



Daily Devotional Readings

Taken from the Works of
Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Booklet Six
November and December

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November First

The true happiness of a believer

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” Psalm 42:1.

Hear David — “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” He panteth not after the gifts of God — not His favours or comforts — but after Himself. A believer longs after God — to come into His presence — to feel His love — to feel near to Him in secret — to feel in the crowd that He is nearer than all the creatures. Ah! dear brethren, have you ever tasted this blessedness? There is greater rest and solace to be found in the presence of God for one hour, than in an eternity of the presence of man. To be in His presence — under His love — under His eye — is heaven, wherever it be. God can make you happy in any circumstances. Without Him, nothing can.

November Second

Busy

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” John 9:4.

Our Lord went about continually doing good; He made it His meat and drink. “Daily in the temple.” So should we. Satan is busy at all times; he does not stand upon ceremony; he does not keep himself to Sabbath-days, or canonical hours. Death is busy. Men are dying while we are sleeping. About fifty die every minute; nearly one every second entering into an unchangeable world! The Spirit of God is busy. Blessed be God, He hath cast our lot in times when there is the moving of the great Spirit among the dry bones.

Shall ministers then be idle, or stand upon ceremony? Oh that God would baptize us this day with the Holy Ghost and with fire, that we might be all changed as into a flame of fire, preaching and building up Christ's church till our latest, our dying hour!

November Third

Justified

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” Acts 13:39.

Once Jesus was unjustified — once there were sins laid to His charge, — the sins of many. It was this that occasioned His agony in the garden, on the cross. His only comfort was, “He is near that justifieth Me.” He knew the time would be short. But now the wrath of God has all fallen upon Him. The thunder-clouds of God's anger have spent all their lightnings on His head. The vials of God's wrath have poured out their last drops upon Him. He is now justified from all the sins that were laid upon Him. He has left them with the grave-clothes. His fellow-men and devils laid all sins to His charge; He was silent. Do you believe this record concerning the Son? Do you cleave to Jesus as yours? Then you have fellowship with Him in His justification. You are as much justified as Christ is. There is as little guilt lying upon you as there is upon Christ. The vials of wrath have not another drop for Christ, nor another drop for you. You are justified from all things.

November Fourth

A living picture

“After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me” 1 Corinthians 11:25.

You cannot look at Him on the cross as the disciples did; you cannot see the blood streaming from His five deep wounds; you cannot see Him shedding His blood that the blood of sinners might not be shed. Yet still, if God spare us, you may see bread broken and wine poured out, — a living picture of the dying Saviour. Now,

brethren, the atonement has been made, Christ has died, His sufferings are all past. And how is it that you do not enjoy peace? It is because you do not consider. “Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider.” Consider, — has Jesus died in the stead of guilty sinners, and do you heartily consent to take Jesus to be the man in your stead? then, you do not need to die. Oh, happy believer, rejoice evermore! Live within sight of Calvary, and you will live within sight of glory; and, oh, rejoice in the happy ordinance that sets a broken Saviour so plainly before you.

November Fifth

Chosen

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” Ephesians 1:4.

So, brethren, it was before the foundation of the world that Christ chose His own; when there was neither sun nor moon; when there was neither sea nor land — it was from the beginning. Ah! He might well say, you have not chosen Me. It was before man loved man, or angel loved angel, that Christ chose His own. Now, I know the meaning of Paul when he says, That you may be able to know the length and breadth, the height and the depth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Now, I am not surprised at the death of Christ! it was a love so great that it broke over the banks that held it in; a love that broke over a Calvary and a Gethsemane. O, brethren, do you know this love?

November Sixth

Retirement

“And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while” Mark 6:31.

I am persuaded that I have been brought into retirement to teach me the value and need of prayer. Alas! I have not estimated aright the value of near access unto God. It is not the mere daily routine of praying for certain things that will obtain the blessing. But there

must be the need within — the real filial asking of God the things which we need, and which He delights to give. We must study prayer more.

November Seventh

Separation better than strife

“And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left” Genesis 13:8, 9.

Abraham yields the choice to Lot. Brethren, this is what it is to be a Christian, this is what Christ did. Do you remember the command to resist not evil? “But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matthew 5:39). Now, many of you do not know the meaning of this; I have been asked its meaning often; now, this is it: Abraham was smitten on the one cheek, and he turned the other also. See also 1 Corinthians 6:7 — “Now therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law with one another: why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” You will see an example of the same thing in the ninth chapter and nineteenth verse — “For although I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.”

My dear brethren, this is exactly what Abraham did, he suffered himself to be defrauded, he suffered himself to be a servant, that he might gain Lot. This was what Christ did Himself. When they smote Him on the one cheek He turned the other also. Ah, brethren, you know little of the love of Christ, if this is not in your heart. There is a great mistake, I observe, in our day; people think that to be a Christian, is to have certain doctrines in the head — to be a Calvinist; but, remember, that to be a Christian, is to have Christ in you. Abraham did not say, I will have it, for it is my right to have it. No! but he said, “Let us separate; if you go to the right

hand, I will go to the left,” etc. Ah! this is to be a Christian. It is not words that will make a Christian. It is not views that will make a Christian. It is this, and this alone.

November Eighth

Only believe

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” Romans 8:28.

You remember Jacob said, when they wanted to take Benjamin away from him, “All these things are against me.” But in a little while he saw that “all these things were working together for good to him.” In a little while all his lost children were restored to him, and he and his seed preserved from famine. So will it be with you. If at any time unbelief steals over your heart — if you lose sight of Jesus, our Passover sacrificed for us — if you forget the hand of the all-tender gracious Father of Jesus and of your soul — you will be crying out, All these things are against me. But ah! how soon you will find that everything in your history, except *sin*, has been *for* you. Every wave of trouble has been wafting you to the sunny shores of a sinless eternity. Only believe. Give unlimited credit to our God.

November Ninth

The same joy

“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” Romans 5:11.

No joy is like the Divine joy. It is infinite, full, eternal, pure unmingled joy. It is light, without any cloud to darken it; it is calm, without any breath to ruffle it. Clouds and darkness are round about Him, storms and fire go before Him; but within all is peace ineffable, unchangeable. Believers in some measure share in this joy. We might mention some of the elements of God’s joy. First, All things happen according to the good pleasure of His will. He has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass. Nothing comes

unprepared upon God. Many things are hateful in His sight, yet, looking on the whole, He can delight in all. If you have come to Christ, you will have some drops of His joy. You can look upon all events with a calm, holy joy, knowing that your Father's will and purposes alone shall stand. Second, The conversion of souls. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting, more than over ninety-nine who need no repentance. I have no doubt that this is one of the great elements of His joy — seeing souls brought into His favour. God loves to save; He delighteth in mercy; He delights when He can be a just God and a Saviour. If you are come to Christ, you will have the same joy.

November Tenth

The prunings of the Father

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” John 15:2.

John experienced many wonderful dealings of God. He experienced many of the prunings of the Father. He was a fruitful branch, and the Father pruned him that he might bring forth more fruit. When he was very old, he was banished to Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea, and, it is supposed, made a slave in the mines there. He was a companion in tribulation; but he had many sweet shinings of the Father's love to his soul. He had sweet revelations of Christ in the time of his affliction; and he was joyfully delivered out of all his troubles. He experienced peculiarly the fatherly dealings of God. And so may you do, believer. Look where John looked — believe as John believed — and, like him, you will find that you have a Father in heaven, who will care for you, who will correct you in measure, who will stay His rough wind in the day of His east wind, who will preserve you unto His heavenly kingdom.

November Eleventh

Comfort for Christians

“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” Job 23:10.

This is precious comfort. There will be an end of your affliction. Christians must have “great tribulation;” but they come out of it. We must carry the cross; but only for a moment, then comes the crown. I remember one child of God’s saying, that if it were God’s will that she should remain in trials a thousand years, she could not but delight in His will. But this is not asked of us: we are only called “to suffer a while.” There is a set time for putting into the furnace, and a set time for taking out of the furnace. There is a time for pruning the branches of the vine, and there is a time when the husbandman lays aside the pruning-hook. Let us wait His time — “he that believeth shall not make haste.” God’s time is the best time. But shall we come out the same as we went in? Ah! no; “we shall come out like gold.” It is this that sweetens the bitterest cup; this brings a rainbow of promise over the darkest cloud. Affliction will certainly purify a believer. How boldly he says it: “I shall come out like gold!” Ah, how much dross there is in every one of you, dear believers, and in your pastor! “When I would do good, evil is present with me.” Oh that all the dross may be left behind in the furnace! What imperfection, what sin, mingles with all we have ever done! But are we really fruit-bearing branches of the true vine! Then it is certain that when we are pruned, we shall bear more fruit. We shall come out like gold. We shall shine more purely as “a diadem in the hand of our God.” We shall become purer vessels to hold the sweet smelling incense of praise and prayer. We shall become holy golden vessels for the Master’s use in time and in eternity.

November Twelfth

All love’s excelling

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” 1 John 4:18.

The love here spoken of is not our love to God, but His love to us; for it is called perfect love. All that is ours is imperfect. When we have done all, we must say, “We are unprofitable servants.” Sin mingles with all we think and do. It were no comfort to tell us, that if we would love God perfectly, it would cast out fear; for how can

we work that love into our souls? It is the Father's love to us that casteth out fear. He is the Perfect One. All His works are perfect. He can do nothing but what is perfect. His knowledge is perfect knowledge; His wrath is perfect wrath; His love is perfect love. It is this perfect love which casteth out fear. Just as the sunbeams cast out darkness wherever they fall, so does this love cast out fear.

November Thirteenth

The best argument of all

“Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?” Song of Solomon 3:6.

The holiness of the believer is like the most precious perfume. When a holy believer goes through the world, filled with the Spirit, made more than conqueror, the fragrance fills the room; “‘tis as if an angel shook his wings.” If the world were full of believers, it would be like a bed of spices; but oh how few believers carry much of the odour of heaven along with them! How many you might be the means of saving, if you lived a holy, consistent life, — if you were evidently a sacrifice bound upon God's altar! Wives might thus, *without the word*, win their husbands, when they see your chaste conversation coupled with fear; parents might in this way save their children, when they saw you holy and happy; children have often thus saved their parents. Servants, adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things; let your light shine before men. The poorest can do this as well as the richest, the youngest as well as the oldest. Oh, there is no argument like a holy life.

November Fourteenth

The believer's tears and triumphs

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” Romans 7:24, 25.

There is nobody in this world so happy as a believer. He has

come to Christ, and found rest. He has the pardon of all his sins in Christ. He has near approach to God as a child. He has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. He has the hope of glory. In the most awful times he can be calm, for he feels that God is with him. Still there are times when he cries, O wretched man! When he feels the plague of his own heart — when he feels the thorn in the flesh — when his wicked heart is discovered in all its fearful malignity. Ah, then he lies down, crying, O wretched man that I am! One reason of this wretchedness is, that sin discovered in the heart takes away the *sense* of forgiveness. Guilt comes upon the conscience, and a dark cloud covers the soul. How can I ever go back to Christ? he cries. Alas! I have sinned away my Saviour. Another reason is, the loathsomeness of sin. It is felt like a viper in the heart. A natural man is often miserable from his sin, but never feels its loathsomeness; but to the new creature it is vile indeed. Ah! brethren, do you know anything of a believer's wretchedness? If you do not, you will never know his joy. If you know not a believer's tears and groans, you will never know his song of victory.

November Fifteenth

The cure for a cold heart

“We love him, because he first loved us” 1 John 4:19.

When a poor sinner cleaves to Jesus, and finds the forgiving love of God, he cannot but love God back again. When the prodigal returned home, and felt his father's arms around his neck, then did he feel the gushings of affection toward his father. When the summer sun shines full down upon the sea, it draws the vapours upward to the sky. So when the sunbeams of the Sun of Righteousness fall upon the soul, they draw forth the constant risings of love to Him in return.

Some of you are longing to be able to love God. Come into His love, then. Consent to be loved by Him, though worthless in yourself. It is better to be loved by Him than to love, and it is the only way to learn to love Him. When the light of the sun falls upon the moon, it finds the moon dark and unlovely; but the moon

reflects the light, and casts it back again. So let the love of God shine into your breast, and you will cast it back again. The love of Christ constraineth us. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” The only cure for a cold heart is to look at the heart of Jesus.

November Sixteenth

The world crucified to the believer

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” Galatians 6:14.

“The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.” — “If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature,” When the blind beggar of Jericho got his eyes opened by the Lord, this world was all changed to him, and he to the world. So it was with Paul. No sooner did he rise from his knees, with the peace of Jesus in his heart, than the world got its death-blow in his eyes. As he hurried over the smooth stones of the streets of Damascus, or looked down from the flat roof of his house upon the lovely gardens on the banks of the Abana, the world and all its dazzling show seemed to his eye a poor, shrivelled, crucified thing. Once it was his all. Once its soft and slippery flatteries were pleasant as music to his ear. Riches, beauty, pleasure, all that the natural eye admires, his heart was once set upon; but the moment he believed on Jesus all these began to die. True, they were not dead, but they were nailed to a cross. They no more had that living attraction for him they once had; and now every day they began to lose their power. As a dying man on the cross grows weaker and weaker every moment, while his heart’s blood trickles from the deep gashes in his hands and feet, so the world, that was once his all, began to lose every moment its attractive power. He tasted so much sweetness in Christ, in pardon, access to God, the smile of God, the indwelling Spirit, that the world became every day a more tasteless world to him.

November Seventeenth

The believer’s self watch

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in

them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” 1 Timothy 4:16.

Your own soul is your first and greatest care. You know a sound body alone can work with power; much more a healthy soul. Keep a clear conscience through the blood of the Lamb. Keep up close communion with God. Study likeness to Him in all things.

November Eighteenth

The heart of the Father

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” Revelation 13:8.

Oh! brethren, could I lift you away to the eternity that is past, — could I bring you into the council of the Eternal Three; and as it was once said, “Let us make man,” could I let you hear the word, “Let us save man,” — could I show you how God from all eternity designed His Son to undertake for poor sinners; how it was the very plan and the bottommost desire of the heart of the Father that Jesus should come into the world, and do and die in the stead of sinners; how the Holy Spirit breathed sweetest incense, and dropped like holiest oil upon the head of the descending Saviour, — could I show you the intense interest with which the eye of God followed Jesus through His whole course of sorrow and suffering and death, — could I show you the anxious haste with which God rolled away the stone from the sepulchre while it was yet dark, for He would not leave His soul in hell, neither suffer His Holy One to see corruption, — could I show you the ecstasies of love and joy that beat in the bosom of the infinite God when Jesus ascended to His Father and our Father; how He welcomed Him with a fullness of kindness and grace which God alone could give, and God alone could receive, saying, “Thou art My Son, this day have I ‘begotten Thee; Thou art indeed worthy to be called My Son; never till this day wast Thou so worthy to be called Mine; Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool;” — O sinner, will you ever doubt any more whether God the Father be seeking thy salvation, — whether the heart of Christ

and of His Father be the same in this one grand controversy? O believer, consider this apostle of God, — meditate on these things, — look and look again, until your peace be like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea, — till the breathing of your soul be, Abba, Father!

November Nineteenth

Infinitely better

“These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” Revelation 14:4.

Acquaint now thyself with Him. Come to Him; do not rest short of Him. You think it a great thing to know a lively Christian: oh! how infinitely better to know God.

November Twentieth

Servants

“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” Matthew 23:11.

Jesus expressly says, “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.” The angels that see the face of God, stoop to serve the meanest children of God. It is the happiness of the happiest angel that he can give up more, and stoop lower down in sweet humble services, than the angels beneath him.

Dear Christians, you often pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?” If you mean anything, you mean that you may serve God as the angels do! Ah, then, your happiness must be in giving. The happiness of the angels consists in this. If you would be like them, become a ministering spirit.

November Twenty-first

The eye of faith

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” Hebrews 3:1.

When Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives, and passed

through these heavens, carrying His bloody wounds into the presence of God, and when His disciples had gazed after Him, till a cloud received Him out of their sight — we are told that they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. What! are they joyful at parting with their blessed Master? When He told them He was to leave them, sorrow filled their hearts, and He had to argue with them and comfort them, saying, “Let not your heart be troubled; it is expedient for you that I go away.” How, then, are they changed? Jesus has left them, and they are filled with joy. Oh! here is the secret — they knew that Christ was now going into the presence of God for them, that their great High Priest was now entering within the veil to make intercession for them.

Now, believer, would you share in the great joy of the disciples? Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. He is above yon clouds, and above yon sky. Oh that you would stand gazing up into heaven, not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of faith! Oh, what a wonderful thing the eye of faith is! It sees beyond the stars, it pierces to the throne of God, and there it looks on the face of Jesus making intercession for us, whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

November Twenty-second

The perfection of God poured forth

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” John 1:14.

Christ did not get more glory by becoming man, but He manifested His glory in a new way. He did not gain one perfection more by becoming man; He had all the perfections of God before. But now these perfections were poured through a human heart. The almightiness of God now moved in a human arm. The infinite love of God now beat in a human heart. The compassion of God to sinners now glistened in a human eye. God was love before, but Christ was love covered over with flesh. Just as you have seen the sun shining through a coloured window, — it is the same sunlight still, and yet it shines with a mellowed lustre. So in Christ dwelt all

the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The perfection of the Godhead shone through every pore, through every action, word, and look, — the same perfections, — they were only shining with a mellowed brightness. The veil of the temple was a type of His flesh, because it covered the bright light of the holiest of all. But just as the bright light of the Shechinah often shone through the veil, so did the Godhead of Christ force itself through the heart of the man Christ Jesus.

November Twenty-third

The secret of victory

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” Ephesians 5:18.

Let the Holy Spirit fill every chamber of your heart; and so there will be no room for folly, or the world, or Satan, or the flesh.

November Twenty-fourth

One hour with God

“But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works” Psalm 73:28.

You will get more knowledge in one hour with God, than in all your life spent with man. You will get more holiness from immediate conversing with God, than from all other means of grace put together. Indeed, the means are empty vanity, unless you come to God in them.

November Twenty-fifth

Spiritual warfare

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” 1 Peter 2:11.

There can never be peace in the bosom of a believer. There is a peace with God but there is always a constant war with sin.

November Twenty-sixth

He is mine

“My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies”
Song of Solomon 2:16.

In the arms of my faith He is mine. I was once of the world — cold and careless about my soul. God awakened me, and made me feel I was lost. I tried to make myself good — to mend my life; but I found it in vain: I sat down more lost than before. I was then told to believe on the Lord Jesus. So I tried to make myself believe. I read books on faith, and tried to bend my soul to believe, that so I might get to heaven; but still in vain. I found it written, “Faith is the gift of God.” “No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” So I sat down more lost than ever. Whilst I was thus helpless, Jesus drew near, — His garments dipped in blood. He had waited long at my door, though I knew it not. “His head was filled with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night.” He had five deep wounds, and He said, “I died in the stead of sinners; and any sinner may have Me for a Saviour. You are a helpless sinner, will you have Me?” How can I resist Him? He is all I need! I held Him, and would not let Him go. “My beloved is mine.”

In the arms of My love, He is mine. Once I did not know what people meant by loving Jesus. I always wished to ask how they could love one whom they had never seen; but was answered, “Whom not having seen, we love.” But now that I have hidden in Him — now that I am cleaving to Him — now I feel that I cannot but love Him; and I long to see Him, that I may love Him more. Many a time I fall into sin, and that takes away my feeling of safety in Christ. Darkness comes, all is clouded, Christ is away. Still even then I am sick of love. Christ is not light and peace to me; but I follow hard after Him amid the darkness, — He is precious to me; and even though I be in darkness, He is my Beloved still. “This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.”

November Twenty-seventh

Delay in answered prayer

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” Habakkuk 2:3.

When the merchant sends his ships to distant shores, he does not expect them to come back richly laden in a single day: he has long patience. “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.” Perhaps your prayers will come back, like the ships of the merchant, all the more heavily laden with blessings, because of the delay.

November Twenty-eighth

Here is the victory

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” 1 Corinthians 15:55.

There is nothing that we naturally shrink back from more than the grave. Ah! it is a fearful thing to leave the company of living men, and lie down in the narrow house, with a shroud for our only clothing, a coffin for our couch, and the worm for our companion. It is humiliating, it is loathsome. But if you are one of Christ’s, here is the victory: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:52-55).

November Twenty-ninth

A divine power

“So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also” Romans 1:15.

Men would laugh at the idea of a poor worm like Paul going to subdue mighty Rome with a few words of his lips; but Paul saw such a divine power in the Gospel that he was not ashamed of it. He knew it could break the hardest heart, and bind up the most broken. The learned men of Rome would smile at the words of this babbling; but Paul saw such wisdom in the Gospel, that all human wisdom appeared utter folly beside it. The wickedness of Rome

reached up to heaven, it was a continual smoke in God's nostrils, a fire that burned all the day; but Paul knew that the righteousness of God could cover the sin of a thousand Romes. He saw it to be so vast, so immense, so free, so surpassingly glorious, so divine, that it could flow over and cover the sins of the greatest sinner in Rome.

November Thirtieth

A whole Saviour

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

Learn the certainty of sanctification. Rutherford said, “Blessed be God, Christ is a whole Saviour — He not only justifies, but He sanctifies too.” Oh, no, He will not lose the end for which He died — to make you not of this world, while you are in the world. He came to this miserable world, and took stones to polish for His Father's palace. Do you think He will leave you unholy? This is the will of the Father, even your sanctification. Jesus died, and the Spirit is sent as the sanctifier. There is much sin between you and God — many temptations — yet you shall be made holy.

December First

Christ manifest

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” 1 John 3:5.

O beloved, if Jesus had not been manifested, you had never been saved! It would have been quite righteous in God to have kept His Son in His own bosom — to have kept that jewel in His own place upon the throne of heaven. God would have been the same lovely God; but we would have lain down in a burning hell. If that Eternal Life which was with the Father — if He had remained in His glory as the Living One, then you and I would have borne our own curse. But He was manifested — “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels — believed on in the world — received up into glory.”

John saw Him — he saw His lovely countenance; he beheld His

glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He saw that better Sun veiled with flesh that could not keep the beams of His Godhead from shining through. He saw Him on the Mount, when His face shone like the sun. He saw Him in the garden, when He lay upon the ground. He saw Him on the cross, when He hung between earth and heaven. He looked upon Him, — many a time he looked upon His heavenly countenance, — his eye met His eye.

He heard Him — heard the voice that said, “Let there be light!” He heard the voice like the sound of many waters. He heard all His gracious words — His words concerning God and the way of peace. He heard Him say to a sinner, “Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

He handled Him — he put his hands in His hands, his arms around His arms, and his head upon His bosom. Perhaps he handled His body when it was taken from the cross — touched the cold clay of Immanuel. O beloved, it is a manifested Christ we declare unto you. It is not the Son in the bosom of the Father — that would never have saved you. It is Jesus manifested in flesh. The Son of God living and dying as man in the stead of sinners; Him we declare unto you.

December Second

A day of double blessing

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet” Revelation 1:10.

When God instituted the Sabbath in paradise, it is said, “God blessed the Sabbath day, and sanctified it” (Gen. 2:3). He not only set it apart as a sacred day, but made it a day of blessing. Again, when the Lord Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week before dawn, He revealed Himself the same day to two disciples going to Emmaus, and made their hearts burn within them (Luke 24:13). The same evening He came and stood in the midst of the disciples, and said, “Peace be unto you;” and He breathed on them and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:19).

Again, after eight days — that is, the next Lord’s Day — Jesus

came and stood in the midst, and revealed Himself with unspeakable grace to unbelieving Thomas (John 20:26). It was on the Lord's Day, also, that the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost (Acts 2:1; compare Lev. 23:15, 16). That beginning of all spiritual blessings, that first revival of the Christian Church, was on the Lord's Day. It was on the same day that the beloved John, an exile on the sea-girt isle of Patmos, far away from the assembly of the saints, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and received his heavenly revelation. So that in all ages, from the beginning of the world, and in every place where there is a believer, the Sabbath has been a day of double blessing. It is so still, and will be, though all God's enemies should gnash their teeth at it. True, God is a God of free grace, and confines His working to no time or place; but it is equally true, and all the scoffs of the infidel cannot alter it, that it pleases Him to bless His word most on the Lord's Day. All God's faithful ministers in every land can bear witness that sinners are converted most frequently on the Lord's Day — that Jesus comes in and shows Himself through the lattice of ordinances oftenest on His own day. Saints, like John, are filled with the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and enjoy their calmest, deepest views into the eternal world.

December Third

Joy in religion

***“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord”* Philippians 3:1.**

Some people are afraid of anything like joy in religion. They have none themselves, and they do not love to see it in others. Their religion is something like the stars, very high, and very clear, but very cold. When they see tears of anxiety, or tears of joy, they cry out, Enthusiasm, enthusiasm! Well then to the law, and to the testimony: “I sat down under His shadow with great delight.” Is this enthusiasm? O Lord evermore give us this enthusiasm! May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing! If it be really in sitting under the shadow of Christ, let there be no bounds to your joy. Oh, if God would but open your eyes, and give you simple, child like faith, to look to Jesus, to sit under His shadow,

then would songs of joy rise from all our dwellings! Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice!

December Fourth

The main-spring

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead” 2 Corinthians 5:14.

That Christ’s love to man is here intended, and not our love to the Saviour, is quite obvious, from the explanation which follows, where His dying for all is pointed to as the instance of His love. It was the view of that strange compassion of the Saviour, moving Him to die for His enemies — to bear double for all our sins, to taste death for every man — it was this view which gave Paul the impulse in every labour — which made all suffering light to him, and every commandment not grievous. He “ran with patience the race that was set before him.” Why? Because, “looking unto Jesus,” he lived a man “crucified unto the world, and the world crucified unto him.” By what means? By looking to the cross of Christ.

As the natural sun in the heavens exercises a mighty and unceasing attractive energy on the planets which circle round it, so did the Sun of Righteousness, which had indeed arisen on Paul with a brightness above that of noon-day, exercise on his mind a continual and an almighty energy, constraining him to live henceforth no more unto himself, but to Him that died for him and rose again. And observe, that it was no temporary, fitful energy, which it exerted over his heart, and life, but an abiding and a continued attraction; for he doth not say that the love of Christ did once constrain him; or that it shall yet constrain him; or that in times of excitement, in seasons of prayer, or peculiar devotion, the love of Christ was wont to constrain him; but he saith simply, that the love of Christ constraineth him. It is the ever-present, ever-abiding, ever moving power, which forms the main-spring of all His working; so that, take that away, and his energies are gone, and Paul is become weak as other men.

December Fifth

The presence of Christ

“But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us” Luke 24:29.

It is the presence of Christ with the soul that gives true peace and true holiness. It is not circumstances, nor ministers, nor place, nor time, but Jesus present. To sit under His shadow, gives great delight. To lean upon the Beloved alone supports his faltering steps. A true believer cannot be satisfied while Christ is away; “Make haste, my Beloved.” One that is not a wife may be content with other lovers; but the faithful bride longs for the return of her Lord. The ordinances are all cold and barren till He return. Ministers speak, but not to the heart. The companions cannot give rest nor ease. Oh, brethren! do you know what it is to long for Himself; to cry, “make haste, my Beloved?”

December Sixth

Listen! Jesus is praying

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

“Father, I will.” This is the most wonderful prayer that ever rose from this earth to the throne of God, and this petition is the most wonderful in the prayer. No human lips ever prayed thus before — “Father, I will.” Abraham was the friend of God, and got very near to God in prayer; but he prayed as dust and ashes. “I have taken upon me to speak unto God, that am but dust and ashes.” Jacob had power with God, and prevailed, yet his boldest word was, “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.” Daniel was a man greatly beloved, and got immediate answers to prayer, and yet he cried to God as a sinner: “O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do!” Paul was a man who got very near to God, and yet he says, “I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But when Christ prayed, He cried, “Father, I will.” Why did He pray thus? He was God’s fellow. “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the man that is My fellow.” He thought it no robbery to be equal with God. It was He that said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” So now He says, “Father, I will.”

He spoke as the Intercessor with the Father. He felt as if His work were already done: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." He felt as if He had already suffered the cross, and now claims the crown. "Father, I will." This is the intercession now heard in heaven.

He had one will with the Father. "I and My Father are one." One God — one in heart and will. True, He had a holy human soul, and therefore a human will; but His human will was one with His divine will. The human string in His heart was tuned to the same string with His divine will.

Learn how surely this prayer will be answered, dear children of God. It is impossible this prayer should be unanswered. It is the will of the Father and of the Son. If Christ wills it, and if the Father wills it, you may be sure nothing can hinder it. If the sheep be in Christ's hand, and in the Father's hand, they shall never perish.

December Seventh

Sowing and reaping

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" Ecclesiastes 11:1.

So it is in giving liberally to the poor out of love of Jesus. Yet fear not; you shall find a crop after many days. You say, "If I were a rich Christian, how happy would I be to give!" Now, I ask you to look at the man sowing seed, when he has but little, does he keep back from sowing that little? No; he sows the more anxiously the little he has. Do you the same.

December Eighth

Not yet in heaven

"Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here" Matthew 17:4.

My friend, you are no believer, if Jesus hath never manifested Himself to your soul in your secret devotions — in the house of prayer, or in the breaking of bread — in so sweet and overpowering a manner, that you have cried out, "Lord, it is good for me to be here!" But though it be good and very pleasant, like sunlight to the

eyes, yet the Lord sees that it is not wisest and best always to be there. Peter must come down again from the mount of glory, and fight the good fight of faith amid the shame and contumely of a cold and scornful world. And so must every child of God. We are not yet in heaven, the place of open vision and unbroken enjoyment. This is earth, the place of faith, and patience, and heavenward-pointing hope.

December Ninth

The idol God hates most

“Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?”
Hosea 14:8.

Self-righteousness is the largest idol of the human heart — the idol which man loves most and God hates most. Dearly beloved, you will always be going back to this idol. You are always trying to be something in yourself, to gain God’s favour by thinking little of your sin, or by looking to your repentance, tears, prayers; or by looking to your religious exercises, your frames, etc; or by looking to your graces, the Spirit’s work in your heart. Beware of false Christs. Study sanctification to the utmost, but make not a Christ of it. God hates this idol more than all others, because it comes in the place of Christ; it sits on Christ’s throne. Just as the worship of the Virgin Mary is the worst of all kinds of idolatry, because it puts her in the place of Christ, so self-righteousness is the idol God hates most, for it sits on the throne of Christ. Dash it down, dear friends; let it never appear again. It is like Manasseh’s carved image in the holiest of all. When Manasseh came home an altered man to Jerusalem, would not his first visit be to the holiest of all? With eager hand he would draw the veil aside; and when he found the carved image, he would dash it down from the throne of God. Go and do likewise. If you feel God’s love freely by the righteousness without works, then why would you go back to this grim idol? “What have I to do any more with idols?”

December Tenth

Uselessness

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” James 1:22.

It is very striking to see the uselessness of many Christians. Are there none of you who know what it is to be selfish in your Christianity? You have seen a selfish child go into a secret place to enjoy some delicious morsels undisturbed by his companions? So it is with some Christians. They feed upon Christ and forgiveness; but it is alone, and all for themselves. Are there not some of you who can enjoy being a Christian, while your dearest friend is not; and yet you will not speak to him? See here, you have got your work to do. When Christ found you, He said: “Go, work in My vineyard.” What were you hired for, if it was not to work? What were you saved for, if it was not to spread salvation? What blessed for? Oh! my Christian friends! how little you live as if you were servants of Christ! — how much idle time, and idle talk you have! This is not like a good servant. How many things you have to do for yourself! — how few for Christ and His people! This is not like a servant.

December Eleventh

A true mark of grace

“That I may know him ...” Philipians 3:10.

It is a sure mark of grace to desire more. The High Priest had a beautiful breastplate over his breast, adorned with jewels — make me one of these. He had also a jewel on each shoulder — make me one of these. These were bound with chains of gold, but the believer with chains of love. This is a true mark of grace. If you be contented to remain where you are, without any more nearness to God, or any more holiness, this is a clear mark you have got none. Hide me deeper, bind me closer, and carry me more completely.

December Twelfth

Your name is in the Bible

“Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man”
Proverbs 8:4.

Some of you may be saying, “If I could see my name in the

Bible, then I would believe that Christ wants me to be saved. When Christ called Zaccheus, He said, ‘Zaccheus, come down.’ He called him by name, and he came down immediately. Now, if Christ would call me by name, I would run to Him immediately. Now, to you I say, Christ does call you by your name, for He says, “To you, O men, I call.” Suppose that Christ had written down the names of all the men and women in the world, your name would have been there. Now, instead of writing down every name, He puts them all together in one word, which includes every man, and woman, and child: “Unto you, O men, I call; and My words are to the sons of man.” So your name is in the Bible. “Go and preach the gospel to every creature.”

December Thirteenth

Change your plan

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” Hebrews 12:2.

Some of you have really been brought by God to believe in Jesus. Yet you have no abiding peace, and very little growing in holiness. Why is this? It is because your eye is fixed anywhere but on Christ. You are so busy looking at books, or looking at men, or looking at the world, that you have no time, no heart, for looking at Christ. No wonder you have little peace and joy in believing. No wonder you live so inconsistent and unholy a life. Change your plan. Consider the greatness and glory of Christ, who has undertaken all in the stead of sinners, and you would find it quite impossible to walk in darkness, or to walk in sin. Oh what mean, despicable thoughts you have of the glorious Immanuel! Lift your eyes from your own bosom, downcast believer, — look upon Jesus. It is good to consider your ways, but it is far better to consider Christ.

December Fourteenth

Love’s overflow

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me” John 14:6.

It is the saying of an old divine, that God often orders it, that

when He is in hand with the greatest mercies for us, then we are most of all sinning against Him; which He doth to magnify His love the more.

In the words I have read, we find an example of this. At no time did the heart of Jesus overflow with a tenderer and more sovereign love to His disciples, than when He said, “Let not your heart be troubled.” They were troubled by many things. He had told them that He was going to leave them; He had told them that one should betray Him — that another should deny Him — that they should all be offended because of Him that very night; and perhaps they thought He was going from them in anger. But whatever the cause of their trouble was, Jesus’ bosom was like a vessel full to overflowing, and these words were the overtopping drops of love — “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”

December Fifteenth

Sinking saints

“But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me” Matthew 14:30.

Once Peter “walked on the water to go to Jesus; but when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” Christ has an almighty arm for sinking disciples to cling to. Once two disciples were walking towards a village north of Jerusalem. They talked earnestly together to beguile the way, and they were sad. A stranger drew near, and went with them; and as He went He expounded to them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Jesus. In breaking of bread He was revealed to them, and left them exclaiming, “Did not our hearts burn within us?” So Jesus reveals Himself to His own to this day, and makes the sad bosom burn with holy joy.

December Sixteenth

The preciousness of Christ to the believer

“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious” 1 Peter 2:7.

Consider how precious Christ is. “In Him is life eternal.” In Him there is pardon for the vilest of sinners. In Him there is sweet peace of conscience — peace with God. In Him there is rest for the weary soul — the way to the Father — an open door into the fold of God. In Him there is a fountain of living waters, unsearchable riches, full supplies of grace and truth for weak and weary souls. In Him there is acquittal at the judgment day, and a glorious crown. Oh! should you not leave all for this? Shall a lust, or a pleasure, or a game, or the smile of a friend, keep you from all this? “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”

December Seventeenth

All precious to Christ

“And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes” Exodus 39:14.

Observe how precious His people are to Him. There is a variety among the stones — every one is different, yet all are precious. So there is a great variety among Christ’s people, yet all are precious to Christ. Some are chosen in infancy, like John the Baptist and Jeremiah, sanctified from the womb. Some are chosen in old age. Some are taken who have committed but little sin, like Martha and Mary; some who have committed much, like the woman which was a sinner, and the dying thief. Some are taken from a cottage, some from a palace; all different, yet all jewels in the eyes of the Redeemer.

December Eighteenth

Selfish children

“... ye have not, because ye ask not” James 4:2.

When God, in Ezekiel 36:26, promises to give a new heart and a

new spirit to Israel — “to take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and to give them an heart of flesh” — He adds, at verse 37: “I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.” And when God promises to give to Christ the heathen for His heritage, He only promises it in answer to prayer: “Ask of Me, and I will give thee.” And just so here; when he wishes to give life to these dead carcasses that are lying in the open valley, His word is: “Prophesy, O son of man, unto the Spirit.”

O believing brethren! what an instrument is this which God hath put into your hands! Prayer moves Him that moves the universe. O men of faith and prayer! Israels who wrestle with God, and prevail! Righteous, justified men, whose prayers avail much! You may be a little flock, but be you entreated to give the Lord no rest. O pray for the Spirit to “breathe upon these slain, that they may live!”

And you, selfish Christians, if such a contradiction can exist — you who approach the throne of God only for yourselves, you whose petitions begin and end only for yourselves, who ask no gifts but only for your own peace and joy — go you and learn what this meaneth: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

December Nineteenth

A sight of Christ

“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me” 1 Corinthians 11:24.

An unconverted man cannot remember Christ; for he hath never seen Him, neither known Him. A man who never tasted honey, cannot remember the taste of it; so a man who never had a saving taste of the sweetness of the Lord Jesus, cannot possibly remember Him. Indeed, there is a kind of remembrance of Christ that any man may have. You may remember the events of His life: that He was born in a stable, that He walked on the Lake of Galilee, that He wept over Jerusalem, that He prayed in Gethsemane, that He died on the cross on Calvary; but even the devils can remember Christ in this way. They remember all His history much more perfectly than

we do. Satan has more knowledge of divine things than many doctors of divinity. And lost souls in eternal misery remember Jesus; they remember all He did, and all He suffered, and how often He would have saved them. Judas, in his place in hell, remembers Jesus. But, ah! this is not the saving remembrance of Jesus which we have at the Lord's Table.

When a labouring, heavy laden sinner is brought to the feet of Jesus, he finds a joy and peace in believing he never felt before. He gets a discovery of the love of Christ that he never had before; the love of Jesus in coming for the ungodly, and dying for them; the freeness of Christ to every creature, to sinners, even the chief, to publicans and sinners coming to Him; the wisdom and excellency of this way of salvation, the amazing glory and perfection of the righteousness of God. When the Spirit thus takes the veil from the eyes, he gets a sight of Christ which he never will, and never can forget. This is the spiritual relish and discerning of the Lord's body.

December Twentieth

A shield for sinners

“Behold, God is my salvation” Isaiah 12:2.

If trembling sinners only knew the person who has undertaken to be a Saviour, it would dispel all their fears. He is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person. He is the peerless, matchless Son of God that has undertaken to stand for us. He is the maker of the world, He that sees the end from the beginning. “By Him were all things made.” He made the sun, moon, and stars; He made the solid earth; He upholds all things by the word of His power.

Do you think He would fail in any undertaking? Do you think, if He engages to be a shield for sinners, that He will not be enough to cover them? Oh! Be ashamed of your unbelief, and come under this infinite Shield. “Behold, God is my salvation,” “I will trust and not be afraid.” Come, trembling soul, under this divine Shield, and you will find divine peace. Come under this Rock, and you will find rest for your weary souls. It matters not what sins you have; if you come under Christ, you shall have peace.

December Twenty-first

A dying boy's testimony

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” John 16:8.

There is, perhaps, no subject upon which there is greater ignorance than that of the Spirit of God. Most people, in our day, if they answered truly, would say as those twelve men of Ephesus: “We have not so much as heard if there be any Holy Ghost” (Acts 19:2). And yet, if ever you are to be saved, you must know Him; for it is all His work to bring a poor sinner to Christ. A little boy, when dying, said: “Three persons in the Godhead. God the Father made and preserved me; God the Son came into the world and died for me; God the Holy Ghost came into my heart, and made me love God and hate sin.” My dear friends, if you would die happy, you must be able to bear the same dying testimony.

December Twenty-second

The gospel bell

“... a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister in; as the Lord commanded Moses” Exodus 39:26.

Christians, you are priests. Be like Christ in this. Wherever you go, carry a savour of Christ. His name is like ointment poured forth; it is like the vine flourishing, and the pomegranate budding. Let men take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus; let it be plain that you come from within the veil; let the smell of your garments be as a field which the Lord hath blessed. Carry a sound of Christ wherever you go. Not a step, Christians, without the sound of the gospel bell! Even in smallest things, be spreading the glad sound. Edwards says, wherever a godly person enters, he is a greater blessing than if the greatest monarch were entering. So be it with you. It appears to me, that even the tracts for which you contribute are like those little bells. They are small and despised by some, yet they carry the clear sound of the gospel wherever they go. What Christian among you would not love to see them multiplied, till every family on the globe should hear the message

of mercy? Come, then, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

December Twenty-third

Communion with God

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” James 4:8.

I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into any corner. A calm hour with God is worth a whole lifetime with man.

December Twenty-fourth

The sovereign mercy of Jesus

“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” Hebrews 2:16-18.

We read of two great rebellions in the history of the universe — the rebellion of the angels, and the rebellion of man. For infinitely wise and gracious purposes God planned and permitted both of these, that out of evil He might bring forth good. The first took place in heaven itself. Pride was the sin by which the angels fell, and therefore it is called “the condemnation of the devil.” “They kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.” “God spared them not, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” The next fall took place upon earth. Satan tempted, and man fell — believed the devil rather than God, and so came under the curse: “Thou shalt surely die.” Both of these families came under the same frown — under the same condemnation — both were condemned to the same “everlasting fire.” But the glorious Son of God resolved, from all eternity, to die for sinners. Now, for which of the two shall He die? Perhaps the angels in heaven would long that He should die for

their once brother angels. The angelic nature was higher than that of man. Men had fallen deeper into sin than the rebel angels. Will He not die for angels? Now, here is the answer — “Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” Here is sovereign mercy passing by one family and coming to another. Let us wonder and adore the sovereign mercy of Jesus.

December Twenty-fifth

‘Tis the Lord! O Wondrous story’

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” Matthew 1:23.

In the manger at Bethlehem there lay a perfect infant, but there also was Jehovah. That mysterious being who rode on an ass’s colt, and wept over Jerusalem, was as much a man as you are, and as much God as the Father is. The tears He shed were human tears, yet the love of Jehovah swelled below His mantle. That pale being that hung quivering on the cross was indeed man — it was human blood that flowed from His wounds — but He was as truly God. In being without sin. He was the only one in human form of whom it can be said, He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; the only one on whom God could look down from heaven, and say, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Every member of our body and faculty of our mind we have used as the servants of sin. Every member of His body and faculty of His mind were used only as servants to holiness. His mouth was the only human mouth from which none but gracious words ever proceeded. His eye was the only human eye that never shot forth flames of pride, or envy, or lust. His hand was the only human hand that never was stretched forth but in doing good. His heart was the only human heart that was not deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. When Satan came to Him, he found nothing in Him. Now, in these two things it behoved Him to be unlike His brethren, or He could not have been a Saviour at all. In all other things it behoved Him to be made like us. There was no part of our condition that He

did not humble Himself unto.

December Twenty-sixth

A higher place

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection” Hebrews 6:1.

Unconverted souls are going down into the wilderness to perish there. All Christians are coming up out of it. Sabbath days are like milestones, marking our way; or rather they are like the wells we used to come to at evening. Every real Christian is making progress. If the sheep is on the shoulder of the shepherd, it is always getting nearer the fold. With some the shepherd takes long steps. Dear Christians, you should be advancing, getting higher, nearer to Canaan, riper for glory. In the south of Russia, the country is of vast plains, rising by steppes. Dear friends, you should get on to a higher place; up another step every Sabbath day. In travelling, you never think of making a house in the wilderness. So, dear friends, do not take up your rest here, we are journeying. Let all your endeavours be to get on in your journey.

December Twenty-seventh

Holiness and your Bible

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” John 17:17.

Jesus is the author of sanctification; but there are many looking to the wrong airt [direction] for it. Now, all comes from the same hand that was nailed to the cross; look to Him for sanctification — His name is Jesus, for He saves from sin. Oh, do any feel faint and weary? Lean on Him, the Beloved; all comes from Jesus. You may as well try to hold up the sun in its course, as to hold up your own goings. Go, then, to Jesus for all you need. Learn the means of sanctification — the Word. No holiness without the Bible! I believe God could sanctify without the Word. He made the angels holy without it, and He made Adam holy without it; but He will not do it. ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth’ (John

17:17). Just like a mother nourishing a child, Jesus takes a soul and nourishes it with the milk of the Word. No life without a Bible! It is just the breathings of God's heart — of His affectionate bosom. Oh, yes, if you would walk much with Jesus, you would become like Him. Oh, you would get the heart and likeness of Jesus. There are some believers, and you may know them by their breath that they have been with Emmanuel, the lovely Rose of Sharon.

Learn, then, that there is no other means of sanctification, and without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Unless you love your Bibles, and feed upon them, you will never stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, with the golden harps.

December Twenty-eighth

High time to wake out of sleep

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” Romans 13:11.

In these words, Paul tells believers that it is waking time; and I would just tell you, dear friends, the same. It is high time for you to awake out of sleep. There is a condition among Christians which may be called sleeping; like the ten virgins, they slumber and sleep. Ah! I fear there are many sleeping Christians among you. It is waking time, believer. Do you know what o'clock it is? You do not seem to know how near sun-rise it is.

I will now show you what it is to be sleeping Christians. It is to be one that has come to Christ yet has fallen asleep in sin. Like the Church at Ephesus, they have left their first love: They do not retain that realization of Christ's preciousness — that freshness of believing. They have forgotten the fresh grasp of a Saviour. So it is with some among yourselves. You may have seen your sins; yet you have lost that fresh conviction of sin you once felt so deeply. You do not see such a beauty in Jesus. The more we look at Him, just the more would we look again. Earthly things pall upon the taste; but it is not so with things divine. They grow sweeter the oftener you use them. So every time you look at Jesus, He grows more precious. The rose is sweet, yet it loses its smell; but the

lovely Rose of Sharon grows sweeter and sweeter. Earthly apples lose their taste; but the apple-tree does not so — “Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.” Sleepy Christians, you have lost taste for the apples. Oh! it is not time for you to sleep any longer. Believer, if you sleep on, you will soon doubt if ever you have come to Christ at all.

December Twenty-ninth

A mirror of Christ

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

In a mirror you will observe that every feature of the face is reflected — both the large and small features. Now our soul should be a mirror of Christ; we should reflect every feature; for every grace in Christ there should be a counterpart grace in us.

December Thirtieth

Strength

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them” Psalm 84:5.

Remember Jesus for us is all our righteousness before a holy God, and Jesus in us is all our strength in an ungodly world.

December Thirty-first

My Master’s time

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” Ephesians 5:16.

What right have I to steal and abuse my Master’s time? “Redeem it,” He is crying to me.

The time is short! — the season near,
When death will us remove,
To leave our friends, however dear,
And all we fondly love!

The time is short! sinners, beware,
Nor trifle time away;
The word of “great salvation” hear,
“While it is called to-day.”

The time is short! ye rebels, now
To Christ the Lord submit;
To mercy’s golden sceptre bow,
And fall at Jesus’ feet.

The time is short! ye saints rejoice,
The Lord will quickly come:
Soon shall ye hear the bridegroom’s voice,
To call your spirits home.

The time is short! it swiftly flies,
The hour is just at hand,
When we shall mount above the skies,
And reach Emmanuel’s land.

Sixth of six booklets.

