

— Morning and Evening

## August 1

### Morning Verse

"Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn." [Ruth 2:2](#)

Downcast and troubled Christian, come and glean to-day in the broad field of promise. Here are abundance of precious promises, which exactly meet thy wants. Take this one: "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." Doth not that suit thy case? A reed, helpless, insignificant, and weak, a bruised reed, out of which no music can come; weaker than weakness itself; a reed, and that reed bruised, yet, He will not break thee; but on the contrary, will restore and strengthen thee. Thou art like the smoking flax: no light, no warmth, can come from thee; but He will not quench thee; He will blow with His sweet breath of mercy till He fans thee to a flame. Wouldst thou glean another ear? "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What soft words! Thy heart is tender, and the Master knows it, and therefore He speaketh so gently to thee. Wilt thou not obey Him, and come to Him even now? Take another ear of corn: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, I will help thee, saith the Lord and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." How canst thou fear with such a wonderful assurance as this? Thou mayest gather ten thousand such golden ears as these! "I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thy transgressions." Or this, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Or this, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Our Master's field is very rich; behold the handfuls. See, there they lie before thee, poor timid believer! Gather them up, make them thine own, for Jesus bids thee take them. Be not afraid, only believe! Grasp these sweet promises, thresh them out by meditation and feed on them with joy.

### Evening Verse

"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness." [Psalm 65:11](#)

All the year round, every hour of every day, God is richly blessing us; both when we sleep and when we wake His mercy waits upon us. The sun may leave us a legacy of darkness, but our God never ceases to shine upon His children with beams of love. Like a river, His lovingkindness is always flowing, with a fulness inexhaustible as His own nature. Like the atmosphere which constantly surrounds the earth, and is always ready to support the life of man, the benevolence of God surrounds all His creatures; in it, as in their element, they live, and move, and have their being. Yet as the sun on summer days gladdens us with beams more warm and bright than at other times, and as rivers are at certain seasons swollen by the rain, and as the atmosphere itself is sometimes fraught with more fresh, more bracing, or more balmy influences than heretofore, so is it with the mercy of God; it hath its golden hours; its days of overflow, when the Lord magnifieth

His grace before the sons of men. Amongst the blessings of the nether springs, *the joyous days of harvest* are a special season of excessive favour. It is the glory of autumn that the ripe gifts of providence are then abundantly bestowed; it is the mellow season of realization, whereas all before was but hope and expectation. Great is the joy of harvest. Happy are the reapers who fill their arms with the liberality of heaven. The Psalmist tells us that the harvest is the crowning of the year. Surely these crowning mercies call for crowning thanksgiving! Let us render it by the *inward emotions of gratitude*. Let our hearts be warmed; let our spirits remember, meditate, and think upon this goodness of the Lord. Then let us *praise Him with our lips*, and laud and magnify His name from whose bounty all this goodness flows. Let us glorify God by yielding *our gifts* to His cause. A practical proof of our gratitude is a special thank-offering to the Lord of the harvest.

— Morning and Evening

## August 2

### Morning Verse

"Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."  
[Ephesians 1:11](#)

Our belief in God's wisdom supposes and necessitates that He has a settled purpose and plan in the work of salvation. What would *creation* have been without His design? Is there a fish in the sea, or a fowl in the air, which was left to chance for its formation? Nay, in every bone, joint, and muscle, sinew, gland, and blood-vessel, you mark the presence of a God working everything according to the design of infinite wisdom. And shall God be present in creation, ruling over all, and not in *grace*? Shall the new creation have the fickle genius of free will to preside over it when divine counsel rules the old creation? Look at *Providence*! Who knoweth not that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father? Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. God weighs the mountains of our grief in scales, and the hills of our tribulation in balances. And shall there be a God in providence and not in grace? Shall the shell be ordained by wisdom and the kernel be left to blind chance. No; He knows the end from the beginning. He sees in its appointed place, not merely the corner-stone which He has laid in fair colours, in the blood of His dear Son, but He beholds in their ordained position each of the chosen stones taken out of the quarry of nature, and polished by His grace; He sees the whole from corner to cornice, from base to roof, from foundation to pinnacle. He hath in His mind a clear knowledge of every stone which shall be laid in its prepared space, and how vast the edifice shall be, and when the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of "Grace! Grace! unto it." At the last it shall be clearly seen that in every chosen vessel of mercy, Jehovah did as He willed with His own; and that in every part of the work of grace He accomplished His purpose, and glorified His own name.

### Evening Verse

"So she gleaned in the field until even." [Ruth 2:17](#)

Let me learn from Ruth, the gleaner. As she went out to gather the ears of corn, so must I go forth into the fields of prayer, meditation, the ordinances, and hearing the word to gather spiritual food. *The gleaner gathers her portion ear by ear*; her gains are little by little: so must I be content to search for single truths, if there be no greater plenty of them. Every ear helps to make a bundle, and every gospel lesson assists in making us wise unto salvation. *The gleaner keeps her eyes open*: if she stumbled among the stubble in a dream, she would have no load to carry home rejoicingly at eventide. I must be watchful in religious exercises lest they become unprofitable to me; I fear I have lost much already--O that I may rightly estimate my opportunities, and glean with greater diligence. *The gleaner stoops for all she finds*, and so must I. High spirits criticize and object, but lowly minds glean and receive benefit. A humble heart is a great help towards profitably hearing the gospel. The engrafted soul-saving word is not received except with meekness. A stiff back makes a bad gleaner; down, master pride, thou art a vile robber, not to be endured for a moment. *What the gleaner gathers she holds*: if she dropped one ear to find another, the result of her day's work would be but scant; she is as careful to retain as to obtain, and so at last her gains are great. How often do I forget all that I hear; the second truth pushes the first out of my head, and so my reading and hearing end in much ado about nothing! Do I feel duly the importance of storing up the truth? A hungry belly makes the gleaner wise; if there be no corn in her hand, there will be no bread on her table; she labours under the sense of necessity, and hence her tread is nimble and her grasp is firm; I have even a greater necessity, Lord, help me to feel it, that it may urge me onward to glean in fields which yield so plenteous a reward to diligence.

— Morning and Evening

## August 3

### Morning Verse

"The Lamb is the light thereof." [Revelation 21:23](#)

Quietly contemplate the Lamb as the light of heaven. Light in Scripture is the emblem of *joy*. The joy of the saints in heaven is comprised in this: *Jesus* chose us, loved us, bought us, cleansed us, robed us, kept us, glorified us: we are here entirely through the Lord Jesus. Each one of these thoughts shall be to them like a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol. Light is also the cause of *beauty*. Nought of beauty is left when light is gone. Without light no radiance flashes from the sapphire, no peaceful ray proceedeth from the pearl; and thus all the beauty of the saints above comes from Jesus. As planets, they reflect the light of the Sun of Righteousness; they live as beams proceeding from the central orb. If He withdrew, they must die; if His glory were veiled, their glory must expire. Light is also the emblem of *knowledge*. In heaven our knowledge will be perfect, but the Lord Jesus Himself will be the fountain of it. Dark providences, never understood before, will then be clearly seen, and all that puzzles us now will become plain to us in the light of the Lamb. Oh! what unfoldings there will be and what glorifying of the God of love! Light also means *manifestation*. Light manifests. In this world it doth not yet appear what we shall be. God's people are a hidden people, but when Christ receives His people into

heaven, He will touch them with the wand of His own love, and change them into the image of His manifested glory. They were poor and wretched, but what a transformation! They were stained with sin, but one touch of His finger, and they are bright as the sun, and clear as crystal. Oh! what a manifestation! All this proceeds from the exalted Lamb. Whatever there may be of effulgent splendour, Jesus shall be the centre and soul of it all. Oh! to be present and to see Him in His own light, the King of kings, and Lord of lords!

### **Evening Verse**

"But as He went." [Luke 8:42](#)

Jesus is passing through the throng to the house of Jairus, to raise the ruler's dead daughter; but He is so profuse in goodness that He works another miracle while upon the road. While yet this rod of Aaron bears the blossom of an unaccomplished wonder, it yields the ripe almonds of a perfect work of mercy. It is enough for us, if we have some one purpose, straightway to go and accomplish it; it were imprudent to expend our energies by the way. Hastening to the rescue of a drowning friend, we cannot afford to exhaust our strength upon another in like danger. It is enough for a tree to yield one sort of fruit, and for a man to fulfil his own peculiar calling. But our Master knows no limit of power or boundary of mission. He is so prolific of grace, that like the sun which shines as it rolls onward in its orbit, His path is radiant with lovingkindness. He is a swift arrow of love, which not only reaches its ordained target, but perfumes the air through which it flies. Virtue is evermore going out of Jesus, as sweet odours exhale from flowers; and it always will be emanating from Him, as water from a sparkling fountain. What delightful encouragement this truth affords us! If our Lord is so ready to heal the sick and bless the needy, then, my soul, be not thou slow to put thyself in His way, that He may smile on thee. Be not slack in asking, if He be so abundant in bestowing. Give earnest heed to His word now, and at all times, that Jesus may speak through it to thy heart. Where He is to be found there make thy resort, that thou mayst obtain His blessing. When He is present to heal, may He not heal thee? But surely He is present even now, for He always comes to hearts which need Him. And dost not thou need Him? Ah, *He* knows how much! Thou Son of David, turn Thine eye and look upon the distress which is now before Thee, and make Thy suppliant whole.

— Morning and Evening

August 4

### **Morning Verse**

"The people that do know their God shall be strong." [Daniel 11:32](#)

Every believer understands that to know God is the highest and best form of knowledge; and this spiritual knowledge is a source of strength to the Christian. It strengthens his *faith*. Believers are constantly spoken of in the Scriptures as being persons who are enlightened and taught of the Lord; they are said to "have an unction from the Holy One,"

and it is the Spirit's peculiar office to lead them into all truth, and all this for the increase and the fostering of their faith. Knowledge strengthens *love*, as well as faith. Knowledge opens the door, and then through that door we see our Saviour. Or, to use another similitude, knowledge paints the portrait of Jesus, and when we see that portrait then we love Him, we cannot love a Christ whom we do not know, at least, in some degree. If we know but little of the excellences of Jesus, what He has done for us, and what He is doing now, we cannot love Him much; but the more we know Him, the more we shall love Him. Knowledge also strengthens *hope*. How can we hope for a thing if we do not know of its existence? Hope may be the telescope, but till we receive instruction, our ignorance stands in the front of the glass, and we can see nothing whatever; knowledge removes the interposing object, and when we look through the bright optic glass we discern the glory to be revealed, and anticipate it with joyous confidence. Knowledge supplies us reasons for *patience*. How shall we have patience unless we know something of the sympathy of Christ, and understand the good which is to come out of the correction which our heavenly Father sends us? Nor is there one single grace of the Christian which, under God, will not be fostered and brought to perfection by holy knowledge. How important, then, is it that we should grow not only in grace, but in the "knowledge" of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

### **Evening Verse**

"I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands." [Haggai 2:17](#)

How destructive is the hail to the standing crops, beating out the precious grain upon the ground! How grateful ought we to be when the corn is spared so terrible a ruin! Let us offer unto the Lord thanksgiving. Even more to be dreaded are those mysterious destroyers--smut, bunt, rust, and mildew. These turn the ear into a mass of soot, or render it putrid, or dry up the grain, and all in a manner so beyond all human control that the farmer is compelled to cry, "This is the finger of God." Innumerable minute fungi cause the mischief, and were it not for the goodness of God, the rider on the black horse would soon scatter famine over the land. Infinite mercy spares the food of men, but in view of the active agents which are ready to destroy the harvest, right wisely are we taught to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." The curse is abroad; we have constant need of the blessing. When blight and mildew come they are chastisements from heaven, and men must learn to hear the rod, and Him that hath appointed it.

Spiritually, mildew is no uncommon evil. When our work is most promising this blight appears. We hoped for many conversions, and lo! a general apathy, an abounding worldliness, or a cruel hardness of heart! There may be no open sin in those for whom we are labouring, but there is a deficiency of sincerity and decision sadly disappointing our desires. We learn from this our dependence upon the Lord, and the need of prayer that no blight may fall upon our work. Spiritual pride or sloth will soon bring upon us the dreadful evil, and only the Lord of the harvest can remove it. Mildew may even attack our own hearts, and shrivel our prayers and religious exercises. May it please the great

Husbandman to avert so serious a calamity. Shine, blessed Sun of Righteousness, and drive the blights away.

— Morning and Evening

August 5

### **Morning Verse**

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." [Romans 8:28](#)

Upon some points a believer is absolutely sure. He knows, for instance, that God sits in the stern-sheets of the vessel when it rocks most. He believes that an invisible hand is always on the world's tiller, and that wherever providence may drift, Jehovah steers it. That re-assuring knowledge prepares him for everything. He looks over the raging waters and sees the spirit of Jesus treading the billows, and he hears a voice saying, "It is I, be not afraid." He knows too that God is always wise, and, knowing this, he is confident that there can be no accidents, no mistakes; that nothing can occur which ought not to arise. He can say, "If I should lose all I have, it is better that I should lose than have, if God so wills: the worst calamity is the wisest and the kindest thing that could befall to me if God ordains it." "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." The Christian does not merely hold this as a theory, but *he knows it* as a matter of fact. Everything *has* worked for good as yet; the poisonous drugs mixed in fit proportions have worked the cure; the sharp cuts of the lancet have cleansed out the proud flesh and facilitated the healing. Every event as yet has worked out the most divinely blessed results; and so, believing that God rules all, that He governs wisely, that He brings good out of evil, the believer's heart is assured, and he is enabled calmly to meet each trial as it comes. The believer can in the spirit of true resignation pray, "Send me what thou wilt, my God, so long as it comes from Thee; never came there an ill portion from Thy table to any of Thy children."

"Say not my soul, 'From whence can God  
relieve my care?  
Remember that Omnipotence has servants  
everywhere.  
His method is sublime, His heart profoundly  
kind,  
God never is before His time, and never is  
behind.'"

### **Evening Verse**

"Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" [Numbers 32:6](#)

Kindred has its obligations. The Reubenites and Gadites would have been unbrotherly if they had claimed the land which had been conquered, and had left the rest of the people to fight for their portions alone. We have received much by means of the efforts and sufferings of the saints in years gone by, and if we do not make some return to the church of Christ by giving her our best energies, we are unworthy to be enrolled in her ranks. Others are combating the errors of the age manfully, or excavating perishing ones from amid the ruins of the fall, and if we fold our hands in idleness we had need be warned, lest the curse of Meroz fall upon us. The Master of the vineyard saith, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" What is the idler's excuse? Personal service of Jesus becomes all the more the duty of all because it is cheerfully and abundantly rendered by some. The toils of devoted missionaries and fervent ministers shame us if we sit still in indolence. Shrinking from trial is the temptation of those who are at ease in Zion: they would fain escape the cross and yet wear the crown; to them the question for this evening's meditation is very applicable. If the most precious are tried in the fire, are we to escape the crucible? If the diamond must be vexed upon the wheel, are we to be made perfect without suffering? Who hath commanded the wind to cease from blowing because our bark is on the deep? Why and wherefore should we be treated better than our Lord? The firstborn felt the rod, and why not the younger brethren? It is a cowardly pride which would choose a downy pillow and a silken couch for a soldier of the cross. Wiser far is he who, being first resigned to the divine will, groweth by the energy of grace to be pleased with it, and so learns to gather lilies at the cross foot, and, like Samson, to find honey in the lion.

— Morning and Evening

August 6

### **Morning Verse**

"Watchman, what of the night?" [Isaiah 21:11](#)

*What enemies are abroad?* Errors are a numerous horde, and new ones appear every hour: against what heresy am I to be on my guard? Sins creep from their lurking places when the darkness reigns; I must myself mount the watch-tower, and watch unto prayer. Our heavenly Protector foresees all the attacks which are about to be made upon us, and when as yet the evil designed us is but in the desire of Satan, He prays for us that our faith fail not, when we are sifted as wheat. Continue O gracious Watchman, to forewarn us of our foes, and for Zion's sake hold not thy peace.

"Watchman, what of the night?" *What weather is coming* for the Church? Are the clouds lowering, or is it all clear and fair overhead? We must care for the Church of God with anxious love; and now that Popery and infidelity are both threatening, let us observe the signs of the times and prepare for conflict.

"Watchman, what of the night?" *What stars are visible?* What precious promises suit our present case? You sound the alarm, give us the consolation also. Christ, the polestar, is ever fixed in His place, and all the stars are secure in the right hand of their Lord.

But watchman, *when comes the morning?* The Bridegroom tarries. Are there no signs of His coming forth as the Sun of Righteousness? Has not the morning star arisen as the pledge of day? When will the day dawn, and the shadows flee away? O Jesus, if Thou come not in person to Thy waiting Church this day, yet come in Spirit to my sighing heart, and make it sing for joy.

"Now all the earth is bright and glad  
With the fresh morn;  
But all my heart is cold, and dark and sad:  
Sun of the soul, let me behold Thy dawn!  
Come, Jesus, Lord,  
O quickly come, according to Thy word."

### Evening Verse

"Let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen."  
[Psalm 72:19](#)

This is a large petition. To intercede for a whole city needs a stretch of faith, and there are times when a prayer for one man is enough to stagger us. But how far-reaching was the psalmist's dying intercession! How comprehensive! How sublime! "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory." It doth not exempt a single country however crushed by the foot of superstition; it doth not exclude a single nation however barbarous. For the cannibal as well as for the civilized, for all climes and races this prayer is uttered: the whole circle of the earth it encompasses, and omits no son of Adam. We must be up and doing for our Master, or we cannot honestly offer such a prayer. The petition is not asked with a sincere heart unless we endeavour, as God shall help us, to extend the kingdom of our Master. Are there not some who *neglect* both to plead and to labour? Reader, is it *your* prayer? Turn your eyes to Calvary. Behold the Lord of Life nailed to a cross, with the thorn-crown about His brow, with bleeding head, and hands, and feet. What! can you look upon this miracle of miracles, the death of the Son of God, without feeling within your bosom a marvellous adoration that language never can express? And when you feel the blood applied to your conscience, and know that He has blotted out your sins, *you are not a man* unless you start from your knees and cry, "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen." Can you bow before the Crucified in loving homage, and not wish to see your Monarch master of the world? Out on you if you can pretend to love your Prince, and desire not to see Him the universal ruler. Your piety is worthless unless it leads you to wish that the same mercy which has been extended to you may bless the whole world. Lord, it is harvest-time, put in Thy sickle and reap.

— Morning and Evening

August 7

### **Morning Verse**

"The upright love Thee" [Song 1:4](#)

Believers love Jesus with a deeper affection than they dare to give to any other being. They would sooner lose father and mother than part with Christ. They hold all earthly comforts with a loose hand, but they carry Him fast locked in their bosoms. They voluntarily deny themselves for His sake, but they are not to be driven to *deny* Him. It is scant love which the fire of persecution can dry up; the true believer's love is a deeper stream than this. Men have laboured to divide the faithful from their Master, but their attempts have been fruitless in every age. Neither crowns of honour, now frowns of anger, have untied this more than Gordian knot. This is no every-day attachment which the world's power may at length dissolve. Neither man nor devil have found a key which opens this lock. Never has the craft of Satan been more at fault than when he has exercised it in seeking to rend in sunder this union of two divinely welded hearts. It is written, and nothing can blot out the sentence, "*The upright love Thee.*" The intensity of the love of the upright, however, is not so much to be judged by what it appears as by what the upright long for. It is our daily lament that we cannot love enough. Would that our hearts were capable of holding more, and reaching further. Like Samuel Rutherford, we sigh and cry, "Oh, for as much love as would go round about the earth, and over heaven--yea, the heaven of heavens, and ten thousand worlds--that I might let all out upon fair, fair, only fair Christ." Alas! our longest reach is but a span of love, and our affection is but as a drop of a bucket compared with His deserts. Measure our love by our intentions, and it is high indeed; 'tis thus, we trust, our Lord doth judge of it. Oh, that we could give all the love in all hearts in one great mass, a gathering together of all loves to Him who is altogether lovely!

### **Evening Verse**

"Satan hindered us." [1Thessalonians 2:18](#)

Since the first hour in which goodness came into conflict with evil, it has never ceased to be true in spiritual experience, that Satan hinders us. From all points of the compass, all along the line of battle, in the vanguard and in the rear, at the dawn of day and in the midnight hour, Satan hinders us. If we toil in the field, he seeks to break the ploughshare; if we build the wall, he labours to cast down the stones; if we would serve God in suffering or in conflict-- everywhere Satan hinders us. He hinders us when we are first coming to Jesus Christ. Fierce conflicts we had with Satan when we first looked to the cross and lived. Now that we are saved, he endeavours to hinder the completeness of our personal character. You may be congratulating yourself, "I have hitherto walked consistently; no man can challenge my integrity." Beware of boasting, for your virtue will yet be tried; Satan will direct his engines against that very virtue for which you are the most famous. If you have been hitherto a firm believer, your faith will ere long be

attacked; if you have been meek as Moses, expect to be tempted to speak unadvisedly with your lips. The birds will peck at your ripest fruit, and the wild boar will dash his tusks at your choicest vines. Satan is sure to hinder us when we are earnest in prayer. He checks our importunity, and weakens our faith in order that, if possible, we may miss the blessing. Nor is Satan less vigilant in obstructing Christian effort. There was never a revival of religion without a revival of his opposition. As soon as Ezra and Nehemiah begin to labour, Sanballat and Tobiah are stirred up to hinder them. What then? We are not alarmed because Satan hindereth us, for it is a proof that we are on the Lord's side, and are doing the Lord's work, and in His strength we shall win the victory, and triumph over our adversary.

— Morning and Evening

## August 8

### Morning Verse

"They weave the spider's web." [Isaiah 59:5](#)

See the spider's web, and behold in it a most suggestive picture of the hypocrite's religion. *It is meant to catch his prey*: the spider fattens himself on flies, and the Pharisee has his reward. Foolish persons are easily entrapped by the loud professions of pretenders, and even the more judicious cannot always escape. Philip baptized Simon Magus, whose guileful declaration of faith was so soon exploded by the stern rebuke of Peter. Custom, reputation, praise, advancement, and other flies, are the small game which hypocrites take in their nets. A spider's web is *a marvel of skill*: look at it and admire the cunning hunter's wiles. Is not a deceiver's religion equally wonderful? How does he make so barefaced a lie appear to be a truth? How can he make his tinsel answer so well the purpose of gold? A spider's web *comes all from the creature's own bowels*. The bee gathers her wax from flowers, the spider sucks no flowers, and yet she spins out her material to any length. Even so hypocrites find their trust and hope within themselves; their anchor was forged on their own anvil, and their cable twisted by their own hands. They lay their own foundation, and hew out the pillars of their own house, disdainingly to be debtors to the sovereign grace of God. But a spider's web is *very frail*. It is curiously wrought, but not enduringly manufactured. It is no match for the servant's broom, or the traveller's staff. The hypocrite needs no battery of Armstrongs to blow his hope to pieces, a mere puff of wind will do it. Hypocritical cobwebs will soon come down when the besom of destruction begins its purifying work. Which reminds us of one more thought, viz., that such cobwebs *are not to be endured in the Lord's house*: He will see to it that they and those who spin them shall be destroyed for ever. O my soul, be thou resting on something better than a spider's web. Be the Lord Jesus thine eternal hiding-place.

### Evening Verse

"All things are possible to him that believeth." [Mark 9:23](#)

Many professed Christians are always doubting and fearing, and they forlornly think that this is the necessary state of believers. This is a mistake, for "all things are possible to him that believeth"; and it is possible for us to mount into a state in which a doubt or a fear shall be but as a bird of passage flitting across the soul, but never lingering there. When you read of the high and sweet communions enjoyed by favoured saints, you sigh and murmur in the chamber of your heart, "Alas! these are not for me." O climber, if thou hast but faith, thou shalt yet stand upon the sunny pinnacle of the temple, for "all things are possible to him that believeth." You hear of exploits which holy men have done for Jesus; what they have enjoyed of Him; how much they have been like Him; how they have been able to endure great persecutions for His sake; and you say, "Ah! as for me, I am but a worm; I can never attain to this." But there is nothing which one saint was, that you may not be. There is no elevation of grace, no attainment of spirituality, no clearness of assurance, no post of duty, which is not open to you if you have but the power to believe. Lay aside your sackcloth and ashes, and rise to the dignity of your true position; you are little in Israel because you will be so, not because there is any necessity for it. It is not meet that thou shouldst grovel in the dust, O child of a King. Ascend! The golden throne of assurance is waiting for you! The crown of communion with Jesus is ready to bedeck your brow. Wrap yourself in scarlet and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day; for if thou believest, thou mayst eat the fat of kidneys of wheat; thy land shall flow with milk and honey, and thy soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. Gather golden sheaves of grace, for they await thee in the fields of faith. "All things are possible to him that believeth."

— Morning and Evening

August 9

### **Morning Verse**

"The city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it." [Revelation 21:23](#)

Yonder in the better world, the inhabitants are independent of all creature comforts. They have no need of raiment; their white robes never wear out, neither shall they ever be defiled. They need no medicine to heal diseases, "for the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." They need no sleep to recruit their frames--they rest not day nor night, but unweariedly praise Him in His temple. They need no social relationship to minister comfort, and whatever happiness they may derive from association with their fellows is not essential to their bliss, for their Lord's society is enough for their largest desires. They need no teachers there; they doubtless commune with one another concerning the things of God, but they do not require this by way of instruction; they shall all be taught of the Lord. Ours are the alms at the king's gate, but they feast at the table itself. Here we lean upon the friendly arm, but there they lean upon their Beloved and upon Him alone. Here we must have the help of our companions, but there they find all they want in Christ Jesus. Here we look to the meat which perisheth, and to the raiment which decays before the moth, but there they find everything in God. We use the bucket to fetch us water from

the well, but there they drink from the fountain head, and put their lips down to the living water. Here the angels bring us blessings, but we shall want no messengers from heaven then. They shall need no Gabriels there to bring their love-notes from God, for there they shall see *Him* face to face. Oh! what a blessed time shall that be when we shall have mounted above every second cause and shall rest upon the bare arm of God! What a glorious hour when God, and not His creatures; the Lord, and not His works, shall be our daily joy! Our souls shall then have attained the perfection of bliss.

### Evening Verse

"He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils." [Mark 16:9](#)

Mary of Magdala was *the victim of a fearful evil*. She was possessed by not one devil only, but seven. These dreadful inmates caused much pain and pollution to the poor frame in which they had found a lodging. Hers was a hopeless, horrible case. She could not help herself, neither could any human succour avail. But Jesus passed that way, and unsought, and probably even resisted by the poor demoniac, He uttered the word of power, and Mary of Magdala became *a trophy of the healing power of Jesus*. All the seven demons left her, left her never to return, forcibly ejected by the Lord of all. What a blessed deliverance! What a happy change! From delirium to delight, from despair to peace, from hell to heaven! Straightway she became *a constant follower of Jesus*, catching His every word, following His devious steps, sharing His toilsome life; and withal she became *His generous helper*, first among that band of healed and grateful women who ministered unto Him of their substance. When Jesus was lifted up in crucifixion, Mary remained *the sharer of His shame*: we find her first beholding from afar, and then drawing near to the foot of the cross. She could not die on the cross with Jesus, but she stood as near it as she could, and when His blessed body was taken down, she watched to see how and where it was laid. She was *the faithful and watchful believer*, last at the sepulchre where Jesus slept, first at the grave whence He arose. Her holy fidelity made her *a favoured beholder of her beloved Rabboni*, who deigned to call her by her name, and to make her *His messenger of good news* to the trembling disciples and Peter. Thus grace found her a maniac and made her a minister, cast out devils and gave her to behold angels, delivered her from Satan, and united her for ever to the Lord Jesus. May I also be such a miracle of grace!

— Morning and Evening

## August 10

### Morning Verse

"Christ, who is our life." [Colossians 3:4](#)

Paul's marvellously rich expression indicates, that Christ is the *source* of our life. "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." That same voice which

brought Lazarus out of the tomb raised us to newness of life. He is now the *substance* of our spiritual life. It is by His life that we live; He is in us, the hope of glory, the spring of our actions, the central thought which moves every other thought. *Christ is the sustenance of our life*. What can the Christian feed upon but Jesus' flesh and blood? "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." O wayworn pilgrims in this wilderness of sin, you never get a morsel to satisfy the hunger of your spirits, except ye find it in Him! *Christ is the solace of our life*. All our true joys come from Him; and in times of trouble, His presence is our consolation. There is nothing worth living for but Him; and His lovingkindness is better than life! *Christ is the object of our life*. As speeds the ship towards the port, so hastes the believer towards the haven of his Saviour's bosom. As flies the arrow to its goal, so flies the Christian towards the perfecting of his fellowship with Christ Jesus. As the soldier fights for his captain, and is crowned in his captain's victory, so the believer contends for Christ, and gets his triumph out of the triumphs of his Master. "For him to live is Christ." *Christ is the exemplar of our life*. Where there is the same life within, there will, there must be, to a great extent, the same developments without; and if we live in near fellowship with the Lord Jesus we shall grow like Him. We shall set Him before us as our Divine copy, and we shall seek to tread in His footsteps, until He shall become *the crown of our life in glory*. Oh! how safe, how honoured, how happy is the Christian, since Christ is our life!

## Evening Verse

"The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." [Matthew 9:6](#)

Behold one of the great Physician's mightiest arts: He has power to forgive sin! While here He lived below, before the ransom had been paid, before the blood had been literally sprinkled on the mercy-seat, He had power to forgive sin. Hath He not power to do it now that He hath died? What power must dwell in Him who to the utmost farthing has faithfully discharged the debts of His people! He has boundless power now that He has finished transgression and made an end of sin. If ye doubt it, see Him rising from the dead! behold Him in ascending splendour raised to the right hand of God! Hear Him pleading before the eternal Father, pointing to His wounds, urging the merit of His sacred passion! What power to forgive is here! "He hath ascended on high, and received gifts for men." "He is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins." The most crimson sins are removed by the crimson of His blood. At this moment, dear reader, whatever thy sinfulness, Christ has power to pardon, power to pardon *thee*, and millions such as thou art. A word will speak it. He has nothing more to do to win thy pardon; all the atoning work is done. He can, in answer to thy tears, forgive thy sins today, and make thee know it. He can breathe into thy soul at this very moment a peace with God which passeth all understanding, which shall spring from perfect remission of thy manifold iniquities. Dost thou believe that? I trust thou believest it. Mayst thou experience now the power of Jesus to forgive sin! Waste no time in applying to the Physician of souls, but hasten to Him with words like these:--

"Jesus! Master! hear my cry;  
Save me, heal me with a word;

Fainting at Thy feet I lie,  
Thou my whisper'd plaint hast heard."

— Morning and Evening

August 11

### Morning Verse

"Oh that I were as in months past." [Job 29:2](#)

Numbers of Christians can view the past with pleasure, but regard the present with dissatisfaction; they look back upon the days which they have passed in communing with the Lord as being the sweetest and the best they have ever known, but as to the present, it is clad in a sable garb of gloom and dreariness. Once they lived near to Jesus, but now they feel that they have wandered from Him, and they say, "O that I were as in months past!" They complain that they have lost their evidences, or that they have not present peace of mind, or that they have no enjoyment in the means of grace, or that conscience is not so tender, or that they have not so much zeal for God's glory. The causes of this mournful state of things are manifold. It may arise through a comparative *neglect of prayer*, for a neglected closet is the beginning of all spiritual decline. Or it may be the result of *idolatry*. The heart has been occupied with something else, more than with God; the affections have been set on the things of earth, instead of the things of heaven. A jealous God will not be content with a divided heart; He must be loved first and best. He will withdraw the sunshine of His presence from a cold, wandering heart. Or the cause may be found in *self-confidence* and *self-righteousness*. Pride is busy in the heart, and self is exalted instead of lying low at the foot of the cross. Christian, if you are not now as you "were in months past," do not rest satisfied with *wishing* for a return of former happiness, but go at once to seek your Master, and tell Him your sad state. Ask His grace and strength to help you to walk more closely with Him; humble yourself before Him, and He will lift you up, and give you yet again to enjoy the light of His countenance. Do not sit down to sigh and lament; while the beloved Physician lives there is hope, nay there is a certainty of recovery for the worst cases.

### Evening Verse

"Everlasting consolation." [2Thessalonians 2:16](#)

"Consolation." There is music in the word: like David's harp, it charms away the evil spirit of melancholy. It was a distinguished I honour to Barnabas to be called "the son of consolation"; nay, it is one of the illustrious names of a greater than Barnabas, for the Lord Jesus is "the consolation of Israel." "*Everlasting* consolation"--here is the cream of all, for the eternity of comfort is the crown and glory of it. What is this "everlasting consolation"? It includes a sense of pardoned sin. A Christian man has received in his heart the witness of the Spirit that his iniquities are put away like a cloud, and his transgressions like a thick cloud. If sin be pardoned, is not that an everlasting

consolation? Next, the Lord gives His people an abiding sense of acceptance in Christ. The Christian knows that God looks upon him as standing in union with Jesus. Union to the risen Lord is a consolation of the most abiding order; it is, in fact, everlasting. Let sickness prostrate us, have we not seen hundreds of believers as happy in the weakness of disease as they would have been in the strength of hale and blooming health? Let death's arrows pierce us to the heart, our comfort dies not, for have not our ears full often heard the songs of saints as they have rejoiced because the living love of God was shed abroad in their hearts in dying moments? Yes, a sense of acceptance in the Beloved is an everlasting consolation. Moreover, the Christian has a conviction of his security. God has promised to save those who trust in Christ: the Christian does trust in Christ, and he believes that God will be as good as His word, and will save him. He feels that he is safe by virtue of his being bound up with the person and work of Jesus.

— Morning and Evening

August 12

### Morning Verse

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." [Psalm 97:1](#)

Causes for disquietude there are none so long as this blessed sentence is true. *On earth* the Lord's power as readily controls the rage of the wicked as the rage of the sea; His love as easily refreshes the poor with mercy as the earth with showers. Majesty gleams in flashes of fire amid the tempest's horrors, and the glory of the Lord is seen in its grandeur in the fall of empires, and the crash of thrones. In all our conflicts and tribulations, we may behold the hand of the divine King.

"God is God; He sees and hears  
All our troubles, all our tears.  
Soul, forget not, 'mid thy pains,  
God o'er all for ever reigns."

*In hell*, evil spirits own, with misery, His undoubted supremacy. When permitted to roam abroad, it is with a chain at their heel; the bit is in the mouth of behemoth, and the hook in the jaws of leviathan. Death's darts are under the Lord's lock, and the grave's prisons have divine power as their warder. The terrible vengeance of the Judge of all the earth makes fiends cower down and tremble, even as dogs in the kennel fear the hunter's whip.

"Fear not death, nor Satan's thrusts,  
God defends who in Him trusts;  
Soul, remember, in thy pains,  
God o'er all for ever reigns."

*In heaven* none doubt the sovereignty of the King Eternal, but all fall on their faces to do Him homage. Angels are His courtiers, the redeemed His favourites, and all delight to serve Him day and night. May we soon reach the city of the great King!

"For this life's long night of sadness  
He will give us peace and gladness.  
Soul, remember, in thy pains,  
God o'er all for ever reigns."

## Evening Verse

"The bow shall be seen in the cloud." [Genesis 9:14](#)

The rainbow, the symbol of the covenant with Noah, is typical of our Lord Jesus, who is the Lord's witness to the people. When may we *expect to see the token of the covenant?* The rainbow is only to be seen painted upon a *cloud*. When the sinner's conscience is dark with clouds, when he remembers his past sin, and mourneth and lamenteth before God, Jesus Christ is revealed to him as the covenant Rainbow, displaying all the glorious hues of the divine character and betokening peace. To the believer, when his trials and temptations surround him, it is sweet to behold the person of our Lord Jesus Christ--to see Him bleeding, living, rising, and pleading for us. God's rainbow is hung over the cloud of our sins, our sorrows, and our woes, to prophesy deliverance. Nor does a *cloud* alone give a rainbow, there must be *the crystal drops* to reflect the light of the sun. So, our sorrows must not only threaten, but they must really fall upon us. There had been no Christ for us if the vengeance of God had been merely a threatening cloud: punishment must fall in terrible drops upon the Surety. Until there is a *real* anguish in the sinner's conscience, there is no Christ for him; until the chastisement which he feels becomes grievous, he cannot see Jesus. But there must also be a sun; for clouds and drops of rain make not rainbows unless the sun shineth. Beloved, our God, who is as the sun to us, always shines, but we do not always see Him--clouds hide His face; but no matter what drops may be falling, or what clouds may be threatening, if *He* does but shine there will be a rainbow at once. It is said that when we see the rainbow the shower is over. Certain it is, that when Christ comes, our troubles remove; when we behold Jesus, our sins vanish, and our doubts and fears subside. When Jesus walks the waters of the sea, how profound the calm!

— Morning and Evening

## August 13

### Morning Verse

"The cedars of Lebanon which He hath planted." [Psalm 104:16](#)

Lebanon's cedars are emblematic of the Christian, in that *they owe their planting entirely to the Lord*. This is quite true of every child of God. He is not man-planted, nor self-planted, but God-planted. The mysterious hand of the divine Spirit dropped the living seed into a heart which He had Himself prepared for its reception. Every true heir of heaven owns the great Husbandman as his planter. Moreover, the cedars of Lebanon *are not dependent upon man for their watering*; they stand on the lofty rock, unmoistened by human irrigation; and yet our heavenly Father supplieth them. Thus it is with the

Christian who has learned to live by faith. He is independent of man, even in temporal things; for his continued maintenance he looks to the Lord his God, and to Him alone. The dew of heaven is his portion, and the God of heaven is his fountain. Again, the cedars of Lebanon *are not protected by any mortal power*. They owe nothing to man for their preservation from stormy wind and tempest. They are God's trees, kept and preserved by Him, and by Him alone. It is precisely the same with the Christian. He is not a hot-house plant, sheltered from temptation; he stands in the most exposed position; he has no shelter, no protection, except this, that the broad wings of the eternal God always cover the cedars which He Himself has planted. Like cedars, believers are *full of sap* having vitality enough to be ever green, even amid winter's snows. Lastly, the flourishing and majestic condition of the cedar *is to the praise of God only*. The Lord, even the Lord alone hath been everything unto the cedars, and, therefore David very sweetly puts it in one of the psalms, "Praise ye the Lord, fruitful trees and all cedars." In the believer there is nothing that can magnify man; he is planted, nourished, and protected by the Lord's own hand, and to Him let all the glory be ascribed.

### Evening Verse

"And I will remember My covenant." [Genesis 9:15](#)

Mark the form of the promise. God does not say, "And when ye shall look upon the bow, and ye shall remember My covenant, *then* I will not destroy the earth," but it is gloriously put, not upon *our* memory, which is fickle and frail, but upon *God's* memory, which is infinite and immutable. "The bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant." Oh! it is not my remembering God, it is God's remembering *me* which is the ground of my safety; it is not my laying hold of His covenant, but His covenant's laying hold on me. Glory be to God! the whole of the bulwarks of salvation are secured by divine power, and even the minor towers, which we may imagine might have been left to man, are guarded by almighty strength. Even the *remembrance* of the covenant is not left to our memories, for *we* might forget, but our Lord cannot forget the saints whom He has graven on the palms of His hands. It is with us as with Israel in Egypt; the blood was upon the lintel and the two side-posts, but the Lord did not say, "When *you* see the blood I will pass over you," but "When *I* see the blood I will pass over you." My looking to Jesus brings me joy and peace, but it is God's looking to Jesus which secures my salvation and that of all His elect, since it is impossible for our God to look at Christ, our bleeding Surety, and then to be angry with us for sins already punished in Him. No, it is not left with *us* even to be saved by remembering the covenant. There is no linsey-wolsey here--not a single thread of the creature mars the fabric. It is not *of* man, neither *by* man, but of the Lord alone. We *should* remember the covenant, and we *shall* do it, through divine grace; but the hinge of our safety does not hang there--it is God's remembering *us*, not our remembering *Him*; and hence the covenant is *an everlasting covenant*.

— Morning and Evening

August 14

### Morning Verse

"Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work." [Psalm 92:4](#)

Do you believe that your sins are forgiven, and that Christ has made a full atonement for them? Then what a joyful Christian *you ought to be!* How you should live above the common trials and troubles of the world! Since sin is forgiven, can it matter what happens to you now? Luther said, "Smite, Lord, smite, for my sin is forgiven; if Thou hast but forgiven me, smite as hard as Thou wilt"; and in a similar spirit you may say, "Send sickness, poverty, losses, crosses, persecution, what Thou wilt, *Thou hast forgiven me*, and my soul is glad." Christian, if thou art thus saved, whilst thou art glad, *be grateful and loving*. Cling to that cross which took thy sin away; serve thou Him who served thee. "I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Let not your zeal evaporate in some little ebullition of song. Show your love in expressive tokens. Love the brethren of Him who loved you. If there be a Mephibosheth anywhere who is lame or halt, help him for Jonathan's sake. If there be a poor tried believer, weep with him, and bear his cross for the sake of Him who wept for thee and carried thy sins. Since thou art thus forgiven freely for Christ's sake, go and tell to others the joyful news of pardoning mercy. Be not contented with this unspeakable blessing for thyself alone, but publish abroad the story of the cross. Holy gladness and holy boldness will make you a good preacher, and all the world will be a pulpit for you to preach in. Cheerful holiness is the most forcible of sermons, but the Lord must give it you. Seek it this morning before you go into the world. When it is the Lord's work in which we rejoice, we need not be afraid of being too glad.

### Evening Verse

"I know their sorrows." [Exodus 3:7](#)

The child is cheered as he sings, "This my father knows"; and shall not we be comforted as we discern that our dear Friend and tender soul-husband knows all about us?

1. *He is the Physician*, and if He knows all, there is no need that the patient should know. Hush, thou silly, fluttering heart, prying, peeping, and suspecting! What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter, and meanwhile Jesus, the beloved Physician, knows thy soul in adversities. Why need the patient analyze all the medicine, or estimate all the symptoms? This is the Physician's work, not mine; it is my business to trust, and His to prescribe. If He shall write His prescription in uncouth characters which I cannot read, I will not be uneasy on that account, but rely upon His unfailing skill to make all plain in the result, however mysterious in the working.

2. *He is the Master*, and His knowledge is to serve us instead of our own; we are to obey, not to judge: "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." Shall the architect explain his plans to every hodman on the works? If he knows his own intent, is it not enough? The vessel on the wheel cannot guess to what pattern it shall be conformed, but if the potter understands his art, what matters the ignorance of the clay? My Lord must not be cross-questioned any more by one so ignorant as I am.

3. *He is the Head*. All understanding centres there. What judgment has the arm? What comprehension has the foot? All the power to know lies in the head. Why should the member have a brain of its own when the head fulfils for it every intellectual office? Here, then, must the believer rest his comfort in sickness, not that he himself can see the end, but that Jesus knows all. Sweet Lord, be thou for ever eye, and soul, and head for us, and let us be content to know only what Thou chooseth to reveal.

— Morning and Evening

August 15

### **Morning Verse**

"Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide." [Genesis 24:63](#)

*Very admirable was his occupation.* If those who spend so many hours in idle company, light reading, and useless pastimes, could learn wisdom, they would find more profitable society and more interesting engagements in meditation than in the vanities which now have such charms for them. We should all know more, live nearer to God, and grow in grace, if we were more alone. Meditation chews the cud and extracts the real nutriment from the mental food gathered elsewhere. When Jesus is the theme, meditation is sweet indeed. Isaac found Rebecca while engaged in private musings; many others have found their best beloved there.

*Very admirable was the choice of place.* In the field we have a study hung round with texts for thought. From the cedar to the hyssop, from the soaring eagle down to the chirping grasshopper, from the blue expanse of heaven to a drop of dew, all things are full of teaching, and when the eye is divinely opened, that teaching flashes upon the mind far more vividly than from written books. Our little rooms are neither so healthy, so suggestive, so agreeable, or so inspiring as the fields. Let us count nothing common or unclean, but feel that all created things point to their Maker, and the field will at once be hallowed.

*Very admirable was the season.* The season of sunset as it draws a veil over the day, befits that repose of the soul when earthborn cares yield to the joys of heavenly

communion. The glory of the setting sun excites our wonder, and the solemnity of approaching night awakens our awe. If the business of this day will permit it, it will be well, dear reader, if you can spare an hour to walk in the field at eventide, but if not, the Lord is in the town too, and will meet with thee in thy chamber or in the crowded street. Let thy heart go forth to meet Him.

### Evening Verse

"And I will give you an heart of flesh." [Ezekiel 36:26](#)

A heart of flesh is known by its *tenderness concerning sin*. To have indulged a foul imagination, or to have allowed a wild desire to tarry even for a moment, is quite enough to make a heart of flesh grieve before the Lord. The heart of stone calls a great iniquity nothing, but not so the heart of flesh.

"If to the right or left I stray,  
That moment, Lord, reprove;  
And let me weep my life away,  
For having grieved thy love"

The heart of flesh is *tender of God's will*. My Lord Will-be-will is a great blusterer, and it is hard to subject him to God's will; but when the heart of flesh is given, the will quivers like an aspen leaf in every breath of heaven, and bows like an osier in every breeze of God's Spirit. The natural will is cold, hard iron, which is not to be hammered into form, but the renewed will, like molten metal, is soon moulded by the hand of grace. In the fleshy heart there is *a tenderness of the affections*. The hard heart does not love the Redeemer, but the renewed heart burns with affection towards Him. The hard heart is selfish and coldly demands, "Why should I weep for sin? Why should I love the Lord?" But the heart of flesh says; "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee; help me to love Thee more!" Many are the privileges of this renewed heart; "'Tis here the Spirit dwells, 'tis here that Jesus rests." It is fitted to receive every spiritual blessing, and every blessing comes to it. It is prepared to yield every heavenly fruit to the honour and praise of God, and therefore the Lord delights in it. A tender heart is the best defence against sin, and the best preparation for heaven. A renewed heart stands on its watchtower looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus. Have you this heart of flesh?

— Morning and Evening

## August 17

### Morning Verse

"The mercy of God." [Psalm 52:8](#)

Meditate a little on this mercy of the Lord. It is *tender mercy*. With gentle, loving touch, He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He is as gracious in the manner of His mercy as in the matter of it. It is *great mercy*. There is nothing little in

God; His mercy is like Himself--it is infinite. You cannot measure it. His mercy is so great that it forgives great sins to great sinners, after great lengths of time, and then gives great favours and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyments in the great heaven of the great God. It is *undeserved mercy*, as indeed all true mercy must be, for deserved mercy is only a misnomer for justice. There was no right on the sinner's part to the kind consideration of the Most High; had the rebel been doomed at once to eternal fire he would have richly merited the doom, and if delivered from wrath, sovereign love alone has found a cause, for there was none in the sinner himself. It is *rich mercy*. Some things are great, but have little efficacy in them, but this mercy is a cordial to your drooping spirits; a golden ointment to your bleeding wounds; a heavenly bandage to your broken bones; a royal chariot for your weary feet; a bosom of love for your trembling heart. It is *manifold mercy*. As Bunyan says, "All the flowers in God's garden are double." There is no single mercy. You may think you have but one mercy, but you shall find it to be a whole cluster of mercies. It is *abounding mercy*. Millions have received it, yet far from its being exhausted; it is as fresh, as full, and as free as ever. *It is unfailing mercy*. It will never leave thee. If mercy be thy friend, mercy will be with thee in temptation to keep thee from yielding; with thee in trouble to prevent thee from sinking; with thee living to be the light and life of thy countenance; and with thee dying to be the joy of thy soul when earthly comfort is ebbing fast.

## Evening Verse

"This sickness is not unto death." [John 11:4](#)

From our Lord's words we learn that there is a limit to sickness. Here is an "unto" within which its ultimate end is restrained, and beyond which it cannot go. Lazarus might pass through death, but death was not to be the ultimatum of his sickness. In all sickness, the Lord saith to the waves of pain, "Hitherto shall ye go, but no further." His fixed purpose is not the destruction, but the instruction of His people. Wisdom hangs up the thermometer at the furnace mouth, and regulates the heat.

1. *The limit is encouragingly comprehensive.* The God of providence has limited the time, manner, intensity, repetition, and effects of all our sicknesses; each throb is decreed, each sleepless hour predestinated, each relapse ordained, each depression of spirit foreknown, and each sanctifying result eternally purposed. Nothing great or small escapes the ordaining hand of Him who numbers the hairs of our head.

2. *This limit is wisely adjusted* to our strength, to the end designed, and to the grace apportioned. Affliction comes not at haphazard--the weight of every stroke of the rod is accurately measured. He who made no mistakes in balancing the clouds and meting out the heavens, commits no errors in measuring out the ingredients which compose the medicine of souls. We cannot suffer too much nor be relieved too late.

3. *The limit is tenderly appointed.* The knife of the heavenly Surgeon never cuts deeper than is absolutely necessary. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of

men." A mother's heart cries, "Spare my child"; but no mother is more compassionate than our gracious God. When we consider how hard-mouthed we are, it is a wonder that we are not driven with a sharper bit. The thought is full of consolation, that He who has fixed the bounds of our habitation, has also fixed the bounds of our tribulation.

— Morning and Evening

August 18

### Morning Verse

"Strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the Lord's house."  
[Jeremiah 51:51](#)

In this account the faces of the Lord's people were covered with shame, for it was a terrible thing that men should intrude into the Holy Place reserved for the priests alone. Everywhere about us we see like cause for sorrow. How many ungodly men are now educating with the view of entering into the ministry! What a crying sin is that solemn lie by which our whole population is nominally comprehended in a National Church! How fearful it is that ordinances should be pressed upon the unconverted, and that among the more enlightened churches of our land there should be such laxity of discipline. If the thousands who will read this portion shall all take this matter before the Lord Jesus this day, He will interfere and avert the evil which else will come upon His Church. To adulterate the Church is to pollute a well, to pour water upon fire, to sow a fertile field with stones. May we all have grace to maintain in our own proper way the purity of the Church, as being an assembly of believers, and not a nation, an unsaved community of unconverted men.

Our zeal must, however, begin at home. Let us examine *ourselves* as to our right to eat at the Lord's table. Let us see to it that we have on our wedding garment, lest we ourselves be intruders in the Lord's sanctuaries. Many are called, but few are chosen; the way is narrow, and the gate is strait. O for grace to come to Jesus aright, with the faith of God's elect. He who smote Uzzah for touching the ark is very jealous of His two ordinances; as a true believer I may approach them freely, as an alien I must not touch them lest I die. Heartsearching is the duty of all who are baptized or come to the Lord's table. "Search me, O God, and know my way, try me and know my heart."

### Evening Verse

"And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but He received it not." [Mark 15:23](#)

A golden truth is couched in the fact that the Saviour put the myrrhed wine-cup from His lips. On the heights of heaven the Son of God stood of old, and as He looked down upon our globe He measured the long descent to the utmost depths of human misery; He cast up the total of all the agonies which expiation would require, and abated not a jot. He

solemnly determined that to offer a sufficient atoning sacrifice He must go the whole way, from the highest to the lowest, from the throne of highest glory to the cross of deepest woe. This myrrhed cup, with its soporific influence, would have stayed Him within a little of the utmost limit of misery, therefore He refused it. He would not stop short of all He had undertaken to suffer for His people. Ah, how many of us have pined after reliefs to our grief which would have been injurious to us! Reader, did you never pray for a discharge from hard service or suffering with a petulant and wilful eagerness? Providence has taken from you the desire of your eyes with a stroke. Say, Christian, if it had been said, "If you so desire it, that loved one of yours shall live, but God will be dishonoured," could you have put away the temptation, and said, "Thy will be done"? Oh, it is sweet to be able to say, "My Lord, if for other reasons I need not suffer, yet if I can honour Thee more by suffering, and if the loss of my earthly all will bring Thee glory, then so let it be. I refuse the comfort, if it comes in the way of Thine honour." O that we thus walked more in the footsteps of our Lord, cheerfully enduring trial for His sake, promptly and willingly putting away the thought of self and comfort when it would interfere with our finishing the work which He has given us to do. Great grace is needed, but great grace is provided.

— Morning and Evening

August 19

### Morning Verse

"He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord." [Micah 5:4](#)

Christ's reign in His Church is that of a *shepherd-king*. He has supremacy, but it is the superiority of a wise and tender shepherd over his needy and loving flock; He commands and receives obedience, but it is the willing obedience of the well-cared-for sheep, rendered joyfully to their beloved Shepherd, whose voice they know so well. He rules by the force of love and the energy of goodness.

His reign is *practical in its character*. It is said, "He shall *stand and feed*." The great Head of the Church is actively engaged in providing for His people. He does not sit down upon the throne in empty state, or hold a sceptre without wielding it in government. No, He stands and feeds. The expression "feed," in the original, is like an analogous one in the Greek, which means to shepherdize, to do everything expected of a shepherd: to guide, to watch, to preserve, to restore, to tend, as well as to feed.

His reign is *continual in its duration*. It is said, "*He shall stand and feed*"; not "He shall feed now and then, and leave His position"; not, "He shall one day grant a revival, and then next day leave His Church to barrenness." His eyes never slumber, and His hands never rest; His heart never ceases to beat with love, and His shoulders are never weary of carrying His people's burdens.

His reign is *effectually powerful in its action*; "He shall feed in the strength of Jehovah." Wherever Christ is, there is God; and whatever Christ does is the act of the Most High. Oh! it is a joyful truth to consider that He who stands to-day representing the interests of His people is very God of very God, to whom every knee shall bow. Happy are we who belong to such a shepherd, whose humanity communes with us, and whose divinity protects us. Let us worship and bow down before Him as the people of His pasture.

### **Evening Verse**

"Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for Thou art my strength." [Psalm 31:4](#)

Our spiritual foes are of the serpent's brood, and seek to ensnare us by subtlety. The prayer before us supposes the possibility of the believer being caught like a bird. So deftly does the fowler do his work, that simple ones are soon surrounded by the net. The text asks that even out of Satan's meshes the captive one may be delivered; this is a proper petition, and one which can be granted: from between the jaws of the lion, and out of the belly of hell, can eternal love rescue the saint. It may need a sharp pull to save a soul from the net of temptations, and a mighty pull to extricate a man from the snares of malicious cunning, but the Lord is equal to every emergency, and the most skilfully placed nets of the hunter shall never be able to hold His chosen ones. Woe unto those who are so clever at net laying; they who tempt others shall be destroyed themselves.

"*For Thou art my strength.*" What an inexpressible sweetness is to be found in these few words! How joyfully may we encounter toils, and how cheerfully may we endure sufferings, when we can lay hold upon celestial strength. Divine power will rend asunder all the toils of our enemies, confound their politics, and frustrate their knavish tricks; he is a happy man who has such matchless might engaged upon his side. Our own strength would be of little service when embarrassed in the nets of base cunning, but the Lord's strength is ever available; we have but to invoke it, and we shall find it near at hand. If by faith we are depending alone upon the strength of the mighty God of Israel, we may use our holy reliance as a plea in supplication.

"Lord, evermore Thy face we seek:  
Tempted we are, and poor, and weak;  
Keep us with lowly hearts, and meek.  
Let us not fall. Let us not fall."

— Morning and Evening

August 20

### Morning Verse

"The sweet psalmist of Israel." [2Samuel 23:1](#)

Among all the saints whose lives are recorded in Holy Writ, David possesses an experience of the most striking, varied, and instructive character. In his history we meet with trials and temptations not to be discovered, as a whole, in other saints of ancient times, and hence he is all the more suggestive a type of our Lord. David knew the trials of all ranks and conditions of men. Kings have their troubles, and David wore a crown: the peasant has his cares, and David handled a shepherd's crook: the wanderer has many hardships, and David abode in the caves of Engedi: the captain has his difficulties, and David found the sons of Zeruiah too hard for him. The psalmist was also tried in his friends, his counsellor Ahithophel forsook him, "He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me." His worst foes were they of his own household: his children were his greatest affliction. The temptations of poverty and wealth, of honour and reproach, of health and weakness, all tried their power upon him. He had temptations from without to disturb his peace, and from within to mar his joy. David no sooner escaped from one trial than he fell into another; no sooner emerged from one season of despondency and alarm, than he was again brought into the lowest depths, and all God's waves and billows rolled over him. It is probably from this cause that David's psalms are so universally the delight of experienced Christians. Whatever our frame of mind, whether ecstasy or depression, David has exactly described our emotions. He was an able master of the human heart, because he had been tutored in the best of all schools--the school of heart-felt, personal experience. As we are instructed in the same school, as we grow matured in grace and in years, we increasingly appreciate David's psalms, and find them to be "green pastures." My soul, let David's experience cheer and counsel thee this day.

### Evening Verse

"And they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall." [Nehemiah 3:8](#)

Cities well fortified have broad walls, and so had Jerusalem in her glory. The New Jerusalem must, in like manner, be surrounded and preserved by a broad wall of nonconformity to the world, and *separation* from its customs and spirit. The tendency of these days break down the holy barrier, and make the distinction between the church and the world merely nominal. Professors are no longer strict and Puritanical, questionable literature is read on all hands, frivolous pastimes are currently indulged, and a general laxity threatens to deprive the Lord's peculiar people of those sacred singularities which separate them from sinners. It will be an ill day for the church and the world when the proposed amalgamation shall be complete, and the sons of God and the daughters of men shall be as one: then shall another deluge of wrath be ushered in. Beloved reader, be it your aim in heart, in word, in dress, in action to maintain the broad wall, remembering that the friendship of this world is enmity against God.

The broad wall afforded a pleasant place of *resort* for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, from which they could command prospects of the surrounding country. This reminds us of the Lord's exceeding broad commandments, in which we walk at liberty in communion with Jesus, overlooking the scenes of earth, and looking out towards the glories of heaven. Separated from the world, and denying ourselves all ungodliness and fleshly lusts, we are nevertheless not in prison, nor restricted within narrow bounds; nay, we walk at liberty, because we keep His precepts. Come, reader, this evening walk with God in His statutes. As friend met friend upon the city wall, so meet thou thy God in the way of holy prayer and meditation. The bulwarks of salvation thou hast a right to traverse, for thou art a freeman of the royal burgh, a citizen of the metropolis of the universe.

— Morning and Evening

August 21

### **Morning Verse**

"He that watereth shall be watered also himself." [Proverbs 11:25](#)

We are here taught the great lesson, that to get, we must give; that to accumulate, we must scatter; that to make ourselves happy, we must make others happy; and that in order to become spiritually vigorous, we must seek the spiritual good of others. In watering others, we are ourselves watered. How? Our efforts to be useful, *bring out our powers for usefulness*. We have latent talents and dormant faculties, which are brought to light by exercise. Our strength for labour is hidden even from ourselves, until we venture forth to fight the Lord's battles, or to climb the mountains of difficulty. We do not know what tender sympathies we possess until we try to dry the widow's tears, and soothe the orphan's grief. We often find in attempting to teach others, that we *gain instruction for ourselves*. Oh, what gracious lessons some of us have learned at sick beds! We went to teach the Scriptures, we came away blushing that we knew so little of them. In our converse with poor saints, we are taught the way of God more perfectly for ourselves and get a deeper insight into divine truth. So that watering others *makes us humble*. We discover how much grace there is where we had not looked for it; and how much the poor saint may outstrip us in knowledge. Our own *comfort is also increased* by our working for others. We endeavour to cheer them, and the consolation gladdens our own heart. Like the two men in the snow; one chafed the other's limbs to keep him from dying, and in so doing kept his own blood in circulation, and saved his own life. The poor widow of Sarepta gave from her scanty store a supply for the prophet's wants, and from that day she never again knew what want was. Give then, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and running over.

### **Evening Verse**

"I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain." [Isaiah 45:19](#)

We may gain much solace by considering what God has *not* said. What He has said is inexpressibly full of comfort and delight; what He has not said is scarcely less rich in consolation. It was one of these "*said not*s" which preserved the kingdom of Israel in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, for "the Lord said not that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven." [2 Kings 14:27](#). In our text we have an assurance that God *will* answer prayer, because He hath "*not* said unto the seed of Israel, Seek ye Me in vain." You who write bitter things against yourselves should remember that, let your doubts and fears say what they will, if *God* has not cut you off from mercy, there is no room for despair: even the voice of conscience is of little weight if it be not seconded by the voice of God. What God *has* said, tremble at! But suffer not your vain imaginings to overwhelm you with despondency and sinful despair. Many timid persons have been vexed by the suspicion that there may be something in God's decree which shuts *them* out from hope, but here is a complete refutation to that troublesome fear, for no true seeker can be decreed to wrath. "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I have not said," even in the secret of my unsearchable decree, "Seek ye Me in vain." God has clearly revealed that He *will* hear the prayer of those who call upon Him, and that declaration cannot be contravened. He has so firmly, so truthfully, so righteously spoken, that there can be no room for doubt. He does not reveal His mind in unintelligible words, but He speaks plainly and positively, "Ask, and ye shall receive." Believe, O trembler, this sure truth--that prayer must and shall be heard, and that never, even in the secrets of eternity, has the Lord said unto any living soul, "Seek ye Me in vain."

— Morning and Evening

August 22

### Morning Verse

"I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love." [Song 5:8](#)

Such is the language of the believer panting after present fellowship with Jesus, *he is sick for his Lord*. Gracious souls are never perfectly at ease except they are in a state of nearness to Christ; for when they are away from Him they lose their peace. The nearer to Him, the nearer to the perfect calm of heaven; the nearer to Him, the fuller the heart is, not only of peace, but of life, and vigour, and joy, for these all depend on constant intercourse with Jesus. What the sun is to the day, what the moon is to the night, what the dew is to the flower, such is Jesus Christ to us. What bread is to the hungry, clothing to the naked, the shadow of a great rock to the traveller in a weary land, such is Jesus Christ to us; and, therefore, if we are not consciously one with Him, little marvel if our spirit cries in the words of the Song, "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, tell Him that I am sick of love." *This earnest longing after Jesus has a blessing attending it*: "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness"; and therefore, supremely blessed are they who thirst after the Righteous One. Blessed is that hunger, since it comes from God: if I may not have the full-blown blessedness of being

filled, I would seek the same blessedness in its sweet bud-pining in emptiness and eagerness till I am filled with Christ. If I may not feed on Jesus, it shall be next door to heaven to hunger and thirst after Him. There is a hallowedness about that hunger, since it sparkles among the beatitudes of our Lord. But the blessing *involves a promise*. Such hungry ones "*shall be filled*" with what they are desiring. If Christ thus causes us to long after Himself, He will certainly satisfy those longings; and when He does come to us, as come He will, *oh, how sweet it will be!*

### **Evening Verse**

"The unsearchable riches of Christ." [Ephesians 3:8](#)

My Master has riches beyond the count of arithmetic, the measurement of reason, the dream of imagination, or the eloquence of words. They are *unsearchable!* You may look, and study, and weigh, but Jesus is a greater Saviour than you think Him to be when your thoughts are at the greatest. My Lord is more ready to pardon than you to sin, more able to forgive than you to transgress. My Master is more willing to supply your wants than you are to confess them. Never tolerate low thoughts of my Lord Jesus. When you put the crown on His head, you will only crown Him with silver when He deserves gold. *My Master has riches of happiness to bestow upon you now.* He can make you to lie down in green pastures, and lead you beside still waters. There is no music like the music of His pipe, when He is the Shepherd and you are the sheep, and you lie down at His feet. There is no love like His, neither earth nor heaven can match it. To know Christ and to be found in Him--oh! this is life, this is joy, this is marrow and fatness, wine on the lees well refined. My Master does not treat His servants churlishly; He gives to them as a king giveth to a king; He gives them two heavens--a heaven below in serving Him here, and a heaven above in delighting in Him for ever. *His unsearchable riches will be best known in eternity.* He will give you on the way to heaven all you need; your place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks, your bread shall be given you, and your waters shall be sure; but it is there, THERE, where you shall hear the song of them that triumph, the shout of them that feast, and shall have a face-to-face view of the glorious and beloved One. The unsearchable riches of Christ! This is the tune for the minstrels of earth, and the song for the harpers of heaven. Lord, teach us more and more of Jesus, and we will tell out the good news to others.

— Morning and Evening

## August 23

### **Morning Verse**

"The voice of weeping shall be no more heard." [Isaiah 65:19](#)

The glorified weep no more, for *all outward a causes of grief are gone*. There are no broken friendships, nor blighted prospects in heaven. Poverty, famine, peril, persecution, and slander, are unknown there. No pain distresses, no thought of death or bereavement

saddens. They weep no more, for *they are perfectly sanctified*. No "evil heart of unbelief" prompts them to depart from the living God; they are without fault before His throne, and are fully conformed to His image. Well may they cease to mourn who have ceased to sin. They weep no more, because *all fear of change is past*. They know that they are eternally secure. Sin is shut out, and they are shut in. They dwell within a city which shall never be stormed; they bask in a sun which shall never set; they drink of a river which shall never dry; they pluck fruit from a tree which shall never wither. Countless cycles may revolve, but eternity shall not be exhausted, and while eternity endures, their immortality and blessedness shall co-exist with it. They are for ever with the Lord. They weep no more, because *every desire is fulfilled*. They cannot wish for anything which they have not in possession. Eye and ear, heart and hand, judgment, imagination, hope, desire, will, all the faculties, are completely satisfied; and imperfect as our present ideas are of the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, yet we know enough, by the revelation of the Spirit, that the saints above are supremely blessed. The joy of Christ, which is an infinite fulness of delight, is in them. They bathe themselves in the bottomless, shoreless sea of infinite beatitude. That same joyful rest remains for us. It may not be far distant. Ere long the weeping willow shall be exchanged for the palm-branch of victory, and sorrow's dewdrops will be transformed into the pearls of everlasting bliss. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

### **Evening Verse**

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." [Ephesians 3:17](#)

Beyond measure it is desirable that we, as believers, should have the person of Jesus constantly before us, to inflame our love towards Him, and to increase our knowledge of Him. I would to God that my readers were all entered as diligent scholars in Jesus' college, students of Corpus Christi, or the body of Christ, resolved to attain unto a good degree in the learning of the cross. But to have Jesus ever near, the heart must be full of Him, welling up with His love, even to overrunning; hence the apostle prays "that Christ may *dwell in your hearts*." See how near he would have Jesus to be! You cannot get a subject closer to you than to have it in the heart itself. "*That He may dwell*"; not that He may call upon you sometimes, as a casual visitor enters into a house and tarries for a night, but that He may *dwell*; that Jesus may become the Lord and Tenant of your inmost being, never more to go out.

Observe the words--that He may dwell *in your heart*, that best room of the house of manhood; not in your thoughts alone, but in your affections; not merely in the mind's meditations, but in the heart's emotions. We should pant after love to Christ of a most abiding character, not a love that flames up and then dies out into the darkness of a few embers, but a constant flame, fed by sacred fuel, like the fire upon the altar which never went out. This cannot be accomplished except by faith. Faith must be strong, or love will not be fervent; the root of the flower must be healthy, or we cannot expect the bloom to be sweet. Faith is the lily's root, and love is the lily's bloom. Now, reader, Jesus cannot be in your heart's love except you have a firm hold of Him by your heart's faith; and,

therefore, pray that you may always trust Christ in order that you may always love Him. If love be cold, be sure that faith is drooping.

— Morning and Evening

August 24

### Morning Verse

"The breaker is come up before them." [Micah 2:13](#)

Inasmuch as Jesus has gone before us, things remain not as they would have been had He never passed that way. He has *conquered every foe* that obstructed the way. Cheer up now thou faint-hearted warrior. Not only has Christ travelled the road, but He has slain thine enemies. Dost thou dread sin? He has nailed it to His cross. Dost thou fear death? He has been the death of Death. Art thou afraid of hell? He has barred it against the advent of any of His children; they shall never see the gulf of perdition. Whatever foes may be before the Christian, they are all overcome. There are lions, but their teeth are broken; there are serpents, but their fangs are extracted; there are rivers, but they are bridged or fordable; there are flames, but we wear that matchless garment which renders us invulnerable to fire. The sword that has been forged against us is already blunted; the instruments of war which the enemy is preparing have already lost their point. God has taken away in the person of Christ all the power that anything can have to hurt us. Well then, the army may safely march on, and you may go joyously along your journey, for all your enemies are conquered beforehand. What shall you do but march on to take the prey? They are beaten, they are vanquished; all you have to do is to divide the spoil. You shall, it is true, often engage in combat; but your fight shall be with a vanquished foe. His head is broken; he may attempt to injure you, but his strength shall not be sufficient for his malicious design. Your victory shall be easy, and your treasure shall be beyond all count.

"Proclaim aloud the Saviour's fame,  
Who bears *the Breaker's* wondrous name;  
Sweet name; and it becomes him well,  
Who breaks down earth, sin, death, and hell."

### Evening Verse

"If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution." [Exodus 22:6](#)

But what restitution can he make who casts abroad the fire-brands of error, or the coals of lasciviousness, and sets men's souls on a blaze with the fire of hell? The guilt is beyond estimate, and the result is irretrievable. If such an offender be forgiven, what grief it will cause him in the retrospect, since he cannot undo the mischief which he has done! An ill

example may kindle a flame which years of amended character cannot quench. To burn the food of man is bad enough, but how much worse to destroy the soul! It may be useful to us to reflect how far we may have been guilty in the past, and to enquire whether, even in the present, there may not be evil in us which has a tendency to bring damage to the souls of our relatives, friends, or neighbours.

The fire of strife is a terrible evil when it breaks out in a Christian church. Where converts were multiplied, and God was glorified, jealousy and envy do the devil's work most effectually. Where the golden grain was being housed, to reward the toil of the great Boaz, the fire of enmity comes in and leaves little else but smoke and a heap of blackness. Woe unto those by whom offences come. May they never come through us, for although we cannot make restitution, we shall certainly be the chief sufferers if we are the chief offenders. Those who feed the fire deserve just censure, but he who first kindles it is most to blame. Discord usually takes first hold upon the thorns; it is nurtured among the hypocrites and base professors in the church, and away it goes among the righteous, blown by the winds of hell, and no one knows where it may end. O Thou Lord and giver of peace, make us peacemakers, and never let us aid and abet the men of strife, or even unintentionally cause the least division among Thy people.

— Morning and Evening

August 25

### **Morning Verse**

"His fruit was sweet to my taste." [Song 2:3](#)

Faith, in the Scripture, is spoken of under the emblem of all the senses. It is *sight*: "Look unto me and be ye saved." It is *hearing*: "Hear, and your soul shall live." Faith is *smelling*: "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia"; "thy name is as ointment poured forth." Faith is spiritual *touch*. By this faith the woman came behind and touched the hem of Christ's garment, and by this we handle the things of the good word of life. Faith is equally the spirit's taste. "How sweet are Thy words to my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my lips." "Except a man eat my flesh," saith Christ, "and drink my blood, there is no life in him."

This "*taste*" is faith *in one of its highest operations*. One of the first performances of faith is *hearing*. We hear the voice of God, not with the outward ear alone, but with the inward ear; we hear it as God's Word, and we believe it to be so; that is the "hearing" of faith. Then our mind *looketh* upon the truth as it is presented to us; that is to say, we understand it, we perceive its meaning; that is the "seeing" of faith. Next we discover its preciousness; we begin to admire it, and find how fragrant it is; that is faith in its "*smell*." Then we appropriate the mercies which are prepared for us in Christ; that is faith in its "*touch*." Hence follow the enjoyments, peace, delight, communion; which are faith in its "*taste*." Any one of these acts of faith is saving. To hear Christ's voice as the sure voice of

God in the soul will save us; but that which gives true enjoyment is the aspect of faith wherein Christ, by holy taste, is received into us, and made, by inward and spiritual apprehension of His sweetness and preciousness, to be the food of our souls. It is then we sit "under His shadow with great delight," and find His fruit sweet to our taste.

### **Evening Verse**

"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." [Acts 8:37](#)

These words may answer your scruples, devout reader, concerning *the ordinances*. Perhaps you say, "I should be afraid to be baptized; it is such a solemn thing to avow myself to be dead with Christ, and buried with Him. should not feel at liberty to come to the Master's table; I should be afraid of eating and drinking damnation unto myself, not discerning the Lord's body." Ah! poor trembler, Jesus has given you liberty, be not afraid. If a stranger came to your house, he would stand at the door, or wait in the hall; he would not dream of intruding unbidden into your parlour--he is not at home: but your child makes himself very free about the house; and so is it with the child of God. A stranger may not intrude where a child may venture. When the Holy Ghost has given you to feel the spirit of adoption, you may come to Christian ordinances without fear. The same rule holds good of the *Christian's inward privileges*. You think, poor seeker, that you are not allowed to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; if you are permitted to get inside Christ's door, or sit at the bottom of His table, you will be well content. Ah! but you shall not have less privileges than the very greatest. God makes no difference in His love to His children. A child is a child to Him; He will not make him a hired servant; but he shall feast upon the fatted calf, and shall have the music and the dancing as much as if he had never gone astray. When Jesus comes into the heart, He issues a general licence to be glad in the Lord. No chains are worn in the court of King Jesus. Our admission into full privileges may be gradual, but it is sure. Perhaps our reader is saying, "I wish I could enjoy the promises, and walk at liberty in my Lord's commands." "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Loose the chains of thy neck, O captive daughter, for Jesus makes thee free.

— Morning and Evening

## August 26

### **Morning Verse**

"He hath commanded His covenant for ever." [Psalms 111:9](#)

The Lord's people delight in the covenant itself. It is an unfailing source of consolation to them so often as the Holy Spirit leads them into its banqueting house and waves its banner of love. They delight to contemplate *the antiquity* of that covenant, remembering that before the day-star knew its place, or planets ran their round, the interests of the saints were made secure in Christ Jesus. It is peculiarly pleasing to them to remember *the sureness* of the covenant, while meditating upon "the sure mercies of David." They delight to celebrate it as "signed, and sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well." It

often makes their hearts dilate with joy to think of its *immutability*, as a covenant which neither time nor eternity, life nor death, shall ever be able to violate--a covenant as old as eternity and as everlasting as the Rock of ages. They rejoice also to feast upon *the fulness* of this covenant, for they see in it all things provided for them. God is their portion, Christ their companion, the Spirit their Comforter, earth their lodge, and heaven their home. They see in it an inheritance reserved and entailed to every soul possessing an interest in its ancient and eternal deed of gift. Their eyes sparkled when they saw it as a treasure-trove in the Bible; but oh! how their souls were gladdened when they saw in the last will and testament of their divine kinsman, that it was bequeathed to them! More especially it is the pleasure of God's people to contemplate *the graciousness* of this covenant. They see that the law was made void because it was a covenant of works and depended upon merit, but this they perceive to be enduring because grace is the basis, grace the condition, grace the strain, grace the bulwark, grace the foundation, grace the topstone. The covenant is a treasury of wealth, a granary of food, a fountain of life, a store-house of salvation, a charter of peace, and a haven of joy.

### **Evening Verse**

"The people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed, and running to Him saluted Him." [Mark 9:15](#)

How great the difference between Moses and Jesus! When the prophet of Horeb had been forty days upon the mountain, he underwent a kind of transfiguration, so that his countenance shone with exceeding brightness, and he put a veil over his face, for the people could not endure to look upon his glory. Not so our Saviour. He had been transfigured with a greater glory than that of Moses, and yet, it is not written that the people were blinded by the blaze of His countenance, but rather they were amazed, and running to Him they saluted Him. The glory of the law repels, but the greater glory of Jesus attracts. Though Jesus is holy and just, yet blended with His purity there is so much of truth and grace, that sinners run to Him amazed at His goodness, fascinated by His love; they salute Him, become His disciples, and take Him to be their Lord and Master. Reader, it may be that just now you are blinded by the dazzling brightness of the law of God. You feel its claims on your conscience, but you cannot keep it in your life. Not that you find fault with the law, on the contrary, it commands your profoundest esteem, still you are in nowise drawn by it to God; you are rather hardened in heart, and are verging towards desperation. Ah, poor heart! turn thine eye from Moses, with all his repelling splendour, and look to Jesus, resplendent with milder glories. Behold His flowing wounds and thorn-crowned head! He is the Son of God, and therein He is greater than Moses, but He is the Lord of love, and therein more tender than the lawgiver. He bore the wrath of God, and in His death revealed more of God's justice than Sinai on a blaze, but that justice is now vindicated, and henceforth it is the guardian of believers in Jesus. Look, sinner, to the bleeding Saviour, and as thou feelest the attraction of His love, fly to His arms, and thou shalt be saved.

Morning and Evening

August 27

### **Morning Verse**

"How long will it be ere they believe me?" [Numbers 14:11](#)

*Strive with all diligence to keep out that monster unbelief.* It so dishonours Christ, that He will withdraw His visible presence if we insult Him by indulging it. It is true it is a weed, the seeds of which we can never entirely extract from the soil, but we must aim at its root with zeal and perseverance. Among hateful things it is the most to be abhorred. Its injurious nature is so venomous that he that exerciseth it and he upon whom it is exercised are both hurt thereby. In thy case, O believer! it is most wicked, for the mercies of thy Lord in the past, increase thy guilt in doubting Him now. When thou dost distrust the Lord Jesus, He may well cry out, "Behold I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves." This is crowning His head with thorns of the sharpest kind. It is very cruel for a well-beloved wife to mistrust a kind and faithful husband. The sin is needless, foolish, and unwarranted. Jesus has never given the slightest ground for suspicion, and it is hard to be doubted by those to whom our conduct is uniformly affectionate and true. Jesus is the Son of the Highest, and has unbounded wealth; it is shameful to doubt Omnipotence and distrust all-sufficiency. The cattle on a thousand hills will suffice for our most hungry feeding, and the granaries of heaven are not likely to be emptied by our eating. If Christ were only a cistern, we might soon exhaust His fulness, but who can drain a fountain? Myriads of spirits have drawn their supplies from Him, and not one of them has murmured at the scantiness of His resources. Away, then, with this lying traitor unbelief, for his only errand is to cut the bonds of communion and make us mourn an absent Saviour. Bunyan tells us that unbelief has "as many lives as a cat:" if so, let us kill one life now, and continue the work till the whole nine are gone. Down with thee, thou traitor, my heart abhors thee.

### **Evening Verse**

"Into Thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." [Psalm 31:5](#)

These words have been frequently used by holy men in their hour of departure. We may profitably consider them this evening. The object of the faithful man's solicitude in life and death is not his body or his estate, but his spirit; this is his choice treasure--if this be safe, all is well. What is this mortal state compared with the soul? The believer commits his soul to the hand of his God; it came from Him, it is His own, He has aforesaid sustained it, He is able to keep it, and it is most fit that He should receive it. All things are safe in Jehovah's hands; what we entrust to the Lord will be secure, both now and in that day of days towards which we are hastening. It is peaceful living, and glorious dying, to repose in the care of heaven. At all times we should commit our all to Jesus' faithful hand; then, though life may hang on a thread, and adversities may multiply as the sands of the sea, our soul shall dwell at ease, and delight itself in quiet resting places.

*"Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."* Redemption is a solid basis for confidence. David had not known Calvary as we have done, but temporal redemption cheered him; and shall not eternal redemption yet more sweetly console us? Past deliverances are strong pleas for present assistance. What the Lord has done He will do again, for He changes not. He is faithful to His promises, and gracious to His saints; He will not turn away from His people.

Though Thou slay me I will trust,  
Praise Thee even from the dust,  
Prove, and tell it as I prove,  
Thine unutterable love.

Thou mayst chasten and correct,  
But Thou never canst neglect;  
Since the ransom price is paid,  
On Thy love my hope is stay'd."

— Morning and Evening

## August 28

### **Morning Verse**

"Oil for the light." [Exodus 25:6](#)

My soul, how much thou needest this, for thy lamp will not long continue to burn without it. Thy snuff will smoke and become an offence if light be gone, and gone it will be if oil be absent. Thou hast no oil well springing up in thy human nature, and therefore thou must go to them that sell and buy for thyself, or like the foolish virgins, thou wilt have to cry, "My lamp is gone out." Even the consecrated lamps could not give light without oil; though they shone in the tabernacle they needed to be fed, though no rough winds blew upon them they required to be trimmed, and thy need is equally as great. Under the most happy circumstances thou canst not give light for another hour unless fresh oil of grace be given thee.

It was not every oil that might be used in the Lord's service; neither the petroleum which exudes so plentifully from the earth, nor the produce of fishes, nor that extracted from nuts would be accepted; one oil only was selected, and that the best olive oil. Pretended grace from natural goodness, fancied grace from priestly hands, or imaginary grace from outward ceremonies will never serve the true saint of God; he knows that the Lord would not be pleased with rivers of such oil. He goes to the olive-press of Gethsemane, and draws his supplies from Him who was crushed therein. The oil of gospel grace is pure and free from lees and dregs, and hence the light which is fed thereon is clear and bright. Our churches are the Saviour's golden candelabra, and if they are to be lights in this dark

world, they must have much holy oil. Let us pray for ourselves, our ministers, and our churches, that they may never lack oil for the light. Truth, holiness, joy, knowledge, love, these are all beams of the sacred light, but we cannot give them forth unless in private we receive oil from God the Holy Ghost.

### **Evening Verse**

"Sing, O barren." [Isaiah 54:1](#)

Though we have brought forth some fruit unto Christ, and have a joyful hope that we are "plants of His own right hand planting," yet there are times when we feel very barren. Prayer is lifeless, love is cold, faith is weak, each grace in the garden of our heart languishes and droops. We are like flowers in the hot sun, requiring the refreshing shower. In such a condition what are we to do? The text is addressed to us in just such a state. "*Sing, O barren, break forth and cry aloud.*" But what can I sing about? I cannot talk about the present, and even the past looks full of barrenness. Ah! I can sing of Jesus Christ. I can talk of visits which the Redeemer has aforesaid paid to me; or if not of these, I can magnify the great love wherewith He loved His people when He came from the heights of heaven for their redemption. I will go to the cross again. Come, my soul, heavy laden thou wast once, and thou didst lose thy burden there. Go to Calvary again. Perhaps that very cross which gave thee life may give thee fruitfulness. What is my barrenness? It is the platform for His fruit-creating power. What is my desolation? It is the black setting for the sapphire of His everlasting love. I will go in poverty, I will go in helplessness, I will go in all my shame and backsliding, I will tell Him that I am still His child, and in confidence in His faithful heart, even I, the barren one, will sing and cry aloud.

Sing, believer, for it will cheer thine own heart, and the hearts of other desolate ones. Sing on, for now that thou art really ashamed of being barren, thou wilt be fruitful soon; now that God makes thee *loath* to be without fruit He will soon cover thee with clusters. The experience of our barrenness is painful, but the Lord's visitations are delightful. A sense of our own poverty drives us to Christ, and that is where we need to be, for in Him is our fruit found.

— Morning and Evening

## August 29

### **Morning Verse**

"Have mercy upon me, O God." [Psalm 51:1](#)

When Dr. Carey was suffering from a dangerous illness, the enquiry was made, "If this sickness should prove fatal, what passage would you select as the text for your funeral sermon?" He replied, "Oh, I feel that such a poor sinful creature is unworthy to have anything said about him; but if a funeral sermon must be preached, let it be from the

words, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.'" In the same spirit of humility he directed in his will that the following inscription and nothing more should be cut on his gravestone:--

WILLIAM CAREY, BORN AUGUST 17th,  
1761:  
DIED - -

"A wretched, poor, and helpless worm  
On Thy kind arms I fall."

Only on the footing of free grace can the most experienced and most honoured of the saints approach their God. The best of men are conscious above all others that they are men at the best. Empty boats float high, but heavily laden vessels are low in the water; mere professors can boast, but true children of God cry for mercy upon their unprofitableness. We have need that the Lord should have mercy upon our good works, our prayers, our preachings, our alms-givings, and our holiest things. The blood was not only sprinkled upon the doorposts of Israel's dwelling houses, but upon the sanctuary, the mercy-seat, and the altar, because as sin intrudes into our holiest things, the blood of Jesus is needed to purify them from defilement. If mercy be needed to be exercised towards our duties, what shall be said of our sins? How sweet the remembrance that inexhaustible mercy is waiting to be gracious to us, to restore our backslidings, and make our broken bones rejoice!

### **Evening Verse**

"All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk." [Numbers 6:4](#)

Nazarites had taken, among other vows, one which debarred them from the use of wine. In order that they might not violate the obligation, they were forbidden to drink the vinegar of wine or strong liquors, and to make the rule still more clear, they were not to touch the unfermented juice of grapes, nor even to eat the fruit either fresh or dried. In order, altogether, to secure the integrity of the vow, they were not even allowed anything that had to do with the vine; they were, in fact, to avoid the appearance of evil. Surely this is a lesson to the Lord's separated ones, teaching them to come away from sin in every form, to avoid not merely its grosser shapes, but even its spirit and similitude. Strict walking is much despised in these days, but rest assured, dear reader, it is both the safest and the happiest. He who yields a point or two to the world is in fearful peril; he who eats the grapes of Sodom will soon drink the wine of Gomorrah. A little crevice in the sea-bank in Holland lets in the sea, and the gap speedily swells till a province is drowned. Worldly conformity, in any degree, is a snare to the soul, and makes it more and more liable to presumptuous sins. Moreover, as the Nazarite who drank grape juice could not be quite sure whether it might not have endured a degree of fermentation, and consequently could not be clear in heart that his vow was intact, so the yielding, temporizing Christian cannot wear a conscience void of offence, but must feel that the

inward monitor is in doubt of him. Things doubtful we need not doubt about; they are wrong to us. Things tempting we must not dally with, but flee from them with speed. Better be sneered at as a Puritan than be despised as a hypocrite. Careful walking may involve much self-denial, but it has pleasures of its own which are more than a sufficient recompense.

— Morning and Evening

August 30

### Morning Verse

"Wait on the Lord." [Psalm 27:14](#)

It may seem an easy thing to wait, but it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier learns not without years of teaching. Marching and quick-marching are much easier to God's warriors than standing still. There are hours of perplexity when the most willing spirit, anxiously desirous to serve the Lord, knows not what part to take. Then what shall it do? Vex itself by despair? Fly back in cowardice, turn to the right hand in fear, or rush forward in presumption? No, but simply wait. *Wait in prayer*, however. Call upon God, and spread the case before Him; tell Him your difficulty, and plead His promise of aid. In dilemmas between one duty and another, it is sweet to be humble as a child, and *wait with simplicity of soul* upon the Lord. It is sure to be well with us when we feel and know our own folly, and are heartily willing to be guided by the will of God. But *wait in faith*. Express your unstaggering confidence in Him; for unfaithful, untrusting waiting, is but an insult to the Lord. Believe that if He keep you tarrying even till midnight, yet He will come at the right time; the vision shall come and shall not tarry. *Wait in quiet patience*, not rebelling because you are under the affliction, but blessing your God for it. Never murmur against the second cause, as the children of Israel did against Moses; never wish you could go back to the world again, but accept the case as it is, and put it as it stands, simply and with your whole heart, without any self-will, into the hand of your covenant God, saying, "Now, Lord, not my will, but Thine be done. I know not what to do; I am brought to extremities, but I will wait until Thou shalt cleave the floods, or drive back my foes. I will wait, if Thou keep me many a day, for my heart is fixed upon Thee alone, O God, and my spirit waiteth for Thee in the full conviction that Thou wilt yet be my joy and my salvation, my refuge and my strong tower."

### Evening Verse

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed." [Jeremiah 17:14](#) "I have seen His ways, and will heal him." [Isaiah 57:18](#)

It is the sole prerogative of God to remove spiritual disease. Natural disease may be instrumentally healed by men, but even then the honour is to be given to God who giveth virtue unto medicine, and bestoweth power unto the human frame to cast off disease. As for spiritual sicknesses, these remain with the great Physician alone; He claims it as His prerogative, "I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal"; and one of the Lord's choice

titles is Jehovah-Rophi, the Lord that healeth thee. "I will heal thee of thy wounds," is a promise which could not come from the lip of man, but only from the mouth of the eternal God. On this account the psalmist cried unto the Lord, "O Lord, heal me, for my bones are sore vexed," and again, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." For this, also, the godly praise the name of the Lord, saying, "He healeth all our diseases." He who made man can restore man; He who was at first the creator of our nature can new create it. What a transcendent comfort it is that in the person of Jesus "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily!" My soul, whatever thy disease may be, this great Physician can heal thee. If He be God, there can be no limit to His power. Come then with the blind eye of darkened understanding, come with the limping foot of wasted energy, come with the maimed hand of weak faith, the fever of an angry temper, or the ague of shivering despondency, come just as thou art, for He who is God can certainly restore thee of thy plague. None shall restrain the healing virtue which proceeds from Jesus our Lord. Legions of devils have been made to own the power of the beloved Physician, and never once has He been baffled. All His patients have been cured in the past and shall be in the future, and thou shalt be one among them, my friend, if thou wilt but rest thyself in Him this night.

— Morning and Evening

August 31

### **Morning Verse**

"On mine arm shall they trust." [Isaiah 51:5](#)

In seasons of severe trial, the Christian has nothing on earth that he can trust to, and is therefore compelled to cast himself on his God alone. When his vessel is on its beam-ends, and no human deliverance can avail, he must simply and entirely trust himself to the providence and care of God. Happy storm that wrecks a man on such a rock as this! O blessed hurricane that drives the soul to God and God alone! There is no getting at our God sometimes because of the multitude of our friends; but when a man is so poor, so friendless, so helpless that he has nowhere else to turn, he flies into his Father's arms, and is blessedly clasped therein! When he is burdened with troubles so pressing and so peculiar, that he cannot tell them to any but his God, he may be thankful for them; for he will learn more of his Lord than than at any other time. Oh, tempest-tossed believer, it is a happy trouble that drives thee to thy Father! Now that thou hast only thy God to trust to, see that thou puttest thy full confidence in Him. Dishonour not thy Lord and Master by unworthy doubts and fears; but be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Show the world that thy God is worth ten thousand worlds to thee. Show rich men how rich thou art in thy poverty when the Lord God is thy helper. Show the strong man how strong thou art in thy weakness when underneath thee are the everlasting arms. Now is the time for feats of faith and valiant exploits. Be strong and very courageous, and the Lord thy God shall certainly, as surely as He built the heavens and the earth, glorify Himself in thy weakness, and magnify his might in the midst of thy distress. The grandeur of the arch of heaven would be spoiled if the sky were supported by a single visible column, and your

faith would lose its glory if it rested on anything discernible by the carnal eye. May the Holy Spirit give you to rest in Jesus this closing day of the month.

### Evening Verse

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light." [John 1:7](#)

As He is in the light! Can we ever attain to this? Shall we ever be able to walk as clearly in the light as He is whom we call "Our Father," of whom it is written, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all"? Certainly, this is the model which it set before us, for the Saviour Himself said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect"; and although we may feel that we can never rival the perfection of God, yet we are to seek after it, and never to be satisfied until we attain to it. The youthful artist, as he grasps his early pencil, can hardly hope to equal Raphael or Michael Angelo, but still, if he did not have a noble *beau ideal* before his mind, he would only attain to something very mean and ordinary. But what is meant by the expression that the Christian is to walk in light as God is in the light? We conceive it to import *likeness*, but not *degree*. We are as truly in the light, we are as heartily in the light, we are as sincerely in the light, as honestly in the light, though we cannot be there in the same measure. I cannot dwell in the sun, it is too bright a place for my residence, but I can *walk* in the light of the sun; and so, though I cannot attain to that perfection of purity and truth which belongs to the Lord of hosts by nature as the infinitely good, yet I can set the Lord always before me, and strive, by the help of the indwelling Spirit, after conformity to His image. That famous old commentator, John Trapp, says, "We may be in the light as God is in the light for *quality*, but not for *equality*." We are to have the same light, and are as truly to have it and walk in it as God does, though, as for equality with God in His holiness and purity, that must be left until we cross the Jordan and enter into the perfection of the Most High. Mark that the blessings of sacred fellowship and perfect cleansing are bound up with walking in the light.

— Morning and Evening