



Daily Devotional Readings

Taken from the Works of
Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Booklet Two
March and April

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March First

Positive sin

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel”
1 Timothy 5:8.

If you do not worship God in your family, you are living in positive sin; you may be quite sure you do not care for the souls of your family. If you neglected to spread a meal for your children to eat, would it not be said that you did not care for their bodies? And if you do not lead your children and servants to the green pastures of God's Word, and to seek the living water, how plain is it that you do not care for their souls! Do it regularly, morning and evening. It is more needful than your daily food — more needful than your work. How vain and silly all your excuses will appear, when you look back from hell! Do it fully. Some clip off the psalm, and some the reading of the Word; and so the worship of God is reduced to a mockery. Do it in a spiritual, lively manner. Go to it as to a well of salvation. There is, perhaps, no means of grace more blessed. Let all your family be present without fail — let none be awanting [absent].

March Second

Be ready

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand” 2 Timothy 4:6.

Dear believers, be ready to leave your room for the golden harp, at a minute's warning; be ready to leave your desk for the throne of Jesus — your pen for the palm of victory; be ready to leave the market below, for the street of the new Jerusalem, where the redeemed shall walk. If you were in a sinking ship, you would not cling hard to bags of money — you would sit loose to all, and be

ready to swim. This world is like a sinking ship, and those who grasp at its possessions will sink with it. Oh! “buy as though you possessed not;” for “the time is short.”

March Third

Wonderful love

“... Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it”
Ephesians 5:25.

This is unparalleled love. Love is known by the sacrifice it will make. In a fit of love, Herod would have given away the half of his kingdom. If you will sacrifice nothing, you love not. Hereby we know that men love not Christ; they will sacrifice nothing for Him. They will not leave a lust; a game; a companion, for Christ. “Greater love than this hath no man.” But Christ gave Himself. Consider what a self. If He had created ten thousand millions of worlds, and given them away, it had been great love; had He given a million of angels; but He gave the Lord of angels; the Creator of worlds. “Lo, I come.” He gave the pearl of heaven. O what a self! — Jesus! — all loveliness!

March Fourth

Parts of prayer

“Let my prayer be set forth before thee ...” **Psalms 141:2.**

I ought not to omit any of the parts of prayer — confession, adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession. There is a fearful tendency to omit confession, proceeding from low views of God and His law — slight views of my heart and the sins of my past life. This must be resisted. There is a constant tendency to omit adoration, when I forget to whom I am speaking — when I rush heedlessly into the presence of Jehovah, without remembering His awful name and character — when I have little eyesight for His glory, and little admiration of His wonders. “What are the wise?” I have the native tendency of the heart to omit giving thanks. And yet it is specially commanded (Philippians 4:6). Often when the heart is selfish — dead to the salvation of others — I omit intercession. And yet it especially is the spirit of the Great Advocate, who has the

name of Israel always on His heart.

Perhaps every prayer need not have all these; but surely a day should not pass without some space being devoted to each.

March Fifth

A promise for the Saviour

“I will hold thine hand, and will keep thee ...” Isaiah 42:6.

The figure here seems taken from a father and his little child. When a little child has to go over some very rough road, or to travel in the darkness, or to wade through some deep waters, he says to his father: I fear I shall be lost; I shall not be able to go through. Nay, do not fear, the father answers: “I will hold Thine hand; I will keep Thee.” Such are the words of the Father to His dear Son. I would not have dared to have imagined them, if I had not found them in the Bible.

When God called His Son to the work, it could not but be a fearful work in His eyes. Christ knew well the infinite number of men’s sins; for He is the searcher of hearts and trier of reins. He knew also the infinite weight of God’s anger against these sins; He saw the dark clouds of infinite vengeance that were ready to burst over the head of sinners; He saw the infinite deluge of eternal wrath that was to drown for ever the guilty world; and, oh! how dreadful His Father’s anger was in His eyes; for He had known nothing but His infinite love from all eternity. Oh! how could He bear to lie down under that wrath? How could He bear to exchange the smile of His Father’s love for the dark power of His Father’s anger? How could He bear, for the sake of vile sinners, to exchange the caresses of that God who is love, for the piercings and bruising of His almighty hand? Surely the very thought would be agony. God here comforts His Son under the view: Yon sea of wrath is deep, its waves are dreadful; but “I will hold Thine hand; I will keep Thee.”

March Sixth

They are not lost

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrows, nor crying, neither shall

there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”
Revelation 21:4.

This world is the vale of tears. There are always some mourning. No sooner is the tear dried up on one cheek than it trickles down another. No sooner does one widow lay aside her weeps, than another takes them up. Those that are in Christ should weep as though they wept not; “for the time is short.” Do you weep over those that died in the Lord? It is right to weep: “Jesus wept.” Yet weep as though you wept not; “for the time is short.” They are not lost, but gone before. The sun, when it sets, is not lost; it is gone to shine in another hemisphere; and so have they gone to shine in a brighter world. It is self-love that makes you mourn for them; for they are happy. You would not mourn if they were with a distant friend on earth — why do you mourn that they are with the sinner’s Friend? “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them unto fountains of living waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:16, 17) “The time is short;” and you will follow after. A few days, and you may be leaning together on the bosom of Jesus; you are nearer them today than you were yesterday. “The time is short;” and you will meet with all the redeemed at the right hand of Christ — we shall mingle our voices in the new song, and wave together the eternal palm! “Weep as though you wept not.”

March Seventh

Everlasting remembrance

“... thou shalt not be forgotten of me” Isaiah 44:21.

The Lord cannot forget you. If you stood before God in your own righteousness, then I see how you might be separated from His love and care; for your frames vary, your goodness is like the morning cloud and early dew. But you stand before Him in Christ: and Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

You shall be held in everlasting remembrance.

The world may forget you, your friends may forget you, for this is

a forgetting world, you may not have a tombstone over your grave; but God will not forget you, Christ will put your name beside that of His faithful martyr, Antipas.

In life, in death, in eternity, “thou shalt not be forgotten of Me.”

March Eighth

Fullness divine

“... he that have mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them” Isaiah 49:10.

Put your finger on the promise, and plead, “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, I the Lord will hear them” (Isaiah 41:17). Tell Him you are poor and needy. Spread out your wants before Him. Take your emptiness to His Fullness. There is an infinite supply with Him for everything you need, at the very moment you need it.

March Ninth

A serious situation

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” Revelation 2:4.

There are many times when, like Ephesus, many of God’s children lose their first love. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Believers lose their close and near communion with God. They go out of the holiest, and pray at a distance with a curtain between. They lose their fervency, sweetness, and fullness in secret prayer. They do not pour out their hearts to God.

They have lost their clear discovery of Christ. They see Him but dimly. They have lost the sight of His beauty — the savour of His good ointment — the hold of His garment. They seek Him, but find Him not. They cannot stir up the heart to lay hold on Christ.

The Spirit dwells scantily in their soul. The living water seems almost dried up within them. The soul is dry and barren. Corruptions are strong: grace is very weak.

Love to the brethren fades. United prayer is forsaken. The little assembly no more appears beautiful. Compassion for the unconverted is low and cold. Sin is unrebuked, though committed

under their eye. Christ is not confessed before men. Perhaps the soul falls into sin, and is afraid to return; it stays far off from God, and lodges in the wilderness.

Ah! This is the case, I fear with many. It is a fearfully dangerous time. Nothing but a visit of the Holy Spirit to your soul can persuade you to return.

March Tenth

Crowned

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” 2 Timothy 4:8.

How sweet it will be, when Christ puts on the crown on a sinner’s brow! The just God and Saviour! Angels will shout for joy when they see the righteous Jesus crowning the sinners for whom He died. He will finish our redemption. He was crowned with thorns; He has been an advocate crowned with glory and majesty; but another step — He is to put on the crown of righteousness. All heaven and earth and hell own Him faithful and true, and righteous in all His ways. Oh! how sweet to be crowned by Jesus.

March Eleventh

Below His feet

“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes” Psalm 119:71.

There are many of the graces of God’s people that can only grow in time of affliction. There is a plant in the garden which the gardener tramples below his feet to make it grow better. So it is with many of the graces of God’s children — they grow better by being tried.

March Twelfth

Light for eternity

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” Hebrews 10:12.

This is the great work of Christ as our High Priest. For this it was needful that He should become man and die. Had He remained God alone in the bosom of His Father, He might have pitied us, but He could not have died for us, nor taken our sins away. We must have perished. Every priest in the Old Testament was a type of Jesus in this; every lamb that was slain typified Jesus offering up His own body a sacrifice for our sins.

Let your eye rest there if you would be happy. Those few dark hours on Calvary, when the great High Priest was offering up the amazing sacrifice, give light for eternity to the believing soul. This only will cheer you in dying. Not your graces, not your love to Christ, not anything in you, but only this — Christ hath died. He loved me, and gave Himself for me. Christ hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

March Thirteenth

Joy

“Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation” Habakkuk 3:18.

The purest joy in the world is joy in Christ Jesus. When the Spirit is poured down, His people get very near and clear views of the Lord Jesus. They eat His flesh and drink His blood. They come to a personal cleaving to the Lord. They taste that the Lord is gracious. His blood and righteousness appear infinitely perfect, full, and free to their souls. They sit under His shadow with great delight. They rest in the cleft of the rock. Their defence is the munitions of rocks. They lean on the Beloved. They find infinite strength in Him for the use of their soul — grace for grace — all they can need in any hour of trial and suffering to the very end.

They go by Him to the Father. “We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We find a portion there — a shield, and exceeding great reward. This gives joy unspeakable and full of glory.

March Fourteenth

No condemnation

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather,

that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” Romans 8:34.

Paul looks round all the judges of the world — all who are skilled in law and equity; he looks upward to the holy angels, whose superhuman sight pierces deep and far into the righteous government of God; he looks up to God, the judge of all, who must do right — whose ways are equal and perfect righteousness — and he asks, Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died. Christ has paid the uttermost farthing: so that every judge must cry out, There is now no condemnation.

March Fifteenth

A triumphant deathbed

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” 2 Timothy 4:7.

I think the dying thief could say: I believe, and enter with joy into Paradise; but he could not say: “I have kept the faith.” This makes the difference between a peaceful and a triumphant death-bed. Paul “bought the truth, and sold it not.” That good thing committed to him he kept, by the Holy Ghost given unto him. He held the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end.

Learn that perseverance in the faith is needful to a triumphant death-bed. It is Christ, and Christ alone, that is our peace in dying; yet the hand that has longest held Him has the firmest hold. It is not our perseverance that is our righteousness before God, but the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus; and yet without perseverance in the faith ye cannot be saved. Alas! you that turn aside to folly, you are preparing clouds for your dying bed. Can you say you have kept the faith, poor backslider?

March Sixteenth

Like the planets

“... I have finished my course” 2 Timothy 4:7.

The moment a soul is brought to Christ, he has a course to run: “And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am?”

I am not He. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of His feet I am not worthy to loose” (Acts 13:25). Paul says: “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1). Every one has a different course, like the planets. All do not shine in the same part of the sky, and so every believer has his course — a work to do. One has the course of a minister, another the course of a master, another that of a servant. The misery of inconsistencies — leaving the course. Each of us has a work to do for Christ; let us do it diligently. “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.”

March Seventeenth

Reaching forth

“For I will pour water on him that is thirsty ...” Isaiah 44:3.

Some persons are contented when they come to Christ. They sink back, as it were, into an easy chair, they ask no more, they wish no more. This must not be. If you are thirsty believers, you will seek salvation as much after conversion as before it. “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

March Eighteenth

Companions

“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” Psalm 119:63.

In choosing connections or friends, O choose with regard to this — will they help or hinder your prayers? Will they go with you, and help you on your journey? or will they be a drag upon your wheels? In going into companies, in reading books, choose with regard to

this — will they fill your sails for heaven? If not, go not near them. In yielding to your affections, especially if you find them hindering your journey, drop them instantly. Never mind the consequences.

“If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to be cast into hell fire.”

“Wherefore, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.”

March Nineteenth

Devoting yourself

“For thou art my servant ...” Isaiah 44:21.

When a man consents that Christ shall be his Surety, he feels that he is not his own, but bought with a price. So David felt: “Truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: Thou hast loosed my bonds.” So Paul felt, when he lay gasping on the ground: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” Before conversion, the unconverted thinks that he is his own: May I not do what I will with mine own? He was the willing slave of the devil. But when he sees the price laid down for him, he feels that the Lord has redeemed him out of the house of bondage. Now he says, I am the Lord’s. Now he is more the servant of the Lord than ever he was of the devil. Oh! Dear Christians, would that I could see more of this among you, a devoting of yourselves unto the Lord; “for thou art my servant, thou art my servant.”

March Twentieth

The touch that heals

“And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him ...” Mark 1:41.

When the woman had spent her all upon physicians, and was nothing better, but rather worse, she heard of Jesus. Ah! said she, if I may but “touch the hem of His garment I shall be made whole.” Jesus said to her: “Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath

made thee whole.” Come, then, incurable, to Christ. The leprosy was always regarded as incurable. Accordingly, the leper came to Jesus, and worshipping, said: “Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.” Jesus said, “I will, be thou clean;” and immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Some of you feel that your heart is desperately wicked; well, kneel to the Lord Jesus, and say: “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.” You are a leper — incurable; Jesus is able — He is also willing to make you clean.

March Twenty-first

The Comforter abides forever

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” Hebrews 13:5.

You may take these words as those of the Spirit, and then they are like those words in fourteenth of John: “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever” (verse 16) — to abide with you for ever. It is the same as these words — “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” When God the Holy Spirit comes to a soul, He will never leave it. Some may often be made to say, “I think the Spirit will go away from me.” But, observe, He says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” David cried out in the bitterness of his soul, “Take not Thy Holy Spirit away from me” (Psalm 51:11). Here is the answer — “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” God will never forsake the temple in which He dwells. He forsook the tabernacle in the wilderness, and He forsook the temple at Jerusalem; but He will never forsake the living temple.

March Twenty-second

From the cross to the throne

“And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son man standing on the right hand of God” Acts 7:56.

When believing souls seek for peace and joy in believing, they do very generally confine their view to Christ upon the earth. They

remember Him as the good Shepherd seeking the lost sheep; they look to Him sitting by the well of Samaria; they remember Him saying to the sick of the palsy: “Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;” but they too seldom think of looking where Stephen looked — to where Jesus is now — at the right hand of God.

Now, my friends, remember if you would be whole Christians, you must look to a whole Christ; you must lift your eye from the cross to the throne, and you will find Him the same Saviour in all — “the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” I have already observed, that wherever Christ is mentioned as being at the right hand of God, He is spoken of as seated there upon His throne; here, and here only, are we told that He is standing. In other places He is described as enjoying’ His glory, and entered into His rest; but here He is described as risen from His throne, and standing at the right hand of God.

He rises to intercede: “He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

How often would a believer be a castaway, if it were not for the great intercessor! How often faith fails! — “flesh and heart faint and fail;” but see here, Christ never, fails. On the death-bed, often the mind is taken off the Saviour, by pains of body, and distress of mind; but, oh! Happy soul that has truly accepted Christ. See here, He rises from His throne to pray for you, when you cannot pray for yourself. Look up to Him with the eye of faith, and cry: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

March Twenty-third

The utmost farthing

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” Romans 4:25.

If you saw a criminal put into prison, and the prison doors closed behind him, and if you never saw him come out again, then you might well believe that he was still lying in prison, and still enduring the just sentence of the law; but if you saw the prison

doors fly open, and the prisoner going free, if you saw him walking at large in the streets, then you would know at once that he had satisfied the justice of his country, that he had suffered all that it was needful to suffer, that he had paid the uttermost farthing. So with the Lord Jesus; He was counted a criminal — the crimes of guilty sinners against God were all laid at His door, and He was condemned on account of them. He was hurried away to the death of the cross, and the gloomy prison-house of His rocky sepulchre, the stone was rolled to the mouth of the grave. If you never saw Him come out, then you might well believe that He was still enduring the just sentence of the law. But, lo! “He is risen — He is not here,” — “Christ is risen indeed.” God, who was His judge, hath raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places: so that you may be quite sure He has satisfied the justice of God. He has suffered everything that it was needful for Him to suffer — He has paid the uttermost farthing.

March Twenty-fourth

The second look

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pieced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” Revelation 1:7.

The first look to Christ makes the sinner mourn; the second look to Christ makes the sinner rejoice. When the soul looks first to Christ, he sees half of the truth, he sees the wrath of God against sin, that God is holy, and must avenge sin, that He can by no means clear the guilty, he sees that God’s wrath is infinite. When he looks to Christ again, he sees the other half of the truth, the love of God to the lost, that God has provided a surety free to all. It is this that fills the soul with joy. Oh, it is strange, that the same object should break the heart and heal it! A look to Christ wounds, a look to Christ heals. Many, I fear, have only a half look at Christ, and this causes only grief. Many are slow of heart to believe all that is spoken concerning Jesus. They believe all except that He is free to them. They do not see this glorious truth, “That a crucified Jesus is free to every sinner in the world” — that Christ’s all is free to all.

March Twenty-fifth

Soul sickness

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love” Song of Solomon 5:8.

In the parable, the bride told the daughters of Jerusalem that she was sick of love. This was the message she bade them carry; and when they asked her about her beloved, she gave them a rich and glowing description of His perfect beauty, ending by saying: “He is altogether lovely.”

So it is with the believer in time of darkness: “He is sick of love.” When Christ is present to the soul, there is no feeling of sickness. Christ is the health of the countenance. When I have Him full in my faith as a complete surety, a calm tranquillity is spread over the whole inner man — the pulse of the soul has a calm and easy flow — the heart rests in a present Saviour with a healthy, placid affection. The soul is contented — with Him — at rest in Him: “Return unto thy rest, O my soul.” There is no feeling of sickness. It is health to the bones; it is the very health of the soul to look upon Him, and to love Him.

March Twenty-sixth

At the heart’s door

“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh ...” Song of Solomon 5:2.

Even believers have got doors upon their hearts. You would think, perhaps, that when once Christ had found an entrance into a poor sinner’s heart, He never would find difficulty in getting in any more. You would think that as Samson carried off the gates of Gaza, bar and all, so Christ would carry away all the gates and bars from believing hearts; but no, there is still a door on the heart, and Christ stands and knocks. He would fain be in. It is not His pleasure that we should sit lonely and desolate. He would fain come into us, and sup with us, and we with Him.

March Twenty-seventh

Not so the believer

“I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer” Song of Solomon 5:6.

In the parable we find that, when the bride found her husband was gone, she did not return to her rest. Oh, no! her soul failed for his word. She listens — she seeks — she calls. She receives no answer. She asks the watchmen, but they wound her, and take away her veil; still she is not broken off from seeking. She sets the daughters of Jerusalem to seek along with her.

So is it with the believer. When the slothful believer is really awakened to feel that Christ has withdrawn Himself, and is gone, he is slothful no longer. Believers remain at ease only so long as they flatter themselves that all is well; but if they are made sensible, by a fall into sin, or by a fresh discovery of the wickedness of their heart, that Christ is away from them, they cannot rest. The world can rest quite well, even while they know that they are not in Christ. Satan lulls them into fatal repose. Not so the believer — he cannot rest.

March Twenty-eighth

Holy rapture

“The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee” Jeremiah 31:3.

Does it give you no joy to feel that God thought upon you in love before the foundation of the world? That when He was alone from all eternity He gave you to the Son to be redeemed? “Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee.” Does it give you no joy to think that the Son of God thought on you with love before the world was: “My delights were with the children of men.” That He came into the world bearing your name upon His heart, that He prayed for you on the night of His agony: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those that shall believe on Me through their word?” Does it give you no joy that He thought upon you in His bloody sweat, that He thought of you upon the cross, and intended these sufferings to be in

your stead? Oh, little children! how it would lift your hearts in holy rapture above the world, above its vexing cares, its petty quarrels, its polluting pleasures, if you would keep this holy joy within, taking up the very word of your Lord: “Father, Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.”

March Twenty-ninth

Go to Jesus

“As soon as she heard that, she rose quickly, and came to him”
John 11:29.

It is evident that Mary was the more deeply affected of the two sisters. Martha was able to go about, but Mary sat still in the house. She felt the absence of Christ more than Martha. She believed His word more, and when that word seemed to fail, Mary’s heart was nearly broken. Ah! it is a deep sorrow when natural and spiritual grief come together. Affliction is easily borne if we have the smile of Jehovah’s countenance.

Why does the mourner rise, and hastily drying her tears, with eager step leave the cottage door? Her friends who sat around her she seems quite to forget. “The Master is come.” Such is the presence of the Lord Jesus to mourners still. The world’s comforters are all physicians of no value. Miserable comforters are they all. They have no balm for a wounded spirit. “The heart knoweth its own bitterness.” But when the Master comes and calls us, the soul revives. There is life in His call, His voice speaketh peace. “In Me ye shall have peace.” Mourners should rise up quickly, and go to Jesus. The bereaved should spread their sorrows at the feet of Christ.

March Thirtieth

His glory reflected

“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee” **Isaiah 60:2.**

It has long been discovered that colour is nothing in the object,

but is all thrown upon it by the sun, and reflected back again. The beautiful colours with which this lovely world is adorned, all proceed from the sun. His glory is seen upon the earth. It is all the gift of the sun that the grass is of that refreshing green, and the rivers are lines of waving blue; it is all the gift of the sun that the flowers are tinged with their thousand glories; that the petal of the rose has its delicate blush, and the lily, that neither toils nor spins, a brightness that is greater than Solomon's. Now, my dear souls, this is the way in which you may be justified. You are dark, and vile, and worthless in yourselves; but Christ's glory shall be seen on you.

If you only consent to take Christ for your surety, His divine righteousness is all imputed to you; His sufferings, His obedience are both yours.

March Thirty-first

God's providence

"For all things are for your sakes ..." 2 Corinthians 4:15.

"All things are for your sakes" For the sake of believers this world was created — the sun made to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night. Every shining star was made for them. All are kept in being for your sakes. Winds rise and fall, waves roar and are still, seasons revolve, seed-time and harvest, day and night — all for your sakes. "All things are yours."

All events are for your sakes. Kingdoms rise and fall, to save God's people. Nations are His rod — His saw and axe to hew out a way for the chariot of the everlasting Gospel; even as Hiram's hewers in Lebanon, and the Gibeonite drawers of water were building up the temple of God. The enemies of the Church are only a rod in God's hand. He will do His purpose with them, then break the rod in two, and cast it away.

Specially all the providences of believing families are for your sakes. When Christ is dealing with a believing family, you say, That is no matter of mine. What have I to do with it? Ah, truly if you are of the world, you have no part or lot in it! But if you are Christ's, it is for your sake, to the intent that ye may believe. The dealings of Christ with believing families are very instructive, His afflictions

and His comforts, His way.

O learn to bear one another's burdens, to see more of Christ's hand among you, to the intent ye may believe!

“There's not a plant that grows below
But makes His glory known;
And thunders roll and tempests blow
By order from the throne.”

April First

Lie in the dust

“Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick” John 11:3.

If a worldly person had been sending to Christ, he would have sent a very different argument. He would have said: He who loves Thee is sick. Here is one who has believed on Thy name. Here is one that has confessed Thee before the world, suffered reproach and scorn for Thy sake. Martha and Mary knew better how to plead with Jesus. The only argument was in Jesus' breast: “He whom Thou lovest is sick.”

Jesus loved him with an electing love. Freely from all eternity Jesus loved him. Jesus loved him with a drawing love. He drew him from under wrath, from serving sin. Jesus loved him with a pardoning love. He drew him to Himself, and blotted out all his sin. Jesus loved him with an upholding love. “Who could hold me up but Thou?” He for whom Thou died, he whom Thou hast chosen, washed, and kept till now, “he whom Thou lovest is sick.”

Learn thus to plead with Christ, dear believers. Often you do not receive, because you do not ask aright: “Ye ask, and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” Often you ask proudly, as if you were somebody; so that if Christ were to grant it, He would only be fattening your lusts. Learn to lie in the dust, and plead only His own free love. Thou hast loved me for no good thing in me.

“Chosen, not for good in me;
Wakened up from wrath to flee;

Hidden in the Saviour's side;
By the Spirit sanctified."

April Second

Our continuing city

"For he looked for a city which have foundations, whose builder and maker is God" Hebrews 11:10.

Christians, learn to long for the heavenly Jerusalem. Do not forget it. Here we are in a strange land; be not taken up with anything that is there. But yonder is our continuing city, the heavenly Jerusalem, with its pearly gates, and streets of shining gold. Let the chief of your desires be to be with Christ, which is far better. When the world is at its brightest, when friends are at the kindest, when your sky is at the clearest, still lift up this sweet song: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

April Third

Not ashamed

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Romans 1:16.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." More is meant in these words than is expressed. He does not mean only that he was not ashamed of the Gospel, but he gloried in it. It is very similar to Galatians 6:14: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Two things are implied.

Firstly, that he (Paul) was not ashamed of it before God. He had ventured his own soul on this way of salvation. He could say, like David, "This is all my salvation, this is all my desire." The way of salvation by Jehovah our Righteousness was sweet to Paul. His soul rested there with great delight. He came thus to God in secret, thus in public, thus in dying. He hoped to stand before God through all eternity clothed in this divine righteousness.

Secondly, that he was not ashamed of it before men. Though all the world had been against him, Paul would have gloried in this way of salvation. He had a burning desire to make it known to other men. He felt it so sweet, he saw it to be so glorious, that he could have desired a voice so loud that all men might hear at one moment the way of salvation by Christ.

April Fourth

Pride of grace

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was give to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure” 2 Corinthians 12:7.

Lest he should be exalted above measure. This is twice stated. What a singular thing is pride! Who would have thought that taking Paul into paradise for a day would have made him proud? And yet God, who knew his heart, knew it would be so, and therefore brought him down to the dust.

The pride of nature is wonderful. A natural man is proud of anything. Proud of his person — although he did not make it, yet he prides himself upon his looks. Proud of his dress — although a block of wood might have the same cause for pride, if you would put the clothes on it. Proud of riches — as if there were some merit in having more gold than others. Proud of rank — as if there were some merit in having noble blood. Alas, pride flows in the veins; yet, there is a pride more wonderful than that of nature — pride of grace. You would think a man never could be proud who had once seen himself lost; yet, alas! Scripture and experience show that a man may be proud of his measure of grace — proud of forgiveness, proud of humility, proud of knowing more of God than others. It was this that was springing up in Paul’s heart when God sent him the thorn in the flesh.

April Fifth

Precious to Him

“The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are

they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!” Lamentations 4:2.

How amazing the love of Christ, that He died for us — such poor, weak flowers, and worms of a day! How safe we are in Jesus! Although we are nothing — fleeing like a shadow — yet in Him we abide for ever. Our very dust is precious dust to Him. Body and soul He will bring with Him, and we shall reign for ever and ever. O you that are in Christ, prize Him! You that are in doubt, solve it now by running to Him. You that are out of Him, choose Him now.

April Sixth

The first mark

“... for, behold, he prayeth” Acts 9:11.

“Behold he prayeth,” was the first mark that Paul was brought from death to life. The soul enjoys great nearness to God, enters within the veil, lies down at the feet of Jesus, and there pours out its groans and tears. The believer rises, like His Lord, a great while before day; waking in the night, cries in secret to God. Before entering any company, or by appointment meeting a friend, or answering a proposal, his heart wings its way to the mercy-seat. He prays without ceasing. He pours forth earnest cries for the deliverance from sin; the sins he is most tempted to, he prays most against. His intercessions for others are deep, constant, wide. It is sweet and easy for him to pray for others: “Forbid that I should sin against God by ceasing to pray for you.”

April Seventh

God forsaken by God

“... My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46.

These are the words of the great Surety of sinners, as He hung upon the accursed tree. The more I meditate upon them, the more impossible do I find it to unfold all that is contained in them. You must often have observed how a very small thing may be an index

of something great going on within. The pennant at the mast-head is a small thing; yet it shows plainly which way the wind blows. A cloud no bigger than a man's hand is a small thing; yet it may show the approach of a mighty storm. The swallow is a little bird; and yet it shows that summer is come. So is it with man. A look, a sigh, a half-uttered word, a broken sentence may show more of what is passing within than a long speech. So it was with the dying Saviour. These few troubled words tell more than volumes of divinity.

April Eighth

A conversation in heaven

“Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” Isaiah 42:5-8.

In this passage we have some of the most wonderful words that ever were uttered in the world. It is not a man speaking to a man, it is not even God speaking to a man, it is God speaking to His own Son. Oh! who would not listen? It is as if we were secretly admitted into the counsel of God, as if we stood behind the curtains of His dwelling-place, or were hidden in the clefts of the rock, and overheard the words of the Eternal Father to the Eternal Son. Now, sometimes when you overhear a conversation on earth, between two poor, perishing worms, you think it is worth treasuring up; you remember what they said; you repeat it over and over again. Oh! then, when you overhear a conversation in heaven, when God the Father speaks, and God the Son stands to receive His words, will you not listen? will you not lay up these sayings in your heart?

God tells the Son:

1. That He had called Him to His service — had passed over all

His angels, and chosen Him for this difficult work.

2. He tells Him that He is not to shrink from the difficulties of it. There is an ocean of wrath to wade through, but fear not; I will hold Thee by the hand — I will keep Thee.

3. He tells Him that He must be given as a covenant Saviour. However dear to His heart, still, says God, “I will give Thee.”

4. He encourages Him by the great benefit to be gained — that He would be a light to whole nations of poor, blind, captive sinners.

5. That in all this He would have His glory: “My glory will I not give to another, nor My praise to graven images.”

April Ninth

Something to hide

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” Psalm 119:11.

When Jesus makes holy, it is by writing the Word in the heart: “Sanctify them through Thy truth.” When a mother nurses her child, she not only bears it in her arms, but holds it to her breast, and feeds it with the milk of her own breast; so does the Lord. He not only holds the soul, but feeds it with the milk of the Word. The words of the Bible are just the breathings of God’s heart. He fills the heart with these, to make us like God. When you go much with a companion, and hear his words, you are gradually changed by them into his likeness; so when you go with Christ, and hear His words, you are sanctified.

April Tenth

The deceitful heart

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” Jeremiah 17:9, 10.

This is a faithful description of the natural heart of man: The heart of unfallen Adam was very different. “God made man upright.” His mind was clear and heavenly. It was riveted upon divine things. He

saw their glory without any cloud or dimness. His heart was right with God. His affections flowed sweetly and fully towards God. He loved as God loved, hated as God hated. There was no deceit about his heart then. It was transparent as crystal. He had nothing to conceal. There was no wickedness in his heart, no spring of hatred, or lust, or pride. He knew his own heart. He could see clearly into its deepest recesses; for it was just a reflection of the heart of God.

When Adam sinned, his heart was changed. When he lost the favour of God, he lost the image of God. Just as Nebuchadnezzar suddenly got a beast's heart, so Adam suddenly got a heart in the image of the devil. And this is the description ever since: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

April Eleventh

Send up this cry

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" Psalm 85:6.

The soul of a believer needs grace every moment. "By the grace of God I am what I am." But there are times when he needs more grace than at other times. Just as the body continually needs food; but there are times when it needs more food than at others — times of great bodily exertion, when all powers are to be put forth.

Sometimes the soul of a believer is exposed to hot persecution. Reproach breaks the heart; or it beats like a scorching sun upon the head. "For my love they are my adversaries." Sometimes they are God's children who reproach us, and this is still harder to bear. The soul is ready to rest or sink under it.

Sometimes it is flattery that tempts the soul. The world speaks well of us, and we are tempted to pride and vanity. This is still worse to bear.

Sometimes Satan strives within us, by stirring up fearful corruptions, till there is a tempest within. Oh, is there a tempted soul that reads these words? Jesus prays for thee. You need more peace. Nothing but the oil of the Spirit will feed the fire of grace when Satan is casting water on it. Send up this cry, "Wilt Thou not revive us again?"

April Twelfth

Avoiding sin

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.”
Matthew 25:1.

The truest mark of children of God is their avoiding sin. They flee from their old companions and old ways, they walk with God. And yet even this is imitated by the foolish virgins. They go out to meet their Lord. They flee old sins for a time, they hasten from their work to the house of God, they seek the company of God’s children, perhaps they try to save others, and become very zealous in this. O how sad that many who now cling to the godly will soon be torn from them, and bound up with devils and wicked men!

April Thirteenth

It was good

“When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was” **John 11:6.**

Had Christ come at the first and healed their brother, we never would have known the love that showed itself at the grave of Lazarus, we never would have known the power of the great Redeemer in raising up from the grave. These bright forth-shinings of the glory of Christ would have been lost to the Church and to the world. Therefore it was good that He stayed away for two days. Thus the honour of His name was spread far and wide. The Son of God was glorified. “This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise.” This is God’s great end in all His dealings with His people — that He may be seen. For this reason He destroyed the Egyptians: “That the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.”

April Fourteenth

Why bread

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered

unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 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 11:23, 24.

This day, my friends, I set before you the plainest and simplest picture of the silent sufferings of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. In that night in which He was betrayed He took bread. Why bread? Firstly, because of its plainness and commonness. He did not take silver, or gold, or jewels, to represent His body, but bread, plain bread, to show you that when He came to be a surety for sinners, He did not come in His original glory, with His Father’s angels. He took not on Him the nature of angels, He became man. Secondly, He chose bread, to show you that He was dumb, and opened not His mouth. When I break the bread it resists not, it complains not, it yields to my hand. So was it with Christ; He resisted not, complained not, He yielded to the hand of infinite justice. “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.”

April Fifteenth

An amazing weapon

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” 1 Corinthians 1:18.

To ungodly men nothing appears more weak and powerless than the Gospel. They regard it as Lot’s sons-in-law did his solemn warning: “He seemed as one that mocked to his sons-in-law.” It appears an idle tale; an old wife’s fable; but it is in reality “the power of God unto salvation.” The Gospel is an amazing weapon when God wields it: “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” When God wields the Gospel it is mighty to awaken the hardest hearts. Paul felt this in his own experience. He was a proud blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious; a proud, self-righteous Pharisee. You would have said: Nothing in the world can awaken that man. Jesus revealed Himself to him. And he fell to the ground, trembling and

astonished. So he had seen it in the case of others; in Lydia, and the jailer; in Sergius Paulus, the deputy of Cyprus: “He believed being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord” (Acts 13:12). “The power of God unto salvation!” not God’s mighty arm to destroy, but his mighty arm to save.

April Sixteenth

A good thing

“And the ark of the Lord continued in the house Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the Lord blessed Obed-edom, and all his household” 2 Samuel 6:11.

When the ark of God was carried into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, and remained there three months, then it is said the Lord blessed Obed-edom, and his household, and all that he had. Now, every believer is a kind of the ark of God in which He hides His law, every believer is a temple of the Holy Ghost. It is a good thing to receive a believer into our house, for the blessing of God goes with him. That promise is true to him: “blessed is he that blesseth thee, cursed is he that curseth thee.”

As far back as the flood you remember how wicked Ham was saved in the ark, and kept from being devoured with the wicked world, because he was in righteous Noah’s family. Doubtless many an ungodly son among us is kept alive, and spared a little longer because of his righteous father.

You remember how Sodom would have been spared if there had been ten righteous men found in it; and how the angel told Lot, “I cannot do any thing until thou be escaped thither.” Doubtless, this town in which we live is spared only for the sake of the few children of God that are in it. Take them away, and God’s wrath would doubtless come down immediately. How little you think, my unconverted friends, that you owe it to the children of God, whom you despise, that you are not this day in hell.

April Seventeenth

Misers of grace

“And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace” John 1:16.

A Christian in our day is like a man who has got a great reservoir brimful of water. He is at liberty to drink as much as he pleases, for he never can drink it dry; but instead of drinking the full stream that flows from it, he dams it up, and is content to drink the few drops that trickle through. O that ye would draw out of His fullness, ye that have come to Christ! Do not be misers of grace. There is far more than you will use in eternity. The same waters are now in Christ that refreshed Paul, that gave Peter his boldness, that gave John his affectionate tenderness. Why is your soul less richly supplied than theirs? Because you will not drink: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

April Eighteenth

Heavenly tenderness

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" John 16:7.

When friends are about to part from one another, they are far kinder than ever they have been before. It was so with Jesus. He was going to part from His disciples, and never till now did His heart flow out toward them in so many streams of heavenly tenderness. Sorrow had filled their heart, and therefore divinest compassion filled His heart. "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away."

Surely it was expedient for Himself that He should go away. He had lived a life of weariness and painfulness, not having where to lay His head, and surely it was pleasant in His eyes that He was about to enter into His rest. He had lived in obscurity and poverty — He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and now, surely, He might well look forward with joy to His return to that glory which He had with the Father before ever the world was, when all the angels of God worshipped Him; and yet He does not say: It is expedient for Me that I go away. Surely that would have been comfort enough to His disciples. But no; He says: "It is expedient for you." He forgets Himself altogether, and thinks only of His little flock which He was leaving

behind Him: “It is expedient for you that I go away.” O most generous of Saviours! He looked not on His own things, but on the things of others also. He knew that it is far more blessed to give than it is to receive.

April Nineteenth

Looking at Christ

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men”
Philippians 2:7.

He was the eternal Son of God — equal with the Father in everything, therefore equal in happiness. He had glory with Him before ever the world was. Yet His happiness also consisted in giving. He was far above all the angels, and therefore He gave far more than them all: “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” He was highest, therefore He stooped lowest. They gave their willing services, He gave Himself: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ”

Now, dear Christians, some of you pray night and day to be branches of the true Vine; you pray to be made all over in the image of Christ. If so, you must be like Him in giving. A branch bears the same kind of fruit as the tree. If you be branches at all, you must bear the same fruit. An old divine says well: “What would have become of us if Christ had been as saving of His blood as some men are of their money?”

April Twentieth

Only one sin

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous”
Romans 5:19.

Only one sin. Some of you see little evil in one sin, or in a

hundred sins; but here you see one sin cast Adam and all his children out of paradise. God did not wait till it was repeated. It appeared a small sin. The outward action was small, only stretching out the hand and taking an inviting fruit. Some of you think little of sins that make no great noise; such as breaking the Sabbath, drinking too much, speaking what is false, sitting down Christless at the Lord's table; but see here, one small sin brought a world under the curse of God. God would rather a world should perish than one small sin go unpunished.

April Twenty-first

Remember the Sabbath day

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day ...” Revelation 1:10.

John was keeping the Christian Sabbath in Patmos. Even though an Exile, far from fellow-Christians, he was walking in the Spirit When God gave this blessed vision to him. Thus, my friends, even when away from the house of God, if you seek to be in the Spirit, and to honour the Sabbath, God will make up for the want of ordinances.

April Twenty-second

The Comforter

“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me” Romans 15:30.

It is curious to remark, that wherever the Holy Ghost is spoken of in the Bible, He is spoken of in terms of gentleness and love. We often read of the wrath of God the Father, as in Romans 1:18. “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” And we often read of the wrath of God the Son: “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way” or, “Revealed from heaven taking vengeance.” But we nowhere read of the wrath of God the Holy Ghost.

He is compared to a dove, the gentlest of all creatures. He is warm and gentle as the breath: “Jesus breathed on them, and said,

Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” He is gentle as the falling dew: “I will be as the dew unto Israel.” He is soft and gentle as oil; for He is called “The oil of gladness.” The fine oil wherewith the high priest was anointed was a type of the Spirit. He is gentle and refreshing as the springing well: “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” He is called “The Spirit of grace and of supplications.”

He is nowhere called the Spirit of wrath. He is called the “Holy Ghost, which is the Comforter.” Nowhere is He called the Avenger. We are told that He groans within the heart of a believer, “helping His infirmities;” so that He greatly helps the believer in prayer. We are told also of the love of the Spirit — nowhere of the wrath of the Spirit. We are told of His being grieved: “Grieve not the Holy Spirit;” of His being resisted: “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost;” of His being quenched: “Quench not the Spirit.” But these are all marks of gentleness and love.

Nowhere will you find one mark of anger or of vengeance attributed to Him; and yet, brethren, when this blessed Spirit begins His work of love, mark how He begins — He convinces of sin. Even He, all-wise, almighty, all-gentle and loving, though He be, cannot persuade a poor sinful heart to embrace the Saviour, without first opening up his wounds, and convincing him that he is lost.

April Twenty-third

Equally righteous

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” Isaiah 61:10.

I have seen a family of children all dressed alike, that none might boast over the others, all being equally fair. So it is with God’s family; they are all righteous in the obedience of one. One garment covers them all — the robe of their elder Brother. Believers differ. In attainments, in gifts and graces, but all are equally justified before God. It is not work of their own that justifies them, it is the

work of Christ alone. Ah, brethren! there is no boasting in Christ's family.

April Twenty-fourth

None but Jesus

“Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth” Psalm 31:5.

Some Christians have little affliction. They sail on a smooth sea; they enjoy health of body for years together; they never knew what it was to want a comfortable meal. Death has perhaps not once entered their dwelling. They think it will be always thus. But a change comes. The “harp of thousand strings” becomes out of tune. The “clay cottage” gives tokens of decay, or grim want invades their dwelling, or death comes up into the window. Ah! it is hard to bear. No affliction for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous. Who can comfort? None but Jesus. He knew all sorrow, deeper sorrows than we have ever known, or ever will. His heart is not of stone. He feels along with us. Afflicts not willingly. Seeks to bring us more to Himself. O afflicted believer, commit thy weeping, suffering, pining, trembling soul to Jesus: “Into Thine hand I commit my spirit.”

April Twenty-fifth

The righteousness of God

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written. The just shall live by faith” Romans 1:17.

There is something infinitely vast and glorious in the righteousness of God. When the deluge covered the earth, it covered the highest mountains. Looking down from above, not one mountain-top could be seen, but a vast world of waters — a vast plain reflecting the beams of the sun. So if you this day lie down under the righteousness of God, the mountains of your sins will not be seen, but only the vast, deep, glorious righteousness of your God and Saviour. If you were to cast a stone into the deepest part of the ocean, it would be lost and swallowed up by the deep waves of

ocean; so when a sinner is cast down under the righteousness of God, he is as it were lost and swallowed up in Christ.

April Twenty-sixth

Fear not

“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible” Hebrews 11:27.

You remember when Elisha and his servant were in Dothan, and a great host of enemies compassed them in, the young man cried, Alas, my master, how shall we do? and Elisha answered, fear not, for they that be for us, are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see.” And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

Dear brethren, believe what you do not see. Live by faith in a covenant-keeping God. “God is faithful, who also will do it.”

April Twenty-seventh

Mark the change

“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” Genesis 12:2.

Abraham, before his conversion, was doubtless as selfish and ungodly as any unconverted man among us. Doubtless he thought it beneath him to have family prayer, or to teach his children and servants to know the Saviour. Doubtless he was as cold and selfish in these things as most are among ourselves. But mark the change! When Abraham becomes a child of God, he builds a family altar wherever he goes; and though he had hundreds of servants under him, yet he cared anxiously for the souls of them all. “For I know him,” says God “that he will command his servants and his household after him, to keep the ways of the Lord.” Before, he had been a curse; but now he is a blessing.

Dorcas before her conversion was doubtless as selfish, and as

fond of worldly things, as all unconverted people are. Doubtless she thought it beneath her to make coats and garments for the poor, doubtless she was as selfish in these things as most are amongst us. But mark the change! When she becomes a child of God, then to do good and to distribute seems to have been the pleasure of her life. This woman was full of good works and alms-deeds, which she did. Before she had been a curse; but now she is a blessing.

Paul before his conversion was as great an enemy to the truth and as keen a persecutor of Christians as most unconverted persons are: “I thought I should do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; I was a blasphemer, and persecutor, and injurious.” But mark the change, when he became a child of God: “In the bowels of Jesus Christ I long after you all;” “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.”

Are you converted? Then see that you be a blessing. Once you were a curse. See that you be as much a blessing.

April Twenty-eighth

Angels unawares

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” Hebrews 13:2.

You remember how a poor widow of Sarepta received Elijah into her house, and how he was a blessing to her; for her barrel of meal never wasted, and her cruse of oil never failed; and her son was brought to life again through Elijah’s prayer. Ah, brethren, be careful to entertain the children of God, you will find angels in disguise. Wherever a child of God is, God’s eye is upon that spot by night and day. Oh, it is good to be near the children of God, that we may share in their blessing. He that receiveth them receiveth Jesus. Blessed is he that blesseth them and cursed is he that curseth them.

April Twenty-ninth

The Saviour’s silence

“He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth” Isaiah 53:7.

Before the world was, He entered into covenant with His Father, that He would stand as a substitute for sinners; and therefore when He did come to suffer, His very righteousness sustained Him, and He set His face like a flint. When a feeble man undertakes some hard piece of service, very often he is loud and boastful before he begins; but when he comes up to the point, his courage dies, and he goes away back from his word. Not so the Son of God. He had sworn that He would bear the curse that was hanging over sinners. He had struck hands with the eternal Father, He would be their Jonah, to lie down under their sea of wrath: "Take Me up," He said, "and cast Me into that sea of wrath." And so, when the waves and billows went over Him, He did not cry nor murmur. He set His face steadfastly. He had sworn once by His holiness, and He would not turn from it. He would not alter the thing that had gone out of His lips. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth."

April Thirtieth

Arise, shine!

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" Isaiah 60:1.

Christians are to become like Christ — little suns, to rise and shine upon the dark world. He rises and shines upon us, and then says to us, "Arise, shine." This is Christ's command to all on whom He has arisen: "Arise, shine." Dear Christians, ye are the lights of the world. poor, and feeble, and dark, and sinful, though you be,

Christ has risen upon you for this very end, that you might "Arise and shine."

1. Be like the sun, which shineth every day, and in every place. Wherever he goes he carries light; so do you. Some shine like the sun in public before men. but are dark as night in their own family. Dear Christians, look more to Christ, and you will shine more constantly.

2. Shine with Christ's light. The moon rises and shines, but not with her own light, she gathers all from the sun; so do you. Shine in such a way that Christ shall have all the glory. They shine brightest

who feel most their own darkness, and are most clothed in Christ's brightness. Oh! wherever you go, make it manifest that your light and peace all come from Him; that it is by looking unto Jesus that you shine; that your holiness all comes from union to Him. "Let your light so shine before men."

3. Make it the business of your life to shine. If the sun were to grow weary of running his daily journey, and were to give over shining, would you not say it should be taken down? for did not God hang it in the sky to give light upon the earth? Just so, dear Christians, if you grow weary in well-doing, in shining with Christ's beauty, in walking by Christ's Spirit, you too should be taken down and cast away.

Second of six booklets.

