

THIRTY-ONE MEDITATIONS ON CHRIST

ROBERT HAWKER (1753-1827)

A scenic landscape featuring a herd of sheep grazing on a grassy hillside. The background shows rolling hills and mountains covered in autumn foliage, with a large tree on the right side. The sky is filled with dramatic, golden light breaking through clouds, suggesting a sunrise or sunset.

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“A certain Samaritan...had
compassion on him.”

—*Luke 10:33*

Look, my soul, beyond the letter of the parable, and see if you cannot instantly discover Who it is that is here meant. Mark how He is described: “A certain Samaritan.” Not any indifferent, undetermined one among the whole mass of men called Samaritans, but an identical certain One—and Who but Jesus answers to this character?¹

“Say we not well [said the Jews] that thou art a Samaritan?” (Joh 8:48). Yes, truly, thus far ye said right; for our Jesus is the true Samaritan that came a blissful stranger from His blessed abode to deliver us from our lost estate, “for his mercy endureth for ever” (Psa 118:29).

And, my soul, observe how exactly corresponding to all that is said of this certain Samaritan in the parable your Jesus proves to have been. Our nature, universally speaking, was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when it fell among thieves, when it was left more than half dead by the great enemy of souls. For we had all miserably departed from the Lord when Jesus came from heaven to the Jericho of this world “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luk 19:10).

And what could the priest or Levite do by law or sacrifice to help our ruined nature? But when Jesus came and bound up the wounds which sin and Satan had made, by pouring in the balsam² of His own precious blood, then He proved Himself to be this certain Samaritan. For none but Jesus could have done this, since there is salvation in no other; “for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Act 4:12). And what is it now but the same gracious mercy, carrying on the same blessed purpose, in completing the perfect recovery of our nature?

It is Jesus, Samaritan-like, which has brought us to the inn of His church, has appointed His servants and angels, who are ministering spirits, to minister in all di-

¹ Note that throughout this devotional Hawker uses various Scripture passages to illustrate the Lord Jesus and His people’s relationship with Him. Some of the passages cited may directly refer to the Savior while others may be better understood as illustrations. In this case, Jesus Christ plainly states in the parable that the Good Samaritan is an example of being a good neighbor by self-sacrificing service to the suffering. Hawker uses the Samaritan as an illustration of our Savior since He is the Good Neighbor in the ultimate sense.

² **balsam** – healing or soothing medicinal preparation.

vine things to the heirs of salvation. He has commissioned the whole train of ordinances,³ providences, and promises to minister to our good. His holy Word and His Holy Spirit are unceasingly engaged to the same blessed end.

And what crowns all, and makes our state and circumstances most safe and blessed indeed is that Jesus has commanded all the remaining costs and expenses of our cure to be put down to His account. He says Himself to me, a poor worthless sinner as I am, and to every individual of His redeemed, “Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay” (Luk 10:35).

And is it so, my soul? Is not the blessing too great to be bestowed, and you too worthless to receive it? Oh no, for it is Jesus Who promises; that is enough! Hail, then, certain Samaritan, almighty traveler through our miserable world! Since the first day that You passed by and beheld me in my blood—cast out to perish—and did bid me live (Eze 16:6), how has my soul hailed You, and now and unceasingly will hail You, as my life, my hope, my joy, my portion forever!



“I am my beloved’s, and his
desire is toward me.”

—*Song of Solomon 7:10*

Yes, dearest Jesus, I am truly Yours by every tie which can make me Yours. I am Yours by the gift of God the Father; by Your own betrothing me to Yourself; by the Holy Ghost anointing me in You and making me one with You and in You, before the world [was]. And I am Yours in the recovery of the Church⁴—from Adam’s fall and transgression—by the sacrifice of Yourself: for You have bought me with Your blood, and made me thereby the conquest of Your Holy Spirit.

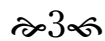
And now, through Your divine teaching, I can and do discover that from everlasting Your desire was towards Your redeemed ones. Even when [they were] dead in trespasses and sins, it was Your desire to quicken them into life and bring them to Yourself.

³ **ordinances** – means God has appointed to help us grow in the knowledge and experience of the grace in the gospel, such as baptism, the Lord’s Supper, the Word, prayer, fellowship, preaching, etc. (1Pe 2:2).

⁴ **Church** – spiritual “invisible Church” universal, which includes all true believers throughout the world and throughout all of time, as differentiated from the “visible church,” local assemblies of professing Christians.

And even now, notwithstanding all my backwardness to You, You rest in Your love, and You are calling me by Your grace, and seeking continual fellowship in ordinances, and by Your Word and providences⁵—all which prove that Your desire is towards me.

And as to the everlasting enjoyment of all Your Church above, Your prayer to Your Father manifested Your desire when You said, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory” (Joh 17:24). Are these then the desires of my God and Savior, my Husband, my Brother, my Friend? And shall my heart be thus cold towards You? Oh, for the reviving influences of Your Spirit, that I may cry out with the Church, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine” (Song 1:2).



“Thou wentest forth for the salvation
of thy people, even for salvation
with thine anointed.”

—*Habakkuk 3:13*

Every view of redemption is blessed, but there are some views transcendently⁶ so. And when the soul is led out in the contemplation of Jehovah in His threefold character of person—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all engaged in their goings forth from everlasting for the accomplishment of it—there is something that overpowers the mind with the greatness and the surpassing glory of the subject.

As the salvation of the Lord’s people is from Jehovah and from all eternity, so it is to Jehovah and to all eternity. All the springs of it are from this one source and tend to this one end. The song of heaven which John heard so proclaimed it—for while the address was to the Lamb, in ascribing to Him all the glory of the work, the great purpose for which it was wrought was ascribed to the Father: “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood” (Rev 5:9).

My soul, mark the similar expression in this song or prayer of the prophet: Jehovah went forth for the salvation of His people, even for salvation with His anointed. And was not Christ the Anointed of the Father? And did not Jehovah go forth with Christ, upholding, supporting, carrying on, and completing redemption work, in and

⁵ **providences** – works of God in preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions. See *God’s Providence* by Charles H. Spurgeon, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

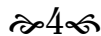
⁶ **transcendently** – supremely.

by and with Jesus? Yea, did not Jesus go forth from everlasting, when His delights were with the children of men before the world? Is it not of Jesus that it is said, “Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men” (Pro 8:30-31)?

Oh, the soul-comforting subject! How truly blessed to see the whole Godhead thus engaged in the salvation of poor sinners! Yes, blessed Lord Jesus, it is plain that in all the goings forth of Jehovah the redemption of Your Church was the one great object and design. Before time began to be numbered, You went forth. In time, when You came in substance of our flesh, still the salvation of Your people was the object. And now in eternity, You are still going forth in Your priestly office on Your throne, which You are carrying on in heaven to the same purpose: to make the salvation of Your people secure.

Oh, for grace to keep these views always in remembrance that, while Jehovah is thus in one eternal act going forth for the salvation of His redeemed, all His redeemed may go forth in love, adoration, and praise in the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, of the Father, and of Christ—and here on earth begin the song which is never to end in heaven:

*“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,
And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him
be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev 1:5-6).*



“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
Behold and see if there be any sorrow like
unto my sorrow, which is done unto me,
wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me
in the day of his fierce anger.”

—*Lamentations 1:12*

Dearest Jesus, I would sit down this evening and, looking up to You, ask the instructions of Your blessed Spirit to unfold some of the many tender inquiries wrapped up in this question of my Lord’s.

Whatever the mournful prophet’s views were of the Church’s sorrow when he wrote his book of Lamentations, surely sorrow never had its full potion poured out but in the cup of trembling which You did drink. And as in all the afflictions of Your

people You were afflicted, added to all Your own personal sufferings, theirs also You did sustain.

And where shall I begin, dear Lord, to mark down the amazing history of Your sorrow? From the manger to the cross, every path was suffering. Indeed You are, by way of emphasis, called the “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa 53:3). Thorns and thistles the earth is made to bring forth to human nature at large; but, as in taking away this curse You became a curse for Your people, none but Yourself, dearest Jesus, was ever crowned with thorns—as if to testify the supremacy of Your sufferings.

And did all our curses indeed fall upon You? Was all the Father’s wrath in the full vials of His anger against sin made to light upon You? Did You wade through all, sustain all, and bear all on purpose that Your redeemed might be delivered? Did great drops of blood in a cold night (when a fire of coals became needful to warm Your disciple) fall from Your sacred body from the agony of Your soul’s suffering? Did the Son of God—Who from all eternity lay in His bosom, the only Begotten and dearly Beloved of His affection—indeed die under amazement⁷ and exceeding sorrow, and the cry of His soul issue forth of His Father’s desertion? Were these among the sorrows of Jesus? And is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

Is it nothing to you, O ye that by disregard and indifference would “crucify...the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb 6:6)? Come hither, ye careless and unconcerned. Come hither, ye fools that make a mock of sin. Come hither, ye drunkards and defiled of every description and character, whose cups of licentiousness⁸ and mirth have mingled for Him the wormwood and the gall. Behold Jesus and listen: “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?”

My soul, bring the question home to your own heart, and never give over the solemn meditation. It is indeed to you everything that is momentous and eternally interesting.⁹ Yes, precious Jesus! Every wound of Yours speaks; every feature, every groan, every cry pleads for me and with me. If I forget You, O bleeding Lamb, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember You, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: yea, if I prefer not the solemn meditation of Gethsemane and Calvary above my chief joy.

⁷ **amazement** – perplexity.

⁸ **licentiousness** – lawlessness; lack of restraint (here, toward sin).

⁹ **interesting** – important.

“I sat down under his shadow with
great delight, and his fruit
was sweet to my taste.”

—*Song of Solomon 2:3*

My soul, hear what the Church says concerning her Lord in those early and distant ages before your Redeemer became incarnate—and mark the strength of her faith and love. Did Old Testament saints thus sit down with a recumbency¹⁰ on the person, work, and finished salvation of Jesus, as those determined to arise no more, when they beheld Christ only through “the shadow of good things to come” (Heb 10:1)? And shall not you rest in Christ, and your enjoyment of Christ be equal and even greater than theirs?

For shame, my soul! Let it never be said that their views of Jesus, Who was then yet to come and had all the vast work of redemption to perform, were as lively as yours; or their delight in those fruits of His salvation, which they partook of by anticipation, sweeter to their taste than they are now enjoyed by you. You have lived to see the whole completed, and can and do look up and behold your Jesus returned to glory, having finished transgression, made an end of sin, and now forever seated at the right hand of God.

Oh, dear Redeemer, give me to sit down under the sweet revelations of Your Word, and in the gospel ordinances of Your Church, and here by faith realize and substantiate all the blessings contained in the glories of Your person, the infinite and eternal merit and worth of Your righteousness, blood, and salvation. [Give me to] have my whole soul, body, and spirit continually feasted with the rich fellowship and communion which there is to be enjoyed with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ!

And surely, Lord, You are all, and infinitely more than is here said of You by the Church. You are a shade for protection from everything which can assault a poor weather-beaten soul, harassed by sin, by sorrow, and temptation. Well might the prophet describe You as the man that is “as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa 32:2). I find You necessary as a hiding place to shelter me from the wrath to come. I have sinned and am justly exposed to the wrath of God.

I find [in me] the accusations of conscience, the arrests of God’s Law, the temptations of Satan, and the alarms of justice. Under all these, what but Your blood and righteousness can screen my poor soul or make me secure in an hour of visitation? But,

¹⁰ **recumbency** – rest.

sheltered by You, and justified by Your great salvation, I find everything I need to protect and secure me from the storm, “when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall” (Isa 25:4).

But, my soul, this sweet Scripture does not set before you your God and Savior only as a shadow to sit under for protection, but as affording fruit also to refresh you in your need of sustenance. Like some rich, luxuriant, and generous tree that not only shelters the traveler from the scorching heat, but holds forth on its branches delicious fruit to regale¹¹ and satisfy for food, so Jesus—by His person, work, and righteousness—protects His people from all evil and, by the fruits of His blood and redemption, supplies them with all good. Yes, blessed, bountiful Lord, You are here again all these and infinitely more; for the fruits of Your life, death, resurrection, ascension, and glory give to Your redeemed mercy, pardon, and peace, with all the fullness of covenant blessings in this life and everlasting happiness in the life to come.

O Lord, grant me then, day by day and from night to morn, to sit down under Your shadow, that I may “revive as the corn, and grow as the vine” (Hos 14:7). Yea, Lord, I would so sit down as one that had determined to rise no more, having found You, and in You, all I need, to bid adieu¹² to all the world holds dear—and, like Paul, to count all things else but dung and dross¹³ that I might win Christ and be found in You, the Lord my Righteousness (Phi 3:8; Jer 23:6).



“And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.”

—*Luke 17:5*

Did the apostles need so to pray? Then well may I.

O great Author and Finisher of our faith, I would look up to You with thankfulness, that You have granted even the smallest portion of faith to so unworthy a creature as I am. Surely, my soul, it is as great a miracle of grace that my God and Savior should have kindled belief in your stony heart, amid all the surrounding obstructions of sin and Satan which lay there, as when the miraculous fire from heaven, in answer to the prophet’s prayer, came down and consumed the wetted sacrifice (1Ki 18:36-38).

¹¹ **regale** – delight; refresh.

¹² **adieu** – *French*: farewell.

¹³ **dross** – worthless matter.

I praise You, my God and King, this day in the recollection of this unspeakable, unmerited mercy. And though this faith in my heart still be but as a grain of mustard seed, though it be but as a spark in the ocean, though it be but as the drop of the dew in comparison of the river—yet, blessed, precious Jesus, still this is *faith*, and it is Your gift. And is it not a token¹⁴ of Your favor? Is it not an earnest¹⁵ of the Holy Spirit and a pledge of the promised inheritance?

Babes in faith, as well as the strong in the Lord, are equally Yours; for it is said that “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Act 13:48); and to as many as believed, You gave “power to become the sons of God” (Joh 1:12). So it is by Yourself, blessed Redeemer, and not by the strength or weakness of the faith of Your people, that their justification before God the Father is secured. Precious is that Scripture which tells us that *all* who believe [in You]—whether great faith or little faith—“all that believe are justified from all things” (Act 13:39).

But, my soul, while the consciousness of your possessing the smallest evidences of faith in your Beloved gives you a joy unspeakable and full of glory, do you not blush to think what ungrateful returns you are making to your Redeemer, in the littleness of your faith in such a God and Savior?

Whence¹⁶ is it that your affections are so warm in a thousand lesser things, and so cold towards Jesus? Whence that His holy Word you so often hear as though you heard not? Whence the ordinances of Jesus’ house, the promises of His Scriptures, the visits of His grace—whence [is it that] these pass again and again before you, and you remain so cold and lifeless in your affections?

Whence [is it] that the temptations of Satan, the corruptions of your heart, and the allurements of the world gain any influence upon you? Whence [is it] that you are so anxious about things that perish—about anything, about nothing deserving to be called interesting? Whence [is it that you are] so seldom at the court of the heavenly King, where you ought to be found daily, hourly waiting?

And whence [are you], under trials, or the need of answers at a Mercy Seat, fretful, impatient, and misgiving? Whence all these and numberless other evils, but from the weakness and littleness of your love to Jesus, your trust in Jesus, your dependence upon Jesus, and your communion with Jesus? All, all arise out of this one sad cause, my soul: your unbelief!

Jesus, Master, look upon me, put the cry with earnestness in my heart that I may unceasingly, with the apostles’ prayer, be sending forth this as the first and greatest petition of my whole soul: “Lord, increase my faith.”

¹⁴ **token** – sign.

¹⁵ **earnest** – given in pledge of what is afterwards to be received in fullness.

¹⁶ **whence** – from where.

“And he that sat upon the throne said,
Behold, I make all things new.”

—*Revelation 21:5*

My soul, when you have been engaged with contemplating the eternal and unchanging glory of your Jesus—in His person, work, offices, character, and relations, as in covenant engagements¹⁷ for your welfare—you have found Him to be an everlasting and secure foundation to rest upon and dwell in, for time and for eternity.

Come now, and look up to your Redeemer in another precious point of view, and behold Him as creating “all things new,” while He Himself, in the eternity of His nature, remains forever and unchangeably the same. Behold Him on His throne; and remember that one and the same throne belongs to God and the Lamb—to intimate the unity of the Father and the Son in nature and dignity, in will, worship, and power.

When you have duly pondered this view of Jesus, next listen to the important words He proclaims: “Behold, I make all things new.” Pause—has He made you a new creature? Yes, if, as the Holy Ghost says, “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2Co 5:17). The new creature is a thoroughly changed creature. It is a new nature, not a new name. “A new heart...will I give you” is the blessed promise, “and a new spirit will I put within you” (Eze 36:26)—so that “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2Co 5:17).

When this grand point is fully and clearly ascertained, then, my soul, let the next consideration from this scripture be the blessed assurance here given: Jesus Himself has wrought it. This indeed cannot but follow, for surely the same power that created the world out of nothing must be necessary to create a new spirit in the sinner’s heart. In the old creation of nature, though there was nothing to work upon, yet there was nothing to oppose it; but in the unrenewed heart of a sinner, there is everything to rise up against it, for “the carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom 8:7). Mark it down then, my soul, that no power less than God’s could have done this—and your Jesus from His throne declares it.

Is there anything more to be gathered from this proclamation from the throne? Yes: He that first creates the heart anew ever lives to send forth the renewings of the Holy Ghost; for creating grace and renewing grace are both alike

¹⁷ **covenant engagements** – action taken to forward God’s gracious purpose of redemption.

His. Hence,¹⁸ therefore, let your morning and evening visits be to Him that sits upon the throne and makes all things new. The same that has made new heavens and the new earth wherein righteousness dwelleth; that has made His tabernacle with men and dwelleth in them; that sits upon the throne making all things new—the same is He “yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8), that gives power to the weak, “and to them that have no might he increaseth strength” (Isa 40:29). Hither,¹⁹ my soul, come—under all your weakness, fears, doubts, tremblings, and the like. Jesus can and will renew your strength.

When I lack a heart to pray, to praise, to love, to believe; yea, when my heart and my flesh faint and hope fails—oh, let me hear Your voice, You Who sit upon the throne and make all things new, for then You will be the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.



“When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me
to the rock that is higher than I.”

—*Psalm 61:2*

Yes, Lord, I would make this my morning, noon, and evening petition, that the great Glorifier of Jesus would gently lead me to Him Who is a Rock, and Whose work is perfect.

I know, dearest Lord, in theory—and can even reason upon it in seasons of coolness—that Your strength and Your security never fail; the failure is in me and my unbelief. And it is only when I lose sight of You and Your promise that I am tossed about with doubts and misgivings. If Jesus be out of sight, and thwarting dispensations²⁰ arise, oh, how soon is my poor forgetful heart ready to exclaim with the Church of old, “I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the LORD” (Lam 3:18).

Then come on the reasonings of flesh and blood. And then the question whether my interest in Jesus and His salvation be sure. And then my poor heart goes forth—like the dove of Noah from the ark, having lost sight of Jesus—and can find no resting place for the sole of my foot.

¹⁸ **hence** – for this reason.

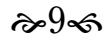
¹⁹ **hither** – here.

²⁰ **thwarting dispensations** – God’s dealings with us that seem to oppose us.

O Lord the Spirit, in all such seasons, “lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” If You, blessed Leader of the Lord’s distressed ones, would be my pilot when those storms are beating upon me, I should soon be blown upon the firm landing place of Jesus’ security. Oh, how should I ride out the storm even when the tempest was highest, as long as God the Holy Ghost enabled me to cast the anchor of faith upon this eternal Rock of Jesus.

Oh, lead me then, sovereign Lord, continually to my all-precious Jesus. Open the port of communication, and keep it constantly open, between Christ and my soul. Faith will find a soft and quiet bed to sleep on in the arms of Jesus, and no noise of wars shall break the soul’s rest while reposing on Him—for so the promise runs: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isa 26:3).

Oh, then, once again, I send up the earnest cry of my soul. Let it be continually answered in mercy! “When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”



“Who loved me, and gave himself for me”

—*Galatians 2:20*

See, my soul, how Paul is forever using Jesus and feasting upon Him. Oh, seek grace to do the same! He says [that] Jesus loved him: Jesus, the Son of God, loved Paul! Now, love from any object is valuable, but from the first, and best, and greatest of all beings, what invaluable love is this?

And who did Christ love? Why, *me*, says Paul, “who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” (1Ti 1:13). And how do you know, Paul, that Jesus loved you? He “gave himself for me,” says Paul. Gave Himself? Yes, Himself, [and] not His gifts only: not His grace, not His mercies, though all creation is His. And whatever He gave must have been an undeserved mercy; for I merited hell when He bestowed upon me²¹ heaven. But even heaven, with all its glories, is nothing, says Paul, to what Jesus gave me; for He gave “himself for me.”

O my soul, will you not look up; will you not be encouraged to hope, to believe, to rest upon Jesus for the same. Oh, for faith to believe! Precious Jesus, Author and Finisher of faith, grant me this mercy. And while I read these sweet words concerning You, Who loved and Who gave Yourself for poor lost sinners, oh, like Paul and with the

²¹ bestowed upon me – gave me.

same assurance of faith, cause me to add “me,” “*me*”—Jesus “loved me, and gave himself for me”!

≈10≈

“Thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart.”

—*Exodus 28:30*

There is something very interesting in this account of “the Urim and the Thummim,” though in the present distance of time we can at the best form nothing more than conjectures as to what they were. But through grace and the teaching of the Holy Ghost, we can have clear views of what they meant.

The general acceptations of the Hebrew words are *lights* and *perfections*. As Aaron, bearing on his breast plate “the Urim and the Thummim” as high priest, became a living type of Christ, there can be no difficulty in beholding Jesus represented as the light and perfection of His people. And as Aaron bare all the names of the people upon his breast, where “the Urim and Thummim” were worn, how delightful is it to see Jesus thus represented as bearing all the persons of His redeemed, in His own light and perfection, when He goes in before the presence of God for us. Sweet and precious thought to the believer!

And now the Church cries out: “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm” (Song 8:6). And so important did this appear to Moses when dying, that he expressly prayed, “Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one” (Deu 33:8). Now here we have at once the application of the whole; for Who is Jehovah’s Holy One but the Lord Jesus Christ? With Him they eminently remain, and with Him only, for during the captivity they were lost with the Temple, and were never again restored. But with Jesus the continuance is everlasting, for He has “an unchangeable priesthood” (Heb 7:24), and is the “same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8).

Precious Lord Jesus, be “the Urim and the Thummim” to my soul; for You are both the light and perfection of Your people, in grace here and in glory forever.

“All my springs are in thee.”

—*Psalm 87:7*

Sweet thought! And this, as Solomon said upon another occasion, forms the conclusion of the whole matter (Ecc 12:13). Jesus is the Source, the Fountain, the Author, the Finisher of all our mercies—for everything of life and salvation, of grace and glory, flow from Him and center in Him. And therefore, in Him and from Him as the source of blessedness, all our springs must flow.

“In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col 2:9). All glories are in Him: the glory of the Church above; the glory of the Church below; yea, the glory of angels and of God Himself—for the Father has given all His glory into His almighty hands. Hence, my soul, from whom should your springs flow but from Jesus? If all divine attributes, all divine perfections are in Him; if grace be nowhere but in Jesus; no blessing, no redemption but in His blood; if all gifts and graces flow from Him, and can nowhere else be found—to whom shall the gathering of the people be, or from whom shall all blessings come?

And what a refreshing consideration is this under all the barren, dry, and withering frames²² of the believer’s heart. See to it, my soul, that you are coming to Jesus day by day for suitable supplies. Let not your emptiness discourage you or keep you away, but rather let a sense of your poverty endear to you Jesus’ riches.

You are as exactly suited for Him as He is suited to you. As much as you need His fullness, Jesus no less needs vessels to fill into, and to pour out upon, of His blessings. Precious Lord Jesus, behold then, I am come to You. I find in everything outside You sin, death, and misery. Oh, the rapturous²³ thought: “All my springs are in thee!”

²² **frames** – states of mind.

²³ **rapturous** – ecstatic; delightful.

“And his name shall be called Wonderful.”

—*Isaiah 9:6*

The fragrance of Jesus’ name as Emmanuel has given a sweet savor²⁴ to my soul. May He, Whose name is as ointment poured forth, give a new refreshment to my spiritual senses in this name also, as “Wonderful”; for surely everything in Him, and concerning Him of Whom the prophet speaks, is eminently so.

But who shall speak of Your wonders, dearest Lord: the wonders of Your Godhead, the wonders of Your manhood, the wonders of both natures united and centered in one Person? Who shall talk of the wonders of Your work, the wonders of Your offices, characters, relations; Your miraculous birth, Your wonderful death, resurrection, ascension? Who shall follow You, risen and exalted Savior, at the right hand of Power, and tell of the exercise of Your everlasting priesthood? Who shall speak of the wonders of Your righteousness, the wonders of Your sin-atonement blood?

What angel shall be found competent to proclaim the wonders of the Father’s love in giving You for poor sinners? What archangel to write down the wonders of Your love in undertaking and accomplishing redemption? And Who but God the Spirit can manifest...the height, depth, breadth, and length of a love that passes knowledge (Eph 3:18-19)?

Is there, my soul, a wonder yet that—as it concerns you and your interest in Him Whose name is Wonderful—is still more marvelous to your view? Yes, O wonderful Lord, for sure all wonders seem lost in the contemplation compared to this: that Jesus should look on me in my lost, ruined, and undone estate. His mercy endures forever! Well might Jesus say, “Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders” (Isa 8:18). Well might the Lord, concerning Jesus and His people, declare them to be as “men wondered at” (Zec 3:8).

And blessed Lord, the more love You have shown to Your people, the more are they the world’s wonder and their own. Precious Lord, continue to surprise my soul with the tokens²⁵ of Your love. All the tendencies of Your grace, all the manifestations of Your favor, Your visits, Your pardons, Your renewings, Your morning-call, Your mid-day feedings; Your noon, Your evening, Your midnight grace—all, all are among Your wonderful ways of salvation, and all testify to my soul that Your name, as well as Your work, is—and must be—Wonderful.

²⁴ **savor** – scent; flavor.

²⁵ **tokens** – signs.

“And he must needs go through Samaria.”

—*John 4:4*

What was there, blessed Jesus, that constrained You to this necessity? Was it because there was a poor adulterous woman there that needed Your grace, and the hour was come for her conversion? Sweet thought! Let me cherish it just now.

Was there not the same needs be²⁶ for the Father setting You up from everlasting to be the Head of Your Church and people? Could there have been a Church without You? And when Your Church had fallen by sin, what archangel could have recovered her...? Why then, there was a *needs be* that You should take the nature of Your people upon You, and “come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luk 19:10).

And as it is said of You concerning this poor woman, that “he must needs go through Samaria,” so must it be equally said, Jesus must needs go to Jerusalem, to save Jerusalem sinners by His blood. Oh yes, there was a blessed necessity upon You, Lamb of God, that You should do all this. “*Ought* not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” (Luk 24:26).

My soul, indulge this precious thought yet further, and see if there be not a *needs be* in your Jesus for numberless other occasions. Is there not a blessed necessity that Jesus should give out of His fullness to His people? Is there not a *needs be*, when His blessed gospel is preached, that He should be present to give virtue and efficacy to the Word delivered? Might not every poor, waiting, needy sinner say: “There is a blessed necessity Christ should be here”?

Surely He is constrained by His promise that, where two or three are met in His name, He is in the midst of them (Mat 18:20), and therefore He will come, He will bless His Word, He will give out of His fullness—for He knows my need, and the need of all His people present. Nay, is not the glory of our Jesus depending upon the receiving of His poor, and making them rich by His bounty?

Go one step further, my soul, this morning as it concerns yourself. Does not Jesus know now your state, your need, your circumstances, and that you are waiting for your daily alms²⁷ before you can leave His gate? Then is there not a *needs be* that He, Who was constrained to pass through Samaria, should come to you?

Precious, precious Jesus! I wait Your coming; I long to hear Your voice. What I need, You know. And as Your glory and my salvation are both blended, Lord, do for

²⁶ **needs be** – necessity (for God to bring it to pass).

²⁷ **alms** – gifts of charity.

me as shall best conduce²⁸ to this one end, and all will be well. Jesus will be glorified, and my soul made happy. Amen.

≈14≈

“Behold the Lamb of God!”

—*John 1:36*

Who is it [that] calls upon you, my soul, to this most gratifying and enriching of all employments? Is it not God the Holy Ghost by the ministry of His servant John? And does not God your Father do the same by the ministry of His servant Isaiah, when He bids you behold Him “in whom my soul delighteth” (Isa 42:1)? And is not Jesus Himself calling, again and again in the ministry of His Word and ordinances upon your poor forgetful heart, when He says, “Look unto me [that is, Behold Me! Behold Me!], and be ye saved” (Isa 45:22)!

And will you not obey the sweet and gracious calls on which all your present peace and everlasting happiness depend? Precious, precious Jesus! Yes, my Lord, I think I would so look unto You and so behold You, until my whole heart and all its affections followed my eyes, and left not a thought behind for a single object besides You. I would eye You, dear Redeemer, as the Lamb of God—both where You once were and where You now are, and follow You whithersoever You go.

I would behold You, as the Lamb of God, set up in the decrees of eternity from everlasting; for You are “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). I would behold You set forth in all the representations of Your redeeming blood, in the innumerable sacrifices of the Law, and in the lamb of the morning and the lamb of the evening, through the intermediate ages to Your coming.

I would behold You, O unequalled pattern of excelling meekness, when in the days of Your flesh You walked through the streets of Jerusalem, and when as a lamb You were led to the slaughter. I would eye You, O Lamb of God, until my eye-strings could hold no longer—when as the Lamb of God and my soul’s Surety,²⁹ You hung upon the tree, putting away sin and satisfying divine justice by the sacrifice of Yourself. And never would I take off my eyes from Your cross, until called by You to behold Yourself as a Lamb in the midst of the throne, where You are feeding Your Church above, and dispensing blessings to all Your Church below.

²⁸ **conduce** – contribute.

²⁹ **Surety** – one who assumes the responsibilities or debts of another; as our Surety, Christ guaranteed a full legal satisfaction for our sin and our deliverance upon His payment of our debt upon Calvary’s cross (Heb 7:22).

Yes, yes, blessed triumphant Lamb of God, You are the Lamb still. Change of place has made no change in Your nature, Your love, or the efficacy³⁰ of Your redemption. You still appear as a Lamb that has been slain (Rev 5:6). And still You bear on Your glorified body the marks of my redemption. Shall I not behold You then, dearest Jesus? Shall I not unceasingly behold You, thus called upon by the Father, Son, and Spirit, and thus finding everything that can satisfy my most unbounded desires for time and for eternity? Help me, blessed Jesus, so to look, and so to live upon You. And oh, do behold me, and bid me live, and make me Yours forever.

≈15≈

“But Mary stood without at the sepulchre,
weeping: and as she wept, she stooped
down, and looked into the sepulchre.”

—*John 20:11*

Behold in this woman, my soul, a delightful instance of what your love should be to your Lord. If at any time you miss your Jesus and long for His return, where would you expect Him? Surely at His ordinances, in His Word, at His throne of grace...

How do men of the world pursue the object of their wishes, but where it is to be found? Are they thirsty? They haste to drink. Are they cold? They seek the fire. Follow this plan: If Jesus be away, seek Him where He has directed you to come. So Mary waited at the sepulcher; and as she waited, she looked in while she wept, to see the place where Jesus had lain.

Sweet view of a sincere seeker! The heart and eye are both engaged, and all the affections are going forth in desire. The angels addressed Mary; but the sight of angels could not satisfy her till Jesus Himself came. It is worthy of remark that the first appearance the Lord Jesus made of Himself after He arose from the dead was to this woman out of whom He had cast seven devils. And it is yet further remarkable that the first words which Jesus spake after the glorious event of His resurrection were to this Mary Magdalene!

He passed by the whole of the apostles to give Mary this distinguished honor. Mary stood at the door of the sepulcher, weeping, but the apostles had returned to their own homes—and the Lord Jesus rewarded that waiting. “Woman,” Jesus says, “why weepest thou?” (Joh 20:15). As if the Son of God had said: What cause can there

³⁰ **efficacy** – effectiveness.

be now to weep, since all the ruins of the Fall are done away, and sin, death, hell, and the grave, with all their tremendous consequences, are destroyed forever?

I hope I do not mistake, but I think this feature in the character of the Lord Jesus is calculated to dry up every tear from every eye of His redeemed. It seems to speak in the language of that precious Scripture: “For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee” (Isa 30:19). My soul, do not fail to take with you the many blessed improvements which the waiting of Mary—and the grace of Jesus in thus rewarding that waiting—brings with it.

There is no interruption, no pause in Jesus’ love. In reading that sweet volume, there are no stops—no, not a comma—but what we ourselves make. And if at any time we find ourselves come to the bottom of a page full of the relations³¹ of Jesus and His love, it is only to turn over the leaf, and there we find the continuation of the same blessed subject. Now, my soul, learn from Mary to take your stand where she stood. Not at the sepulcher of Jesus, for He is risen as He said, and we are commanded not to seek the living among the dead; but we are to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes, and to look at Christ upon His throne of glory.

Nevertheless, as the angels said to those who sought Christ at the tomb, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (Mat 28:6), so we may by faith often view that memorable sepulcher—and precious will be the meditation, as Mary’s was. And, my soul, do not forget Who it was that led Mary thither,³² gave her those sympathies, and at length converted her sorrow into the most heartfelt joy. Oh, it is blessed, it is precious, to be kept in the way, the good old way, of waiting upon the Lord. He is always near, and though He may for a while seem to conceal Himself, yet He will be found of them that seek Him. He Himself says, “It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear” (Isa 65:24). “Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am” (Isa 58:9)!

Blessed Jesus, do by me, do by all Your children who seek You sorrowing as You did by Mary, and as You do by all Your people: “Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?” And when our souls reply, “It is Jesus alone we seek,” oh, then to hear our own names called upon as hers was, “Mary!”—and in such a way as to draw forth every affection of the heart in our answer, “Rabboni! My Lord and my God!” (Joh 20:15-16, 28).

³¹ **relations** – accounts.

³² **thither** – to that place.

“Why have I found grace in thine eyes,
that thou shouldest take knowledge
of me, seeing I am a stranger?”

—*Ruth 2:10*

My soul, do you not find continual causes for sending forth the same inquiry as this poor Moabitess did, when you are receiving some renewed instance of Jesus' favor? Her heart was overwhelmed with the kindness of Boaz in permitting her to glean³³ only in his fields, and to eat a morsel of food with his servants. But your Boaz, your kinsman-redeemer, has opened to you all His stores of grace and mercy; He bids you come and take of the water of life freely. Yea, He is to you, Himself, the bread of life and the water of life, and is now, and will be forever, your portion on which you may feed to all eternity.

When you look back and trace the subject of His love from the beginning, in the springs and autumns of His grace; when you take a review of the distinguishing nature of these acts of grace; when you bring into the account your ingratitude under all the sunshine of His love and favor—will not the question again and again arise, at every review, “Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?”—stranger indeed, by nature and by practice, living without God and without Christ in the world (Eph 2:12).

And, my soul, after such repeated, unceasing acts of grace as Jesus has shown—and even when you have caused Him “to serve with thy sins” and “wearied [him] with thine iniquities” (Isa 43:24)—yet His compassions have failed not, but have been “new every morning” (Lam 3:23). It might have been supposed that long and unceasing grace would at length have produced the blessed effect of living wholly to Him Who has so loved you as to give Himself for you. But, alas, the day that marks again His mercy marks again your rebellion! So that the heart is constrained every day to cry out, “Why have I found grace in thine eyes?” (Ru 2:10).

Precious Jesus, the only answer is because You are—You will be—Jesus. Lord, I bow down to the dust of the earth in token of my vileness and Your unspeakable glory! It is indeed the glorious attribute of Your grace to poor fallen men: “He delighteth in mercy” (Mic 7:18).

³³ **glean** – gather grain or produce left behind after harvest.

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

—1 Peter 1:8-9

My soul, mark what a blessed testimony believers of the present hour are here said to give to an unseen but dearly beloved Redeemer. Behold what blessed effects are induced³⁴ in the soul by such lively acts of faith upon His person and righteousness! And, indeed, when it is considered Who Christ is, what He is to us, what He has done for us, and what He is forever doing for us and will do to all eternity—who but *must* love Him?

In His person, all divine perfections center. Whatever tends to make any creature lovely, in heaven or on earth, is found in Jesus in the most eminent degree—for there is nothing lovely in creatures of any character, whether angels or men, but it is derived from Him. It is Jesus Who gives all that excellency and grace which they possess. The whole is found in Him, and received from Him. And when to these views of what Christ is in Himself the believer adds the consideration of what Christ is to him—what He has wrought and what He has accomplished in redemption for him—such thoughts of Jesus, under the teachings of the Holy Ghost in His glorifying Jesus Christ to the soul, give “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1Pe 1:8).

My soul, what says your own experience to these truths? Surely Christ is a portion full and rich enough for every poor, needy sinner to live upon to all eternity. You have been taught that all the fullness in Jesus is for His people; that His grace is magnified in giving out of His fullness to supply their need; yea, that Jesus waits to be gracious. He is as truly glorified when a poor creature lives by faith and joy upon His bounty, as He is when that poor creature lays himself out in praises for that bounty. Surely, though you have never seen Christ in the flesh, yet by faith you have seen Him and lived upon Him. You have such believing views of Him as give you present peace and immediate enjoyment of salvation.

Oh, the felicity³⁵ of thus realizing future things by present possession! Oh, the blessedness of substantiating things unseen by the strength of that faith which works by love! See to it, my soul, that your God and Savior is increasingly precious and increasingly lovely day by day. He is lovely to the Father and to the Holy Ghost, to the praise of all His

³⁴ **induced** – produced.

³⁵ **felicity** – happiness; blessedness.

saints in glory, to the joy and adoration of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. He is lovely to all creation excepting devils and poor, blind, unawakened sinners. [Then] see to it, my soul, that this lovely and all-loving Jesus is the first, best, and completely satisfying object of your delight; [so] that this blessed testimony, which the Holy Ghost has here given of the faithful, may be yours. And [see to it] that, though not having seen Jesus, you love Him; and though unseen, you believe in Him. This will be to “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

≈18≈

“And they called Rebekah, and said unto
her, Wilt thou go with this man?
And she said, I will go.”

—*Genesis 24:58*

See, my soul, with what readiness Rebekah determined to accompany the servant of Abraham to Isaac. And will you not arise and go forth at the invitation of the servants of Jesus, Who sends them to call you to His arms? Has He not, by the sweet constraining influences of His Holy Spirit as well as by the outward ministry of His blessed Word, made you willing in the day of His power (Psa 110:3)?

Did the servant of Abraham give an earnest of his master’s affection in putting the bracelets upon Rebekah’s hands, and the earrings and the gold? But what was this to the love tokens which Jesus Himself has given you, when He set you as a seal³⁶ upon His heart and arm? All the waters of divine wrath (poured upon His holy soul for your sins) and all the floods of corruption that like a deluge had overspread your whole nature could not quench His love nor drown it.

And if it then be demanded from your own mouth this day, “Will you go with this Man”—this God-man, this Glory-man, this Jesus—will you not instantly cry out, “I will go”? Yes, [my] altogether lovely Lord, chiefest and fairest among ten thousand, I will go with You. I would forget mine own people and my father’s house, for my father’s house is an house of bondage. I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity, a child of wrath even as others, and by nature dead in trespasses and sins. It is You, blessed Jesus, Who has delivered me from the wrath to come. It is You Who has quickened me by your Holy Spirit to a new and spiritual life. It is You Who has sent Your servants to call me to yourself, and has betrothed me to yourself forever. And if there is any that yet ask me, “Wilt thou go

³⁶ seal – stamp; engraving.

with this man?” my whole soul would outrun the question and, like the apostle, I would answer: “To whom else shall I go?” (*see* Joh 6:68). Witness for me, you servants of my Lord, you angels and ministers of light—I have none in heaven, neither in earth, but Him. Yes, dearest Redeemer! I will go with You, follow You, live with You, hang upon You, die with You—nor even death itself shall part You and me.

Oh, let those precious words of Yours concerning Your Church be sweetly felt in my soul: “I will say...thou art my people,” and my whole soul will make her responses to the gracious sound, and say, “Thou art my God” (Hos 2:23).

≈19≈

“And thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.”

—*Hosea 3:3*

My soul, was not God the Holy Ghost representing, by the similitude³⁷ of His servant the prophet’s marriage with an adulteress, the astonishing marriage of Jesus with our nature, and His personal union with every individual of His Church and people?

Look at this Scripture and see how sweetly it points to Jesus. The prophet was commanded to love this woman, beloved of her friend and yet an adulteress. He was to buy her also to himself; and he was to charge her to abide with him and not to play the harlot any more, saying unto her: “And thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.”

Precious Jesus, do I not behold You in all this? Can anything more strikingly shadow forth Your grace, Your mercy, Your love to Your people? Was not our whole nature estranged from You when You came down from heaven to seek and save that which was lost (Luk 19:6)? Were not all in a state of daring adultery when You had from everlasting betrothed Yourself to us, in standing up [as] our glorious Husband and Surety?

And how striking the expression: “Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend” (Hos 3:1)! Surely at the command of God Your Father—and not uncalled, unsent, unauthorized—did You come. Our nature was indeed yet beloved [by] You, our best and dearest Friend—though in a state of spiritual adultery and wholly gone away from You. Yes, blessed Jesus, in defiance of all our multiplied transgressions, it might be truly said [that] we were yet beloved of You, our Friend and

³⁷ **similitude** – likeness; resemblance.

Brother born for adversity: for You were then, as now, unchangeable in Your love, the same Jesus yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8).

And surely, Lord, in another feature the prophet [also] shadowed You forth: for as he purchased the harlot, so You, Lord, before we became Yours, did purchase us by Your blood. And do You now say to me this day, “Abide with me...and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee”?

O condescending God! O precious, lovely, all loving Savior! Lord, make me Yours; yea, altogether Yours! Let my whole soul, body, and spirit be all Yours—both by the conquests of Your grace, as they are justly Yours, and by the purchase of Your blood—that never, never more I may depart from You; but with the same full consent as the Church of old, I may exult in this blessed assurance, “My beloved is mine, and I am his” (Song 2:16).

≈20≈

“Seeking for Jesus”

—*John 6:24*

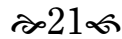
This, my soul, should be your constant employment, wherever you are, however engaged; in going in or out; at rising up or lying down; whether in public or private, in the church or marketplace; the closet, the family, the garden, the field, the house—the question ever arising in the heart should be: Where is Jesus?

Blessed Spirit, glorifier of my Lord, will You constantly excite this seeking for Jesus in my heart? Will You, Lord, give me every moment a sense of need, [and] then a view of His fullness, suitableness, readiness to impart? Then bring Him Whom my soul loves and me together; and then open a communication in leading me forth in desire, and giving me faith to receive from the infinite fullness of my Lord, and grace for grace.

Lord Jesus, I would desire grace to seek You as for hidden treasure. I would seek You and You only, O my God! I would separate myself from all other things; it is Jesus my soul chooses, my soul needs. I would trust in nothing beside: no duties, no works; neither prayers nor repentance. No, nor faith itself, considered as an act of my soul, shall be my comfort, but Jesus alone I would make my center. Every thought, every affection, and every desire, like so many streams meeting in one, should all pour themselves as rivers into the ocean of Your bosom! As a stream that draws near the sea is propelled to

fall into it, so the more forcible and vehement³⁸ let my soul be in desires after You, as my soul draws nearer the hour of seeing You.

O Lamb of God, give me to be seeking after You through life, pressing after You from one ordinance³⁹ to another. And when ordinances cease and all outward comforts fail, then, Lord, may I gather up all my strength, as the dying patriarch did his feet in the bed (Gen 49:33), and pour my whole soul into Your arms, crying out, “I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD” (Gen 49:18).



“How much owest thou unto my lord?”

—*Luke 16:5*

My soul, if this question, which the unjust steward put to his lord’s debtors, was put to you concerning that immense debt which has made you insolvent⁴⁰ forever, what would you answer?

Never could you conceive the extent of it, much less think of paying the vast amount. A debtor to free grace for your very being; a debtor to free grace for your well-being; ten thousand talents,⁴¹ which the man in the parable owed his master, would not be sufficient to reckon up what you in reality owe to your Lord for even the common gifts of nature and providence. But when the calculation goes on in grace, what archangel shall write down the sum total!

To the broken Law of God, [I am] a bankrupt exposed to the justice of God; to the dreadful penalty of everlasting death; to the fears and alarms of a guilty conscience; to the worm that dies not; to the accusations of Satan, unable to answer one in a thousand. My soul, how much do you owe unto your Lord?

Are there yet any other outstanding debts? Oh yes, infinitely and beyond all these! What think you, my soul, of Jesus? How much do you owe to the Father’s love in giving, to the Redeemer’s love in coming, and to the Holy Ghost in making the whole effectual to your soul’s joy? By these Jesus has paid all your debts, cancelled all the demands of God’s righteous Law, silenced Satan, [and] answered justice. [He has] not

³⁸ **vehement** – fervent; eager.

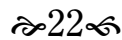
³⁹ **ordinance** – baptism, the Lord’s Supper, hearing the Word preached, prayer, etc.

⁴⁰ **insolvent** – unable to pay a debt.

⁴¹ **talent** – originally, a talent was a measure of weight, varying in size from country to country; it came to mean a large unit of money, varying in value with the metal involved, whether gold, silver, or copper. “Ten thousand talents” represents an immeasurable sum of money.

only redeemed you out of the hands of everlasting bondage, misery, and eternal death, but brought you into His everlasting kingdom of freedom, joy, and glory!

Say, say, my soul, how much you do owe unto your Lord! Oh, precious debt, ever increasing and yet everlastingly making happy in owing. Lord Jesus, I am Yours, and Your servant forever. You have loosed my bonds (Psa 116:16).



“The comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me.”

—*Lamentations 1:16*

Whence⁴² is it, my soul, that those distressing thoughts arise? Pause, and inquire:

Is the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, indeed withdrawn, when Jesus, your Jesus, sweetly and graciously promised that He should abide forever? This cannot be.

Is the righteousness of Jesus less, or has His blood to atone and cleanse lost its efficacy? Oh no! Jesus' righteousness, and Jesus' all-atoning⁴³ propitiation,⁴⁴ like the Almighty Author of both, must be eternally and everlastingly the same: “yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8).

Has God your Father forgotten to be gracious? Oh no! God your Father proclaimed from heaven that He is well pleased for His dear Son's righteousness' sake; and never, never, shall a word gone out of the Lord's mouth be altered.

From whence then, my soul, are your leanness, your fears, and despondency? Can you not discover? Oh yes, it is all in yourself and your unbelieving frame;⁴⁵ you are looking to yourself and not to all-precious Jesus! You want to feel some new frame of your own, some melting of heart or the like; and if you could be gratified in this, then you would go to Jesus with confidence, and *then* plead for acceptance (as you think) Jesus' name, blood, and righteousness.

And does the want of these feelings keep you back? Oh, fie,⁴⁶ my soul; is this your love, your kindness to your Friend? Can anything be more plain than that you are making a part savior of your feelings, and not a whole Savior of your Jesus? No wonder you cry out, “the comforter...is far from me,” for the Holy Ghost will teach you

⁴² **whence** – from where.

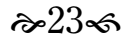
⁴³ **all-atoning** – entirely reconciling.

⁴⁴ **propitiation** – appeasement; sacrifice that turns away wrath.

⁴⁵ **frame** – state of mind.

⁴⁶ **fie** – expression of disappointment or disapproval.

that all comfort is only in Jesus. And mark this, my soul, for all future occasions: if you will seek comfort in anything out[side] of Jesus, though it be in the sweetest frames (as you may think of your own), Jesus, in mercy and love, will put your comforts out of your reach. Oh, then, come to Jesus, poor and needy, with or without frames. Make Him all and in all; and He will be your joy, your comfort, and your portion forever!



“Because of the savour of thy good ointments
thy name is as ointment poured forth.”

—*Song of Solomon 1:3*

Why, my Lord, is Your name so truly blessed, but because You have so endeared it to Your redeemed by every tie which can gain the affections.

Even before I had being, You entered into suretyship⁴⁷ engagements for me, [so] that You would redeem me when fallen. You would take my nature, live for me, die for me, become a sacrifice for me, shed Your blood for me, wash me in Your blood, clothe me with Your righteousness, justify me before God and Your Father; become my Advocate, High Priest, Intercessor; betroth me to Yourself here in grace, and everlastingly unite me to Yourself in glory hereafter.

Did You do all this, and are You still doing it, making my cause Your own, and following me with love, grace, and mercy—every day, and all day? And will You never leave me nor forsake me?

And must not Your name be as ointment poured forth? Can there be a savor⁴⁸ as sweet, as fragrant, as full of odor,⁴⁹ as the name of Jesus? Precious ointments, it is true, have a smell in them very grateful.⁵⁰ But what savor can be like that which to the spiritual senses manifests Jesus in His person, love, grace, and mercy. In [Jesus] there is everything desirable and nothing but what is lovely: all beauty, power, wisdom, strength—an assemblage⁵¹ of graces more full of odor than all the spices of the east.

⁴⁷ **suretyship** – taking responsibility for someone else’s debt.

⁴⁸ **savor** – scent; flavor.

⁴⁹ **odor** – scent.

⁵⁰ **grateful** – pleasing.

⁵¹ **assemblage** – collection.

Precious Lord Jesus, let Your name be written in my heart, and let everything but Jesus be forever obliterated there, [so] that nothing may arise from thence⁵² but what speaks of You; [so] that through life and in death, the first and the last—and all that drops from my lips, even in the separation of soul and body—*Jesus* may form, in the close of grace here and in the first opening of glory to follow, the one only blessed precious name, as ointment poured forth.

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“Behold how he loved him!”

—*John 11:36*

The tears of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus produced [such] astonishment in the mind of the Jews that they thus exclaimed! But had they known, or did the whole world know, what I know of Your love to me, dear Redeemer of my soul, every one that heard it might with greater wonder cry out, “Behold how he loved him!”

In my contemplation of Your love, I would for the present pass by all the numberless instances of it which I possess in common with Your Church and people. For though these in every and all cases carry with them the tokens of a love that passes knowledge (Eph 3:19), yet, for this meditation, I would pause over the view of Jesus’ love to me a poor sinner—not as it is displayed in general mercies, even the glorious mercies of redemption, but as those mercies come home in their personal direction of them to my own heart, even to mine.

Think, my soul, what a huge volume you will have to read over in eternity of Jesus’ love to you as distinguished, express,⁵³ personal, and particular. Amid all the several chapters of that love, how will you dwell with rapture on those two sweet verses of it which, like the hymn in one of the psalms, you will have to chant aloud after the review of every blessing noted down: “for his mercy endureth for ever” (Psa 136).

I mean, [my soul,] first, that Jesus should ever look with pity on you; and next to this, that after such distinguishing grace, the floods of sin and corruption in you should not have quenched that love and extinguished it forever. The thought of Jesus’ love, if looked at only in these two points of view, will be enough to employ your immortal faculties in contemplation, love, and praise to all eternity. Pause, my soul, and take a short view of each.

⁵² **thence** – there.

⁵³ **express** – explicit.

Jesus looked on you, loved you, called you, redeemed you, and manifested Himself to you otherwise than He does to the world. And this [was] at a time when thousands and tens of thousands are passed by, of temper, mind, disposition, and understanding—in every point of view—vastly your superiors and far more promising to glorify Him. Bow down, my soul, while you ponder over the rich mercy, and refer all the praise and all the glory unto Him Whose free grace, not your deserts, became the sole cause. And when you have fully turned this astonishing subject over in your mind, think again that, after such distinguishing grace, how increasingly astonishing it is that all your repeated and aggravated transgressions have not extinguished this love towards you, but that Jesus still loves though you have been, and still continue, so ungrateful.

O love unequalled, past all comprehension! When shall this base, this shameful heart of mine so love You as to live to Your glory? Lord, I abhor myself in this view of Your grace and my vileness (Job 42:6)!

≈25≈

“He restoreth my soul.”

—*Psalm 23:3*

Yes, Lord, it is indeed You that brings back the stray sheep; for as no man ever quickened, so “none can keep alive his own soul” (Psa 22:29). It was indeed Your promise, and most graciously You fulfil it: “As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep...so will I seek out my sheep...and bring again that which was driven away” (Eze 34:12, 16).

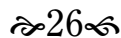
My soul, mark this trait of character in your Jesus for your meditation. It is well for you that that restoring work, reclaiming work, [and] reviving work is all with Jesus: it begins in Him and is carried on and completed by Him and through His grace in you. It is well for you, my soul, that though you so often fail in all things towards your Jesus, yet He never fails in His love to you in anything.

Sweet consideration! His love, and not our deserts,⁵⁴ is the standard for all His tenderness to His people. And mark it down in strong characters, my soul, that Jesus’ grace is much shown this way. He does not wait [for] our *return*, for then we should never return at all. Neither does He wait [for] our cry for help, but *He* puts that cry into the soul.

⁵⁴ **deserts** – deserving.

Alas, how often have we wandered and gone away, even before we were sensible of our departure. How blessed is it then to see and know that Jesus' eye is upon us, and that before we return to Him, He is coming forth to us. His love, His pity, [and] His compassion are the security of His people's recovery.

Yes, Lord, it is You that restores my soul. Praises to Your name, for You do it all in such a way as proves it to be for Your great name's sake, that Your grace comes freely and without upbraiding.⁵⁵ "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."



“The day dawn, and the day star”

—2 Peter 1:19

And what is “the day dawn, and day star” arising in the hearts of God's people, but Jesus, “the dayspring⁵⁶ from on high” visiting us (Luk 1:78)? Is not Jesus “the bright and morning star” (Rev 22:16), the light and the life of men (Joh 1:4)? Yea, is He not the “Sun of righteousness” arising “with healing in his wings” (Mal 4:2)? And when He arises on our benighted⁵⁷ minds, may He not be called, “the day dawn, and the day star”?

Pause, my soul, over the sweet thought. It was all darkness in the creation of God until Jesus arose. And His coming was as the breaking forth of the morning, the sure harbinger⁵⁸ of day. Indeed, Jesus was “the day dawn, and the day star” in the light of redemption, before the world was formed; for in the council of peace,⁵⁹ He came up as man's light and salvation at the call of God from all eternity. And in time, during all His eventful ministry upon earth, was not Jesus “a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luk 2:32)?

And what is Jesus now but “the day dawn, and the day star” of all the promises? Until we see Christ in them, they are nothing. It is He that makes them all yea and amen, and is “the day dawn, and the day star” of all dispensations.⁶⁰ His Word, His providences,⁶¹ His grace, His ordinances—all are dark until Jesus arises as “the day

⁵⁵ **upbraiding** – reproving; rebuking.

⁵⁶ **dayspring** – dawn.

⁵⁷ **benighted** – overcome by night; involved in moral darkness or ignorance.

⁵⁸ **harbinger** – messenger or sign that gives notice of what will soon follow.

⁵⁹ **council of peace** – eternal purpose of the Triune God for salvation.

⁶⁰ **dispensations** – arrangement of events by divine providence.

⁶¹ **providences** – God's work of preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.

dawn, and the day star” to enlighten them. When He shines in upon them, then are they blessed and clear. When He withdraws His light, not one of them can be read.

And what is “the day dawn, and the day star” in the hearts of His people—converting them from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God—but Jesus shining by His Holy Spirit within, and bringing them to the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of Himself? Say, my soul, what was the day—the ever blessed, ever to be remembered day—when God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined in upon your heart; and Jesus, “the day dawn, and the day star,” arose to give you “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Co 4:6)?

Hail, glorious Light and Life of my soul! Oh, continue Your sweet influences, morning by morning, and in the day dawn and evening star of Your grace. [Continue] until, after many dark dispensations and wintry days of my blindness, ignorance, and senseless state (during which You will renew me in the precious discoveries of Your love), I am carried through all the twilight of this poor dying state of things below. Then shall I awake up to the full enjoyment of Yourself in glory—to see You in one full, open day, and to be made like unto You in Your kingdom of light, life, and happiness forever and ever.

≈27≈

“Jesus wept.”

—*John 11:35*

My soul, look at your Redeemer in this account of Him. Was there ever a more interesting⁶² portrait than what the evangelist has here drawn of the Son of God? If the imagination were to be employed forever in forming a compelling scene of the miseries of human nature, what could furnish so complete a picture as these two words given of Christ at the sight of them: “Jesus wept”?

Here we have at once the evidence how much the miseries of our nature affected the heart of Jesus. And here we have the most convincing testimony that He partook of all the sinless infirmities of our nature, and in all points was truly *man* as well as God. We are told by one of the ancient writers (perhaps St. Chrysostom⁶³) that some weak but injudicious⁶⁴ Christians in his days were so rash as to strike this verse out of

⁶² **interesting** – engaging the mind, affections, or emotions.

⁶³ **John Chrysostom** (c. 347-407) – Bishop of Constantinople, an important Early Church Father. He is known for his eloquence in preaching and public speaking.

⁶⁴ **injudicious** – unwise.

their Bibles, from an idea that it was unsuitable and unbecoming in the Son of God to weep. But we have cause to bless the over-ruling providence of God that, though they struck it out from their Bibles, they did it not from ours. It is blessed to us to have it preserved, for it affords one of the most satisfying views we can possibly have of the affectionate heart of Jesus in feeling for the sorrows of His people.

And, methinks, had they judged aright, they would have thought that if it were unsuitable or unbecoming in Jesus to weep, it would have been more so to put on the appearance of it. And why those groans at the grave of Lazarus, if tears were improper? Precious Lord! How refreshing to my soul is the consideration that, forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, You likewise partook of the same; for in all things it behooved⁶⁵ You to be made like to Your brethren (Heb 2:14, 17)!

Hence,⁶⁶ when my poor heart is afflicted, when Satan storms or the world frowns, when sickness in myself or when under bereaving providences for my friends, all Your waves and storms seem to go over me, oh, what relief is it to know that Jesus looks on and sympathizes! Then do I say to myself: Will not Jesus, Who wept at the grave of Lazarus, feel for me? Shall I look up to Him and look up in vain? Did Jesus, when upon earth, know what those exercises were? Was His precious soul made sensible of distresses even to tears; and will He be [so] regardless of what I feel and the sorrows under which I groan?

Oh, no! The sigh that bursts in secret from my heart is not secret to Him; the tear that on my night couch drops unperceived and unknown to the world, is known and numbered by Him. Though now exalted at the right hand of Power, where He has wiped away all tears from off all faces, yet He Himself still retains the feelings and the character of the “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa 53:3).

Help me, Lord, thus to look up to You, and thus to remember You! Oh, that blessed Scripture: “In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old” (Isa 63:9).

⁶⁵ **behooved** – was necessary for.

⁶⁶ **hence** – from this reason.

“The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”

—*Zephaniah 3:17*

My soul, look at this Old Testament promise through the medium⁶⁷ of the New Testament dispensation,⁶⁸ and behold what a cluster of rich blessings it contains—and which, like all the other promises of the Bible, is yea and amen in Christ Jesus (2Co 1:20)! Observe how it opens.

“The LORD thy God,” that is, Jehovah in His threefold character of person, in rich covenant engagements,⁶⁹ is “in the midst of thee.” He has set up His throne in Zion and lives, reigns, and governs in the hearts of His redeemed. So said Jesus, and so that dear Lord explained it in after ages: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Joh 14:23). “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth” (Joh 14:16-17).

Mark these blessed, precious truths, my soul—in the most lively characters—on your heart; and hence learn that the Lord your God, in covenant engagements, dwells in the midst of His people and in their hearts—[so] that, like the sun at midday in the center of the heavens, He may enlighten, warm, refresh, and give forth all His blessings to bless you.

Next, mark what the prophet says of this covenant Lord God, Who is in the midst of His Church and people: “He is mighty!” Shout aloud at this, my soul; for if He be mighty, then He will support your weakness and subdue your foes.

What can bear down or destroy the soul whom this mighty God upholds? What shall arise to distress a child of God, as long as God is almighty? And if He has engaged to be for you, who can dare to be against you (Rom 8:31)? Sweet consideration! What signifies my weakness while Christ is strong?—yea, His strength will be made perfect in my weakness (2Co 12:9).

Go on farther, my soul, in looking over the many blessed things spoken of in this verse. “He will save.” Yea, He has saved, does save, and will save! And this is the very cause, the angel said, for which His name should be called Jesus: for “he shall save

⁶⁷ **medium** – means by which anything is conveyed.

⁶⁸ **dispensation** – age; period of time.

⁶⁹ **engagements** – obligations by agreement or contract.

his people from their sins” (Mat 1:21). Think of this when, at any time, sin or sorrow, trial or temptation, would cast you down. Jesus is still Jesus, still on His throne: yea, [is still] your Savior. Amid all your changeableness, there is no change in Him.

And observe yet farther how the prophet chimes on those sweet words: “He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” Pause, my soul, over this most gracious account. Jesus not only saves, not only pardons, but He does it as God, as Jesus. It is His joy, His delight, His pleasure to do so. As He says in another Scripture, “Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul” (Jer 32:41).

And as the poor timid believer, from feeling such coldness and deadness as at times he feels in himself, is but too easily prevailed upon by the enemy (and by his own unbelieving heart) to suppose the same of Jesus, [so] that the timid might not give way to this temptation, the Lord adds, “he will rest in his love”—that is, will abide in it unmoved and without change; for, as He says in another Scripture, “the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away” (Mal 2:16).

Oh, what a multitude of sweet things are folded up in this verse! Jesus rejoices over His people; yea, Jesus joys “over thee with singing.” How often have I seen, in some lovely evening, that sweet bird of the air called the skylark mount aloft from her nest, still looking at her young as she ascends—and when advanced to her height, warbling in the most delightful notes over her brood, until at length, with all the rapidity of love, she darts down to cover, feed, and protect them. Thus, but in an infinitely higher degree, does Jesus joy over His children with singing, resting in His love. [He] is ever near, ever mighty to defend, to bless, to keep, and to make happy those who rest in His strength—while He rests in His love, being their God, and they His people.

≈29≈

“Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and
drink thy wine with a merry heart;
for God now accepteth thy works.”

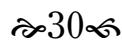
—*Ecclesiastes 9:7*

My soul, here is a sweet subject for your hourly thoughts. Are you “accepted” in the Beloved? Have you accepted Jesus, and God accepted you in Jesus?

Well may you then eat of the bread of common providences,⁷⁰ and drink of the sweet of all sanctified mercies, for everything is blessed in Jesus, and Jesus is blessing you in everything. Surely, an accepted soul is a blessed soul, for he is blessed in his basket⁷¹ and in his store;⁷² blessed in his lying down and blessed in his rising up; blessed in his going out and blessed in his coming home; yea, blessed in time and blessed to all eternity. Yes, blessed source of all my blessedness, precious Jesus, I will go my way, for You are my way (Joh 14:6). I will eat my bread with joy, for You are my bread of life (Joh 6:35). I will drink the wine which You have mingled⁷³ for me, for Your love is better than wine (Song 1:2).

And as God my Father accepts me in You, this forms an everlasting cause of everlasting joy: joy in what I have; joy in what I expect; joy in even what I want,⁷⁴ for those very wants will lead me the closer and the nearer to You. Joy in what I fear, for my fear will keep me depending upon You; joy in what I suffer, for my sufferings are sweetly blessed when they afford a renewed occasion for my Jesus to soothe me under them and, in His time, to deliver me out of them. And joy in all I lose, for lose what I may, I cannot lose You—I cannot lose God’s Christ; I cannot lose His love, His favor, His grace, His Spirit, the efficacy of His blood, and the merits of His righteousness.

Oh precious security, precious salvation in the Lord our Righteousness (Jer 33:16)! Shall I not then live up to this heritage, and live under its influence, in the thankful, joyful use of it from day to day? Go your way, my soul, go in Jesus as your Way. Every day, and all the day, eat your bread with joy. Eye Jesus as your spiritual food and always present at your table. Drink hourly of His cup of salvation with a cheerful heart, for you are accepted in the Beloved.



“One pearl of great price”

—*Matthew 13:46*

Great indeed, and but One, for salvation is in none other; neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved (Act 4:12).

⁷⁰ **providences** – works of God in preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.

⁷¹ **basket** – contents of a basket, as in harvesting—as much as it can hold.

⁷² **store** – storehouse, as of harvested food.

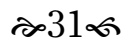
⁷³ **mingled** – mixed (possibly with water, as was a common practice).

⁷⁴ **want** – lack.

My soul, have you considered Jesus in this precious point of view? Have you beheld Him both in His divine and human nature—how unspeakably glorious in Himself, and how enriching to the souls of His people? Are you a spiritual merchantman, seeking goodly pearls? And is Jesus the One, the only One—costly, precious, and so infinitely desirable in your eye, that you are willing to sell all, [so] that you would part with millions of worlds rather than lose Christ?

Have you found Him in the field of His Scripture, and do you ask, “How shall I buy?” Listen to His own most gracious words, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich” (Rev 3:18). Yes, generous Lord, I am come to buy of You “without money and without price” (Isa 55:1). For well I know, through Your teaching, that neither the obedience of men or angels can purchase the least title to You, but only Your own precious merits and Your atoning blood.

And now, Lord, possessing You I possess all things; and will give up all beside—and part with all and forget all—since Jesus is mine and I am His, in time and to all eternity.



“For thou wilt light my candle.”

—*Psalm 18:28*

Precious consideration! It is the Lord that lights the candle of His people. And if the Lord lights it, what power can put it out? Cherish, my soul, the faith this thought awakens amid all the darkness around you and in you. Has the Lord, indeed, given you light? Do you in His light see light? In the light of God the Father, do you behold God the Son and, by the enlightening of the Holy Ghost, have you the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Co 4:6)? Oh, the blessedness of such a state of light, life, and knowledge. How is it possible, then, any more to be in darkness when the Lord Himself is my everlasting light, and my God, my glory?

Now, consider the reverse of this in creature-enlightening. “How oft,” says Job, “is the candle of the wicked put out!” (Job 21:17). And how exposed it is to be every moment put out, for it is not of God’s kindling. A fleeting⁷⁵ of its own oil will do it. What is called a “thief in the candle”⁷⁶ will do it. It may be blown out; it may be snuffed out; or if none of these causes occur, yet of itself it must shortly burn out—for what is our life but a vapor (Jam 4:14)?

⁷⁵ **fleeting** – running out.

⁷⁶ **thief in the candle** – flaw in the wick.

My soul, ponder these things. Has the Lord lit your candle? Is Jesus your light, your life, your joy, your sunshine, your morning star, your all in all? And has He risen upon you, never more to go down? Oh, then, though all you know, all you behold now, is but as the faint taper⁷⁷ of the night compared to the glory of that Day which shall be revealed, yet take to yourself by faith all the sweet comforts of your state of grace and say, “It is the Lord that has lit my candle! The Lord my God will enlighten all remaining darkness. I shall see Your face in glory, and shortly wake up after Your likeness.”



⁷⁷ **taper** – small wax candle.