingering fear that in Christ's household you would still be sad, remembering your former sinful state? You apprehend that

keen remorse would still adhere a bitter comrade by your side. You know that wrath pursues transgression. You fear, then, that wrath must ever follow at your heels.

True; each sin must have its punishment—God's truth and justice have this claim. But from this vengeance there is rescue and escape. Hear the glad tidings of His kingdom. "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Jesus is made His people's substitute—their burden-bearer—their sinremover—their guilt-sustainer. Their debt is placed to His account. His riches pay the full amount. Their curse is rolled on Him, and He endures it, until no more remains. God deals with Him as verily the guilty one. He, spotless as God can be, receives imputed sins, and fully expiates them all. In the vicarious victim, all claims are satisfied, and wrath expires. Thus His servants are exempt. Jesus, in His life—in the garden—on the cross—suffers their sufferings—dies their death—and so becomes their uttermost salvation. His pains are their pardon—His stripes are their healing—His agony is their recovery. Thus over the portals of His palace the scroll shines brightly, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world."

I allow that consciousness of unforgiven sin brings torment—but I maintain that sins washed out can terrify no more. Can crimson dye affright when it is whiter than the whitest snow? All His servants have this cheering knowledge. It is the earliest lesson of their faith,—"the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin."

Therefore, throughout His many mansions, the happy chorus rings—"There is redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Would not you joy to take part in this song! Come, then, and learn the melody.

Well, what is your reply? You look on homely garb—you think of humble birth—you recollect the childhood's hut, and you conclude that this abode is not a fit place for you. This scruple shows ignorance of His condescending grace. Distinction of the poor and rich—the lowly and the great—exists not in His eyes. No! the poor and needy seem to win especial favor. The very humblest, in the humblest hovel—the very neediest of the race of poverty are called as freely as earth's lords. No golden keys are needed to unlock His gates. They open gladly to the poor man's touch. Many a Lazarus is borne by angels to the heights of heaven. "You see your calling, how that not many mighty—not many noble are called; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised has God chosen; and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are." Your apprehension is a groundless fancy. The lowly state is not despised in heaven.

But I will not enlarge. Believe me, no valid bar prevents your instant welcome. Faith overleaps all hindrances. Let me, then, counsel, exhort, beseech you to cast away reluctance, fear, and hesitation. Linger not, nor pause to

commune with your carnal heart, or worldly friends. Be persuaded at once—resolutely, unreservedly—to surrender yourself to Christ, the only Savior and the only Hope. "Now is the accepted time." Now, invitations echo in your ears. Now, ready arms are outstretched to receive you. Dream not of a future day. Young as you are, you may be near your grave. Traverse the cemetery. Many lie there who counted not your years. Some, too, have entered fairs healthy and blithe, and never reached their homes alive.

Say not, I will return—reform my ways—acquire some fitness, and then accept this proffered yoke. Be not so mad. Such efforts are the wreck of every hope. You have no power to cleanse your heart as fit abode for Christ. Christ is the entrance to the Christian course. By faith receive Him; and, thus united, advance forward. Until this first step be rightly taken you grope in darkness—no spark of holiness can kindle—your dwelling is in the shadow of death. Extend, then, the hand of faith and grasp the Savior. You are not called to travel slowly towards Him through a long road of outward forms. Rites may show life, and sweetly nourish true believers. But you must be Christ's, before you can be member of His Church, and claim the privileges of His household, and call God, Abba, Father. You must be joined to Him, as branch to the parent stem, before you can look up to heaven as your home, and joy in the promises, and feast with His family at the sacramental board. Stay not in the crowd of formalists who are content with outward show; while faith, which is the saving grace, has never occupied their hearts. True religion is the reign of faith.

May the mighty Spirit of the living God bless, by His conquering power, this earnest effort for your good! While many shall return this night to plunge more deeply into sin, may angels sing aloud because the Lord receives in you another jewel for His crown! While this Fair shall rivet around many stronger bands of ruin, may you enter on a new course leading to victory over sin, and death, and hell, and Satan—securing peace of conscience—usefulness of life—fullness of present joy, and pleasures at His right hand forever!

I now must say, Farewell, and bear your answer to my Lord. Shall I report acceptance, or refusal? Do you welcome or reject? The balance trembles between heaven and hell.

Hear my parting importunity. By all His boundless love—by His accursed death—by His most precious blood—by His redeeming wounds—by His triumphant rising from the grave—by His exalted seat at God's right hand—by the power of His interceding life—by His near coming to reign gloriously—by final gathering before the great white throne—by all the joys of saints in light—by all the miseries of everlasting woe, I implore you to lift up the portals of your heart and cry,—Come in, great Savior, come. Let your inmost soul bound forward to profess, "Now to be Your, and Your alone, O Lamb of God, I come." May this hiring Fair thus join you to the saved! Seeking an earthly Master, may you find heaven, and a heavenly Lord!

THE FALLEN

Come, listen for a few short minutes to some friendly words. If you hear me to the end, you will be detained but for a little while. If you should become weary of me, turn your eye from the page, and I am gone. But my hope is that you will not dismiss me, until my message has been fully told.

Do you say, "I know you not. What can be your business with me?" In social life we do not refuse to exchange courteous words with strangers. Therefore the fact that I plead no previous acquaintance, is no reason why your ears should instantly be closed. Strangers have talked with you and you have gained no good. Let me, though a stranger, tell my tale, and I have good hope that you may bless the day which brought me to your notice.

But now an uncomfortable feeling seems to creep over you. You say, "I understand you. This introduction intimates that your design is to talk about my soul and my eternity; I must not admit such thoughts; they cannot fail to make me unhappy, therefore I think we had better part at once."

No, do not thus cut me short. You fear that my converse, if on eternal matters, will interrupt your happiness. Tell me then, Are you happy?

Pause one moment, give an honest answer. Ah! your countenance is sad—a sigh breaks from you; the truth is manifest—you are not. If then you do not possess happiness, my words cannot rob you of what you have not.

Now I seem to read an anxious thought in your bosom; "would that I could gain that treasure!" But something like despair tells you that all such hope is in vain—that happiness and you can never meet. You shrink from listening to my statements, lest they should only show you that your state cannot be mended. You are disposed to hasten away, and to drown thought by forcing some noisy merriment into the present hour.

Stay, stay, my friend; you are wholly wrong—a cruel enemy—a vile deceiver—leads you into this self-destroying error. I come with tidings, which, if God grant His blessing, will bring happiness in their hand, and change all your wretchedness into peace; all your misery into joy; all your forlorn disquietude into tranquil delight.

You say, "Can it be so?" I reply, Fear not—it is true. Will you listen? I see that I have gained your ear, and will therefore thankfully, hopefully, proceed.

Why is it that you are always striving to drown thought? It is because you know that conscience, if aroused to speak,

would show that you are pursuing a course of deliberate sin, the end of which must be the eternal wrath of God. I gain then one important point in having your confession, that you are a transgressor of God's law, and that you dread condemnation at His just bar. Now I do not come to set your sins before you in the terrific light of God's condemning law. My object is not to upbraid you, nor to depict your low condition in the eyes of men, and your fearful prospect for the endless ages. I take my stand on the acknowledged fact, that your heart is lonely, desolate, and sad,—that you are conscious of the multitude of your transgressions—and that you dare not face the awful future. My heart burns to tell you that all this gloom may yet be chased away. I am eager to announce a sweet hope of pardon and of peace.

Do not be incredulous. Do not reason, "I cannot undo the past—I cannot recall the abominations which have stained my life; I cannot be innocent before God; my sins are many and most vile; and such must be their character forever."

Friend, you pronounce these bitter things against yourself, either wholly ignorant, or utterly forgetful, that Jehovah, your great Creator, your gracious preserver is a God, whose name is Love; who delights in mercy; who wills not the death of a sinner; who, in the riches of His grace, has decreed and accomplished a scheme of salvation, in which forgiveness reigns—in which all guilty stains become whiter than snow—all mountains of iniquity disappear—all impurity is washed away—the vilest are welcomed—

the most hardened are melted—the worst outcasts are brought home.

All these great and good things are freely dispensed in the glorious Gospel of His beloved Son. And now, He, who has spared you so long, and has not suffered His full displeasure to dash you in pieces, comes, and by the voice of His messenger bids you contemplate the treasures of grace, and mercy, and loving-kindness, which are here opened for your hands to take. Hear then a few sentences concerning Jesus, the sum and substance of our Gospel-hope.

Would that I could tell you how great He is! But thoughts and words fail. Let it then suffice to say, that He is God's only begotten and well-beloved Son. He is equal to the Father in all the glories of Deity; He is very and eternal God. All power, might, majesty, glory, are His essential property.

When you have fully set before your mind the all-surpassing dignity of His person, advance in thought to this fact. God, in His tender love, sent this, His glorious Son, higher than the heavens, to become man, to take the poverty and lowliness of our nature upon Him, to be made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And again, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Here you see the greatest conceivable effort on the part of the Father to rescue sinners from their misery. Here you see the glorious

Jesus ready to undergo any humiliation, that He may become a Savior. You must admit, then, the desire of God is to deliver from woe. When Jesus was thus very man, without ceasing to be very God, our Heavenly Father, in His grace, transferred to Him the transgressions of His people.

He removed sin from the sinner, and placed it on the Sinless. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6. "He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21. This fact might be confirmed by many other Bible-statements. But enough is said to prove that infinite grace has called Jesus to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. You must surely admit God is willing to relieve the sinner of his sins. The sinner need no longer be his own sin-bearer.

Advance another step. When the sins of His people were thus regarded as belonging to Jesus, God dealt with Jesus as though He were the perpetrator of all and each. He righteously inflicted on Him the total punishment. He exacted of Him the whole curse. The vengeance denounced against them collectively and individually fell on Him. Thus Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the Cross of Calvary, made "His soul an offering for sin." He actually and verily stood in the sinner's place.—In the sinner's name and stead He gave due satisfaction to every attribute of God. Each believer endures in the person of his

Lord the whole wrath denounced against his personal transgressions.

Marvelous fact! glorious truth! blessed reality! The believer suffers in Christ—dies in Christ—pays in Christ—satisfies in Christ. Thus Paul exclaims, "I am crucified with Christ." Gal. 2:20. You must now admit, that in the work of Christ—redemption is accomplished—salvation is procured—sins are atoned for—souls are saved. And now the proclamation goes forth, "Look unto me, and be you saved." "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life." "By Him, all that believe are justified from all things."

"Incline your ear, and come unto me—hear, and your soul shall live." "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." God is "just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus." "He who believes has everlasting life."

These calls and assurances are so amazing, that perhaps—half-persuaded, half-doubting,—you think, But can these things be? Can there be such grace in God? can such blessedness be extended to the children of men? But God must be true. There cannot be any word from His lips in which error has place. Jehovah from His throne on high cannot deceive His children or delude them by visionary hopes. Whatever is said by Him must be an eternal truth, which never can fail—which nothing can hinder. And does not every gospel-page echo and re-echo with the tidings, that every poor sinner, who comes to the blessed Jesus in

faith, shall be delivered from all condemnation, and shall be made heir of heaven's blessedness?

You assent to this statement. You know it to be the faithful tidings of the Gospel. Well then, turn not from the glorious hope set before you. Only make it your own. Only draw near to Jesus—accept His invitation—cast yourself on His grace and mercy—put all your trust in the merits of His sufferings—hide your sins under the perfection of His infinite righteousness—and you are pardoned, cleansed from all iniquity, and everlastingly saved.

But perhaps you sigh, "my sins! my sins!! there never were the like. Oh! no. I may not venture to the holy Savior. I should be spurned, rejected, cast back."

I boldly reply, that this fear is only the offspring of unwillingness, and unbelief. It is suggested by the enemy, who trembles, lest you should escape.

Will you cast it away, if I can prove it to be utterly opposed to the Word and the Heart of Jesus, and the ways of His grace.

HIS WORD. He has, as if for the very purpose of slaying such doubts, by His Spirit recorded this gracious assurance, "Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. If this word be a deception, the whole Gospel falls to the ground, and there is no hope for any child of Adam. But it is the solemn pledge of Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life." At this very moment

then, let your soul draw near to Jesus; tell Him that you know there is salvation in Him, and Him alone; that you come pleading His word, and beseeching Him to give you a place among His saved ones.

HIS HEART. But perhaps some fears still keep you back. You think that He cannot but loathe one, who has so rolled in the mire of pollution. I will say nothing to extenuate your guilt. I will not send you for comfort to the flimsy plea, that your case is not uncommon. No! I direct you only to the tender heart of our Lord. The immensity of your misery is a strong plea to the infinity of His compassions. Why did Jesus become man, groan in the garden, and lay down His life on the Cross? Because He so tenderly felt for the extremity of misery, and loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins. His heart is in nowise changed, "He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Among all His saved multitudes there is not one whom He has not, in the pitifulness of His mercies, rescued from depths of iniquity. Your sins are a mighty mass— but the magnitude of His tenderness overtops them all. His heart is a tablet engraven with sinners' names. Plead with Him that He loves the wretched, and that you draw near the most wretched of the wretched. He will receive you, for He cannot act in opposition to His Heart.

THE WAYS OF GRACE. The Holy Spirit in tender love is diffuse in records of striking instances to attract the chief of sinners and to level doubts. Behold the case of our first parents. The sin which stands the foremost in the Word is the foremost in gigantic enormity. No motions of

internal corruptions tempted to it. The enticement was of trivial strength. The consequence was the just perdition of the whole family of man. It was followed by no tears of contrition—no confession of iniquity—no cries for pardon. If there could be guilt beyond the utmost limits of forgiveness, surely the guilt is here. But no— grace bounds to save them—and the Gospel of redemption through the woman's seed is freely proclaimed. Let this instance so conspicuous in the Bible-page have full effect. It surely tells, that there is pardon for the worst.

You doubtless know the history of Rahab. She lived a heathen among heathens. To say the least, her name is linked with infamy. No outward reason can be found why heavenly smiles should raise her to distinction. But she was favored above women. Her eyes were opened to perceive the truths of God. She was delivered in the general ruin of her town. She was the means to save her kindred. She obtained place among the progenitors of the God-man. She stands a monument of saving grace—and calls on you to turn from evil to our pardoning God. Can you consider her, and bar the door to hope? Manasseh stands out as a very monster among the monsters. We turn with loathing from the bare recital of his odious course. But grace yearned over him. Afflictions were ordained. He was hurried a captive from his home. In the prison his heart was humbled—a spirit of supplication was conferred—and the truth was received, that "the Lord He was God." 2 Chr. 33. You see in him, that no amount of abominable crime places the sinner beyond the reach of

enlightening and converting grace. Surely this case forbids you to despair.

In the fullness of time the Great Redeemer comes. His own lips tell His wondrous purpose. Do they interdict the vilest of the vile—the most polluted of sin's slaves—the stained with the deepest taint of infamy—the branded with the crimson and the scarlet dye? Far otherwise—the smile averted from the self-righteous beams tenderly on such poor outcasts. The proclamation runs, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Matt. 9:13. May the Spirit open your ears this day to hear the call extending unto you! Again hear His announcement, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Matt. 21:31. Matchless grace! These words assure you that in His kingdom there is room for you;—yes—even for you. Can you now fear that heaven's gate is not wide open for you! Do you not hear a voice, Come, enter in! Go to Samaria's well. Jesus, way-worn and weary, is there seated. A woman from the town draws near. He leads her on by gentle converse to confess her guilty state. Is she then reproached—reviled and spurned in righteous anger from Him? No, she hears the glorious truth, that He was indeed the Christ. "I that speak unto you am He." John 4:26. May the same voice now ring throughout your heart, I am Jesus, still able and willing to save you to the uttermost. Go to the house of Simon the Pharisee. A poor female cannot be kept back. She breaks through obstacles and reaches Him. Showing every sign of penitence and ardent love, she "stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and washed His feet with tears, and wiped them with the

hairs of her head and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment." Simon was shocked and startled, that such endearments were received—for this poor penitent was one notorious for evil living in the town. But Jesus gave no repulse. His words assure her, "Your sins are forgiven." "Your faith has saved you, go in peace." Draw near in penitence as deep—in love as true—in faith as lively—in gratitude as fervent, and fear not that a similar welcome will be yours.

Who can mark unmoved the loving train, which followed the steps of Jesus! From each the testimony comes—See whom this precious Savior joys to save. See whom He rescues from the vilest depths. See whom He mightily reclaims. See from whose hands He deigns to take His sustenance. "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and many others, which ministered to Him of their substance." Luke 8:2, 3. If you had joined this company, would you have been repelled? Why then now hesitate? Though high in heaven He is still very near. The hand of faith may at each moment touch Him. Other instances most tenderly invite. They thicken round you, like constraining cords, drawing with sweet force.

Say not these cases show the gracious heart of Jesus walking as man among His fellow-men. But was there no change when the death at Calvary concluded His personal ministry on earth? Approach and see. He rises victorious from the grave. He gives commission to His disciples.

They are to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations. Is any place selected for especial notice? Are any sinners to have priority of call? It is so. The first call is to Jerusalem-sinners. The mandate states, "Beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:47. What! Jerusalem! The scene of His bitter scorn—reviling—suffering. What, among those whose murderous cry almost still lingers in the echo, "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" What, among those whose hands are almost reeking with His blood! Yes. Seek first my maddened murderers, and tell them, that there is pardon—mercy—grace—acceptance for them—tell them, that My arms are open to embrace them. Follow them with invitations, Come, Come to Me. Can then your case be desperate? Are you beyond the pale of hope? Look toward the Mercy-seat. You will find that grace still reigns unexhausted—inexhaustible.

You have heard of luxurious Corinth—ill-famed for all impurity, the lewdest seat of libidinous excess. Of this city the blessed Jesus testifies, that He has much people in it. Acts 18:10. Paul preached there, and many heard and turned unto the Lord. He subsequently states a hideous catalogue of the outrageous evils which most soil our race. He fixes on them large participation, "And such were some of you." Does he add, Therefore your doom is sealed—I turn away. No, he subjoins, "But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. 6:11. Why should it not be said of you—You too are washed—you too are sanctified—you too are justified!

The cleansing blood has lost no power—the renovating Spirit is still omnipotent to sanctify—the power of faith is still unbounded to make righteous. Gaze on these jewels sparkling on the Gospel-page. They are written for your encouragement. Oh! then, be encouraged. I appeal to you, that you never heard of a case in which the cry to Jesus for pardon, and peace, and life, was not heard and answered. If you really flee to Him, and He drives you back, yours will be the first rejected case; and it would break the countless assurances which the God of grace and truth has given.

It would be very pleasing to me to proceed to depict the change, which pervades the heart, in which Jesus is admitted as Savior and Friend. But I promised to be brief, and therefore will retire beseeching you to think of Him to whom my words have called you. Contemplate His greatness—majesty and glory—His tenderness and love and grace. Think how great He is, who is Jehovah's fellow—"God over all blessed for evermore:"—"the brightness of His Father's glory—the express image of His person." It is in Jesus Christ, that the Father is seen and known, and loved and worshiped. He is the seal, which shows the Father's image. He is the superscription which records the Father's essence. Would you learn the Father's attributes? You must study Christ, who is their visible display. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ. There you see justice—wisdom—truth and love blended in harmonious beauty.

Learn to know Christ and you know God. He is the pearl of great price hid in the Bible-field. He is the end of the law for righteousness—the first and last of Scripture-revelation—the truth of every type—the purport of the noble line of prophecy. Without Him Scripture is a blank—a chaos—a delusion. Without Him the Spirit has no testimony—no channel through which His gifts can flow—the preacher no theme—faith no object—the sinner no hope. Think of His matchless worth. Angels are great—but their collected weight is infinitely outweighed by Him. Pile in one mass all kings and potentates of earth—all the wisdom of the wisest—and might of the mightiest—and strength of the strongest—it is all less than nothing, when compared to Him. Without Him heaven is no heaven—there is no crown of life—no hymn of victory—no never-ending hallelujah—no good now—no happiness forever. Think too of His work to save poor sinners. To redeem them he came down from heaven—put on the rags of our mortality—agonized and bled and died.—To justify them He rose again from the dead—ascended into heaven—and sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high. To bless them He ever lives to intercede—pouring down the Spirit's gifts. To receive them He will soon come again. Oh! think of Him, and open wide your heart to give Him welcome. As you value your soul, as you desire to escape the bitter pains of eternal death, as you would be partaker of the pleasures for evermore at God's right hand, ponder these things.

I say, Farewell, praying you by all the love, which is in God our heavenly Father—by all the merits of the Cross of

Jesus—by all His rising power, and interceding grace—by all the glories of His coming kingdom—by all the life-giving virtue, and comforting presence, and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit—to fall on your knees before the God of our Salvation, and not to let Him go until you can say, "I have found the Savior," or rather "the Savior has found me. My sins, which are many, are forgiven."

SERMON - COMFORT FOR MOURNERS

Sorrow has crossed the threshold of your home, and sits a downcast inhabitant in your heart. You mourn as one from whom all joy is fled. The saddened countenance—the open fount of tears—the swelling sighs—the shrinking from needless discourse—the pensive musing—clearly prove your burden of distress. This grief must spring from some most crushing cause.

It is so. You drink affliction's bitterest cup. Death has approached with withering power, and one, most tenderly beloved, has fallen. BEREAVEMENT, ever working its relentless work, now touches you. You bow beneath its desolating blow. The form on which you joyed to gaze no longer lives. The voice, so charming to your ear, can never more be heard on earth. A vacant seat tells of a sadder vacancy within. The dear one—dearer far than self—must now be covered in the grave. You mourn with grievous mourning. Who can marvel? Who would restrain?

With weeping friends the Christian ever weeps. Do not think that gracious spirits are unfeeling. Grace tenderly transforms the heart. It makes a dreary waste to bear sweet fruit. It wholly sweetens the inner man. It implants new hopes—new prospects—new affections—new desires: but they are all high—unselfish—heavenly. Its province is to

melt, and not to freeze. It is no stoic sternness. It is love going forth in amiable emotion. It never checks the tears of broken-heartedness. Hence be assured your grief is not exclusively your own.

Scripture with melting pathos shows many pictures of the bereaved. It states, but never chides their grief. Mourners pass the sacred page attractive and endearing. We honor, while we sympathize.

There is no eclipse of holy dignity in Abraham, when he "came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her."—Gen. 23:2. Where is the heart which disesteems the agony of Jacob, when, supposing Joseph to be slain by beasts, "he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days." He refused to be comforted; and he said: "For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him."—Gen. 37:34, 35. How many sighs re-echo David's wail: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son! Absalom! Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son! my son!"—2 Sam. 18:33. The blessed Jesus with approving love joins in the tears of Bethany's sad sisters. The Psalmist consecrates the sorrow of an orphan child in the similitude: "I bowed down heavily, as one that mourns for his mother."—Ps. 35:14.

It then would be harsh philosophy—far alien from Christian love—showing no lineaments of the heart of Jesus—crudely ignoring the endearments of domestic life, which could now counsel you to dry your tears, and do

revolting violence to man's best instincts. Christian sympathy regards you with much softer mind. "Behold! he mourns," is a key which unlocks the chamber of condolence. The question arises, and will not be put aside—Can access be obtained to that bereaved house? Can any wings convey some words of loving comfort? Without intrusion or disturbing presence, can tender whispers soothe; can quiet entrance be gained; can an unseen finger point to true solace; can the mourner weep alone, and still hear truths strong to minister relief?

These humble pages venture the attempt. Oh! may they come as a reviving shower on the mown grass! May our gracious Jesus, whose office it is "to comfort all that mourn—to appoint unto those who mourn in Zion to give unto them beauty for ashes—the oil of joy for mourning—the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," now show that He is and ever will be, all that this Word portrays. May it be found that He who smites, is near to heal—that the arm which prostrates, is ready to upraise—that this cup of woe is mixed with precious balm—that the valley of grief often leads to pastures of enduring peace! Holy Spirit! give Your smile, and then the sting of suffering is gone. No comfort can be sound, except God's Scripture is its base. Let, then, the Word be heard. It thus exhorts the stricken: "Hear the rod, and him who has appointed it."—Micah 6: 9. Therefore the rod is graciously ordained. "Affliction comes not forth of the dust, neither does trouble spring out of the ground."—Job 5:6. It is not *chance* which thus bereaves you. Death has not hurled a random-shaft, which undesignedly has found your

dwelling. Your beloved is not borne from you by the tide of casual current. "God's never-failing providence orders all things in heaven and in earth." No sparrow falls to the ground without the counsel of His will. Matt. 10:29.

This arrow flew, then, from a well-poised bow; therefore no rebel thought may swell. Mercy, wisdom, love, are the inscription of this trial. Humble yourself with more than meek submission. Let patient lips, with true sincerity, profess, "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him." Remember Aaron. When the keenest edge of affliction harrowed his very soul, no murmur, no complaint was uttered. Deeply he felt—bitterly he mourned—but "he held his peace."—Lev. 10:3. Emulate the Psalmist's meekness, "I was silent, I opened not my mouth, because You did it."—Ps. 39:9.

When the sun of prosperity is in its zenith, gratitude adores the giving hand. Now under this dark cloud let grateful love still testify: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21. Forbid it that *mere formality* should breathe the often-repeated prayer: "Your will be done." In this rod read the appointment of your God, the author of your being—the gracious disposer of your every concern—your constant and all-loving Benefactor, and acknowledge, "It is well." The love which gave Christ Jesus to the cross, writes goodness on all minor dealings. Realize that it is His hand which presses you so heavily, and in its very weight you will find elements of comfort. Out of the darkness there will spring up light. Only say, My Father—the Father of

all mercies—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the God, whose name is love, thus smites, and heavenly calm will lull the waves of sorrow to repose. Mark not the *appointment* only—hear, also, the *rod*. The rod surely speaks, and its voice is the voice of God. Your trial is not silent. It pleads with heavenly eloquence. Breathe, then, the inward prayer: "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears."—1 Sam. 3:9.

In its approach it may appall, as the loud thunder's clang. It may shake terribly the very center of your heart. But pause, and you will hear a still small whisper dealing calmly with your conscience. It calls you apart to quiet meditation. It bids you, while severed from the world's intrusions, to ponder your ways—to consider your state—to hold frank, upright, manly converse with yourself. It presents a mirror, faithfully reflecting self. It asks most pointedly—How stands your soul with God? Do you know Him as your Father in Christ Jesus? Have you received His Son—the gift of gifts—as all your salvation and desire? Have you welcomed Him as bringing redemption on His wings? Has your faith gazed on Him hanging on the accursed tree, and pouring out His soul unto death, that He might thus atone for all your guilt, and cleanse you by His precious blood? Do you trust Him as exhausting to the last dreg the cup of wrath so justly due to each of your innumerable sins? Do you bless Him as paying to the uttermost the debt of curse incurred by your transgressions? Do you believe in Him satisfying, as your surety, all the demands of all the holy attributes of God? Have you the happy knowledge that this perfect expiation,

makes your every crimson dye whiter than the whitest snow, and levels every mountain of iniquity, until all disappear. Have you put on His pure obedience, as the wedding garment, which decks believers for the courts of heaven? Deeply conscious of your miserable guilt—trembling at the loud threats of vengeance—renouncing all hope in self—have you fled to the all-atoning, all-covering, all-beautifying Jesus? Have you enshrined Him on the throne of your soul, as "made of God unto us, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption?"—1 Cor. 1:30. Do you act loving reliance on the Gospel-message, and personally embrace its glorious hopes? Can you truly aver, O blessed Jesus, thrice-adored Lord, "You know all things;" You know that I have committed my soul to You in full assurance of Your power and willingness to save!

If so, happy is your state. You are one with Christ, and Christ is one with you. No power in heaven or earth can part you from the love of God. In this affliction, He, too, is afflicted. These things all work together for your good. Yet a little while and you shall dwell with God, having His name written on your brow, and "God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying—neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."—Rev.21:4.

Is there not sweetness in the present sorrow which helps you thus to prove the sure foundation of your hopes, and to uplift, more loudly than before, the voice of praise for mercies without bounds? But it may be that, tremblingly,

you hesitate. Conscience cannot admit that faith has raised you to this eminence. You fear that you are still a stranger to the Spirit's indwelling and converting presence—an alien to the covenant of grace—not sheltered in the saving ark.

If so, be persuaded. While you thus mourn domestic loss, bemoan your deeper misery. Weep not for the dead alone—weep too for yourself. Death has opened your door. No human means could stay its step. It may relentlessly return with icy hand to tear you hence. You are helpless to withstand. But where, ah! where would it bear you? Hear one warning out of many: "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him."—John 3:36.

But yet you live. Yet you have space, and Jesus is beside you—full of all grace. In this bereavement He seems to stand at the door of your heart and knock. Rev. 3:20. Open immediately. Admit the willing Savior. Fall low on your knees in this your house of death. No longer spurn the mercies of the Cross. Cast yourself into the expanded arms of reconciling love. Arise a living soul. "Awake, you that sleep and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light"—Eph. 5:14. Thus may this present sorrow prove to be God's blessing in the highest!

It may be that your heart, believing in the Lord, is conscious of much recent coldness. The flame which once burned brightly is now sadly dim. The love which warmly

beat in every pulse is partially repressed. Your former joys droop as a frost-touched leaf. Close walk with God and His dear Son; and watchful waiting for the Spirit's beckoning hand; and happy study of the Word; and prayer uplifting above earth; and holy converse redolent of heaven, no longer are your pleasure-ground. The cheating world has reassumed some sway. You are not happy. You have tasted Canaan's grapes; therefore all other fruit is tasteless. You have walked with your Lord as in a paradise of joy—other companionship must be a weary blank.

Now, while you bewail your dead, bewail yourself. Depressed in shame, catch the echo of the many calls—the gracious promises—the tender expostulations, which throng around backsliders. "Return, O backsliding Israel, says the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever."—Jer. 3:12. Plead such tender words. Claim them meekly as now become your due. The answer will surpass belief. You will find that while a friend on earth is gone, your Friend in heaven cannot die. You will realize the sweetness of the truth: "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."—Heb. 13:5. Your dead one cannot be restored, but this death may restore your soul.

Your case may yet exceed in wretchedness. While, in your pensive loneliness, you search the tablets of your heart, you may read clear, unanswerable accusations. Some hidden lust may lurk like Achan in the camp. Some evil embers, not yet thoroughly extinct, may smoulder. Some sin may still detain

you with bewitching cords.

Rich is the mercy which brings this misery to light, and warns of an entangling net, and of a leak imperiling the vessel, and of a precipice before your feet. Be wise. Flee this Delilah's lap. Dash resolutely this poisoned goblet to the ground. Do not let this vampire prey on your life-blood. Loathe yourself in dust and ashes. Confess the aggravations of your guilt, and wrestle for pardon through Christ and the all-expiating cross. When penitence and faith thus plead, they cannot plead in vain. A voice will issue from the mercy-seat: "I have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions, and as a cloud your sins."—Isa. 44:22. "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."—Heb. 8:12. You will soon sing with grateful heart: "I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy; for You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities." Ps. 31:7. Thus a friend lost may issue in salvation found, and the void which this bereavement makes, may be filled up by God.

But no delay must intervene. Gain from your present loss may be obtained today. No man may reckon on tomorrow. Fruit, when ripe, not gathered, will decay. The soil which showers soften, soon becomes dry.

Perhaps you think this weeping will be life-long—joys will be buried in this grave—the sun of earthly happiness is set. But the darkest night will have a dawn. *Time's hand* has art to efface the writing of an iron pen, and to heal the

scars which sorrow has infixed. To customary employ you will return; and as you have been, so you may be again. Unless you come forth wholly changed, you will remain more hopelessly the same. The furnace, which refines the ore, hardens the flint. The sun, which melts the snow, converts the clay to stone. Your sorrow brings a blessing or a curse. The warmth which opens flowers, revives the frost-bound adder.

Ponder the dreadful testimony: "They would have none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof."—Prov. 1:30. Remember the solemn admonition: "Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more."—Isa. 1:5. This call may be your last. If you still slumber, you may be left to sleep unto perdition—quiet, undisturbed, forsaken. No second affliction may shake your fatal rest. Nahum 1:9. It is not written in vain: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."—Gen. 6:3. He was resisted by sinners before the flood. He is resisted oftentimes now. He may be resisted by you this day, even beside a lifeless form.

You have heard, too, of a "reprobate mind." This is no unmeaning sound—no shadow of an unreal form—no figment of imaginary state—no term invented to give groundless terror. It is a sad description of a sadder woe. It is a current drifting to blackness of darkness forever. If no grace mingles with present tears, your mind, now seemingly so soft, may harden into hopeless hardness. Forbid it, gracious God, for Jesus' sake!

Many are prone to lull the mourner with vain fantasies, and bring false opiates to his lips. But these pages heal no wound deceitfully. They show no comforts which are empty sounds. At once they point to Christ, knowing that in Him alone there is salvation and all peace. Receive Him. All consolations follow in His train. He is the fount of solace. Heaven is happiness because He is there; and earth is happiness when He is known.

Your sorrow brings, too, especial hopes. Showers of blessings often fall from such dark clouds. They have this fringe of cheering light: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."—Rev. 3:19. The path, smooth only with unchanging ease, in which no thorns afflict the feet, is not the road familiar to the heirs of life. Through much distress—through a waste wilderness of woe—over huge mountains of affliction—through deep waters of grief—through heated furnaces of trouble—with weeping eye—with agonizing breast the heavenly home is often reached.

Your present anguish, then, is hopeful sign, that hidden purposes of love are ripe. God seems to charge this trouble, as David his captains, eager for the fight. Deal gently for my sake with my son.—2 Sam. 18:5. He thus prunes His vines to multiply the fruit. The knife is sharp, but it removes encumbering boughs. The north wind hardens the stem before the south wind calls forth the buds. The process is not purposeless. These rigid means are now astir to wean you from the world, whose ways are death—to unmask the hollow treachery of creature-charms—to expose the utter vanity of earth's delights. The

lesson is now taught, that all is fleeting emptiness apart from God. He, and He only, is unfailing portion—a cup of overflowing joy—a garden in which calm happiness is ever blooming, ever fragrant, ever new.

Often on these wings of sorrow the Spirit flies to make glad the heart. In sable garb He comes the harbinger of saving good. In a grim mask He casts down Satan from His wrongful throne—expels the troops of vile desires—subdues ungodly lusts—establishes the reign of righteousness, and peace, and purity, and holiness, and brings down heaven to abide on earth.

Thus sorrow is the dawn of hope. Unless her only son had died, the widow of Nain might not have beheld her Lord. He meets the mourner following the coffin. When God's mysterious ways are known, death will appear as often used to bring new comforts. Many in heaven will gratefully confess, We would have died in hopeless state, unless death had borne off some friend. But by inflicting death, Christ showed Himself the Prince of life—giving life to lifeless souls, or life more abundantly to those who lived before.

May these blessings now be richly yours! Through your fast-falling tears may heavenly love be seen in heavenly light! May Jesus' presence fill the new made void. And while your happy smiles reflect His saving smile, may you hear the storm-allaying voice: It is I, be not afraid—look unto Me and moderate your grief—cast all your care on Me, and be sustained—receive Me, and be comforted.

And when your secluded days shall end, may you go forth a light to enlighten—a sweet savor to refresh—a mighty power to attract to Christ! May He from this day be your total life! Then when you lie down to die—and die you must, except His coming shall prevent it—may death, which is a Christian treasure (1 Cor. 3:22), be welcomed with no shrinking fear. May you extend a willing hand. The messenger, though black, will bear you to your waiting Lord. You will then learn, what words of man can never teach, how great a Savior is the blessed Jesus; and how salvation infinitely exceeds what hope can paint, or heart conceive, or flesh and blood inherit.

But you must wait until your change shall come. Job 14:14. Take heed that all your waiting days be chastened—savored—hallowed by this grief. The house of mourning is a teaching school. The painful lessons are severely kind. Turn not away—the harshness is but seeming—the profit may endure forever. Distasteful weeds supply the thrifty bee, and give large stores of honey. Juicy berries hang on a prickly briar. Samson found sweets in an unlikely hive. Lasting impressions come from heavy blows.

Lose none of the improvements of the recent scene. You witnessed death accomplishing its work—irresistible—unrestrained—mocking all opposing means. It came and conquered. At its touch the strength declined—the vital powers ebbed—the luster of the eye grew dim—the color faded—the senses laid aside their functions—the fluttering

pulse stood still—animation was no more—the heart no longer moved—the spirit fled its tenement of clay—nothing remained, but a stranded wreck—a tenantless abode—an empty casket—a deserted shell. Death displayed its ruthlessness and might. It put forth its barbed sting and laughed resistance into nothingness.

It is instructive now to ask, How is death armed with this tremendous sway? What furbished, what supplied its weapons? What placed a helpless world beneath its conquering feet? Whence its commission to give the inhabitants of the palace and the hut alike, a banquet to devouring worms?

Now ponder the enlightening reply; SIN is the origin of death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—Rom. 5:12. Learn that sin slew your friend, and all who ever died. Sin locks earth's offspring in its foul embrace, and so consigns them to the arms of death. Survey the lifeless frames from Abel to this hour—huge is the pile—the whole is piled by sin. It digs all graves—constructs all vaults—peoples each graveyard. In all the tears which have bedewed the dying and the dead—in all the mourning which now racks your heart, and has made earth the home of sighs, behold the work of death through sin. You see it now in your own house. Oh! see it rightly, and you will largely gain.

Profit will not be small, if henceforth you hate sin with deadlier hate. View well the monster in true light—the

enemy of God—the enemy of man. It changed fair Eden into a wilderness of thorns, and blackened angels into fiends of hell. Never give truce to such a foe. Cry for the Spirit's help to drive it from each corner of your heart. Unless you slay it, it will be your ruin. Nail it to the Savior's cross. It will fight hard, and struggle long; but cease not the encounter. Take courage. Play the man. The believer can do all things through Christ who strengthens him. Phil. 4:13.

Grace will expand, while, thus abhorring sin, you steel your breast in earnest opposition. This is rich gain. Your sorrow thus yields profit.

But richer gain is near. Look now with more loving gaze on Jesus. He seeks you with most fitting comfort. Of every ill He is consummate remedy. He more than heals each wound—repairs each breach—retrieves each loss. But especially He comes the mourner's healer. He bids you mark His death-subduing work. Behold Him as annulling sin—annihilating death. He sprinkles sin with His most precious blood, and it is blotted out—no trace remains. He sets His conquering feet upon the power of death, and it is crushed—it lifts no more its head. As you bewail your dead, hear His triumphant shout, "I am He that lives and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."—Rev. 1:18. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in Me, though he dies, yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."—John 11:25,

26. Clasp now to your heart the record, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—1 Cor. 15:22. Drink the full cup of comfort, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."—1 Thess. 4:14.

Anticipate this promised day, and tears will cease. It speeds apace. It may be very near. The angels may be standing now with wings all ready for descending flight. Earnest expectation listens for "the shout of the Archangel and the trumpet of God." Let faith go forth to meet the conqueror coming in His power. We too, so many as are His, shall bear our part. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."— Col. 3:4.

"We shall all be changed." How changed! Thought staggers, while it strives to picture. Words fail in utter impotence to tell. But the Spirit's hand uplifts the veil, and we are called to gaze. Amazing glories are portrayed, and the reality will gloriously exceed.

The body crumbles into dust touched by corruption—the prey of loathsomeness—offensive to the shunning sight. But it shall rise—how changed! No flower blooming from its wintry tomb—no bright-winged flutterer bursting from its grub-shroud, can give similitude. It shall rise in incorruption—ever fresh in undecaying beauty—ever shining in immortal luster. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."—1 Cor. 15:49.

"It is sown in dishonor." We hide it as less than worthless in our eyes. We consign it to its native dust—we lay it low, lest it should taint the air. "It shall rise in glory." The brightness of the mid-day sun is black as sackcloth beside its brilliancy. Concentrate all the rays that ever shone, it shall outshine them all. Image our Lord's transfigured glory, the new body shall not be less bright.

"It is sown in weakness." No log can be more impotent. It has no power to stir. Raise the hand—it falls. It shall rise with more than giant-might—girded with strength—clothed with power, as a warrior's panoply. We reckon angels to be strong—one smote in the camp of the Assyrians in a night 185,000. A glorified saint is not inferior in power.

During its fleshly state, the frame was animal—linked to all the littleness, and ills, and clogs, and weights which burden nature. It shall rise wholly spiritual—light—agile as the very air—fleet as the wings of wind. "Though you have lived among the pots, yet shall you be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."—Ps. 68:13. But the power and beauty of the resurrection-robos cannot be fully known until their clothing be put on.

Where, then, shall death appear? No search can find it. It is wholly and forever gone. It has vanished as the fabric of a dream, or as the morning dew. It is utterly destroyed. It is swallowed up in victory.

Fully drink the comfort of this prospect, and smiles will dry up tears. Uplift your downcast eyes, and watch for the streaks of the approaching day. Think, how brief is death's apparent triumph, how soon its chains will all be severed—and all its captives regain liberty! Go forth in faith, and mark its final abolition. Hear the shout of resurrection multitudes: "O grave, where is your victory! O death, where is your sting!"

Do not your comforts swell as a wide-flowing river, while buoyant on these wings of thought you give due praises to our Lord? His is this victory. His the commanding voice which calls to deathless glory. Give Him full thanks, and happiness will surely brighten. Adore Him and rejoice. Pour out your ardent hearts. It is sweet exercise.

Brief is the time in which your gratitude can be evinced. Waste not another grain. Let thoughts of death and deathlessness quicken your tardy spirit. Then these days of mourning will bring life-long joys. It will be heaven begun to take each step intently riveted on Christ—ever listening for His voice—measuring the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of His salvation—soaring high above the charnel-house of earth—watching for His sure return—inhabiting by faith "the building of God—the house not made with hands—eternal in the heavens;"—2 Cor. 5:1—going forth to join the white-robed multitude whom He shall lead unto living fountains of waters—who shall obtain joy and gladness—and from whom sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

The loss which brings these comforts to your heart should not be regarded as *hostile* arrow from an adverse bow.

This trial calls you to especial prayer. It is the Spirit's rule. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray."—James 5:13.

Happy affliction which inspires prayer! Our hearts are prone to cleave to earth—to nestle in soft ease—to shun the effort of wrestling with God. Such indolence is injury, and tends to poverty of soul, and is a barrier to a flood of joys. It is a loving hand which shakes this rest. The rod is kind which drives a truant son to school. Absalom fires the fields of Joab to obtain an interview.— 2 Sam. 14:30. The voice of mercy in this trial calls, My son, come hold more close and constant converse with Me. What! if an ear on earth be dead, your gain is vast if you talk more with God. Unlock your care. Pent up vapor may do deadly hurt. Let it fly heavenward. The dove will return with olive-leaf.

Quicken now the art of communion with heaven. Live more above. Then when you, too, go hence, you will but move from God to God. In better place, you will retain like company. Converse of prayer will end in converse of praise. In happier nearness communion will be the same. The grief is gain which thus enlivens prayer.

Here faithfulness must warn that ENEMIES infest the mourner's path. Double the watch on every avenue of Satan's entrance. He now draws near, expectant of admission. He well knows his favorable times. Dark

clouds encompass you. You sit alone. In darkness the thief goes forth. The lonely traveler is attacked. Jesus, alone and weak, is tried by all the powers of hell. Job's solitary woe lays bare his breast. The arrow quickly seeks him, "Curse God and die."—Job 2:9. Unnerved by sadness, you will hear the wily whisper, Is this the proof of heavenly love? is this the pressure of a tender hand? are these the dealings of beneficence? surely this sorrow might have been withheld! Thus Satan will strive to inject hard thoughts.

You may not listen or hold parlance. In holy horror turn the back. The sun is not removed when clouds obscure the rays. God seems to leave, that we may seek Him with more speed. It is a noble word, "Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him."—Job 13:15. This gale is rough, but let it drive you to a Father's arms, and it will not be adverse. Win now another victory for unwavering faith, and show its power to trust amid all storms.

You now have precious opportunity. Let it not escape unused. Many eyes observe you. Let them see your shining light and godlike lineaments. Let meek submission—Christ-like patience—unmurmuring acquiescence gild as a halo your bereaved state. Let it be seen *how firmly you trust God*—how confidently you drink the bitter cup—how lovingly you bow before the rod—how unreservedly you bless the chastening hand. Thus the reality of your *experience* may convince, where previous *arguments* have failed. Thus many may be led to say, Surely the anchor is strong which holds the ship in such a storm—the rock is firm which such a billow cannot

shake—the joy is true which even now faints not—the help is precious, which can thus sustain. Is there not comfort in the hope that your demeanor may win others to receive the truth of God, and cause some doubting hearts to cry, "This people shall be our people—this God our God—this Savior our Savior—we will now welcome Christ as ours forever!"

You will reap comfort too, if from this grief more Christian ZEAL shall spring. Perhaps hitherto your soul has slept on downy beds of hopes and promises. Precious indeed they are. Their cup is filled to the brim with joy, and we may drink abundantly. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice."—Phil. 4:4. But it is sickly faith which only muses and plucks flowers. Real grace will *toil* with hands on the plough, and feet in the furrows. Without activity health fails. By motion the limbs and sinews strengthen. By exercise we grow to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

At this moment ask your conscience, whether you are laboring—your lamps burning—your spirits ardent in well-doing. Is it your morning question, "Lord, what will You have me to do?"—Acts 9:6. Rest not until you can reply, "Lord, here am I, send me."—Isa. 6:8. Another cannot indicate your special call. But urgent work is surely at your door. The poor—the sick—the ignorant encircle you. These you may visit—relieve—comfort—teach. A chair awaits you beside dying beds. As deer pant for the water-brooks, so many a broken spirit longs for the tidings which your lips might bring. Haunts of misery and vice

invite your steps. With loving words you may arrest the wandering sheep. Timely counsel may rescue many from hell's gates, and pluck brands from eternal burning. Angels have no such privilege.

While then you sorrow, arm yourself for work. And limit not your zeal to home—to family—to parish—to neighborhood—to a native land. Much need is here. More is beyond. Traverse the globe in thought. What deserts of heathen night! What nations, tribes, and peoples, fast locked in chains of death! Perishing masses cry aloud, "Come over and help us."—Acts 16:9. Behold those countless idols—each seems to reproach you for allowing it so long to rule and to deceive.

Do not say that you have no wings to fly to distant climates. Be it so. But you have means to speed heroic champions longing to go forth. You may forego some luxury—deny some cost—restrain some lavish taste, and thus have means to swell missionary funds. You may collect and circulate the gospel message. Your fire may kindle many energies. Your example may proclaim the Christian duty. Your tongue may tell the heathen need.

Thus your friend's death may be the birthday of new happiness. It is ever true that in activity there is a glow of healthy joy. In the delight of holy work mourners have no time to mourn. Self and distress give place to lively guests.

You will find too that in his toil the Gospel-laborer receives good wages. There is repayment in the thought,

"By grace I do my best for Him, who has done all for me. By the Spirit's help I live for Him, who lived and died and lives again, my Savior and my God. His eye is ever on me. So too my eye is ever toward Him. He has my all, who is my all. Poor and scanty is my best service—but such as it is, I place it at His feet, and realize by faith an accepting smile—and foretaste the welcome, Well done, good and faithful servant." May you resolve in your affliction thus to labor—thus to joy—thus to win jewels for your heavenly crown!

This comfort now seeks mourners. May many through it gain conformity to Jesus—our elder Brother—the Man of Sorrows—the acquainted with grief—who drank of the brook by the way, and now lifts up the head.

When the deceased lived 'one with Christ'—when holy walk reflected genuine faith—when pious course proved the indwelling Spirit, a legacy of solid comfort is bequeathed. This should be duly prized. It is the spring of happiest thought. It may be with devoted love—with anxious watching—with ceaseless care to smooth the dying road—with all devices to minister relief, you nursed your loved one to the gate of death. Perhaps looks of love were interchanged, and parting words affectionately breathed. In a moment the spirit winged its flight. The cage was opened, and the bird was gone.

You anxiously inquire, "Where, ah! where is it fled? This earth is left—what is the new home reached? The fleshy house is void, where is the recent inhabitant?" The lifeless

clay gives no reply. Reason may guess, and darken counsel with mists upon mists of vain surmise. Conjecture may dream dreams. Long labyrinths of thought may puzzle and fatigue, and mazy wanderings leave you wandering still.

But here the Bible dissipates all doubt, and guides to an enchanting and delightful view. The upraised veil reveals a scene, in which reality of blessedness resides. Open the eye of FAITH and soberly behold. Speculation has no need to lend its wings. A faithful record courts attention. Receive its plain message. It is true as the truth of God—bright as the heaven of heavens—resplendent with a blaze of bliss. It fills a cup of comfort to the brim.

Paul is again inspired to speak. Hear and believe. "I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."— Phil 1:23. No doubt can cloud the fact, that to go hence is to join Christ. The saint's departure bears him to the Savior's side.

Again, approach the Cross and listen while the dying speak. Amazing light breaks on the contrite *thief*. He finds a Savior on the accursed tree. In lively faith he cries, "Lord, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom." There is no pause—no hesitation—no demur—no doubtful answer. At once a sparkling promise is announced—a promise cheering mourners through all time—cheering you in this hour of trial. "Truly I say unto you, Today shall you be with Me in paradise."—Luke 23:42, 43.

What sunbeams shine from Calvary! Amid them bright is the truth, that death conveys believers to the company of Christ. The hour of death is new birth to transcendent life.

Come, listen yet again. Jesus speaks. Mysteriously He communes with the Father. "Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me—for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."—John 17:24. He prays—the prayer is surely heard. He more than prays. He states His will—the will as of Jehovah's fellow. The prayer and will doubly secure a blessed union. Dying believers must then go to Him.

Can you need more? Heaven's signet ring seals this truth.

Blessed announcement! happy tidings! most enrapturing news! most cheering revelation! What joy—what ecstasy—what transport—what delight here sound with trumpet-tongue! All that most ardent hope expected, becomes fruition—all that faith pictured, is outshone—all that Scripture taught, is fully verified. The faithful pastor—the assuring friend—gave but the faint outline. Jesus—the precious Jesus—the adored Lord of salvation—the wondrous purchaser of wondrous redemption is now seen—seen with no intervening mist—seen not remotely by the telescope of faith—but face to face in all His beauty—all His glory—arrayed in all His majesty—bright in all His smiles of love. There is no dull obscurity—the blissful spirits view Him as He is. There is

no distance—nearness cannot be more near. There is no partial discovery— they know Him, even as they are known. This is no momentary glance—they gaze forever.

Can you repine, while the unfettered spirit thus bathes in an ocean of unfathomable bliss? Think of the recent state. Think of the sure exchange. Do you not hear a voice, 'Weep not for me?' The blessed Jesus seems to touch this chord. Let it now vibrate through your thankful heart. His followers heard, "I go away." They heard and sorrowed. He checks in tone, betokening reproach— "Do you thus show the truth of your affection? This grief is selfishness. Would kindness hold Me back from glory? If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father—for My Father is greater than I." Should you not similarly joy, because another saint has reached the Lord?

With Scripture guidance we may yet advance. It is proved, that eternal union with the Lord is gained. This is the crown of crowns. This is the pinnacle of joy. But this high tree has branches laden with diversity of fruit. We are invited to partake of all. This central light shines in the sky of many stars. We may examine each.

We read, that "he who overcomes, shall no more go out."—Rev. 3:12. There is rich transport in this knowledge of UNCEASING DWELLING. Paradise is really reached. Its threshold is indubitably passed. The soul is truly safe. Salvation verily is won—eternal happiness is a grasped prize—heaven's portals have received a permanent inhabitant. Admitted spirits abide forever.

Ponder this bliss secure from diminishing. While the body held the spirit, fears and tremblings were its daily lot. Timidity often dimmed the Gospel-page, and veiled the promises, and closed the ears to the assuring voice, and raised all phantoms of distracting doubts. Mountains on mountains raised their heights. The way appeared to be both long and steep. Threatening pitfalls and entangling snares beset the path. Satan came forth with all his legion mighty to impede. The thought arose, 'How can this my bark reach the safe haven through foaming billows—against raging winds—amid such rocks—such shoals—such treacherous sands.' David's misgiving brought faintness to the heart. "I shall now perish one day by the hands of Saul."—1 Sam. 27:1.

Where now is this vast host of haunting fears? As smoke before the wind they are dispersed. They are buried deeply, never more to rise. The journey is accomplished—the race is run—the crown of victory is gained—the perils of the voyage are passed—the peaceful haven has received the bark—it floats in waters ruffled by no storm. Safety cannot be more safe. Picture the joy of *apprehensions left behind*, and *certain bliss most tightly grasped*. This certainty is real to all the dead in Christ. What solace to surviving friends!

Scripture presents a page of larger joy. It shows the spirit reposing in meadows of sunny rest. REST! how sweet the term to worn-out laborers on earth. But this is the heaven-sent word—"Write, blessed are the dead who die in the

Lord from henceforth. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may REST from their labors, and their works do follow them."—Rev. 14:13.

Earth to the Christian is a scene of toil. He is a soldier in a warring army. Daily he fights the fight of faith. The foe rests not. His arrows ever fly. Here is the open conflict—there is the secret ambush. One arm must hold the shield of faith—the other must upraise the Spirit's sword. Each day brings battle, and in battle is no rest.

His home, also, is a constant watch-tower, not only from the foe outside, but also from indwelling traitors. The heart swarms with inborn corruptions, each striving to gain sway. The word is sadly true, "The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh—and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would."—Gal. 5:17. There are daily sighs, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." "I delight in the law of God after the inward man—but I find another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members."—Rom. 7:21-23. A sentinel must guard the portals of the lips. Vigilance must keep the feet from evil ways, and turn the eyes from wicked sights, and close the ears to graceless converse. Thus every day is weary watchfulness.

There is, also, the husbandman's employ. The heart is a field requiring constant culture. What fallow ground must be ploughed up! what seed from Scripture must be cast

abroad—what tares—what weeds must be uprooted! what budding graces must be diligently tended! what fences must be raised against destroying beasts! Early and late with agonizing prayer the work must be pushed on. Such is the ceaseless toil. Ease takes not heaven by storm.

But the happy dead now rest. The flesh is left behind—corruptions are deep buried in the grave—evil suggestions can no more disturb—the devil sets no foot in Paradise. This rest cannot be broken. Let us consider and give thanks! It must not be ignored, that here believers have sweet tastes of rest. There are "green pastures" where the sheep repose. "Still waters" court their feet. Each one can sing, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste."—Canticles 2:3. The precious invitation calls, "Come unto Me, all you who labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Matt. 11:28. But this repose of soul consists with outward conflict. It is rest amid incessant tossings of unrest.

True is the testimony, "We who have believed enter into rest."—Heb. 4:3. This rest of faith is real, precious, reviving. Faith sees salvation fully purchased by the work of Christ—redemption earned by His most perfect merits—all sins washed out by His all-expiating blood—all the Church beauteous in His beauty—bright in His righteousness—consummately complete in Him. It marks the fabric towering above heaven, and ceases from all efforts to add needless stones. But *faith* falls short of sight. It fluctuates—it wavers—it flags—it totters—at times it seems to be inertly dying. But the rest of *sight* is

changeless. It never ebbs—it is the tide in fullest flow. It never wanes—it is the sun in mid-day blaze. It never fades—it is a full-blown flower—ever fresh. Such rest is undisturbed, and undisturbable. The faithful dead have reached it.

Let us draw near to our Gospel-record. These bodies are liable to countless pains. No care of ours, can totally avert. No skill can give sure cure. Afflicted sufferers find no ease by day, and tossings to and fro wear out the hours of night. But *pain expires, when the body dies*. It is distinctly said, "Neither shall there be any more pain."—Rev. 21:4. And again, "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick—the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."—Isa. 33:24. Keen was your sorrow when perhaps you witnessed pains beyond relief. Will you not now give thanks for those whom malady can no more touch?

Believers, although taught that death is their friend, draw back with shudder from its touch. The blessed Jesus shrunk from the repelling cup. Faith truly tells, that "when they pass through the waters, he will be with them; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow them; when they walk through the fire, they shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon them."—Isa. 43:2. But nature is averse to chilly waters and the scorching flame. Thus dread anticipations trouble.

Perhaps you know well these solemn thoughts. Then count them happy who have passed the shadows of the valley.

Scripture says, "There shall be no more death."—Rev. 21:4. Reject not this consoling thought.

The godly have most grievous anguish from ungodly men. Such openly oppose—and secretly malign—and cruelly reproach—"The poison of asps is under their lips." The Spirit testifies, "*Arise and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted.*"—Micah 2:10. The Psalmist sighs, "Oh! that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest." Death bears the godly to the realms "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."—Job 3:17.

Shall we not give thanks for those delivered from such harrowing grief? No wicked man will vex again—no evil sound be heard—no calumny give pain. The atmosphere around is heaven's own peace, and purity, and love. Each face is bright with sincere smiles.

It is a Gospel rule, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Acts 14:22. Happy they who have these tribulations in their past! It is so with the blessed dead. But we are warned that *coming woes* shall terribly exceed what earth has hitherto endured. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."—Matt. 24:21. Appalling miseries will usher in the Lord's return. But saints at home with Christ are high above these fears. This is the signal mercy promised to Judah's humbled king. "Behold, I will gather you unto your fathers, and you shall be gathered unto your grave in

peace, and your eyes shall not see the evil which I will bring upon this place."—2 Kings 22:20. Mark too the comfort of the word, "The righteous perish, and no man lays it to heart; merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace—they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness."—Isa. 57:1, 2. Consider this. In happy thought behold the blessed company screened in their peaceful Zoar, while earth is unprecedented woe.

But higher ground invites us to ascend, and brighter scenes still court our eyes. The sight of Jesus implies perfection. Are we not taught that to behold Him as He is, we must be like Him?—1 John 3:2. Dissimilarity excludes clear sight. The spirits clearly see Him; therefore perfect likeness must be theirs, and spiritual faculties must be strengthened to the full.

Former vision was obscure. Previous knowledge was the pupil's alphabet. The earthly state was childhood. Now manhood is attained, and tutors teach no more. Spiritual powers are fully ripened. There is union with the "spirits of just men made perfect."—Heb. 12:23.

By them God is now truly known—the mind of Jesus is thoroughly perused—entangled providences are clear—perplexing purposes are no longer a closed book. The open page reveals how He loved—and why He loved, and all the mysteries of redemption's scheme. The significance of each sorrow, trial, and distress is understood. A mirror is

presented, which displays in shining light the wisdom and the love which ordered every step of every saint from cradle to the grave. Intelligently the chorus swells, "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Your ways, O King of saints."— Rev. 15:3. Oh! the transport of gazing on the blaze of all the love of the Triune Deity! Oh! the delight of reading the whole history of each redeemed soul! Such is the joy of Paradise. Can you believe this, and withhold your thanks?

Into this Paradise Paul was caught up. He witnessed more than he might fully tell, but still he tells enough to give the clue to happy contemplation. "He heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."—2 Cor. 7:3. There was no silence. Converse and praise resounded. Words surely prove the interchange of thought, and such communion supposes recognition.

Happy spirits mutually know, and are known. To Jesus doubtless adoring voices mainly turn. But perfect spirits have no limits of knowledge. The child beholds the mother at whose knees the earliest prayer was learned—and from whose lips the precious name of Jesus was first heard. The fond mother renews praise when she smiles on her offspring, washed in the redeeming blood, and saved before the throne forever. The pastor sees a number, more than he dared to hope, won by his teaching to the saving Cross. Converts gladden while faithful teachers claim them as their joy and crown of rejoicing. Heroes of faith, whom ages, climates, and distance parted, now compose one recognizing company. Patriarchs—apostles—

prophets, whose writings taught us—whose examples cheered—whose warnings checked, pass in review, while every sight awakens Hallelujahs.

But the pen must pause. Who can conceive the glories of the scene, where all are known, and all are loved by all! where all are blissful in each other's bliss! and all give thanks for universal joy! and one harmonious chorus ascribes salvation to our Triune God! There is no jar in all their praise—no discord in their worship—no jealousy in all their joy. Grace reigns. Pure praise prevails. The only rivalry is rivalry of love. Such is the joy which meets believers when they soar away. Is not the thought now joy to you!

This joy is vast indeed, but it is not complete. It is perfect so far as the spirit parted from the body can rejoice. But the **BODY** is required to constitute entirety of man. The absence of this essential part makes happiness but partial. Perfect consummation tarries for this reunion. For this, the happy spirits wait. They know this fullness to be sure. They know it to be near. They joy in the prospect, that yet a little while they shall surround their Lord descending to revisit the earth. Then he will call their sleeping bodies from their graves. Then the awakened dust will be arrayed with glory, and spiritual tenements receive their former inhabitants. This is perfection—perfection in glory—perfection without end.

Who will not cry, "We bless You, O God, for the redemption in Christ Jesus! We bless You for all the joys

of faith on earth. We bless You for those now living in Your holy service—we bless You for those departed in Your faith and fear—we bless You for all the bliss of disembodied spirits in Your presence—we bless You for the coming consummation of resurrection-life. To Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be glory without end!"

Let mourners say, 'Amen!' and in their mourning they will smile.

SERMON - CORDIALS IN TEMPORAL TROUBLES

Each woman's son is born an heir—not to a palace or a crown, not to broad lands or mines of gold, not to ancestral lineage of fame, not to high rank among the rich and great, not to a soft seat on luxury's lap, but to the inheritance of a common portion—TROUBLE. Few are called to be honored and caressed, to be idols of admiring crowds, to outstrip others in the worldly race, to enjoy sound health and sinewy strength, to overabundance of sublunary goods; but many are called to suffering. Our usual walk is in a valley of tears. The billows of affliction swell around us, and storms of distress, with little intermission, buffet us. Where is the eye which rarely weeps? Where is the breast which seldom sighs? Bereavements go forth to their daily work. Pains and diseases do not slumber. The lament is not uncommon, "In the morning, would God it were evening! In the evening, would God it were morning!" Deut. 28:67. Wails belong not to a scanty class. We know that the white-robed multitude came out of great tribulations.

Man is indeed endowed with wondrous gifts of intellect; and mental resources, neither few nor weak, labor to exclude the entrance of trouble. But they can erect no fortress which sorrow fails to scale. They can construct no intercepting bars. Trouble has a key for every lock, and takes its seat by every chair. It is the rich man's shadow,

and lies on poverty's low pallet. It marches with every camp, and sails in every fleet. It is the native of each climate, and has its root in every soil. Flight to lonely deserts will not secure escape; and crowds give no concealment. To be a human being is to be linked to trouble.

This truth cannot be controverted, for every heart confirms it. We read it in the annals of our race. It is the stamp on history's brow. In diversity—large as diversity can be—there is the oneness of distress. In Eden's garden, clear sunshine was a brief delight; obscuring clouds soon cast a dismal gloom. Sin came. All troubles thronged its rear. The woman hears—"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception." The man hears—"In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life." "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Job 5:7. It is our common course—our beaten path—the well-known stream, on which we float. Earth is a wide 'Bochim'. "So they called the place 'Weeping.'" Judges 2:5

Doubtless, some mitigating periods intervene. In stormy days the wind is sometimes lulled; and the sun sometimes breaks the densest clouds. In sandy deserts some green spots are found. So, in a troublous life, there are some intervals of rest. But they are not sufficient to nullify the rule that trouble is largely written on life's page.

But there is great diversity in man's inward state. Some are new-born of God—the children of eternal love—the heirs of never-ending life—the sheep of Christ's pasture—His

appointed spouse—the purchase of His blood—the called of His Spirit—His joy, His portion, His delight. On them the eye of God beams lovingly; His power protects; His wisdom guides; His angels encamp around them. Will not their course be constant sunshine? Will they not soar where trouble cannot come?

Such a conclusion would be a fallacy. Their precious privileges bring not such immunity. It is forever true—"Many are the afflictions of the righteous." "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14:22. But yet, there is a grand, happy, glorious distinction. They are sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. In their lowest depths they sing. In all their trials they rejoice. In all afflictions they give thanks. Troubles thicken, but consolations more than abound. Their heart of sorrow is a heart of joy.

Many considerations bring to them support. The time of trouble is the time of thought. They suffer, and they ponder. Their eyes look inward and above. They ask, 'Whence comes this trial?' The reply is obvious. It is not the working of *blind chance*. God's will designs; His hand inflicts it. It is ordered in the courts of heaven. It is pre-arranged in the covenant of grace. Who will repine when he endures according to a Father's will? It is a precious word—"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." Rev. 3:19. This is a plank which upholds the sinking heart. This is an anchor which keeps it steady in the roughest waves. The spirit cannot faint which tastes this cordial. That

trouble does not dismay, which is fringed with shining evidence of heavenly mission.

But this view is general and vague. It may bewilder rather than instruct. In wide expanse particular objects are too faintly seen. Let the horizon now be narrowed; let separate cases be in turn surveyed; and troubled ones be helped to understand their own distress.

1. SICKNESS. Many are sick. Disease and languor touch most frames. The outward tenement decays, and the afflicted inhabitant groans. This case is not more sad than common. Where is the home long free from this invasion? The marvel is, that these frail bodies know long respite. Think of the marvelously constructed framework. The component parts are almost countless, and most delicate and peculiar. Each part may be the door of malady. Each nerve may be the inlet of distress. Contagion, also, floats in the surrounding *air*, and walks beside us in all the ways of daily life. Hence ailment is our frequent lot. Bethesda pictures our earth. In it there lies a great company of impotent folk, the prey of suffering in every form.

In sickness, then, there is no aggravating fear that it is peculiar hardship. Through all the families of earth, what multitudes are drinking the cup of sickness! Who then can expect exemption? Who will repine, because as man he has the fellow-suffering of man? To all in the flesh the liabilities of flesh are due. Such reasoning checks all murmuring complaint.

But, when this commonness is clearly seen, there may be the fear that sickness is an indication of divine displeasure. It may be asked, "If love is smiling, why does not love avert this suffering?" At Bethany the reply is sweetly given. It is stated of a family in that little town—"Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." John 11:5. But Lazarus, thus loved, is sick; so sorely sick that life expires. The love of Jesus, then, is consistent with disease. Sickness is no evidence of His displeasure; suffering hours are no messengers of His wrath.

Rather may not the hope be cherished that these visitations are mercifully sent? The 'hand of love' may pluck the twigs that constitute this rod. This 'page of chastening', then, when read correctly by the 'eye of faith', may truly tell of *gracious* dealings. Surely this thought extracts the bitterness of the cup, and makes the Marah sweet. Welcome all pains which heavenly love inflicts!

Our Lord's conduct during His abode on earth should be a constant study. By this key we enter the secret chambers of His heart. This is the portrait of His character. In this survey special compassion for the sick is conspicuous. He sought Jerusalem at a stated feast. Apparently His feet first turned to the 'crowded home of malady'. Out of the multitude He selected a sufferer of thirty and eight years. He spoke, and health returned. May not he who has counted long years of ailment embrace the happy thought—the eyes which rested so tenderly on the infirm man of Bethesda, may now be resting tenderly on me? In every town the sick were brought to Him. In every place

they clustered round Him. Did any frown repel them? Did any denial disappoint them? As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole. What teaching is there in the scene—"When the sun was setting, all those who had any sick with diverse diseases brought them unto Him, and He laid His hands on *every one* of them and healed them?" Luke 4:40. Sometimes His pity yearned where no request was made. We read—"and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, 'Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.' Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God." Luke 13:11-13. Thus, sickness was Christ's chosen sphere of mercy when on earth; and "He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Heb. 13:8.

A multitude of precious words are property of the sick alone. No music charms the deaf; no prospect captivates the blind. Without appropriating sense there can be no enjoyment. Thus, *without malady, how many promises become a blank! But sickness gives interest in many sweet sayings.* Thus to the healthful the word is pointless—"I am the Lord that heals you." Exod. 15:26. But it is a staff to the crippled limb; a pillow to the aching head; a cordial to the fainting nerves. It tells of Jehovah's presence, omnipotent to heal. It brings to the lips the wrestling plea, "Do as you have said."

The soul of religion is experience. Happy they who have *tasted* and have *found!* The restored can say, "Now know

we that the Lord is faithful; not by the hearing of the ear, not by the assurance of another's lips, but by personal experience." In the high tide of bodily strength, the word seems like a foreign tale—belonging to some other race—"The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing. You will make all his bed in his sickness." Ps. 41:3. But, when the hour of languishing has come, and underneath the everlasting arms If sickness is unknown, then *recovery* must be unknown also. And then, how many songs must be unsung! The inexperienced spread no thanksgiving-wings. They joy not in the *promise fulfilled*—"Behold, I will bring health and cure; and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth." Jer. 33:6. But, it is rapture to exclaim, "The health is come, the cure is given; the peace, the truth in rich abundance will now surely follow."

Paul had *gained much by his distress*, when he testified—"We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead—who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver—in whom we trust, that He will yet deliver us." 2 Cor. 1:9, 10. The *past rescue*, the *present calm*, gave pledge of a blissful future. Sickness comes with no terror to the man who has feasted on the word, "Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases." Ps. 103:3.

It may not be denied that *active service for the Lord is happiness in full bloom*. The work of each day well done, is cheerful exercise. But 'daily employments' consume time, and chain the mind to passing matters. The busy man

often knows the sigh, 'Mine own vineyard is not kept. I desire the sincere milk of the word that I may grow thereby, but I have no leisure to suck large supplies.' Thus flowers unwatered droop their heads, and weeds spring up in the neglected soil. The polish becomes dim when the instrument is not well rubbed.

But if sickness comes, it *severs* from the all-occupying toil. Seclusion from bustle is now *enforced*. The intruder's step is now forbidden. Tranquil hours are now a necessity. This is a season to yield rich fruits. Meditation may now have full scope. The PAST days may be calmly reviewed. Alas, what sins, what negligences, what failures will appear! These will awaken contrite shame, and impel us to bury each transgression in the deep grave of the Redeemer's wounds. Here is the opportunity to tell our miseries to His all-gracious ears, and to sue out His perfect pardon. Self-examination now may find ample space. The weak parts of the soul's fortress may be discerned. The dangers of the way may become more visible. The need of foresight and of help may be felt more vividly. All this is gain!

Now, also, is the time to study CHRIST more quietly. Oh, the blessedness of such tranquil exercise. All His goodness may now leisurely pass before the wondering eye—it is a long train—eternity is too short to comprehend it. But sick hours give space to read the volumes of His love, His grace, His goodness, His unfailing care, His patient pitifulness, His unfailing truth, His work accomplished,

His coming reign, His everlasting glory. Happy the sickness rich in such meditations!

When health is in its prime, many matters press SCRIPTURE SEARCH into brief space. But now no jostling claimants take the Bible's place. It sits a companion without rival. Now the heart may joyfully exclaim, "Oh, how love I your law—it is my meditation *all the day*." Ps. 119:97. "Your words were found, and I did eat them—they are the very joy and the rejoicing of my heart." Jer. 15:16. To tell the varied charms of Scripture is a boundless theme. But its grand glory is the revelation of God's love in Christ. Now is the time to feast on this delight, to bathe in this refreshing stream, to roam in this gallery of joy, and to obey the Savior's voice exhorting, "Eat, O friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved." Song 5:1.

It may be that languor has no strength for *long* perusal. Doubtless, there is much grandeur in *extensive* prospects. The eye is charmed with a vast expanse. But when such vision is denied, is it not joy to scrutinize the *tiniest* flower, and mark the skill in its minutest parts? Thus *a brief sentence of the Word may be meal for many languid hours*; a few monosyllables from heaven may spread a table of richest dainties for the weak.

There are seasons when the FLESH is found a burden and a pain. Anguish clogs the spirit's upward flight. It is happy then to think that the period of escape draws near. When death puts forth its hand, the body bids farewell to

suffering. Power now invests the word, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying—neither shall there be any more pain—for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4. In this distress how precious is the thought, "Yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry," Heb. 10:37; and "He shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Phil. 3:21.

These pains proclaim that dissolution will not linger forever. But unless the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, how can we have the building of God—the house not made with hands—eternal in the heavens? 2 Cor. 5:1.

Thus sickness comes with many cordials. It is not unalloyed adversity. It brings many a reviving song. True is the repeated testimony, that in our hospitals the sweetest peace and truest joys are often found.

2. POVERTY. Diversity of 'economic resources' rules all society. Heavenly wisdom thus orders for general good, and opens a door through which many blessings pass. But it is common for the poor and lowly to mark with envy those of exalted rank. They think abundance shuts out many cares, and that ease dwells with wealth. It is needless to expose this obvious error. It is better to remind that Scripture gives especial cordials to the poor. Lowliness is not an unfavored lot. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in

faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to those who love Him." James 2:5. If poverty excluded grace, the poor might well bewail.

But let them sing, when they peruse, "You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called," "but *lowly* things of the world, and things which are *despised*, has God chosen." 1 Cor. 1:26, 28. Let the 'son of toil' exult in reading "He raises up the *poor* out of the dust, and lifts the *needy* out of the ash-heap, that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people."—Ps. 113:7, 8.

Remember, also, *the lowly path is sanctified by Jesus' step*. Though He was sovereign of all, no palace was His home. In early days the workshop was His constant employment; and when He entered on His public course, He had no where to lay His head. Both by water and by land He *borrowed* what His need requires. Poor women shared with Him their scanty fare; and when His body rested for three days in the grave, His tomb was not His own. Let not the poor then scorn a lot so sanctified.

But poverty has many shades. Its darkest hue is abject poverty. Cases occur, which no forethought could avert, when loss of strength, deficiency of work, domestic trials, or other trouble in some pinching form, reduce to emptiness the means of living. Heavy indeed is this burden, and strong faith only can sustain. But this is the time for grace to triumph over nature's fears. Hope will

pierce the intervening clouds, and see God on His all-arranging throne— reigning, loving, blessing. The promise brightens, "God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19. *Streams of support* may seem all dry, but His fullness is forever full. The heart is now attuned to sing, "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation. The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He will make me as surefooted as a deer and bring me safely over the mountains." Habakkuk 3:17-19

This, also, is the time when wrestling prayer refuses to let God go; and is such prayer without success? The annals of God's saints teem with records of the largest answers. Unexpected channels most unexpectedly are opened. Hands most unlikely bring unlooked-for aid. The truth is realized, "There is nothing too hard for the Lord to do." It is forever true, "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst; I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." Isa. 41:17.

3. DISAPPOINTED HOPES. The desire to prosper consists with heavenly grace. It is not real humility to shun the seat of eminence. Success may bring extended influence, and thus do work for God. Let no one then condemn the *straining efforts* in the race of life. But

failure is a common condition. Instead of honor there is neglect. Instead of prominence there is obscurity. Elevation eludes the grasp. Depression then is prone to sadden. The doubt may trouble—"Where are the promises?"—"Whatever he does shall prosper." Ps. 1:3. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33.

But pause—let no distrust of God arise. He still holds His righteous scepter. He knows the temperament of each inner man. One can walk steadily, where another would be giddy and soon fall. All shoulders cannot bear like weights. Success might ruin some, and therefore is most graciously denied. It is wisdom to *prevent* what painful discipline could scarcely remedy. Hence disappointment is no miscarriage of God's truth. Such crosses may be blessings in disguise. Lest Paul should be exalted above measure, there came a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet him. Let the baffled rest in hope, that *snares are thus escaped, and safety's path preserved*. Greatness may not make truly great. Fame among men may not be honor from above.

4. REPROACH. Believers must expect the hatred of the world. The warning is most clear, "If you were of the world, the world would love his own; but because you are not *of* the world, but I have chosen you *out* of the world, therefore the world hates you."—John 15:19. Hatred then will incessantly assault. Its armory is full of deadly weapons; but chief among them is the *Sometimes malicious exaggeration* distorts; and truth is told so as to

insinuate a lie. Sometimes a *venomous hint* is dropped, which proves a seed whence evil crops spring up. Thus wounds are craftily given, and the fair name maligned. Sometimes falsehood stalks forth, and boldly scatters its vile calumnies. In this suffering the foremost was our blessed Lord. "The world hated Me before it hated you." John 15:18. If *sinless perfection* could escape, surely against Him no evil tongue would have moved. But His blamelessness envenomed man's reproach. "They laid to My charge things that I knew not." He is reviled as worse than the worst of men. "He has a devil." But as a lamb before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth, except in extenuating prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Let the reviled, then, glory in the thought—"Some lineaments of the Holy Master awaken such attacks; these are the trials of the narrow way; the godly people have this 'heritage of hate' upon them."

But when the storm beats pitilessly, heavenly shelter often intercepts all hurt. True is the word, "You shall hide them in the secret of Your presence from the pride of man— You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." Ps. 31:20.

It may not be ignored, that the cause of the reviled is especially espoused by God; and, "if God is for us, who can be against us?" Is it not written, "God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled." 2 Thes. 1:6-7. And again,

"Listen to me, you who know right from wrong and cherish my law in your hearts. *Do not be afraid of people's scorn or their slanderous talk.* For the moth will destroy them as it destroys clothing. The worm will eat away at them as it eats wool. But my righteousness will last forever. My salvation will continue from generation to generation." Isaiah 51:7-8.

Think, also, *the reviled* have claim to especial blessings. The lips of man *reproach*. The lips of Jesus thus *solace*. Which scale preponderates? "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Matthew 5:11-12. Happy they who inherit Moses' spirit. He "thought it was better to suffer for the sake of the Messiah than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the great reward that God would give him." Hebrews 11:26. The faithful word draws near with a refreshing cordial—"If you are reproached because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. "1 Peter 4:14. Welcome reproach which thus brings glory to the Lord!

INJURIES. But sometimes hatred rests not in inward feeling or mere speech. *Injustice* may deal wrongly. *Oppression* may do ruinous work. *Malevolence* may defraud. This is the time for faith to realize that its substance is far above the skies. The true riches are not here. They are where rust and moth cannot corrupt, nor

thieves break through and steal. No thieving hand can reach them. For God has reserved a priceless inheritance for His children. It is kept in heaven, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. It is laid up in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

The elders of the household of faith took joyfully the "the confiscation of their property, because they knew that they had better and lasting possessions." Christian annals are dark with tales of persecuting rage. But in this darkness there is light. The testimony is ever sure, "All things are yours—things present, and things to come." 1 Cor. 3:21. "The meek shall inherit the earth." He is upraised above all injury, who can say, "All things are mine in God."

DESERTION. Sweet is the tenderness of sympathy. Trials are bereft of bitterness, when a loving friend is near to share the sorrow, and to whisper a sustaining word. A kindly smile makes heavy burdens light. But this support is not always found. The summer brook is often dry. The weary traveler seeks its stream in vain. Thus sufferers may meet suffering alone—without an earthly arm on which to lean. But now faith reminds—this loneliness was known by Jesus. He has preceded in this solitary way. In His most extreme need, they all forsook Him and fled. Hear the plaintive sigh of Paul—"This you know, that all those who are in Asia be turned away from me." 2 Tim. 1:15. And again—"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all

men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."

But had he no help? Was there no support near? Did he realize unmitigated desertion? Hear his experience—"Notwithstanding, *the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.*" 2 Tim. 4:16, 17. He felt, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." We miss no friend when we can see His smile.

We need no human prop when we can lean on Him. Happy they who can clasp to the heart the assurance of Christ's fellow-feeling. "We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15. When friends desert, listen to His word—"Fear not; for I am with you—be not dismayed; for I am your God—I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness." Isa. 41:10.

Details in long train might still be added, and the extent of trouble not be traversed. Most hearts have some *particular bitterness*. An enlarged catalog would not contain *each* form of woe. But these are general cordials, which may be adapted to most cases. The troubled may always find comfort in words general as these—"He shall deliver you in six troubles; yes, in seven there shall no evil touch you." Job 5:19. "You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance." Ps. 32:7. "You have allowed me to suffer

much hardship, but You will restore me to life again and lift me up from the depths of the earth." Ps. 71:20.

Some SIMPLE RULES are now adjoined to promote right use of these cordials.

1. Labor with earnest diligence for an increase of faith. This grace in exercise prevents sinking amid billows. It grasps the Savior's hand, and is kept up. It sees His smile, and darkness disappears. It is a tender and a teaching word— "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me." John 14:1. Thus, *faith is the barrier which trouble cannot pass*. Who will not pray, "Lord, increase our faith?"

Frequent with unremitting constancy the throne of grace. Here help is ready for every time of need. There are no limits in the precept, "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:6, 7. Let distress call to prayer and praise; then peace, flowing like a river, shall submerge the trouble.

Maintain a holy walk. Godliness has the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. 4:8. "The Lord God is a sun and shield—the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." Ps. 84:11. Trouble of conscience terribly augments other troubles. Relief can

only come from God; and none can claim God's help, whose wills are not conformed to His.

Use your appointed Burden-bearer. Christ is all things to His people. Not only is His work their uttermost salvation; not only does He purchase for them deliverance from wrath and give eternal life, but He presents Himself their *shelter* from each storm—their *refuge* in each need—their *present help* in every trouble. They are exhorted to bring every care and cast it upon Him, knowing that He cares for them. 1 Pet. 5:7. Strength in ourselves is utter weakness; but why should our shoulders bear what He stands ready to remove?

Consider how short is trouble's day. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4:17. However sharp and keen the present anguish may be, the believer knows that yet a little while and he shall be raised far above its reach. Let trouble do its worst, its worst cannot last long.

Let self-examination be sincere and deep. The rod is God's appointed messenger. It is not mute. It calls to the inquiry—"Is there not purpose in this painful visitation?" Let the prayer go forth, "Search me, O God, and know my heart—try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Ps. 139:23-24. Happy the trouble which detects some lurking evil, rescues from some secret snare, shows an unsuspected leak in the frail bark, expels some lingering

lust, and establishes the undivided rule of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."

The final counsel shall be the Lord's precept, "*Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you; and you shall glorify Me.*" Ps. 50:15. The testimony will follow—"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."—Ps. 34:6.

"Holy Comforter, fulfill your office, and give some cordial through these words!"

SERMON - FEAR OF DEATH

While the Lord delays His coming, death works incessantly. There is no moment when its scythe is idle. We may soon feel its leveling blow. The debt of dying is due from us and all earth-born. "It is appointed unto men once to die."—Heb. 9:27. Is there no comfort in this thought? Do no bright streaks illumine this horizon? The Christian replies, "Yes! verily, when death is viewed in gospel-light, its brow is clothed in smiles; its icy hand is no more chilly; it is despoiled of terror; its step is friendly; its approach is welcomed." Such is the picture which these pages strive to show. May every word be echo of God's truth!

But at the outset, barriers must be raised, and CAUTIONS duly set. These comforts are not widely strewn, as portion of all mothers' sons. They are not wild flowers of the open field. They are not berries which each passenger may pluck. They are not rays which gild the universe. They are not free as the air, and all-diffusive as the light. They are the heirdom *only* of the heirs of God.

The present purpose is to give true solace. But no solace finds true place, where God condemns. There is no real peace, where He is not a friend. Death smiles not, when God frowns. It cannot cheer the aliens from grace—the

strangers from the covenant of promise. Such have no hope. The hopeless must be comfortless.

It is a fearful thought, that multitudes compose this class. Thronging travelers crowd destruction's broad way. A common feature shows their common state. They never feel the misery of sin—nor see the broken law—nor tremble at the impending curse. No tears of penitence bedew their eyes. No sighs of anguish prove their contrite hearts. They do not flee from the wrath to come. They do not enter salvation's only ark. They do not wash in the cleansing stream. They do not cling to the saving cross. They do not hide in the sheltering wounds of Jesus. They are deaf to the Spirit's voice—the calls of earnest pastors—and all the warnings of the Book of Life. They continue in nature's darkness, and in nature's filth—"dead in trespasses and sins"—"enemies to God by wicked works"—slaves to the devil and bond-slaves of hell. Can such be told to have no fears of death? No! rather let the very mention of death horrify them. Let open graves and funeral-bells affright. To them death comes to dissipate delusion—to give reality to hated truths—to tear away their blinding veils—to end their respite—to consign them to their final doom. It is their long farewell to every ray of hope. To them to die is endless woe. Let them fear it with all fear.

But let not such be heeded with indifference. Who would pass by without a rescuing effort? Who would not strive to check them on the precipice's brink? While space remains the Spirit may give grace. By unexpected means he opens

eyes, and softens hearts, and implants faith. The Gospel-net may catch men unawares. Arrows may pierce an unsought mark. Where terrors fail to terrify, the sight of bliss in others may allure. Thus death displayed as friendly to believers may bring others to believe. In this glad hope let death be viewed in Christian light.

It is sweet now to turn to those who are immediately addressed. Grace has made them to differ. Lovely lineaments show their heavenly birth. They have been taught sin's vileness, and its deathful stains. In deepest penitence they have abhorred themselves. They know that endless ruin is the wages of their guilt. Condemned in SELF, they fly to Jesus, as their only hope. They receive His full redemption with adoring hearts. They love their Savior with intensest love. Their new-born lives reflect their Heaven-sent light. They are trees of righteousness "the planting of the Lord." "A royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." To them "to live is Christ." The sequence may not be divorced. To them "to die is gain."—Phil.

1:21.

But often they ignore their joys. They think of death and tremble. It is so now. It has been so of old. The Spirit states the malady and cure. "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their

lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."—Heb. 2:14,15.

Here is rebuke to all such tremblers. Shall Jesus die to bring deliverance, and shall this mercy be frustrated? Shall He by suffering purchase freedom, and shall they refuse the blessing? Shall they entwine again the broken fetters? Shall He extend a cup of joy, and shall they choose the dregs of the cup of trembling?

Surely Christ's death should slay this fear. The proof is obvious. Apply it to your case. You daily gaze on Jesus hanging on the Cross. You doubt not that His death is yours. You glory in Him as your all-expiating surety. You confidently shout, "I am crucified with Christ."—Gal. 2:20. Your faith, which makes you one with Him, gives interest in His entire work. You believe, then, that there is "no condemnation" for you. You see in every attribute of God a friend adorning you with salvation's robes. You know, that to you the law's thunder was all hushed at Calvary—that the devil cannot touch you—that hell cannot receive you—that your punishment is paid, and paid forever. Death then cannot harm you. It is an enemy which Christ has slain. It is now a phantom which inflicts no hurt—a shadow's shade—the embers of an extinguished earth—a pointless dart—a crushed opponent—a wounded snake. Why then do you fear it?

But let us take a nearer view. Death comes not only as no foe, but as a DELIVERER. It liberates from earth, and all the evils of which earth is the home. Let a few instances

demonstrate this blessing. While we are engaged in flesh INBORN CORRUPTIONS are a restless plague. We long to be pure, even as our God is pure. We pant for holiness, as the deer for water-brooks. But an evil fountain sends forth evil streams. The good that we would, we do not; but the evil that we would not do, that we do.—Rom. 7:19. What tears— what groans—what bitterness of heart ensue! How often do we mourn our God offended—our Jesus not glorified—the Spirit vexed! How often do we sigh for wings to fly away to heights above our nature's mire! When will it once be! Death comes, and we are free. Is it reason to fear its rescuing touch?

In our lowly climate TEMPTATIONS are a ceaseless storm. They rage from every side—in every form—at every age. We seek for shelter, but are still exposed. Hence we experience the constant struggle—the fierce fight—the absence of repose—the frequent wounds—the stings of conscience. Death sounds a solution. It ends the strife. It bears to regions far above assaults. It cries, "Comfort, comfort my people." "The warfare is accomplished." How precious is this peace! And shall we dread the herald with this olive branch!

Who can recount the SORROWS which infest this earth? The dismal train is long. No grief is absent. All miseries appear. To be a man is to have fellowship with tears. Humanity is the beaten path of woe. But at the touch of death sorrow and sighing flee away. With the last breath the last tear falls—the last sob wails—the last distress is felt. The Christian knows this well. Shall he then fear the

hand which wipes his eyes, and decks him with eternal smiles?

Think, also, of the many PAINS, to which each sense is inlet, and each limb exposed. Hence days bring agony, and nights resound with groans. Who has not nursed beside a tossing bed! But pain expires when the body dies. Hence to fear death is to reject pain's total cure.

Let it be added that this rescue is no transient respite—no momentary pause—no fading garland—no April-shower—no passing meteor—no shadow of a cloud—no lull between the tempest's gusts. On earth the resting traveler may soon be roused. The soldier may unsheath the sleeping sword. Renewed alarm may chase away short peace. But death's deliverance is complete—final—forever. It hides earth's evils in deep grave. They have no resurrection. The epitaph, "No more," proclaims their dissolution. Then fear not death which has no fears behind it.

But look again. Floods of new light break forth. To be unchained is gain. To be EXALTED is far more. Joseph rejoices to escape the prison. The joy is more to sit the next to Pharaoh on the throne. Mark then the bliss to which death's car uplifts.

Here let God's voice alone be heard, and mortal lips be silent. Heed the welcome, "Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

foundation of the world."—Matt. 25:34. "Enter into the joy of your Lord."—Matt. 25:21.

Mark some of the DELIGHTS;—"In Your presence is fullness of joy—at Your right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Ps. 16:11. "The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters—and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Rev. 7:17. "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it—for the glory of God lights it—and the Lamb is the light thereof."—Rev. 21:23.

Ponder the HONOR—"To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."—Rev. 3:21. "The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one. "—John 17:22. "It does 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."—1 John 3:2. "You shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away."—1 Peter 5:4. "They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads."—Rev. 22:4.

Scan the DURATION—"So shall we be forever with the Lord."—1 Thess.

4:17.

Such are some jewels from the kingdom's treasury. Such the true sayings of our God—uttered to give strong consolation—given, that we may exult in happy prospect of our heritage. Feast then richly at this table—inhalé the sweetness of these fragrant flowers—revel in these luxuriant meadows. But powers strained to the utmost fail to grasp the coming glory. Who can count what exceeds number—or measure an immeasurable space—or fathom depths which have no end—or empty ocean of its countless drops—or span infinity—or overtop the heaven of heavens! But such task were easier far than to conceive what God has prepared for those who love Him.

Death bears the saints to the reality. It is then rightly classed among our treasures. "All things are yours, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours."—1 Cor. 3:22. Let us not undervalue the passage to this bliss.

Many thoughts concur to chide away this fear. Mark its blame-worthiness. Our God has largely told us of *full joy with Him*. Shall we reply, "No! Rather let our days on earth be lengthened—let us still tarry in our homes of clay— not yet—not yet." In such reluctance there is shame. Where is the gratitude for Jesus' work! He has died that we may live with Him. Shall we desire a respite from such bliss! He sends His chariot to give convoy. Shall we shudder, shiver, and draw back! This is to vex the Spirit's love. He tenderly withdraws the veil, and gives enchanting glimpses of the kingdom. He paints the heavenly land as redolent of all delights. He strives to kindle warm

desires—to excite us to heave detaining anchors—to cut entangling cords—to unmoor tackling—to spread the willing sail—to court the home-conveying breeze! Shall we decline and hug a sin-polluted shore! This is affront to His alluring teaching.

There is yet further blame in this timidity. It takes part with our deadliest foe.

This world is Satan's territory. While we tarry in his confines, it is his joy to worry—to molest—to roll us in his mire. And shall we choose to stay within his toils! It is his anguish when we gain escape. Shall we remain his willing sport, and dread the voice which summons us away! Is this abhorrence of the monster's touch! Is this desire to tread him under foot!

It is our glorious boast, that the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world.—Gal. 6:14. If this be so, can we still cling to a decaying carcass! Is Egypt left behind! What means then, this lingering love of the flesh-pots—this dread to enter Canaan! Have we escaped the accursed city! What means then this pause—this backward look, and this reluctant step towards the mountains! Let the *culprit* tremble, when the bell tolls for execution. But let not the *prince* draw back from coronation—let not the bride turn from the shout, "Behold the Bridegroom comes." Let not the heir shrink from admission to his own castle—let not the Christian dread fulfillment of the word, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."—John 14:3.

Mark next what noble instances rebuke this fear! And here the Bible shall alone instruct. For wisest cause it is not large in death-bed scenes. It tells us how to *live* and to secure a gainful death. It shows the homeward road, but entrances are sparingly revealed. But still some jewels sparkle in the page. The dying *Jacob's* chamber is thrown open. We enter and hear blessings flowing from expiring lips. Suddenly the stream is checked, and he triumphantly exclaims, "I have waited for Your salvation, O Lord."—Gen.

49:18. Who trembles when waiting for such blessed hope! The waiting Jacob is no slave of fear.

Mark, also, *Simeon* bounding to the wished-for goal. "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace according to Your word—for my eyes have seen Your salvation."—Luke 2:29, 30. In peace there is no element of fear. Unruffled streams prove a surrounding calm.

Paul had been caught to Paradise, and the third heaven. How is he reconciled to remain on earth? Not by its love, but by the noble hope of helping others' faith. At last the end arrives. The veteran appears. Surveying the past and eyeing the future, he fearlessly exclaims—"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that

day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."—2 Tim. 4:6-8. The retrospect is calm—the testimony is glad—the assurance is full; the expectation is all of bliss. There is not a reluctant word.

In these examples learn how fearlessly saints die. We are wisely taught to take with us words, and turn unto the Lord.—Hos. 14:2. Our precious Book contains fit utterance for every hour of need—not least so for life's final scene. Let two instances suffice. Words of trust are brought to dying lips. "Into Your hand I commit my spirit, for You have redeemed me, O Lord, You God of truth."—Ps. 31:5. Again, "Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff they comfort me."—Ps. 23:4. The faithful utterance of such holy words is a strong fortress against fear. No limbs can tremble which have such a prop.

You may reply, The haven truly is desired, but tossing waves impede the entrance. *Pains and distress are common in last days. Life often ends in pangs of body.* Hence apprehensions cannot be dispelled. It is not *death*, but *dying* that affrights.

But perhaps such pains may never come. Some suddenly depart and know not until the home is reached. Without one moment's *twilight* there is *day*. Others are gently rocked asleep, as infant in a mother's arms. They doze away as on a downy couch. *It is unwise to dread what never may arrive.* Why think of the huge stone at the

tomb's mouth! It may be gone before your steps approach.— Mark 16:3, 4.

But what if nature should dissolve in pain! Are there no promises of compensating help! Is there no aid which makes all burdens light! Is there no presence which annihilates distress! Is there no joy which changes groans to smiles! Is it not pledged, "Fear not, for I am with you?" It is true now as when the words first left inspired lips, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you—when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you."—Isa. 43:2.

Super-abounding comforts may destroy distress. Stephen's was no painless death. But showers of stones excited no complaint. He kneeled down, and prayed, and fell asleep. He saw his Savior, and forgot himself. Will not this Savior solace you! Time would fail to tell how martyrs have exulted at the stake, and in the fires glorified God.

Think of the agonies of Jesus's death. No pains of body could exceed. Moreover, desertion darkened, and the curse did its dire work. But in the prospect His light step sprang forward. He went before His disciples in the way, "and they were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid."—Mark

10:32. "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame."—Heb. 12:2. *Follow*

Jesus, and bound through intervening pains to promised joy.

Sometimes tender emotions make us cling to earth. Affection gilds our homes with gladness. Its claims are strong and dear. To love and to be loved, is holy pleasure-ground. To think of separation is irrepressible distress. But faith subordinates all feeling to God's will. *We may not dread what He decrees!*

We apprehend that our departure may entail loss on the survivors. Let us think rather that God can more than compensate. His eye beholds, His hand protects, His bounty feeds the widow and the orphan-home. The house of grace knows not a widow's desolation. "Your Maker is your husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name."—Isa. 54:5. Where God is executor, there is no insolvency. Good legacies will be paid. Weep not then at the thought that others may be destitute. Your place will not be vacant, if supplied by God. Soon too—how soon—all who are one in Christ will follow. Brief is the parting—endless the reunion. But if you live they may precede, and leave you lonely. *By dying you escape bereavement's pangs.*

Think, also, the friends left here are few when numbered with the friends above. What joys are stored in fellowship with all the ransomed band! Who would not gladly die to intermix with this most glorious company—to see their beauty—to share their rapture—to enlarge their songs—to hold ecstatic communion—to be their fellow citizens! Add the remembrance of cloudless sight of God, and then

enraptured wings will spread. The cry will break forth, "My soul thirsts for God—for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God."—Ps. 42:2.

Some feel that, to do work for Christ is their extreme delight. They shrink from death, which seems to end this service. Is it well-founded apprehension that work is limited to mortal life! But the realms of light are no inactive sphere. Is glory linked to dreamy ease? Jesus says, "My Father works hitherto, and I work." Fellow-workers with the Lord on earth are fellowworkers with the Lord forever. They "follow the Lamb wherever He goes." In His employments they are employed. Death may enlarge and multiply activities. "Bless the Lord, all His hosts, you ministers of His that do His pleasure."—Ps. 103:21. Do not think such work is adverse to a state of rest. Rest presupposes weariness—but weariness cannot be known where powers never flag. Eternal freshness never needs repose. Of spiritual bodies we may truly say, "They shall run and not be weary—they shall walk, and not faint."—Isa. 40:31.

Work on earth will not be less or worse because our hands no longer hold the tools. He, who bids us to cease, may give new impulse to new agents. Others more able and more fit may enter in. A vacant post is speedily supplied. It is a remnant of self-seeking which desires to occupy beyond allotted time. We have worked long. To God be all the praise! But it may be that weary evening may soil the luster of the morning zeal. It is sad when early influence

and power wanes, and loving friends deplore, "This life has been too long." Trust God to take us in right time.

Remember, also, life is not really sweet, while love of it predominates. To hold it in loose hand is fully to enjoy. Let then all diligence be used to *weaken the roots of undue love to the world*. Fruits of the soil, and skill in arts, and growth in grace thrive most when means are sedulously plied. The husbandman who sparely sows will sparely reap. Cultivate therefore the precious graces, which root up inordinate attachment to the world.

FAITH, which unites to Christ, and feeds on redeeming work, holds fast the title-deeds of endless life, and longs for full possession. As faith strengthens, the promised land is the object of increased desire. Seek then advance in this death-conquering grace. Pray, also, that the Spirit's breath may fan HOPE into brighter blaze. Hope ever lives in soul-delighting prospects, and pants to cross the intervening stream. Let LOVE too perfectly pervade the heart. Waters of death cannot quench it. Opposing mountains cannot impede it. It overcomes all interposing hindrances, and yearns for God's immediate presence. Away with little faith, and little hope, and little love. They nurse tormenting fear. Abounding faith—assured hope—perfect love laugh it to scorn.

Soar, also, above the world, and its sordid vanities. Do not rest in a Delilah's lap. "Set your affections on things above." Realize that you are dead to all earth's

nothingness. Live, where your life is—high with Christ in God.

Indifference to things below will relax all clinging grasps.

In thought, also, anticipate the hour of release. Be not a stranger to your dying hour. Often look death in the face. Often touch its chilly hand. So when it comes, it will not have a stranger-aspect. Who fears a trodden path! Who shrinks from an accustomed act! Who dreads the entrance of a well-known guest! Expectation makes way for welcome.

Above all, let HOLINESS do its perfect work. Let it entirely rule in body, soul, and spirit. Let it be the element in which you live and move—the belt of your loins—the path in which you walk—the sign conspicuous on your brow. It is the parent of 'no fear of death'. *One breath of fondled sin obscures the mirror which reflects heaven, and weakens the strength of fearlessness.* A guiltless conscience gives the fearless pillow.

May the Spirit's mercy make these reflections a real comfort to you! Live Christ—dwell in the Spirit—walk with God! Then while life lasts you will work cheerfully, with cheerful heart—willing to stay, but feeling that to depart is better—ready to sing, "Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors," a blood-bought soul comes in. "You heavenly mansions, make him room, for he must stay forever."

SERMON - I AM THAT I AM

"I am that I am" Exodus 3:14

The believer is called to wayfaring and warfaring struggles. He has to bear a daily cross and to fight a daily fight. But in every hour of need a sure support is near. Behold Moses. The ground that he must tread is very slippery. The hill of his difficulties is very steep. A foe opposes every step. But a staff and a sword are provided for him in the name of his guiding and protecting Lord. "I AM THAT I AM." On this He can lean the whole burden of his cares, and fears, and pains. By this he can scatter kings as dust. This stay is still the same, ever mighty, ever near. The feeblest pilgrim may grasp it by the hand of faith. And whosoever grasps it is "as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever." "I AM THAT I AM."

Such is the voice from the burning bush. The Speaker, then, is hid in no mask of mystery. It is the Angel of the everlasting Covenant. It is the great Redeemer. He would establish His people on the firm rock of comfort. Therefore with trumpet-tongue He thus assures them that all the majesty, all the supremacy, all the glory of absolute and essential Deity, are His inherent right. O my soul, into what a speck must poor man dwindle before such greatness! The limits of the mind cannot scan it. The arms

of the heart cannot embrace it. Words are mere skeletons before it. Intellect would sincerely on eagle's wing fly around the ever-widening circle. But vain is the effort. Its height is on heaven's summit. What mortal arm can reach it? It is as space which has no bounds. What human line can measure it? Our mortal eyes pierce not unlimited expanse. Our scales weigh not the mountains. Our vessels measure not the ocean's depths. So our faculties are too short to probe the immensities of God. To grasp divine essence requires divine largeness. "I AM THAT I AM" alone can read the volume of that title. Shall we then repine? What! Repine because our God is so great? Where is the subject who frets because he cannot count his prince's treasures? Let us rather bow our heads in pious adoration.

Let us rather give thanks that a mine is open in which the very dust is gold. Let us rather humble ourselves, that we are so slow and careless to gather up the manna of rich truth which falls at the tent-door. Let us rather pray the Spirit to illumine more clearly the written page. Let us rather long for the day when every cloud which veils our God shall brighten into perfect light; and when His people "shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is." Come then, and with such loving teachableness let us take our seat beside this sea of truth, and strive with reverence to touch the spray that sparkles on the shore. "I AM THAT I AM." Here the first sound is eternity. Jesus, as God, He puts on eternity as his robe. He knows no past. He knows no future. He lives unmoved in one unmoving present. He stretches through all the ages which are gone and which

are yet to come. His only bounds are immeasurable boundlessness. Before time was born, He is "I AM THAT I AM." When time shall have expired, He still is "I AM THAT I AM." If there had been the moment when His being dawned, His name would be, "I am what I was not." If there could be a moment when His being must have end, His name would be, "I am what I shall not be." But He is, "I AM THAT I AM." Thus He treads first and last beneath his feet. He sits on the unbroken circumference of existence, as He who ever was, and ever is, and ever shall be. Let thought fly back, until in weariness it faints: let it look onward until all vision fail; it ever finds Him the same "I AM."

Reader, look down now from this astounding glory and fix your eye on Bethlehem's manger. A lowly Babe lies in the lowly cradle of a lowly town, the offspring of a lowly mother. Look again. That child is the eternal "I AM." He whose Deity never had birth, is born "the woman's Seed." He, whom no infinitudes can hold, is contained within infant's age, and infant's form. He, who never began to be, as God, here begins to be, as man. And can it be, that the great "I AM THAT I AM" shrinks into our flesh, and is little upon our earth, as one newborn of yesterday? It is so. The Lord promised it. Prophets foretold it. Types prefigured it. An angel announces it. Heaven rings with rapture at it. Faith sees it. The redeemed rejoice in it. But why is this wonder of wonders? Why is eternity's Lord a child of time? He thus stoops, that He may save poor wretched sinners such as we are. Could He not by His will or by His word? Ah! No. He willed, and all things were.

He speaks, and all obey. But He must die, as man, that a lost soul may live. To rescue from one stain of sin, the Eternal must take the sinner's place, and bear sin's curse and pay sin's debt, and suffer sin's penalty, and wash out sin's filth, and atone for sin's malignity. "I AM THAT I AM" alone could do this. "I AM THAT I AM" alone has done it. What self-denial, what self-abasement, what self-emptying is here! Surely, royalty in rags, angels in cells, is no descent compared to Deity in flesh! But mighty love moves Jesus to despise all shame, and to lie low in misery's lowest mire. Through ages past His "delights were with the sons of men." Prov. 8.31.

Eternity to come is but a void, unless his people share His glory. Therefore He humbles Himself to earth, that specks of earth may rise to heaven's immortality. Believer, you joy in prospect of thus living with Him forever. But wherefore is there full rapture in the thought? Do not you feel that the crowning ecstasy is in this? Eternity will afford you time to gaze with steady look on a Savior's glories, to sing with unwearied hymn a Savior's praise, to bless with perpetual blessing a Savior's name, and to learn with ever-expanding knowledge a Savior's worth. There is another note in this loud chorus of truth, which is especial sweetness to the believer's ear. It tells melodiously that Jesus cannot change. He is as constant as He is great. As surely as He ever lives, so surely He ever lives the same. He is one expanse of never-varying oneness. He sits on the calm throne of eternal serenity. Change is the defect of things below: for things below are all defective. Immutability reigns above: for immutability is perfection's

essence. Our brightest morn often ends in storm. Summer's radiance gives place to winter's gloom. The smiling flower soon lies withered. The babbling brook is soon a parched-up channel. The friend who smiled, smiles no more friendly welcomes.

Bereavement weeps where once the family beamed with domestic joy. Gardens wither into deserts. Babylons crumble into unsightly ruins. On all things a sad inscription writes "fleeting--transient--vanishing." Time flaps a ceaseless wing, and from the wings decay and death drop down. "I AM THAT I AM" sits high above all this. He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." The unchangeableness of Jesus is the unchangeableness of His attributes. Each shines brightly in this bright mirror. But a rapid glance at His love and power must suffice. His love is in perpetual bloom. It is always in summer-tide. The roots are deeply buried in Himself; therefore the branches cannot fade. Believer, drink hourly of this cup of joy. Allow not Satan to infuse a poisonous doubt. Christ loved you largely when, in the councils of eternity, He received you into His heart. He loved you truly when, in the fullness of time, He took upon Himself your curse, and drained your hell-deep dues. He loved you tenderly when He showed you, by the Spirit, His hands and His feet, and whispered to you that you were His. He loves you faithfully while He ceases not to intercede in your behalf, and to scatter blessings on your person and your soul. He will love you intensely in heaven when you are manifested as His purchase and crowned as His bride. To each inquiry--has He loved? Does He love? And will He love?

The one reply is, "I AM THAT I AM." Do not raise the objection, if He thus loves, why am I thus? Why is my path so rugged, and my heart like flint? You will soon know that your bitterest trials and your sorest pains are sure tokens of His love. The father corrects because he loves.

In anxious care the physician deeply probes the wounds. Thus Jesus makes earth hard, that you may long for heaven's holy rest. He shows you your self-vileness that you may prize His cleansing blood. He allows you to stumble that you may cleave more closely to His side. He makes the world a blank that you may seek all comfort in Himself. If He seems to change, it is that you may change. He hides His face that you may look towards Him. He is silent, that you may cry more loudly. His desertion prevents your desertion. He saves from real hell, by casting into seeming hell. But love fails not. All His dealings are love's everflowing, overflowing tide. On each the eye of faith can read, "I AM THAT I AM." Power goes hand in hand with love. They co-exist and co-endure. It was a mighty voice which said, "Be"--and all things were. It was a mighty hand which framed this so wondrous universe. It is a mighty arm which turns the wheel of providence. This power still is, and ever will be, what it always has been. No age enfeebles, and no use exhausts it. This is the Church's rock.

The Bible, blazing with its exploits, encourages the "worm Jacob" to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." He can still bid the seas of difficulty to

recede. He can cause hurricanes and tempests to cease. He can make straight the crooked paths of evil. He can level the mountains of high-towering corruption. He can stop the lion-mouth of persecution. He can quench the scorching flames of every lust. In the face of all Goliaths, He cheers His followers to victory, under the banner of "I AM THAT I AM." But perhaps it is your wretched case to live unsprinkled by His saving blood. Will you die thus? What, thus appear before His great white throne? His truth condemns you--and it cannot change. His wrath burns hot against you and it cannot relent. His power has commission to destroy you--and it cannot be withstood. "I AM THAT I AM" becomes an idle fable, if truth and wrath and power war not eternally with sin. And can they war and not prevail? Believer, the eternity and unchangeableness of "I AM THAT I AM" make heaven to be heaven forever.

Sinner, the eternity and unchangeableness of "I AM THAT I AM" make hell to be hell forever. Reader, these thoughts scarce touch the boundary line of the shadow of this glorious name. But surely they show the blessedness of those who, guided by the Spirit, repose beneath the wings of Jesus. "The eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms" Deut. 33:7. "I AM THAT I AM" must perish or must change, before their names can be cast from His heart. Some greater power must arise before they can be plucked from His tight-grasping hand. The bare idea is folly. Happy flock "I AM THAT I AM" loves them, and they are loved: calls them, and they follow Him: sanctifies them, and they are

sanctified: blesses them, and they are blessed: gives them life, and they live: gives them glory, and they are glorified.

AMEN!

SERMON - SPIRITUAL FEARS

If there is a picture, in which all enchanting beauty shines, it is that which represents the state of the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:26. Every joy should glow in their cup. They are called to a song swelling with melody, which cannot be more sweet. They are invited to a garden, in which each fragrant flower ever blooms. They are enjoined to sit down beneath the shadow of a tree, on whose extended branches most luscious fruit forever hangs. A volume is presented to their hands, written inside and outside in glowing terms of bliss—in which every page is calm and bright, and where perusal never wearies. Thus blessed is the heritage of faith.

To show the truth of this statement is an easy and delightful task. It requires no stretch of mind—no strain of argument—no effort of intellect—no expansion of reason's wings—no deductions of logic—no inventions of wit. To gain this light, we have only to sit still, and hear what God the Lord has said. Let the record be now pondered with earnest cry—'Open our eyes, good Lord, that we may behold wondrous things out of Your law; open our ears that we may hear Your heavenly voice, walking in the garden of Your word; open our mouths wide, and then descend and fill.'

The faithful word instantly gives the following witness—

1. God's children share His EVERLASTING LOVE. Oh! that the love of God were shed abroad more abundantly in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us.—Rom. 5:5. Its origin and duration should be pondered. It began before the birth of time. It will be fresh, when time shall be no more. "I have loved You with an everlasting love."—Jer. 31:3. "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom 8:38-39. "God is love." It is the very essence of His being. If it could expire where would God exist?

Consider, also, its FREENESS. God loves not for anything seen or foreseen—known or foreknown—given or designed—destined or pledged. There neither is, nor can be, a moving cause independent of Himself. He loves, because He will love. The actuating motive, so to speak, is His own heart. This statement leaves nothing to be added.

Mark, also, its NEVER-VARYING brightness. It knows no mutability. "I change not—therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed."—Mal. 3:6. "With Him is no variableness neither shadow of turning."—James 1:17. Man is fickle, as the restless wind. The prince's smile may be a frown tomorrow. The summer-friend may freeze into a winter-foe. Our perceptions of God's love may indeed differ. A passing cloud may hide the sun. But its reality is the same "yesterday, and today, and forever."

Its INFINITY is an amazing thought. The heavens are high—but it is higher. The ocean has vast depths, but it is deeper. Far is east from west, but its length has no horizon. We have no measure with which to estimate—no scales to weigh—no line to fathom it. No tongue can tell—no thought conceive—its boundless, boundlessness. If happiness exists, it surely must be theirs, who are encircled by this love.

2. God's children are enriched with the gift of gifts—the largest and the best, which heaven could grant. God gives His co-eternal and co-equal Son, Christ Jesus the Lord. If worlds upon worlds with all their treasures, beauties, glories, had been piled into one pyramid, it would have been as the small dust of the balance, when weighed against this portion. Each one can truly say, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine."—Song 6:3. Christ—all that Christ is—all that Christ has—is granted as an inalienable possession.

What tender RELATIONSHIPS result! He is the everlasting Father—we are begotten by the word of His truth. "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget You."—Isa. 49:15. But Jesus is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.—Prov. 18:24. His life belongs to His people, that they may live forever. His death is theirs, that the second death may touch them not. His blood is theirs, to wash them whiter than the whitest snow. His wounds are theirs, their hiding-

place from wrath. His stripes are theirs, their healing balsam. His righteousness is theirs, their fit robe for the courts of heaven. His prayers are theirs, that every blessing may be obtained. His advocacy is theirs, to silence the accuser's voice. His whole work is theirs, that they may be forever saved. His glory is theirs, that they may be like Him, as He is. Is not this all-surpassing happiness?

God's children rank the HOLY SPIRIT high among their treasures. The word is true, "I will not leave you comfortless."—"I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."— John 14:16. Hence the bold appeal—"What! Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you!"—1 Cor. 6:19. Is he not supremely happy, who at all times and in all places bears within his heart this heavenly inhabitant—this in-dwelling God! His presence gives light, and peace, and joy. He opens the eye to see the glories of the Gospel-hope. He molds the will to receive the blessed Jesus in His every office of saving grace. He shows redemption's consummated scheme, and gives the appropriating hand of faith. He whispers guidance in each doubt, perplexity, distress. He causes the Bible-page to shine in heavenly light. He applies the precious promises with enlivening power. He stamps the sacramental privileges with seals of assurance. He leads into all truth, and dissipates the mists of error. Are they not happy who are thus enriched?

God's children are exempt from sin's penal woe. In common with all mothers' sons, their iniquities are—

many—grievous—vile—often done against the Spirit's warning—the voice of conscience, and clear knowledge of duty's call. These rise as mountains upon mountains, and they accuse as with thunder's roar. The children meet not offences with excuse. They humbly own their magnitude of guilt. But they present an all-absolving plea. "Christ has died," when urged by faith, releases from all wrath. The blood, which streamed on Calvary, obliterates the crimson-dye, and makes each stain invisible even to the omniscient eye. "As far as the east is from the west," the dying Savior bears the load away. The voice is heard in all its sweet assurance, "You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."—Micah 7:19. The heart may grasp the record, "There is therefore now no condemnation."—Rom. 8:1. And again, "in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace."—Eph. 1:7. The God, who is their God, pardons iniquity, and transgression, and sin.—Exod. 34:7.

God's children are surrounded by a glorious company of GUARDS. It is a wondrous word—worthy of all study and acceptance, "You have come to an innumerable company of angels."—Heb. 12:22. These bright intelligences counted it their highest honor to minister to their great Lord, during His sojourn on this earth. Similarly they joy to serve all the members of His body. What though their presence is not open to our gaze, is it the less real? Our eyes behold not the surrounding air; but is it less our life? We cannot touch the fragrance of the rose; but it is real refreshment to the sense. We cannot see the wings of these

encircling friends; but are they therefore the less near? The prophet's servant trembled when he saw the besieging host. But fear fled when his eyes beheld "the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."— 2 Kings 6:17. Armies of invisible defense, though undiscerned by sense, were present.

The Spirit's pledge is not recalled—"The angel of the Lord encamps round about those who fear Him, and delivers them."—Ps. 34:7. Daniel testifies to the King—"My God has sent His angel, and has shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me."—Dan. 6:22. It is true of each lowly member, even as of the glorious Head, "He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways."—Ps. 91:11. See some mighty monarch going forth encircled by his glittering guards. It is a splendid spectacle. The potentate is clad in honor and garrisoned with safety. But what is this state to the grand security of him to whom the hosts of heaven always minister? Believers are thus guarded.

They are ADOPTED into the family of God. This honor belongs to all Christ's members. Such was the purpose before the world began. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."—Eph. 1:5. The heaven-directed pen writes, "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his

sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."—Rom. 8:15, 17.

How sweet the tenderness, which encourages, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."—1 John 3:2. This sonship involves the brotherhood of Jesus. The relationship is gladly avowed. Hear the assurance, "I ascend to My Father and your Father—to My God and your God."—John 20:17. We are predestinated to be conformed to His image, that "He might be the first-born among many brethren."—Rom. 8:29.

There is a thrill through loving hearts at the bare name of HOME. How should the believer exult in the truth that his soul's home is the palace of his God! Here he is ever welcome. Here smiles await him. At all times he may draw near. The gates are never closed. He may claim audience and pour out every desire of his heart into the listening ears above. He may fondly lisp, "My Father," expecting the dear response, "My son." He may ask, and will receive, all that paternal love can grant. The portion, which is really good, will be abundantly supplied. He may sit down at heaven's own table, and feast on the luxurious fare of the eternal Word, and be refreshed with the delicious richness of the promises. He is regaled by the celestial manna—the true bread that came down from heaven. There are no more empty cravings. The word is realized, "Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life—he who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes on Me shall never thirst."—John

6:35. Say, where can happiness be found, if it be not with the children of adopting love?

Is it not high privilege to be united by one Spirit to all the family of heaven, and to see a brother in every saint? But believers are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."—Eph. 2:19. Happy membership with the mystic body! Happy fellowship with this sanctified band! Happy union with "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven!"—Heb. 12:23. Great is the joy of this community. Large is the benefit of sharing all the general supplications of the Church. Sweet is the comfort of being interwoven in heart with the greatest and noblest of our race. Blessed indeed are the members of this holy brotherhood!

Happy are they, for whose good all PROVIDENCES work. To our blindness the course of daily events may seem to be a tangled net. In a long chain the links may appear to be united without plan. A mass of occurrences apparently is jumbled by confusion's hand. But is it so? God's never-failing wisdom orders every minutest circumstance. Without Him no insect crawls—no sparrow falls—no breeze arises—no gale is lulled. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Luke 12:7. In so-called trifles, even as in a nation's crisis, wise prearrangement regulates the whole machine. God sits supreme upon the directing throne. The government is upon the shoulder of our mediatorial King, Who ever guides it for His people's

well-being. Events most adverse in their first look subserve their good. The frost—the snow—are

needful for the crop. The keen wind chills beneficially. The tempest clears the air. Out of the bitter, sweet can come. We cannot always trace—we may be often puzzled—but we should always trust and lean confidently on our Lord's arm. The word is settled in the heaven of heavens, "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."—Rom. 8:28. Sweet is their peace who in every circumstance look upward, and devoutly say, "It is well."

But this happy day is gilded by a happier CLOSE. The present light is dim before the coming brightness. The bud, though sweet, exhales but scantily the fragrance of the full-blown flower. The infant's limbs show little of the grown man's strength. Here indeed we lie down in green pastures and are led by still waters. Here we rejoice in full knowledge of Christ's finished work, and claim the riches of complete redemption. But as yet we stand outside and have but glimpses of the full heavenly bliss. Yet in a little while, and we shall hear the Master's voice, "Come up here—sit beside Me on My throne—share My glory, and enter into all My joy." Let your enchanted gaze dwell on the dazzling prospect! It will indeed invigorate. The traveler steps briskly when in sight of his resting place. Will not Zion's pilgrims sing, when they see their city fully in view? Such is a scanty glimmer of the blessed heritage of faith.

But few drink deeply of this cup. Realizing perception of heaven is alas! too rare—a flower uncommon in a wilderness of weeds—a verdant spot in an expanse of sand—a jewel in the rubbish of a quarry. Through grace believers are not few. In this fallen world a goodly company look unto Jesus and are safe. But sadly they ignore their privileges. They mourn like Heman in the valley of timidity. They pitch their tents amid bewildering doubts. They draw their water from the wells of fear. They creep along the cloudy side of Zion's hill. They see a lion in each path. They tremble at the rustling of each leaf. Their heads droop mournfully. Their looks are downcast and their hearts despond. Though the sun is high in the heavens they seek some chilling shade.

Let us proceed to mark some DOUBTS which injuriously trouble, and scrutinize some CLOUDS, which darken without cause their way.

1. Some are distressed when they read of "the Lamb's Book of Life." They know that from the foundation of the world a mystic register of the saved was written. The truth is announced that the happy seed are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit— unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. 1:2. They hear the record and reverently bow the head. They foster no rebellious thoughts against God's sovereign will. They cavil not against His wisdom. They know that the Judge of all men must do right. But still they cannot calm the apprehension, that they have no saving interest in this

everlasting purpose. They cannot read—what is inscrutable—the page of heaven—and this veil of mystery creates agitation. They hesitate to claim the portion of the predestined, because not cognizant of hidden counsels.

They thus invert the order, which has been so wisely ordained. They think that knowledge of electing love should be the basis of faith's rest. They desire assurance, that God has loved them from eternity, as ground for venturing to love Him. This is to work backwards. It is no marvel that they advance not, whose first step takes a misguiding course. Doubtless, in God, election must precede our faith, as cause precedes effect. But in our hearts faith must precede our comfort in decrees. We believe indeed, because of God's choice and faith must be given before we can read this choice. Therefore by believing, we gain knowledge of our saving interest in the Book of Life. It is thus we reason in nature's work, and in occurrences of life. We prove that summer is arrived by the heat, and crops, and ripened fruit. We argue from the motion of the rapid train, that steam must be at work. So from effects we know that grace rules in the heart.

But, whence this grace? It is no product of dull nature. It springs not spontaneously in corrupt soil. It is from heaven, and thus is clear evidence of heavenly regard. Are our souls warm with love of God? Then we are sure that God loves us—and in His love has marked us as His own. Do we choose God to be our portion—our joy—our all? Whence this choice? It is the planting of the Spirit, and establishes that He works in us according to God's will.

Does the strong current of desire bear us towards God and heaven? Trace the stream to its first source. It must descend from God. He first desires us, or never would we think of Him. Beloved, if you are conscious of the actings of true grace, cast to the wind all doubt. Be satisfied—rejoice—be glad. The finger which implants grace, first wrote your name in the Lamb's Book. In the effects you see the first cause.

2. Sometimes the soul is heavy, because it cannot fix the DATE of its first turning unto God. It dreamily reasons, if conversion is a real work, it must have had commencement, and the commencement of such change must be a marked era. Go forth again to nature's field. Mark gradual operations and be wise. You see a flower. Did you see the seed quicken in the soil? No—but you doubt not that there was a moment of life's first spring. You see the sun resplendent in the skies. You saw not the first ray in the chambers of the east. But the shining light leaves no doubt that it once began. You see a river rolling down its floods. Its source is hidden from man's research. No traveler can trace the waters to their origin. But still you know there is a spot where it has birth—an opening, whence the tiny rill first issues forth.

God may deal thus in matters of your soul. With noiseless step He may come in, and take His seat with no announcing knock. The question is—Does God reside within? Do holy thoughts, and faith in Christ, and love of the Word, and joy in ordinances testify His presence? If so, conversion is a sure fact—it has indisputable proof.

Rejoice, although its origin cannot be dated. You doubt not that you naturally live, although you felt not life's first spark.

3. Others nurse despondency, because of DECLENSIONS in grace. Their first love, so bright—so joyous—so ecstatic—has suffered sad eclipse. Their early warmth is chilled. Their leaves, once verdant, now droop witheringly. Delight in prayer—high flights of praise—delicious feasting on the richness of the Word—have spread departing wings. A vacancy is left most coldly void. They have gone back to the *husks of worldly vanity*. They have sought pleasure in scenes, where God rules not, and their dear Savior is ignored. Theirs is the backsliders' deadness. They feel disquietude. An accusing conscience alarms. They mourn and sigh alone—"Is not all hope now gone? Can I regain the happy eminence, from which I have fallen? Can heavenly smiles again beam over me? Can my delinquency be pardoned? Can I again have place among the children? Can my erring soul be restored?"

Let no one speak lightly of this case. To desert the Lord and drink again *the puddle of the world*, is grievous guilt. But such is the tender mercy of our Gospel—such the sweet pitifulness of our heavenly Father—such the infinitude of His love, that especial promises and most alluring calls pursue this class. Peter has been foremost to deny his Lord—but Peter especially receives tidings of great joy—"Go your way, tell His disciples *and Peter*."—Mark 16:7. The admonition is reiterated, "Return backsliding Israel—says the Lord—and I will not cause

My anger to fall upon you—for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Turn O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married unto you."—Jer. 3:12, 14. Let such then hasten to the throne of grace, pleading that they obey this gracious call. He who gave the pledge will faithfully redeem it. They will realize the gracious truth "He hates divorce."—Mal. 2:16. "The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion—and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads—they shall obtain gladness and joy—and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."—Isa. 51:11.

4. Another sigh is not uncommon. How can my brow be decked with smiles, and notes of gladness warble from my lips? My dwelling is amid so many foes and my voyage amid opposing waves. I may not remit my watch. I dare not put off my armor. Threats and alarms give no respite. My many adversaries are fierce in rage—mighty in strength—deadly in hate. They have crushed many far abler than I am. In their presence how can I rejoice and sing! Is there not cause to be dismayed! Did not David fear! "He said in his heart I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." But did David fall? Yet a little while and his feet stood on the necks of all his enemies, and we read, "David spoke unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul."—2 Sam. 22:1.

It is true that we are called to fight the good fight of faith—never to lay down the shield and sword—to wrestle

with untiring nerve—to strive, as if each effort was for life—to give no place to the devil—to resist even unto death. But it is also true, that we go forth with certainty of eventual triumph—with infallible promises of sure victory. We should remember what Captain leads us—what Spirit arms us with endurance—what angelic guardians hover around—what a cloud of witnesses encompasses. We should think of our many Ebenezers—sure pledges of unfailing help—of our many brethren, more than conquerors in all these trials—of the treasury of promises stored with all-prevailing aid. "Fear not, for I am with you—be not dismayed, for I am your God—I will strengthen you—yes I will help you—yes I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness."—Isa. 41:10. "I will never leave you nor forsake you."—Heb. 13:5.

The *gracious design*, also, of this continued conflict should be understood. It is ordered to drive from self-confidence—to show where true strength resides—to prompt faith into constant action—to intensify confiding prayer. Realize these purposes, and then the joyful song will sound, God is faithful. He will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear. "If God is for us, who can be against us?"—Rom. 8:31. The victory is sure. Away then with these fears!

5. Sometimes the soul is locked in another gloomy cell. It questions whether its faith is true. May it not be some cheat—some counterfeit—some deceiver in disguise—some earthborn vanity—no heaven-born grace! Undoubtedly presumption may assume the semblance of

faith. It stealthily may creep into the heart and give sweet opiates. It may persuade that soul-concerns are safe, and cause for discomfort remains no more. It may lull on a soft pillow of delusion, and rock to sleep amid deception's dreams. Wherever this impostor cheats, there is the full calm of security.

The fact, then, that the soul trembles is sure proof that presumption is not its inhabitant. The presumptuous, pleased with their seeming beauty, are at ease in Zion. They gaze complacently on painted features, and take them for the children's likeness. This counterfeit may be detected by its half-heartedness. It professes to make total self-sacrifice—to be bought by a price, and therefore to be wholly Christ's. But, like Ananias, while it consecrates much, some portion is retained. It hides some secret idol 'beneath the stuff'. It offers to surrender all sons, except the darling Benjamin. It locks some secret chamber, from which the Lord is excluded.

If you are conscious of this half-consecration, your faith is equivocal, and trembling is justly yours. But if in thorough sincerity you give your body, soul, and spirit to the Lord—if you are willing that He should live in you as truly as He died for you—if you desire that He should reign supreme, as really as you hope to sit beside Him on His throne—these evidences show faith to be true. This fear is your own infirmity, and ranks among the deceiver's guiles.

Observe, also, presumption has scanty relish in the Word, and draws but little strength from prayer, and warms not in

the joys of ordinances. It still seeks pasture amid the weeds and berries of the world. But if you turn dissatisfied from such food, and have no content in anything but Christ—if your constant yearning is for more of His presence—more tokens of His love—more basking in the sunshine of His smiles, you may take comfort. Such are the actings of true faith. Presumption never thirsts for such delights.

6. The traveler must expect some cloudy days. So the Christian pilgrim must be prepared for storms. Providences may seem to frown. A great fight of affliction must be endured. As wave succeeds to wave, so trouble may follow trouble. One disappears, another comes, more trying and severe. Sometimes sickness invades the frame—strength languishes—the night brings no repose—the day is wearisome in pain. Sometimes failing health in much-loved friends awakens concern—means of family support are dried—poverty shows its grim form—the cruse of oil runs to its last drop—the barrel of meal is exhausted. Perhaps malicious tongues breathe wicked slanders. Reproach assails the name, and calumny hints opprobrious surmise. Varied miseries assail in turn, and batter with pitiless assault. The disconsolate heart is prone to read in these dealings, signs of heavenly wrath. Gideon's doubt is felt, "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?"—Judg. 6:13. Timidity infers, If God indeed loves me, if rightly I call Him Father, Protector, Friend, why am I thus? If He but speak the word, all pains depart—all peace and joy and blessedness come in. These troubles intimate that I am an alien, and no child.

But all these doubts are prompted by the father of lies. The sun is near, though its rays do not appear. The Father's love is no inconstancy. These dealings may be real mercies. Have you not read "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."—Rev. 3:19. He is not the blessed man who never knows, but who endures, temptation—for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life. Consider the saints of old. May not the present trial be Paul's thorn? Did not Job suffer more than this? In this affliction may I not be retracing David's path? A cloud of witnesses have preceded in this road. Many were their afflictions. Did they perish in them? Out of them all the Lord delivered them. Perhaps you cannot read God's purpose, yet you must trust, and still cry, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him."—1 Sam. 3:18.

7. Sometimes the wheels move heavily, being clogged by fears of final failure. Intelligence is sound—knowledge illumines the mind—the provisions of the covenant of grace are clearly seen. The work of grace is real. Repentance is deeply felt. Faith tightly grasps the Savior. But the *full assurance* of hope is not admitted. The feet are in the right path, but clouds obscure the end. There is a lurking dread, lest the vessel, in which Jesus sits, may yet make shipwreck. What! can it be, that they who are born of God should die at last in Satan's grasp? What! can his breath put out the flame of grace? Can the incorruptible seed decay? Can he who has received everlasting life find it to be everlasting death? Can a son of God—an heir of

promise—lapse into a child of perdition? Let not such groundless surmise be entertained.

There would indeed be cause for every fear—there would be slender ground of hope, if saints were left to their own keeping. They would then fall, as Adam fell in Paradise. They would not keep their high estate better than apostate angels kept theirs. But they are secure in the almighty arms of God. Their "life is hidden with Christ in God."—Col. 3:3. Christ must be spoiled, and God subdued, and heaven ransacked, before saints can be plucked from their safe custody. They are committed to the guardian-care of God the Holy Spirit. It is a wondrous word—but not more full of marvel than of truth, "I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do them—and you shall be My people, and I will be your God."—Ezek. 36:27, 28.

When Israel left Egypt, not a hoof might be left behind. Exod. 10:26. The ark stood still in Jordan, until the entire host had passed the stream. The promise provides that all God's children shall safely reach their home. Christ and His members make one body. If but one member perish, Christ is no longer whole. Christ incomplete is an impossibility. Believer, realize these solid truths. The covenant, which secures salvation to Christ's seed, includes each member. The portion in Paradise is doubtless more happy, but the militants on earth are equally secure. Cling to Christ, and He will bring you to be with Him where He is.

If fears be thus prone to enter, diligence should bar the portals of the heart against them. The tremblers are weak. Satan knows this and strives to despoil us of our strength. Awake to his stratagems, and vigilantly resist.

With this intent renew repentance daily. Be often in the penitential valley. Cloak not transgressions. Recite with smitten breast the falls which conscience knows. Bewail their multitude and magnitude. The weeping eye sweetly beholds the cross. The humbled heart most quickly hears, "Your sins, which are many, are forgiven—go in peace." The promises cheer most tenderly such as confess and forsake their sins.

Daily draw near to Christ, as if each day's approach were a new act. Plead, "Lord, if I never came before, now I lie low at Your feet." Continually cast yourself into His open arms, and enter by faith into His wounds. Clinging to His side, avow that nothing shall ever part you from His presence. Be assured that oneness thus cemented is oneness for the endless life. Draw near, then, and be happy.

Review the gracious dealings of preceding days. Surely memory's casket contains many jewels. Let them not lie neglected. Bring them to light and profit by their contemplation. Retrace your journey through the desert land. The guiding pillar has never yet failed. When foes came forth have not your arms been strengthened to win glorious trophies! Think of your many escapes, as a bird from the fowler's snare. Has not sadness disappeared,

when the Sun of righteousness arose with healing in His wings! You have trembled at the

thought of hindrance, but the opposing stone was gone when you drew near.— Mark 16:3-4.

When sinking in the billows the Savior has held forth His hand, and you sank not. When you were mourning in a captive's cell, the prison-door flew open untouched. Infuriate Esau has run to your embrace. These sweet Ebenezers are courage for succeeding days. He, who delivers now, and has delivered, will deliver to the end. Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind. Review your mercies and march bravely on.

Soar high on wings of PRAISE. Begin on earth the song of the redeemed. Intermingle now with the harpers harping with their harps. What motives urge you to this melody! What topics of thanksgiving throng around you! Verily, they cannot be exhausted. The bliss of adoration is ever new. The name of Jesus is an ever-budding theme. In it there is melody without end. Without pause praise His salvation. Bless God incessantly that you claim Him as your own—that your feet stand on praising and on praying ground—and that every moment wafts your bark nearer to the shore of ceaseless hallelujahs. In this blissful exercise fears wither. Resolve that these songs shall continually be in your mouth, and happiness will fill your heart.

Never hold par lance with your crafty foe. You cannot sound the depths of his devices. He can transform himself

into an angel of light, and can soon bewilder by his subtleties. Answer him not a word. Appeal to your Advocate on high. Fly quickly to His sheltering arms. There nestle as in a mother's close embrace. The tempter cannot then obtain advantage.

May the loving Spirit so bless these humble words, that they may lead you to be happy among the happiest, ever rejoicing with the sons of joy! It should be so. It is sad shame—it is ingratitude, when they, professing to be Christ's, weep among the woe-worn and downcast. The spies were punished who brought discouraging report of Canaan's land. Never misrepresent your gracious Lord. You are high above others in exalted state—in present privilege—in glorious prospect. Be equally high in happy walk—in smiling brow—in glowing lip. Let all observers see the coming glory beaming in your heaven-lit countenance. Let godly words prove that you are upraised from earth. Thus allure others to your happy walk; and until heaven's portals open to you, sing for very joy at your own heaven's gate.

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