

New Years' Address

January 1868

By J. C. Philpot

To enjoy a sense of the goodness, mercy, and love of God in our own bosom, to glorify the Lord in our body and spirit, which are his, and to serve his cause and people, to the best of our ability, in our day and generation, are the only objects for which we, if indeed heirs of the kingdom, should really desire to live. Strong, indeed, with most of us are the natural ties which bind us closely to the present life. An instinctive cleaving to life for its own sake, a natural shrinking from death as something terrible to the flesh, family ties and affections, especially when the very maintenance, or, if not the maintenance, yet the comfort and protection of wife and children seem much to depend on our continuance here— these and other bonds and fetters of a similar nature, into which we need not now enter, chain the greater part of us fast to earth.

Often also, through darkness of mind, deadness of spirit, coldness of affection, absence of the Comforter, who alone can dispel the gloom which, from time to time, gathers over the soul, we feel as if we were utterly unfit to die, and that we need some special breaking in of light, life, liberty, and love, and some powerful application of the blood of sprinkling to our conscience, to make us willing, yes, desirous to depart, and leaving forever this wretched world of sin and sorrow, to lay down the body of death under which we often groan, being burdened. Still, with all these allowances, which we are obliged to make for the weakness and infirmities of the flesh, we say again that the only objects really worth living for are the enjoyment of a sense of God's favor and love, to live to his honor and glory, and to be instruments in his hand of advancing his cause, ministering to the needs, temporal and spiritual, of his people, and doing what good we can to the bodies and souls of our fellow-men. In thus specifying what should be the three main objects of our present life, we, of course, do not intend to lay down thereby any exact rigid definition of gracious desires or instrumental usefulness. It will be sufficient for our purpose to present them as a general representation of what a Christian should desire to have, to do, and to be.

But if such are, or should be, the main objects for which life is desirable to all who truly fear God and believe in his dear Son, much more should they be so to those who are called to stand forth in a more prominent position in the church of God than private believers. The servants of God who stand in the forefront of the battle, as they need special grace and special gifts to do the work to which God has called them, so should they, above all other men, desire to walk in the light of

his countenance, to live to his praise, seek his glory, advance his cause, proclaim his truth, minister to his people, and abound in every good word and work.

And if so, such also should be the desire of all who, like ourselves, occupy a kind of ministerial position as employing the pen in the service of God and the furtherance of his truth. This is a reading age; and as books are cheap, largely read, and easily procurable, the press has come to embrace a wider circle and to possess a greater influence on the public mind than any other medium of communication. As the great tidal wave of the world necessarily affects the minor tide of the church, so that it ebbs and flows with it, the Christian press, like the worldly press, has spread itself in all directions, and exercises an influence scarcely inferior to that of the pulpit. Works, therefore, written by gracious men, whether living or dead, may be viewed as exercising a ministry of their own, running, as it were, parallel to that of the pulpit, and in harmony with it, but possessing the advantage of penetrating into places, and speaking on occasions where the voice of the living preacher cannot come, as well as of being accessible at all times, lying silently and unobtrusively on the table or the book-shelf, ready to be taken up or laid down at pleasure, and, if we have well chosen them, our trustiest friends and wisest counselors, who will always tell us the truth without fear and without flattery.

Among such trusty friends and counselors we would gladly be numbered. Without our seeking or desiring such an important and responsible position, we find ourselves occupying a place of great trust, if not of great usefulness. Month after month, and now year after year, we have an opportunity of speaking as if face to face to a large number of the people of God. What appears in our pages, either from our own pen or that of others, addresses itself to a living family, who receive what is thus submitted to them because they believe that, for the most part, it bears upon it the stamp of sincerity and truth, and is in harmony with the Scriptures and the teaching of the blessed Spirit in the heart. Our monthly visitant comes to them sometimes with a Sermon of a departed servant of God; and if it consists of but fragments of the actual discourse, still it speaks the same language and breathes the same spirit as when it issued from his lips. Sometimes it comes with a gracious Experience of the dealings of God with one of his living family, which would otherwise have been buried in oblivion; and thus fulfils the promise that "there is nothing secret that shall not be made manifest, neither anything hidden that shall not be known and come abroad." Sometimes it comes as a Letter written to a friend, out of the fullness of a broken or rejoicing heart; and as such it speaks in our pages to other hearts as well as to that of the private correspondent. Sometimes it records in an Obituary the experience of a dying saint, and thus testifies to the goodness and faithfulness of God in those solemn moments when heart and flesh fail. Sometimes the Editor lays before his readers his Meditations on various important points of truth, or seeks to unfold the Scriptures as they seem opened to his mind.

And once in the year, in the opening month, our little work comes before them

bearing on its first pages an Address to the spiritual readers, in which the Editor addresses them with the familiarity of a friend, and yet tenders them such affectionate counsel as he would desire himself to act upon and follow.

God works by instruments; and if he has seen fit to employ the hand which now traces these lines for his own glory and his people's good, the more solemn is the trust, and the greater the responsibility. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful;" and if any one has reason to believe that to him there has been entrusted a stewardship of the mysteries of God, unfaithfulness to that trust, that is, willful unfaithfulness (for allowance must be made for human infirmity), must be a great and crying sin. Of course, no steward, however unfaithful, would acknowledge his own unfaithfulness; as no minister, however erroneous, would own himself to be in error. He must, therefore, be judged by his actions; and if these will bear the test of examination, confidence will be reposed in him in exact proportion to his presumed ability, for that, of course, is a necessary element of trust, and his proved faithfulness.

But if this confidence be reposed in him, how careful should he be not to injure it by carelessness, presume upon it by assuming undue authority, lower and lessen it by making slips and mistakes, or abuse it to the exaltation or advantage of self, instead of seeking the honor and glory of God. These things press upon our mind, so that, while, on the one hand, we feel willing to labor with our pen, especially as that is now our chief ministerial employment, on the other our path becomes increasingly difficult in proportion to the extent and variety of our labors, the circulation and influence of our periodical, and the felt responsibility of our position.

But hitherto we have found that as our day is so our strength has been, that all our needs have been freely supplied, that meal has not failed in the barrel, nor oil in the cruse; and that should the Lord say to us, as to his disciples, "Have you lacked anything?" we must answer. "Nothing, Lord, except a larger measure of your grace for ourselves, and a larger measure of blessing upon our labors for others."

But enough of this. If any have received instruction or consolation from our labors; if what has appeared in our pages has strengthened their faith, encouraged their hope, or drawn forth their love; if any light has been cast upon a dark path, any confirmation of truth received, or exposure of error in which they were nearly entangled; any reproof or rebuke less keenly, but not less effectually felt because administered by a secret voice; any stirring up or recovery from sloth and indifference; any brokenness of spirit, true penitence, and godly sorrow for sin produced; any backsliding healed; any gracious renewal or revival of the good work within effected; in a word, if any real, solid, and abiding profit has been communicated to any of our readers by our labors on their behalf, let them show their thankfulness to God as the Author, and to us as the instrument, by bearing us up before the throne of his grace, that he would bestow upon us that

spiritual and experimental knowledge of his truth, that heavenly wisdom and judgment, that holy boldness and faithfulness, that zeal for his glory and desire for his people's good, which, if granted, would be both our and their best reward. And, indeed, we doubt not that many such prayers have been and are put up by those who esteem and love us for truth's sake, and that those petitions have been answered in the Lord's granting to us those supplies of his grace, without which we should be but sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

We have rather dropped our thread in thus speaking of ourselves and our little work; but as this is not a frequent offence with us, we trust that it will not be counted a great one, especially in an Address to our spiritual readers, when, laying aside the reserve and gravity of an editor, we speak as a friend and brother, from heart to heart, and do not tie ourselves to that orderly arrangement of thought and expression which such articles as our Meditations seem to require.

We laid down, then, in the opening of our Address, three main objects of our life here below. These were— the enjoyment of a sense of the goodness, mercy, and love of God, a living to his honor and glory, and a serving of his cause and people to the best of our power. Now let us see whether, from this text, we cannot preach our New Year's Sermon; or, rather, without the formality of a sermon, make it so far the theme of our Address as to gather our thoughts round it, and thus give them that unity which may preserve them from wandering and confusion.

I. We laid down, as one of the chief objects of the present life, a desire to enjoy more of the goodness, mercy, and love of God in our own bosom.

There may be, and, doubtless, are some, if not many, blessed exceptions; but, as a general rule, the living family of God in our day do not walk much in the light of his uplifted countenance. They have, indeed, their favored moments, when, for a short time, the clouds seem to part, and gleams of sunshine to break in through the sky. In reading or hearing the word, their hearts are sometimes melted and softened, faith raised up and drawn forth on the Lord of life and glory, while hope casts forth its anchor, and love mounts upward to him who sits at the right hand of God. At such seasons their fears are removed, their doubts dispelled, their evidences brightened, their darkness, guilt, and bondage lightened and removed, and their souls made happy in the Lord. But clouds return after rain. Earthborn vapors rise from below, clouds gather from above, and the sky soon becomes almost, if not altogether, as much overcast as before. Then comes on the whole train of doubt, fear, and misgiving, relieved, indeed, by sweet remembrances of past favors and by a more steadfast cleaving to the word of promise, but, for the most part, depressing the mind, and attended with a good deal of the spirit of bondage.

In this state of mind they usually have a great many sermons preached to them. Some tell them that they ought not to doubt and fear, that by so doing they are living below their privileges, that they should believe in Christ and take God at his word, that these doubts and fears are very dishonoring to God, that they should not indulge in them nor make a religion out of them, but should rejoice in the Lord in the full assurance of faith. Such preachers, like Job's friends, are partly right and partly wrong. It is wrong to doubt and fear after the Lord has blessed the soul with a sense of his mercy and love. These doubts and fears should not be encouraged, or set up as evidences; they do dishonor God and rob the soul. All this is quite true.

But can these kind friends tell them how to get rid of these doubts and fears in such a way as shall ease the conscience, remove darkness from the mind, and satisfy them with the smiles of God and the witness of a sprinkled and peaceful conscience? Alas! no. Here they fail, and are, therefore, as miserable comforters as ever Job's friends were. The faith which they would have them exercise is a mere natural, notional faith, and the confidence to which they would urge them is mere presumption. Such a faith as they teach, preach, and, we suppose, possess, or they would not press it so on others, is a faith that does nothing for its possessor. It does not work by love, nor purify the heart, nor overcome the world, nor triumph over death and hell, nor bring into the soul atoning blood, dying love, or pardoning mercy. It leaves the soul just where it found it, and does it as much good as the priest and Levite did the Samaritan who had fallen among thieves, and lay in the road, stripped, wounded, and half dead.

We and you, dear readers, no more hold with unbelief, doubts and fears, darkness and bondage, than these men do; for we know that they are our greatest hindrances, and the worst of thieves and robbers. If a man has a disease or a complaint which sticks to him closer than the collar of his coat, if it troubles him night and day, if it makes his life a burden, if he expects to carry it to his grave, does he love it, does he enjoy it, does he make health and strength out of it? Say "Yes," or "No," you afflicted ones in body. Is it not the same with doubts, fears, and unbelief? They are our soul disease, our inward complaint; and to make our religion out of them would be like making health out of a disordered liver, a consumptive constitution, a paralyzed limb, an asthmatic complaint, or a nervous affliction.

Now, suppose that our doctor, when we sought his advice upon any one of these or similar afflictions, should say, "Be well; be well; don't be ill; don't be ill; shake off your complaint. Only believe you are well, and you will be well." "Ah, but," replies the patient, "I am no better by believing I am well, when every feeling, every pain, every suffering in my poor body tells me how ill I am. I am only deceiving myself by believing I am well when I am really ill; and you must be very ignorant both of my complaint and my symptoms not to see how ill I am, and I do not fear are equally ignorant of the right remedy. We leave to the judgment of our readers the application of the figure to the physicians of no value, who prescribe

for the complaints of the family of God.

But because these miserable physicians understand neither malady nor remedy, is there no cure? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Does not the Lord himself say, "I am the Lord that heals you?" How blessedly does the Psalmist speak— "Who heals all your diseases." And what a gracious promise is that— "For I will restore health unto you, and I will heal you of your wounds, says the Lord; because they called you an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeks after." (Jer. 30:17.)

But what is this remedy? Is it not the very thing which we have laid down as one of the great objects of life— an enjoyment of the goodness, mercy, and love of God in our own soul, under a sense of pardoned sin, and a full and free acceptance in the Beloved? What but some breaking in of the light of his countenance, and some discovery and manifestation of the love and mercy of God can dispel the darkness of our mind, thaw the hardness of our heart, remove guilt from our conscience, and, animating us with new life, bring us out of that deadness of soul which seems one of our worst complaints? Here we see the wisdom of God in allowing his people to be so buffeted by sin and Satan, so plagued and worried by temptation, so exercised by unbelief, infidelity, enmity, jealousy, doubt, and fear, so shut up and fast bound by chains, often of their own making. "Have you not procured this to yourself?"

Is it not that they may despair of all other salvation out God's salvation, and find no remedy for sin but in the blood and righteousness of the Son of God? Is it not that they may enjoy no rest, peace, or comfort but what the Lord himself is pleased to give; and thus be experimentally taught the necessity of ever looking to him, and hanging upon him for a smile from his face, a word from his lips, a touch from his hand, a manifestation of his presence, and some intimation of his favor?

Those who look thus to the Lord, under the strong pressure of inward exercise of soul, will not look in vain. Some turn in providence, most unexpected and yet most suitable and acceptable, will sometimes make them feel, if not say, "I am poor and needy— yet the Lord thinks upon me;" and this intimation of the Lord's remembrance of them will melt their heart into a persuasion of his favor toward them. Sometimes they will be favored with a special season in prayer, when, viewing by faith the glorious Mediator on his throne of grace, and drawing strength and virtue out of his fullness, they come forth with free and holy liberty into the light of such a day as the sweet Psalmist of Israel describes— "a morning when the sun rises, even a morning without clouds." (2 Sam. 24:4.)

Sometimes in reading the word in private, light breaks in upon its contents; authority and power, majesty and glory seem stamped upon it as the word of the living God; faith is raised up and drawn forth upon the gracious truth revealed in that special portion of it, so as to embrace it in love, and thus become mixed with

it, and this enlarges, comforts, and sensibly edifies and profits the soul. Sometimes, without any particular application of the word, or any special light on, or life from, any passage, there flows into the soul a peculiar sense of the divine reality of the truths of the gospel and the mysteries of our most holy faith. Their weight, their importance, their eternal and imperishable nature, their purity and holiness, as contrasted with this sinful world and the worse sinfulness of our own wretched nature, their sweetness and blessedness, their suitability to our needs and woes, the glorious wisdom of God shining forth in them, and especially his grace, mercy, and truth in the Person and work of the Mediator, are brought into the heart with a peculiar weight and power. In this way God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4:6.)

And what is the effect? The spirituality of mind which such divine impressions communicate, the earnest prayers which they produce, the heavenly affections which they kindle, and the blessed lift which they give us out of darkness, deadness, and earthly mindedness, are all so many convincing testimonies of the reality and power of a religion which comes from God. This is not a building on the sand, for it brings the soul unto, and lays it upon, cements it to, and gives it vital union with the Rock. To build on doubts and fears, on convictions of sin, on deadness and coldness, darkness, barrenness, guilt, and bondage, is to build upon the sand, and almost worse than sand, for it is to build upon a bog. The very reason why "the Lord tries the righteous," and why he allows them to be tempted with unbelief and every other form of evil, is to beat them off the sand and the bog, and make them embrace the Rock for need of a shelter. That ministry, therefore, which would encourage a religion built upon doubts and fears would be to preach unbelief as the way instead of faith, put infirmities in the place of blessings, make a knowledge of sin as clear a testimony of interest in Christ as a knowledge of salvation, and elevate guilt, bondage, darkness, and condemnation into the room of pardon, deliverance, love, joy, peace, and every other fruit of the Spirit.

II. But is there no other effect of those visitations which preserve the spirit?

Do they not produce an earnest desire to live to the praise, honor, and glory of God, which we have laid down as the second great object of a Christian's life? It is "the grace of God, that brings salvation, which teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." It is because "we are not our own, but are bought with a price," that we are to "glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are his." It is "the love of Christ which constrains us because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that those who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:14, 15.)

Wherever the grace of God is, it constrains its partaker to desire to live to his honor and glory. But he soon finds the difficulty of so doing. Such is the weakness of the flesh, the power of sin, the subtlety of Satan, the strength of temptation, and the snares spread on every side for our feet, that we can neither do what we desire, nor be what we desire. Before we are aware, we get entangled with some idol, or drawn aside into some indulgence of the flesh, which brings darkness into the mind, and may cut us out some bitter work for the rest of our days. But we thus learn not only the weakness of the flesh, but where and in whom all our strength lies. And as the grace of the Lord Jesus, in its suitability, in its sufficiency, and its super-aboundings, becomes manifested in and by the weakness of the flesh, a sense of his wondrous love and care in so bearing with us, in so pitying our case, and manifesting mercy where we might justly expect wrath, constrains us, with a holy obligation, to walk in his fear and to live to his praise.

We have felt the bitterness of sin, the misery of being left to our own will and way, the danger of temptation, the craft and power of Satan, and what poor, helpless, vile, and depraved creatures we are in ourselves; and a mingled sense of our misery and the Lord's mercy, of the greatness of our sin and the fullness of his salvation, of our multiplied, aggravated, and unceasing transgressions and his pity, compassion, and loving-kindness to poor penitent, self-abhorring, broken, and confessing transgressors, accompanied with views at times of his bleeding, dying love, compels every gracious feeling of the soul to arm itself as it were, against that dreadful enemy— the sin that dwells in us.

It may be the work of years to teach us these simple elements of vital godliness; and it is our mercy if we learn them at all and are not eventually found among those who are ever learning and yet are never able to come to the knowledge, that is, the saving knowledge, of the truth. O the pains which the Lord takes with his dull, ignorant, stupid, obstinate, wayward pupils. How it is "line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little." How he has sometimes to drive, sometimes to draw, sometimes to beat his truth into us by strokes of his chastising hand, and sometimes gently and quietly to drop it in when he has unsealed the eyes to look up to him, and opened the ears to receive instruction from his lips. We are such strange creatures. We are willing and more than willing to be taught of the Lord, for we are continually, in all sincerity of heart, begging him to teach us; and yet we do not like his way of teaching when it crimps the flesh.

We feel earnestly desirous to live to the honor and glory of God; and yet when to do so demands some sacrifice of money, or ease, or comfort, or reputation— still more when it seems to require the plucking out of a right eye, or the cutting off of a right hand, then we draw back and rebel that there is not a more easy and pleasant way for the flesh. And yet, perhaps, if we are enabled to make the sacrifice required by the word and our own conscience, there is a sweetness to our spirit mingled with the bitterness to the flesh. It is almost with these bitters to

the flesh as Mr. Deer speaks of repentance—

"Nor is it such a dismal thing
As 'tis by some men named.
A sinner may repent and sing,
Rejoice, and be ashamed."

It, perhaps, has been a call to make a sacrifice of a little money in possession or in prospect; and after a stout battle between a liberal spirit and a covetous heart, the better principle prevailed. Now, when the victory has been gained, do we not often find that what has been given is but little missed; and the good it has done to the cause of truth, or to any of the Lord's poor and needy children, is an ample compensation for having overcome the opposition of a covetous spirit, and the crying out of the old man as he had a nail or two driven into his miserly fist? But soon, perhaps, as he dies hard, and writhes under the crucifying nail, there will come forth a cry from us, or some one connected with us, "Spare yourself. Why, if you go on like that, you will rob your wife and family, and bring them to beggary. There is this and that bill to be paid, and you know how hard money is gotten, and how swiftly it is gone." But some kind providence turns up, and then drops the head into the dust, with a "Lord, I am vile, and you are good. Pardon my covetous, unbelieving heart. O let me never doubt you again." So, if a little of our good name or fame, or darling respectability must be parted with, the flesh soon begins to cry out, and cannot endure the shame of the cross. But how soon the Lord can so break in upon our heart with a sense of his goodness, mercy, and love as to make us feel even unworthy to suffer shame for his name's sake, and count it an honor to endure his reproach.

We need not pursue the subject further. Our readers' own experience will supply them with abundant instances both of the weakness and wickedness of the flesh and the super-aboundings of grace; and they will agree with us that both misery and mercy, all that we have seen and felt of the evil of sin and all that we have tasted, felt, and handled of salvation, all that we know of self, and all that we know of the Lord, call upon us and constrain us, as with one voice, to walk in his fear, live to his praise, and seek to glorify him with our body and spirit, which are his.

III. And with this desire will certainly follow a willing readiness to serve the Lord's cause, help the Lord's poor, sympathize with them in their afflictions and trials, and manifest to them our esteem, affection, and love.

In what other way can we manifest the truth and reality, the life and power of our religion? Men will judge us, and rightly judge us, by our works, not by our words; by our fruit, not by our leaves; by our Christian spirit— meekness, quietness, humility, sincerity, unselfishness, readiness to serve rather than to rule, and general willingness to bear and forbear, to seek others' advantage, not our own,

and do what good we can to the souls and bodies of our fellow-men.

But our limits warn us that we must draw near to a close. Allow us, then, to drop a few words as to our monthly publication, and our desires and labors in connection with it. The Lord, as we before said, works by instruments, and usually lowly and despised instruments, that the power and glory may be more distinctly seen to be his own. Now, if he is pleased to use our little monthly work as an instrument for his people's good and his own glory, how abundantly will it reward us for all the toil, care, anxiety, and responsibility of conducting it which falls to our share. Our desire is to make it as instructive, as edifying, and as profitable as we can to the Lord's living family. We wish, therefore, to avoid all strife and contention, all doubtful disputations, all gossip, slander, and news-mongering, all flattery and time-serving, all dry and merely notional discussion of points of doctrine which usually leads to endless dispute and vain jangling, and every other thing which feeds the flesh and starves the soul.

We would come, month after month, simply, quietly, and unobtrusively, without loud knock or noisy ring, and lie by the side of the Bible and the hymn-book, speaking the same language, breathing the same spirit, attended with the same power, bedewed with the same influence, and producing the same effect. As the apostle speaks of himself and his fellow-ministers as "laborers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:9), so would we desire to be engaged in the same blessed work of laboring with God in the building up of his people on their most holy faith. But as the Lord will not work by anything but his own blessed truth, and that only as impregnated with his Spirit and grace, it makes us to be ever on the watch to use our spiritual senses in spreading our table with such wholesome, nourishing, and savory provisions only as he will own and bless. As caterers for the Lord's family, we have carefully to weigh, examine, smell, handle, turn over, and taste the food set on the table. If short in weight, if tainted with error, if fly-blown, if too much underdone or too much overdone, if not sufficiently salted and seasoned, if not juicy nor savory— in a word, if it lacks that indescribable relish and flavor which all know who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and found his word and eaten it, unto the joy and rejoicing of their heart; it will not feed the living family.

This, therefore, lays upon us much beyond the mere labor of reading communications, or even writing what we put forth of our own. We have to select, among many sermons, letters, pieces, and obituaries, those which seem to bear the right stamp, and carry with them some evidence of having in them the breath of life. Similarly in what we write ourselves, we have to seek for the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit, to instruct and guide us line by line, and then attend it with power and savor to the hearts of the people of God. Thus ours is no common task, no mere mechanical employment, no such work as a clerk in a counting-house does— reading, ticketing, docketing, selecting and putting in right order paper after paper, that each may come in its proper place; that A. B. may have the pleasure of seeing his long piece inserted, as he generally requests, "in our next number;" and C. D. his explanation of a passage, which he believes

none but himself has been hitherto favored to understand— and E. F. his Obituary of a Sunday-school scholar, which he has sent besides to half-a-dozen other magazines— and G. H. his Experience of, perhaps, 100 or 200 pages, in close and scarcely legible writing— or J. K. his Poetry, of 300 or 400 lines— and all, perhaps, highly offended, because sometimes lack of room, and more frequently lack in them of the main thing, prevents their appearing in our pages.

We have, indeed, much reason to be thankful for the way in which all our needs have been supplied; for the valuable and experimental letters of saints, living and departed, which have been forwarded to us; for the interesting and edifying Obituaries, which surviving friends and relations have recorded, and thus enabled us to insert; and for the various accounts which have been sent us of the personal dealings of God with some of his favored children. We would also raise a humble acknowledgment of his goodness and mercy to us, personally, in enabling us still to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints; and, amid many difficulties and hindrances, strengthening us still to labor in that particular field in which, with but little help except from himself, we have now for many years endeavored to serve the cause of truth and the good of his people.

In his strength, not our own, we desire still to labor— and, standing as if amid the tombs of so many departed friends and brother ministers, and not knowing how soon we may be numbered among them, to have it made manifest in our own conscience and in that of others that to enjoy a sense of God's goodness and mercy, to glorify him in our body and spirit, which are his, and to serve his cause, truth, and people, are the main objects of our private, ministerial, and editorial life.

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