



# *Morning and Evening*

CHARLES H. SPURGEON

*Revised & Updated by Alistair Begg*

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*A New Edition of the Classic Devotional Based on  
The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*

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Alistair Begg

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*Morning and Evening*

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*“Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear  
to hear as those who are taught.”*

ISAIAH 50:4

*“My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and  
my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,  
when I remember you upon my bed,  
and meditate on you in the watches of the night.”*

PSALM 63:5-6



# Introduction

SPURGEON'S DAILY DEVOTIONAL READINGS have stood the test of time and are unrivaled as an example of deep theological insight and warm pastoral concern. They are so classic that one hesitates to tamper with them.

In revising and updating the material, I have tried to make them more readable without spoiling the splendor of the language. Most of the changes are minor and will go largely undetected. On a few occasions, because of the difference between the King James Version and the English Standard Version, I was forced to take more liberty.

My goal throughout has been to fashion the material in such a way that it will be accessible to a far wider audience than before. Spurgeon's vocabulary is so vast that the reader may still find himself reaching for a dictionary, but this will surely be an added benefit!

Since I did not have the opportunity to ask Spurgeon's permission, when I meet him I will seek his forgiveness if in attempting to bring clarity I have clouded the issue. The reader must judge. My prayer is that another generation will emerge thankful to God for the work of Spurgeon, whose memory we revere and whose example of godly devotion we seek to follow.

*Alistair Begg*



JANUARY



# January 1

MORNING | *They ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.* JOSHUA 5:12

Israel's weary wanderings were all over, and the promised rest was attained. No more moving tents, fiery serpents, fierce Amalekites, and howling wildernesses: They came to the land that flowed with milk and honey, and they ate the old corn of the land. Perhaps this year, beloved Christian reader, this may be your case or mine. Joyful is the prospect, and if faith be in active exercise, it will yield unalloyed delight. To be with Jesus in the rest, which remains for the people of God, is a cheering hope indeed, and to expect this glory so soon is a double bliss. Unbelief shudders at the Jordan that still rolls between us and the goodly land, but let us rest assured that we have already experienced more ills than death at its worst can cause us. Let us banish every fearful thought and rejoice with exceeding great joy in the prospect that this year we shall begin to be "forever with the Lord."

Some of the company will this year remain on earth, to do service for their Lord. If this should fall to our lot, there is no reason why the New Year's text should not still be true. "We who have believed enter that rest." The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance; He gives us glory begun below. In heaven believers are secure, and so are we preserved in Christ Jesus; there they triumph over their enemies, and we have victories too. Celestial spirits enjoy communion with their Lord, and this is not denied to us. They rest in His love, and we have perfect peace in Him; they sing His praise, and it is our privilege to bless Him too. We will this year gather celestial fruits on earthly ground, where faith and hope have made the desert like the garden of the Lord. Man ate angels' food of old, and why not now? O for grace to feed on Jesus, and so to eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan this year!

EVENING | *We will exult and rejoice in you.* SONG OF SOLOMON 1:4

We will be glad and rejoice in You. We will not open the gates of the year to the sorrowful notes of the organ, but to the sweet strains of the harp of joy and the high-sounding cymbals of gladness. "O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation."<sup>1</sup> We, the called and faithful and chosen, will drive away our griefs and set up our banners of confidence in the name of God. Let others lament over their troubles; we with joy will magnify the Lord. Eternal Spirit, our effectual Comforter, we who are the temples in which You dwell will never cease from adoring and blessing the name of Jesus. Jesus must have the crown of our heart's delight; we will not dishonor our Bridegroom by mourning in His presence. We are ordained to be the minstrels of the skies; let us rehearse our everlasting anthem before we sing it in

the halls of the New Jerusalem. We will *exult and rejoice*: two words with one sense, double joy, blessedness upon blessedness. Need there be any limit to our rejoicing in the Lord even now? Do not men of grace find their Lord to be the sweetest of incense even now, and what better fragrance have they in heaven itself? We will be glad and rejoice *in You*. That last word is the meat in the dish, the kernel of the nut, the soul of the text. What heavens are laid up in Jesus! What rivers of infinite bliss have their source, aye, and every drop of their fullness in Him! Since, O sweet Lord Jesus, You are the present portion of Your people, favor us this year with such a sense of Your preciousness that from its first to its last day we may be glad and rejoice in You. Let January open with joy in the Lord, and December close with gladness in Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 95:1

MORNING | *Continue steadfastly in prayer.* COLOSSIANS 4:2

It is interesting to consider how large a portion of the Bible is occupied with the subject of prayer, either in furnishing examples, enforcing precepts, or pronouncing promises. We scarcely open the Bible before we read, "People began to call upon the name of the LORD;"<sup>1</sup> and just as we are about to close the volume, the "Amen" of an earnest supplication meets our ear. Instances are plentiful. Here we find a wrestling Jacob—there a Daniel who prayed three times a day—and a David who with all his heart called upon his God. On the mountain we see Elijah; in the dungeon Paul and Silas. We have multitudes of commands, and myriads of promises. What does this teach us, but the sacred importance and necessity of prayer? We may be certain that whatever God has made prominent in His Word, He intended to be conspicuous in our lives. If He has said much about prayer, it is because He knows we have much need of

it. So deep are our necessities that until we are in heaven we must not cease to pray. Do you need nothing? Then I fear you do not know your poverty. Have you no mercy to ask of God? Then may the Lord's mercy show you your misery! A prayerless soul is a Christless soul. Prayer is the lisping of the believing infant, the shout of the fighting believer, the requiem of the dying saint falling asleep in Jesus. It is the breath, the watchword, the comfort, the strength, the honor of a Christian. If you are a child of God, you will seek your Father's face and live in your Father's love. Pray that this year you may be holy, humble, zealous, and patient; have closer communion with Christ, and enter more often into the banqueting-house of His love. Pray that you may be an example and a blessing to others, and that you may live more to the glory of your Master. The motto for this year must be, "Continue . . . in prayer."

EVENING | *Let the peoples renew their strength.* ISAIAH 41:1

All things on earth need to be renewed. No created thing continues by itself. "You renew the face of the ground,"<sup>2</sup> was the psalmist's utterance. Even the trees, which wear not themselves with care, nor shorten their lives with labor, must drink of the rain of heaven and draw from the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, only live because day by day they are full of sap freshly drawn from the earth. Neither can man's life be sustained without renewal from God. As it is necessary to repair the body by the frequent meal, so we must repair the soul by feeding upon the Book of God, or by listening to the preached Word, or by the soul-fattening table of the ordinances. How depressed are our graces when means are neglected! What poor starving souls they are who live without the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! If our piety can live without God it is

not of divine creating; it is but a dream; for if God had begotten it, it would wait upon Him as the flowers wait upon the dew. Without constant restoration we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, or the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for the strife within. When the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe to the tree that has not sucked up fresh sap and grasped the rock with many inter-twisted roots. When tempests arise, woe to the mariners that have not strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven. If we suffer the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for the mastery over us; and as a result a painful desolation and a lamentable disgrace may follow. Let us draw near to the footstool of divine mercy in humble entreaty, and we shall realize the fulfillment of the promise, "They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Genesis 4:26 <sup>2</sup>Psalms 104:30 <sup>3</sup>Isaiah 40:31

## January 3

MORNING | *I will . . . give you as a covenant to the people.* ISAIAH 49:8

Jesus Christ is Himself the sum and substance of the covenant, and as one of its gifts He is the property of every believer. Believer, can you estimate what you have received in Christ? “In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”<sup>1</sup> Consider the word “God” and its infinity, and then meditate upon “perfect man” and all His beauty; for all that Christ, as God and man, ever had, or can have, is yours—out of pure free favor, given to you to be your entailed property forever. Our blessed Jesus, as God, is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Will it not console you to know that all these great and glorious attributes are altogether yours? Has He power? That power is yours to support and strengthen you, to overcome your enemies, and to preserve you even to the end. Has He love? Well, there is not a drop of love in His heart that is not yours; you may dive into the immense ocean of His love, and you may say of it all, “It is mine.” Has He justice? It may seem

a stern attribute, but even that is yours, for He will by His justice see to it that all that is promised to you in the covenant of grace shall be most certainly secured to you. And all that He has as perfect man is yours. As a perfect man the Father’s delight was upon Him. He stood accepted by the Most High. O believer, God’s acceptance of Christ is your acceptance; for the love that the Father set on a perfect Christ, He sets on you now. For all that Christ did is yours. That perfect righteousness which Jesus worked out, when through His stainless life He kept the law and made it honorable, is yours and is imputed to you. Christ is in the covenant.

*My God, I am Thine—what a comfort divine!  
What a blessing to know that the Savior is  
mine!  
In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am,  
And my heart it doth dance at the sound of  
His name.*

EVENING | *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”* LUKE 3:4

The voice crying in the wilderness demanded *a way for the Lord, a way prepared, and a way prepared in the wilderness*. I would be attentive to the Master’s proclamation and give Him a road into my heart, cast up by gracious operations, through the desert of my nature. The four directions in the text<sup>2</sup> must have my serious attention.

*Every valley must be exalted.* Low and groveling thoughts of God must be given up; doubting and despairing must be removed; and self-seeking and carnal delights must be forsaken. Across these deep valleys a glorious causeway of grace must be raised.

*Every mountain and hill shall be laid low.* Proud creature-sufficiency, and boastful self-righteousness, must be leveled, to make a highway for the King of kings. Divine fellowship is never promised to haughty, high-minded sinners. The Lord has respect to the lowly and visits the contrite in heart, but the

lofty are an abomination unto Him. My soul, beseech the Holy Spirit to set you right in this respect.

*The crooked shall be made straight.* The wavering heart must have a straight path of decision for God and holiness marked out for it. Double-minded men are strangers to the God of truth. My soul, take heed that in everything you are honest and true, as in the sight of the heart-searching God.

*The rough places shall be made smooth.* Stumbling-blocks of sin must be removed, and thorns and briars of rebellion must be uprooted. So great a visitor must not find miry ways and stony places when He comes to honor His favored ones with His company. Oh, that this evening the Lord may find in my heart a highway made ready by His grace, that He may make a triumphal progress through the utmost bounds of my soul, from the beginning of this year even to the end of it.

<sup>1</sup> Colossians 2:9 <sup>2</sup> Isaiah 40

MORNING | *Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*  
2 PETER 3:18

“Grow in grace”—not in one grace only, but in all grace. Grow in that root-grace, *faith*. Believe the promises more firmly than you have done. Let faith increase in fullness, constancy, simplicity. Grow also in *love*. Ask that your love may become extended, more intense, more practical, influencing every thought, word, and deed. Grow likewise in *humility*. Seek to lie very low and know more of your own nothingness. As you grow *downward* in humility, seek also to grow *upward*—having nearer approaches to God in prayer and more intimate fellowship with Jesus. May God the Holy Spirit enable you to “*grow in . . . the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.*” He who grows not in the knowledge of Jesus, refuses to be blessed. To know Him is “life eternal,” and to advance in the knowledge of Him is to increase in happiness. He who does not long to know more of Christ, knows nothing of Him

yet. Whoever has sipped this wine will thirst for more, for although Christ does satisfy, yet it is such a satisfaction that the appetite is not choked, but whetted. If you know the love of Jesus as the hart pants for the water-brooks, so will you pant after deeper draughts of His love. If you do not desire to know Him better, then you love Him not, for love always cries, “Nearer, nearer.” Absence from Christ is hell; but the presence of Jesus is heaven. Do not rest content without an increasing acquaintance with Jesus. Seek to know more of Him in His divine nature, in His human relationship, in His finished work, in His death, in His resurrection, in His present glorious intercession, and in His future royal advent. Live close to the Cross, and search the mystery of His wounds. An increase of love to Jesus and a more perfect apprehension of His love to us is one of the best tests of growth in grace.

EVENING | *And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.*  
GENESIS 42:8

This morning our desires went forth for growth in our acquaintance with the Lord Jesus; it may be well tonight to consider a kindred topic, namely, *our heavenly Joseph’s knowledge of us*. This was most blessedly perfect long before we had the slightest knowledge of Him. “Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.”<sup>1</sup> Before we had a being in the world we had a being in His heart. When we were enemies to Him, He knew us, our misery, our madness, and our wickedness. When we wept bitterly in despairing repentance, and viewed Him only as a judge and a ruler, He viewed us as His brethren well beloved, and His heart yearned toward us. He never mistook His chosen but always beheld them as objects of His infinite affection. “The Lord knows those who are his”<sup>2</sup> is as true of the prodigals who are feeding pigs as of the children who sit at the table.

But, sadly *we did not know our royal Brother*, and out of this ignorance grew a host of sins. We withheld our hearts from Him and allowed Him no entrance to our love. We mistrusted Him and gave no credit to His words. We rebelled against Him and paid Him no loving homage. The Sun of Righteousness shone forth, and we could not see Him. Heaven came down to earth, and earth perceived it not. Let God be praised, those days are over with us; yet even now what we know of Jesus is small compared with what He knows of us. We have only begun to study Him, but He knows us altogether. It is a blessed circumstance that the ignorance is not on His side, for then it would be a hopeless case for us. He will not say to us, “I never knew you,” but He will confess our names in the day of His appearing, and meanwhile will show Himself to us as He does not to the world.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 139:16 <sup>2</sup> Timothy 2:19

## January 5

MORNING | *And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.* GENESIS 1:4

Light might well be good since it sprang from that fiat of goodness, “Let there be light.” We who enjoy it should be more grateful for it than we are, and see more of God in it and by it. *Physical* light is said by Solomon to be sweet, but *gospel* light is infinitely more precious, for it reveals eternal things and ministers to our immortal natures. When the Holy Spirit gives us *spiritual* light and opens our eyes to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we behold sin in its true colors, and ourselves in our real position; we see the Most Holy God as He reveals Himself, the plan of mercy as He propounds it, and the world to come as the Word describes it. Spiritual light has many beams and prismatic colors, but whether they be knowledge, joy, holiness, or life, all are divinely good. If the light received be thus good, what must the *essential* light be, and how glorious must be the place where He reveals Himself. O Lord, since light is so good,

give us more of it, and more of Yourself, the true light.

No sooner is there a good thing in the world than a *division is necessary*. Light and darkness have no communion; God has divided them—let us not confound them. Sons of light must not have fellowship with deeds, doctrines, or deceptions of darkness. The children of the day must be sober, honest, and bold in their Lord’s work, leaving the works of darkness to those who will dwell in it forever. Our churches should by discipline divide the light from the darkness, and we should by our distinct separation from the world do the same. In judgment, in action, in hearing, in teaching, in association, we must discern between the precious and the vile, and maintain the great distinction that the Lord made upon the world’s first day. O Lord Jesus, be our light throughout the whole of this day, for Your light is the light of men.

EVENING | *And God saw that the light was good.* GENESIS 1:4

This morning we noticed the goodness of the light, and the Lord’s dividing it from the darkness. We now note the special eye that the Lord had for the light. “God saw the light”—He looked at it with complacency, gazed upon it with pleasure, saw that it “was good.” If the Lord has given you light, dear reader, He looks on that light with peculiar interest; for not only is it dear to Him as His own handiwork, but it is like Himself, for “God is light.” It is pleasant for the believer to know that God’s eye tenderly observes that work of grace that He has begun. He never loses sight of the treasure that He has placed in our earthen vessels. Sometimes we cannot see the light, but God always sees the light, and that is much better than our seeing it. Better for the judge to see my innocence than for me to think I see it. It is very comfortable for me to know that I am one of God’s people—but whether *I* know it or not, if the

Lord knows it, I am still safe. This is the foundation, “The Lord knows those who are his.” You may be sighing and groaning because of inbred sin, and mourning over your darkness; yet the Lord sees “light” in your heart, for He has put it there, and all the cloudiness and gloom of your soul cannot conceal your light from His gracious eye. You may have sunk low in despondency, and even despair; but if your soul has any longing toward Christ, and if you are seeking to rest in His finished work, God sees the “light.” He not only *sees* it, but He also *preserves* it in you. “I, the Lord, do keep it.” This is a precious thought to those who, after anxious watching and guarding of themselves, feel their own powerlessness to do so. The light thus preserved by His grace, He will one day develop into the splendor of noonday, and the fullness of glory. The light within is the dawn of the eternal day.

MORNING | *Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.* 1 PETER 5:7

It is a happy way of soothing sorrow when we can feel, "He cares for me." Christian, do not dishonor religion by always wearing a brow of care; come, cast your burden upon your Lord. You are staggering beneath a weight that your Father would not feel. What seems to you a crushing burden would be to Him but as the small dust of the balance. Nothing is so sweet as to

*Lie passive in God's hands,  
And know no will but His.*

O child of suffering, be patient; God has not passed you over in His providence. He who is the feeder of sparrows will also furnish you with what you need. Do not sit in despair; hope on, hope ever. Take up the arms of faith against a sea of trouble, and your opposition shall yet end your distresses. There is One who cares for you. His eye is fixed on you, His heart beats with pity for your woe, and His

omnipotent hand shall bring you the needed help. The darkest cloud shall scatter itself in showers of mercy. The blackest gloom shall give place to the morning. He, if you are one of His family, will bind up your wounds and heal your broken heart. Do not doubt His grace because of your tribulation, but believe that He loves you as much in seasons of trouble as in times of happiness. What a serene and quiet life might you lead if you would leave providing to the God of providence! With a little oil in the cruse and a handful of meal in the barrel, Elijah outlived the famine, and you will do the same. If God cares for you, why do you need to care too? Can you trust Him for your soul and not for your body? He has never refused to bear your burdens; He has never fainted under their weight. Come, then, soul! Say good-bye to anxiety and leave all your concerns in the hand of a gracious God.

EVENING | *Now the hand of the Lord had been upon me the evening before . . .*  
EZEKIEL 33:22

In the matter of *judgment* this may be the case, and if so, let me consider the reason for such a visitation and accept it as from His hand. I am not the only one who is chastened in the night season; let me cheerfully submit to the affliction and carefully endeavor to profit by it. But the hand of the Lord may also be felt in another manner, strengthening the soul and lifting the spirit upward toward eternal things. O that I may in this sense feel the Lord dealing with me! A sense of the divine presence and indwelling bears the soul toward heaven as upon the wings of eagles. At such times we are full to the brim with spiritual joy, and forget the cares and sorrows of earth; the invisible is near, and the visible loses its power over us. Servant-body waits at the foot of the hill, and the master-spirit worships upon the summit in the presence of the Lord. O that a hallowed season of divine communion may be granted

to me this evening! The Lord knows that I need it very greatly. My graces languish, my corruptions rage, my faith is weak, my devotion is cold; all these are reasons why His healing hand should be laid upon me. His hand can cool the heat of my burning brow and calm the turmoil of my palpitating heart. That glorious right hand that molded the world can renew my mind; the unwearied hand that bears the earth's huge pillars can sustain my spirit; the loving hand that encloses all the saints can cherish me; and the mighty hand that breaks in pieces the enemy can subdue my sins. Why should I not feel that hand touching me this evening? Come, my soul, address God with the potent plea that Jesus' hands were pierced for your redemption, and you shall surely feel that same hand upon you that once touched Daniel and set him upon his knees that he might see visions of God.

## January 7

MORNING | *For to me to live is Christ.* PHILIPPIANS 1:21

The believer did not always live to Christ. He began to do so when God the Holy Spirit convinced him of sin, and when by grace he was brought to see the dying Savior making a propitiation for his guilt. From the moment of the new and heavenly birth the man begins to live to Christ. Jesus is to believers the one pearl of great price, for whom we are willing to part with all that we have. He has so completely won our heart that it beats alone for Him; to His glory we would live, and in defense of His Gospel we would die. He is the pattern of our life, and the model after which we would sculpture our character. Paul's words mean more than most men think; they imply that the *aim and end of his life* was Christ—nay, his life itself was Jesus. In the words of an ancient saint, he ate and drank and slept eternal life. Jesus was his very breath, the soul of his soul, the heart of his heart, the life of his life. Can

you say, as a professing Christian, that you live up to this idea? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? Your business—are you doing it *for Christ*? Is it not done for self-aggrandizement and for family advantage? Do you ask, “Is that a mean reason?” For the *Christian* it is. He professes to live for Christ; how can he live for another object without committing spiritual adultery? There are many who carry out this principle in some measure; but who is there that dares say that he has lived wholly for Christ as the apostle did? Yet this alone is the true life of a Christian—its source, its sustenance, its fashion, its end, all gathered up in one word—Christ. Lord, accept me; I present myself, praying to live only in You and to You. Let me be as the creature that stands between the plow and the altar, to work or to be sacrificed; and let my motto be, “Ready for either.”

EVENING | *My sister, my bride.* SONG OF SOLOMON 4:12

Observe the sweet titles with which the heavenly Solomon with intense affection addresses His bride, the church. “*My sister*, one near to Me by ties of nature, partaker of the same sympathies. *My bride*, nearest and dearest, united to Me by the tenderest bands of love; My sweet companion, part of My own self. *My sister*, by My Incarnation, which makes Me bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh; *my bride*, by heavenly betrothal, in which I have married you to Myself in righteousness. *My sister*, whom I knew of old, and over whom I watched from her earliest infancy; *My bride*, taken from among the daughters, embraced by arms of love and joined to me forever.” See how true it is that our royal Kinsman is not ashamed of us, for He dwells with manifest delight upon this twofold relationship. We have the word “my” twice in our version; as if Christ dwelt with rapture on His possession of His Church.

His delights were with the sons of men because those sons of men were His own chosen ones. He, the Shepherd, sought the sheep because they were *His* sheep; He has gone about “to seek and to save that which was lost,” because that which was lost was *His* long before it was lost to itself or lost to Him. The church is the exclusive portion of her Lord; none else may claim a partnership or pretend to share her love. Jesus, Your church delights to have it so! Let every believing soul drink solace out of these wells. Soul, Christ is near to you in ties of relationship. Christ is dear to you in bonds of marriage union, and you are dear to Him; behold, He grasps both of your hands with both His own, saying, “*My sister, my bride.*” Consider how the Lord gets such a double hold of you that He neither can nor will ever let you go. Be not, O beloved, slow to return the halLOWED flame of His love.

MORNING | . . . *guilt from the holy things.* EXODUS 28:38

What a veil is lifted up by these words, and what a disclosure is made! It will be humbling and profitable for us to pause awhile and see this sad sight. The iniquities of our public worship, its hypocrisy, formality, lukewarmness, irreverence, wandering of heart, and forgetfulness of God—what a full measure have we there! Our work for the Lord, its emulation, selfishness, carelessness, slackness, unbelief—what a mass of defilement is there! Our private devotions, their laxity, coldness, neglect, sleepiness, and vanity—what a mountain of dead earth is there! If we looked more carefully, we should find this iniquity to be far greater than appears at first sight. Dr. Payson, writing to his brother, says, “My parish, as well as my heart, very much resembles the garden of the sluggard; and what is worse, I find that very many of my desires for the improvement of both, proceed either from pride or vanity or indolence. I look at the

weeds, which overspread my garden, and breathe out an earnest wish that they were eradicated. But why? What prompts the wish? So that I may walk out and say to myself, ‘In what fine order is my garden kept!’ This is *pride*. Or, so that my neighbors may look over the wall and say, ‘How finely your garden flourishes!’ This is *vanity*. Or I may wish for the destruction of the weeds, because I am weary of pulling them up. This is indolence.” So even our desires after holiness may be polluted by ill motives. Under the greenest sods worms hide themselves; we need not look long to discover them. How cheering is the thought that when the High Priest bore the iniquity of the holy things he wore upon his brow the words, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD,” and even so while Jesus bears our sin, He presents before His Father’s face not our unholiness, but His own holiness. O for grace to view our great High Priest by the eye of faith!

EVENING | *For your love is better than wine.* SONG OF SOLOMON 1:2

*Nothing gives the believer so much joy as fellowship with Christ.* He has enjoyment as others have in the common mercies of life—he can be glad both in God’s gifts and God’s works; but in all these separately, yes, and in all of them added together, he does not find such substantial delight as in the matchless person of his Lord Jesus. He has wine that no vineyard on earth ever yielded; he has bread that all the cornfields of Egypt could never bring forth. Where can such sweetness be found as we have tasted in communion with our Beloved? In our esteem, the joys of earth are little better than husks for pigs compared with Jesus, the heavenly manna. We would rather have one mouthful of Christ’s love and a sip of his fellowship than a whole world full of carnal delights. What is the chaff to the wheat? What is the sparkling paste to the true diamond? What is a dream to the glorious reality? What is life’s merriment compared

to our Lord Jesus in His most despised estate? If you know anything of the inner life, you will confess that our highest, purest, and most enduring joys must be the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. No spring yields such sweet water as that well of God, which was dug with the soldier’s spear. All earthly bliss is of the earth earthy, but the comforts of Christ’s presence are like Himself, heavenly. We can review our communion with Jesus and find in it no empty regrets; there are no dregs in this wine, no dead flies in this ointment. The joy of the Lord is solid and enduring. Vanity has not looked upon it, but discretion and prudence testify that it abides the test of years and is in time and in eternity worthy to be called “the only true delight.” For nourishment, consolation, exhilaration, and refreshment, no wine can rival the love of Jesus. Let us drink to the full this evening.

## January 9

MORNING | *I will be their God.* JEREMIAH 31:33

Christian, here is all you require. To make you happy you want something that shall satisfy you, and is not this enough? If you can pour this promise into your cup, will you not say, with David, “My cup overflows.” When this is fulfilled, “I am your God,” are you not possessor of all things? Desire is insatiable as death, but He who fills all in all can fill it. The capacity of our wishes who can measure? But the immeasurable wealth of God can more than overflow it. I ask you if you are not complete when God is yours? Do you want anything but God? Is not His all-sufficiency enough to satisfy you if all else should fail? But you want more than quiet satisfaction; you desire *rapturous delight*. Come, soul, here is music fit for heaven in this your portion, for God is the Maker of heaven. Not all the music blown from sweet instruments or drawn from living strings can yield such melody as this sweet

promise, “I will be their God.” Here is a deep sea of bliss, a shoreless ocean of delight; come, bathe your spirit in it; swim an age, and you shall find no shore; dive throughout eternity, and you shall find no bottom. “I will be their God.” If this does not make your eyes sparkle, and your heart beat fast with bliss, then assuredly your soul is not in a healthy state. But you want more than present delights—you crave something concerning which you may exercise *hope*; and what more can you hope for than the fulfillment of this great promise, “I will be their God”? This is the masterpiece of all the promises; its enjoyment makes a heaven below and will make a heaven above. Dwell in the light of your Lord, and let your soul be always ravished with His love. Get out the marrow and fatness that this portion yields you. Live up to your privileges, and rejoice with unspeakable joy.

EVENING | *Serve the Lord with gladness.* PSALM 100:2

Delight in divine service is a token of acceptance. Those who serve God with a sad countenance, because they do what is unpleasant to them, are not serving Him at all; they bring the *form* of loyalty, but the *life* is absent. Our God requires no slaves to grace His throne; He is the Lord of the empire of love, and would have His servants dressed in the uniform of joy. The angels of God serve Him with songs, not with groans; a murmur or a sigh would be a mutiny in their ranks. That obedience that is not voluntary is disobedience, for the Lord looks at the heart, and if He sees that we serve Him from force, and not because we love Him, He will reject our offering. Service coupled with cheerfulness is heart-service and therefore true. Take away joyful willingness from the Christian, and you have removed *the test of his sincerity*. If a man be driven to battle, he is no patriot; but he who marches into the fray with flashing eye and beaming face, singing, “It is

sweet for one’s country to die,” proves himself to be sincere in his patriotism. Cheerfulness is *the support of our strength*; in the joy of the Lord are we strong. It acts as *the remover of difficulties*. It is to our service what oil is to the wheels of a railway carriage. Without oil the axle soon grows hot, and accidents occur; and if there be not a holy cheerfulness to oil our wheels, our spirits will be clogged with weariness. The man who is cheerful in his service of God proves that obedience is his element; he can sing,

*Make me to walk in your commands,  
It’s a delightful road.*

Reader, let us put this question—do *you* serve the Lord *with gladness*? Let us show to the people of the world, who think our religion to be slavery, that it is to us a delight and a joy! Let our gladness proclaim that we serve a good Master.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 23:5

MORNING | *There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.* 2 TIMOTHY 4:8

Doubting one, you have often said, “I fear I shall never enter heaven.” Fear not! All the people of God shall enter there. I love the quaint saying of a dying man who exclaimed, “I have no fear of going home; I have sent all ahead of me. God’s finger is on the latch of my door, and I am ready for Him to enter.” “But,” said one, “are you not afraid lest you should miss your inheritance?” “Nay,” said he, “nay; there is one crown in heaven which the angel Gabriel could not wear; it will fit no head but mine. There is one throne in heaven which Paul the apostle could not fill; it was made for me, and I shall have it.” O Christian, what a joyous thought! Your portion is secure; “there remains a rest.” “But cannot I forfeit it?” No, it is entailed. If I be a child of God I shall not lose it. It is mine as securely as if I were there. Come with me, believer, and let us sit upon the top of Nebo and view the goodly land,

even Canaan. Do you see that little river of death glistening in the sunlight, and across it do you see the pinnacles of the eternal city? Do you mark the pleasant country and all its joyous inhabitants? Know, then, that if you could fly across you would see written upon one of its many mansions, “This remains for such a one, preserved for him only. He shall be caught up to dwell forever with God.” Poor doubting one, see the fair inheritance; it is *yours*. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, if you have repented of sin, if you have been renewed in heart, you are one of the Lord’s people, there is a place reserved for you, a crown laid up for you, a harp specially provided for you. No one else shall have your portion; it is reserved in heaven for you, and you shall have it before long, for there shall be no vacant thrones in glory when all the chosen are gathered in.

EVENING | *In my flesh I shall see God.* JOB 19:26

Consider the subject of Job’s devout anticipation: “I shall see God.” He does not say, “I shall see the saints”—though doubtless that will be untold happiness—but “I shall see God.” It is not “I shall see the pearly gates, I shall behold the walls of jasper, I shall gaze upon the crowns of gold,” but “I shall see God.” This is the sum and substance of heaven; this is the joyful hope of all believers. It is their delight to see Him now in the ordinances by faith. They love to behold Him in communion and in prayer; but there in heaven they shall have an open and unclouded vision, and thus seeing “him as he is,”<sup>1</sup> shall be made completely like Him. *Likeness to God*—what more can we wish for? And *a sight of God*—what can we desire better? Some read the passage, “Yet I shall see God in my flesh” and find here an allusion to Christ as the Word made flesh, and that glorious beholding of Him that shall be the splendor of the latter days. Whether so or not,

it is certain that Christ shall be the object of our eternal vision; nor shall we ever want any joy beyond that of seeing Him. Do not think that this will be a narrow sphere for the mind to dwell in. It is but one source of delight, but that source is infinite. All His attributes shall be subjects for contemplation, and as He is infinite under each aspect, there is no fear of exhaustion. His works, His gifts, His love to us, and His glory in all His purposes and in all His actions, these shall make a theme that will be ever new. The patriarch looked forward to this sight of God as a *personal* enjoyment. “Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”<sup>2</sup> Take realizing views of heaven’s bliss; think what it will be *to you*. “Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty.”<sup>3</sup> All earthly brightness fades and darkens as we gaze upon it, but here is a brightness that can never dim, a glory that can never fade—“*I shall see God.*”

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3:2 <sup>2</sup> Job 19:27 <sup>3</sup> Isaiah 33:17