

Spiritual Delight, and Confiding Trust

Preached at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, London, on Thursday Evening, August 7, 1845

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day." Psalm 37:4, 5, 6

To search and to know the heart of man is God's special prerogative. He claims it as such; for, when speaking of man's heart, he says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" he adds, "I, the Lord, search the heart; I try the reins." (Jer. 17:9, 10.) We find the Psalmist using similar language, "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me: thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off; thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways: for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." (Psa. 139:1-4.)

The deepest traces of this knowledge which God has of the heart of man are to be found scattered up and down the Scriptures of truth. The **37th Psalm, [I believe the author meant the 73rd Psalm]** for instance, contains the deepest knowledge of the heart of man; and not merely the most intimate acquaintance with all its secret movements, but also with the remedy which God himself has provided to meet the malady. It is a grand spiritual armoury out of which heavenly weapons to fight against the peculiar besetments of God's people are to be brought to the end of time. It is a repository of healing medicines to be applied from time to time to the

rankling wounds that these peculiar besetments continually make in the conscience. One of these peculiar besetments is the fretting and envying that there is in a gracious man's heart against the prosperity of the ungodly. Asaph deeply felt this; nay, so deeply that his feet had well-nigh slipped altogether through the force of the temptation. Job felt this, as we read in the 21st chapter, when he was so stumbled at the prosperity of the wicked. And all God's people, one in a greater and another in a less degree, feel from time to time the workings of this spirit of envying and fretful murmuring, when things go against them, and in favour of those whom they know to be ungodly.

The Lord in this Psalm meets this case, and provides remedies for it; and these remedies he not merely provides for his people in the letter of truth, but he also, in his own time and way, graciously applies them to their soul.

You will observe, that in the text there is a very close and intimate connection betwixt the precept and the promise. The Lord lays down two precepts, and he connects with them two promises. And it will be my endeavour and aim this evening, if God give me power and ability, to show not only what the precept and the promise are, but also the spiritual and experimental connection between them. So that, if we are enabled (and God alone can enable us) to perform the precept, we are sure of having the promise fulfilled in our heart's experience.

The text consists, therefore, as I have just observed, of two distinct branches. There is a precept in each, and a promise in each, and these two are intimately connected.

I.—The first precept runs thus, "Delight thyself in the Lord;" and the promise connected with that precept is, "And he shall

give thee the desires of thine heart."

There is a close and intimate connection betwixt the humbling teachings of God in the heart, and our delighting ourselves in him. What was the frame and mind, and what was the peculiar besetment that God the Spirit met in this Psalm? It was the envy and fretfulness which often work in a good man's bosom against the prosperity of the wicked. In other words, the character pointed out in this Psalm was one walking in a path of peculiar trial, temptation, and perplexity; and one of his peculiar trials, perplexities, and temptations was, that all things went contrary to him, whilst all things went on favourably with the ungodly. Now I do not say that this was absolutely necessary to make him delight in the Lord. But I say this, that we cannot delight ourselves in the Lord till we have ceased to delight in other things; and therefore we need to be led in a path of trial, temptation, perplexity, conflict, and sometimes to experience great distress of soul on account of sin laid upon our conscience, in order to be brought to fulfil this precept spiritually.

The precept is not laid down here as though man were able in his own strength and wisdom to take it up and obey it. There is a preparatory teaching of the blessed Spirit before a man can enjoy in his own soul a living experience of the precept. And the very way whereby God brings him to perform it is, by first leading him into those paths of trial, perplexity, and sorrow which stir up the enmity, peevishness, and fretfulness of his rebellious heart. For instance

1. By nature *we delight in the world*. It is our element, our home, and what our carnal hearts are intimately blended with. We need to be divorced from this carnal union; we need to have the world embittered to us. Now the very means that God employs to embitter the world to us are cutting and

grievous dispensations as unexpected reverses in fortune, afflictions of body, of family, or of soul. But these very means that the Lord employs to divorce our carnal union from the world, act upon the peevishness and fretfulness of our depraved nature. So that we think we are being very hard dealt with in being compelled to walk in this trying path, whilst the ungodly are prospering. And yet by these cutting dispensations we are eventually brought to delight ourselves in him, who will give us the desires of our heart.

2. Again. *We cleave close to a covenant of works.* Our naturally religious heart is continually aiming to do something whereby we think we can gain the favour of God. Now when every exertion to set up our righteousness is completely baffled, when our resolutions are proved to be weak as water, when all our endeavour to do something that we think God can accept prove entirely baseless, and the corruption of our heart becomes more and more manifest in every attempt to carry out what we think will please God—this stirs up the self-pity, the murmuring, the peevishness, and the rebelliousness of our nature.

3. Again. *We delight in sin.* It is the very element of our nature; and even after the Lord has called us by his grace and quickened us by his Spirit, there is the same love to sin in the carnal heart as there was before. We delight in it; we would wallow in it, take our full enjoyment of it, and swim in it as a whale swims in the waters of the sea. But the Lord will never suffer us to do the evils that we would; he prevents us from walking in these things, by laying the guilt of them upon the conscience, by producing cutting convictions in our soul, by making us at times loathe ourselves in dust and ashes on account of our own sinfulness and folly, by making us feel ashamed of ourselves, and covering us with confusion of face because our carnal heart so delights in wickedness.

4. We by nature *are prone to idolatry*. Self is the grand object of all our sensual and carnal worship. Our own exaltation, our own amusement, our own pleasure, and our own gratification, or something whereby self may be flattered, admired, adored, and delighted, is the grand end and aim of man's natural worship.

From all these things, then, which are intrinsically evil, which a pure and holy God must hate with perfect abhorrence, we must be weaned and effectually divorced. This we cannot learn from reading the Scriptures, or by hearing the experience of others. We may have the theory correct; but the experience of it must be wrought by God's own hand in our conscience. But all the time we are doing homage and worship to self; all the time we are loving the world; all the time we delight in sin; all the time we are setting up idols in the secret chambers of imagery, there is no delighting ourselves in the Lord. There cannot be. We cannot delight ourselves in the Lord till we are purged of creature love, till the idolatry of our hearts is not merely manifested, but hated and abhorred, till by cutting temptations, sharp exercises, painful perplexities, and various sorrows we are brought to this state—to be sick of sin, sick of self, and sick of the world. Until we are brought to loathe ourselves, we are not brought to that spot where none but God himself can comfort, please, or make the soul really happy.

How long you shall be walking in this painful path, how heavy your trials, or what their duration shall be, how deep you may have to sink, or how cutting your afflictions may be in body or soul, God has not defined, and we cannot. But they must work till they have produced this result—weaned, divorced, and completely separated us from all that we naturally love, all that we idolatrously cleave unto, and all that we adulterously roam after. If they have not done this,

they must go on till they produce that effect. The burden must be laid upon the back, affliction must try the mind, perplexities must encumber the feet, until we are brought to this point,—that none but the Lord himself, with a taste of his dying love, can comfort our hearts, or give us that inward peace and joy which our soul is taught to crave after.

See, then, the connection betwixt the workings of fretfulness, rebelliousness, and peevishness in the heart of the saint, and the precept, "Delight thyself in the Lord." 'What?' it may be said, 'here is a man full of peevishness, rebellion, enmity, and fretfulness, and God tells him to "delight himself in the Lord."' He fain would do it, but cannot. This is the state and case of many of the Lord's people; they have enough religion to make them miserable, but not enough to make them happy; enough grace to make the world distasteful, but not enough to make the Lord of life and glory precious; enough religion to keep them from falling into sin, but not enough to break down the hankering idolatry of the carnal heart.

The Lord, then, who sees all their trials, raises up in their hearts the power to perform the precept—to delight themselves in the Lord. But how does the Lord do this? We are completely powerless, thoroughly unable to delight ourselves in the Lord. It is as impossible for a fallen sinner to delight himself in the perfections of Jehovah, as it is for him to create a new sun, and plant it in the sky. It ever is, and ever must be, a special act of grace, and of the operation of God the Spirit in the heart and conscience of the elect sinner. But there is a time and season when the Lord does enable his dear family to fulfil this precept, "Delight thyself in the Lord."

How then does he bring about the fulfilment of this precept? By manifesting himself, with more or less clearness and power to their souls. There are in the Lord of life and glory

infinite treasures of loveliness and beauty; and when these are manifested to the soul, then delight in these glorious perfections instantaneously springs up in the heart. Sometimes the Lord is pleased to enlighten the eyes of our understanding, and then we have a view of his matchless perfection, beauty, and loveliness by the eye of living faith. We see an indescribable glory in his eternal Godhead; we see an indescribable loveliness in his pure and spotless humanity; and we see an indescribable beauty in the union of the Godhead and the manhood in one glorious Immanuel. I have seen, I believe, with the eye of faith, that "perfection of beauty," which the tongue of man can never express, the beauty, loveliness, grace, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. When there is any discovery of his beauty and glory to the eyes of the understanding, and any reception of it by living faith in the heart, it is utterly beyond the tongue of men or angels to describe. But when we have a view by faith of the matchless perfection, glory, beauty, and loveliness of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is then, and then only we are enabled to delight ourselves in him. There is in the soul a solemn delight in the beauty of the Lord of life and glory; there is a going forth of the tender affections of the heart unto him as the "altogether lovely;" and there is a flowing forth of the secret desires of the soul towards him as he sits enthroned in glory, power, and majesty at the right hand of the Father. Now if ever we have seen this, we have fulfilled the precept, "Delight thyself in the Lord." But this delight is not in thy religion, not in thy own acts, no, nor in thy own experience either, but "*in the Lord*"—thy thoughts, thy desires, thy meditations, thine affections, all fixed in, all fixed upon, the Lord of life and glory.

Now, when we are enabled to delight ourselves thus in the Lord, it is sometimes *in the way of meditation*. There is a sweet meditation of the soul upon his glorious attributes.

Every divine character that shines forth in the Person of Immanuel is received by faith; and no sooner does faith receive it, than hope in the soul anchors in it, and love in the heart flows out towards it. Sometimes *in reading the Scriptures*, they are opened up to us with sweetness and savour. We see and feel an indescribable beauty in those passages which speak of the Lord of life and glory. Faith is kindled; the soul believes, simply and with a child-like spirit, what it reads; and the affections flow forth to that which is so sweetly and solemnly made known. Sometimes, in secret prayer, there is a drawing near to the Lord—a delighting ourselves in him as altogether beautiful, and altogether glorious and lovely. And sometimes, without any special means, before the heart is aware it is made like the chariots of Amminadib, caught up in believing admiration and adoration of the Lord of life and glory. Now, when this is felt in the soul, it is a fulfilment of the promises—"Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isa. 33:1)—"In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." (Isa. 4:2.) Then the soul can enter, in some measure, into the language of the Bride, when she said, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest amongst ten thousand: yea, he is altogether lovely."

II.—But I pass on to consider the connection of the promise with the precept. You will observe, the Lord has given a precept—"Delight thyself in the Lord;" and he has closely connected a promise with it—"And he shall give thee the desires of thy heart." Now, if we are enabled (and only God can enable us) to delight ourselves in the Lord with child-like simplicity and affection, the Lord, for his own name's sake, for his own mercy's sake, will fulfil the promise so closely connected with the precept. And not only so. They are not

merely connected by the solemn declaration of Jehovah, but also *by a link in time*. I will explain my meaning. If we are enabled to delight ourselves in the Lord, he gives us then and there the desires of our heart. The precept and the promise are so closely allied, there is such an intimate connection between the two, that they are linked together in time in enjoyment at seasons, as closely as they are linked together in the word of truth. When we are enabled to delight ourselves in the Lord, the desire of the heart flows out instantaneously unto him in whom we are enabled to delight. There are times, many times (O how numerous are they?), when we have no delight in the Lord—when we can scarcely recall any delight we have ever experienced—when our heart is a desolate wilderness, where nothing grows but thorns and briars; and when we have no desires after him. But when we are enabled to delight ourselves in the Lord, immediately desires spring up. The very same Spirit that raises up the power and gives the feeling to delight ourselves in the Lord, enables us, at the same moment, and by the same operation, to feel desires—nay more, to give those desires utterance, to pour them forth, to spread them out, to lay them, with all humility and simplicity, at the divine footstool. And what are these desires? Let us endeavour to mention a few of them.

1. One is, to *embrace in our arms that blessed Lord in whom we are, at the time, delighting*. We see him sitting in heaven above, in glory and beauty; and our desire is, to stretch forth our arms, and bring him down into our heart, and that he would come with divine savour and power into our soul. We want something more than to delight ourselves in him—we want to enjoy him. It is not sufficient to see his beauty at a distance. It is not sufficient to have the affections of the heart drawn out towards that beauty. *That* does not satisfy us—nothing satisfies us but a personal enjoyment of that

beauty, made manifest and shed abroad in the heart. But when we are enabled to delight ourselves in the Lord, there is the desire going forth that the Lord would reveal himself with power, come down with glorious majesty, and sweetly form himself in our heart the "hope of glory." This, you see, is the desire of the heart; and the Lord gives the desire when he enables us to perform the precept. To be brought near to that blessed bosom out of which all grace flows, and in which all affection and love centre, is the desire of the heart when we are enabled to delight ourselves in the Lord; not to be at a distance, but to be brought near; and the nearer we are brought, the nearer we desire to be brought. If I may use an illustration, it is something like the movement of the earth towards the sun. Philosophers tell us, that were the earth to advance towards the sun, it would move every moment, more and more rapidly towards it, till at last it would be altogether swallowed up, and lose its own existence in it. So spiritually. When the Sun of Righteousness attracts a soul near to himself, the more near it is drawn, the nearer it desires to be drawn; so that nothing can really satisfy and satiate it, except to be absorbed and swallowed up in his boundless grace and glory.

2. Another desire of our heart is, *to be conformed to his image*. When we delight ourselves in the Lord, and are then enabled to tell him the desires of our heart, one is—that he would stamp upon us his own image, and conform us to his own likeness. We see his meekness, gentleness, tenderness, and compassion. We see him "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." We see in him all perfection—everything holy, pure, and blessed. Now, we cannot delight ourselves in the Lord, unless there be some sympathy and union between us and him. Can impurity delight in purity? Can sin delight in holiness? Can the carnal love that which is spiritual? Impossible. But when

we are under the sensations I have traced out (and I hope I know something of them, or I could not speak of them as I do), then there is that softness of heart, that spirituality, that heavenly-mindedness, that tenderness of conscience, that holy affection, graciously wrought out and produced in the soul, whereby we desire to have the mind, likeness, and image of Christ stamped upon us. And if the Lord would but indulge us with it, we would wish never to sin again, never think anything again dishonouring to God, never speak anything that grieves the Spirit, never do anything that the Lord eternally hates.

3. Another desire of our heart is, to be *separated and weaned from the things of time and sense*, to have the world put under our feet, and the body of sin and death subdued; that we may not live under the power of any sin, but trample it under our feet.

4. Another desire is, to receive *the blood of sprinkling with full power upon our conscience*; to feel its sweet efficacy, purging away all sin and guilt; to have it so applied by the Holy Ghost, so spiritually received, known and felt, that fear, dread, and darkness may all take flight from the soul, and hide themselves in their dens as the unclean birds were driven away from Abraham's sacrifice.

5. Another desire of the heart is, to *shelter under his glorious righteousness*. When we delight ourselves in the Lord we behold his righteousness; but to behold his righteousness with solemn delight, is not the same thing as feeling the sweet enjoyment of that glorious righteousness received into the soul. There is a delighting in it as a garment; but this is a different thing from having the garment put upon and imputed to us, suited and perfect in all its parts. But when the soul delights itself in the Lord's spotless righteousness,

its desire goes after this righteousness, to be altogether wrapped and clothed in it, to feel the sweetness and know the efficacy of it, that it may stand up before God whiter and brighter than the angels of light.

But many, nay, innumerable are the desires which the soul feels, when it is enabled to delight itself in the Lord. Each has his peculiar trials which then he can lay before the throne; each has his peculiar griefs which then he can unbosom himself of; each has one request which then lies with greater power upon his heart than another. And when he delights himself in the Lord, he is enabled to tell the Lord that desire. There are times when we have desires in our hearts, but we cannot utter them; sometimes unbelief works in us; sometimes self-pity, sullenness and murmuring; sometimes despondency and rebellion; sometimes a cold, torpid spirit that freezes up every faculty of the soul. We may too have desires fluttering in our heart, and working at the bottom of our bosom; but there they are fluttering to and fro, without any power to raise themselves up from the heart in which they lie. But when we are enabled to delight ourselves in the Lord, they come trooping forth. This however may not be once a year, or very rarely in a man's life. These are not every day banquets, every week or month's enjoyments; no, they are for the most part very rare things,—so rare that when they are past we look back at them as sweet reminiscences. But it is at these times if we have desires, that we are enabled to lay them before the throne of mercy.

Now if we have ever been enabled, in the depths of the soul, in the movements of the heart towards God, when stretched upon our bed, sitting by our fireside, occupied in the affairs of life, or in any of those solemn moments, when no eye or ear saw or heard us but the eye or ear of the Almighty—if ever we have been enabled to delight ourselves in him, and

to have the goings forth of sweet affection towards him who is infinitely, ineffably, and inconceivably glorious—if ever our delights have centred in him who is altogether lovely and only desirable, then God will give us every desire of our heart. At these moments he says, inwardly, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" "Make thy request large; make it in heaven above, or in the depth beneath." And the Lord is pleased, so to speak, that his dear people should open their mouth wide at such times, telling every thought, and uttering at his footstool every secret desire.

III.—But we pass on to consider the other precept contained in the text, and the promise connected with it. I see a great beauty, glory, and sweetness in the linking together of these two precepts and these two promises. I will explain how.—There may be here some of God's people (perhaps many) who cannot altogether realize what it is to delight themselves in the Lord. They want to do so more than they have been yet enabled. They have had glances, glimpses, testimonies, hopes, tokens; but as to a season of solemn delight in the Lord, they cannot say clearly and positively, that such has been their experience. Well, does the Lord cut off such? Does the Lord do with them as many a haughty professor does now-a-day, trample them under foot as nothing? take his weak sheep and trembling lambs, and throw them over the hurdles? God deals not so with his little ones. The sympathizing bosom of Jesus is as distinct from the conduct of such professors, as heaven is from hell. He knows his people's state and case. He sees the secret movements of their hearts. He knows all their times of despondency, fear and apprehension. And therefore he gives them a precept, and connects with that precept a promise as suitable as the other. "*Commit thy way unto the Lord.*" Some here may say, 'O that I could delight myself in the Lord! but my heart is hard, my path intricate, my mind perplexed and burdened,

and my soul dark; I feel my helplessness; I know I cannot delight myself in the Lord; but it is my grief and burden that I cannot do so.' Now are you to be cut off for that? No: does it not say, "Commit thy way unto the Lord." What is 'thy way?' Why, it is thy perplexed way, thy entangled way, thy desponding way, thy doubting and exercised way, every feeling thou hast in thy soul because thou canst not delight thyself in the Lord—this is 'thy way.' 'But,' say some of you, 'if I could see my interest clear; if I could feel the blood of sprinkling applied, enjoy the sweet assurance that I am saved, and taste the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, how happy I should be!' The anxiety and sorrow you feel because you cannot realize these sweet sensations in your heart, are your 'way;' that is the path in which you are walking. And it is this which tries you so. It is your perplexed way, your intricate way, your entangled way, that is the grief and trouble of your heart.

Now, the text says, "Commit thy way unto the Lord." But God must as much work in us the power to commit our way unto him, as he must work in us the ability to delight ourselves in him. They are both acts of faith. The minor act of faith, to "commit our way unto the Lord," is as much an act of living faith, as the greater act of faith, to "delight ourselves in the Lord." It requires the same power that made heaven and earth to enable a living soul to commit his way unto the Lord. But there are times and seasons when the Lord enables the soul to fulfil the precept, to commit its way unto him.

But what is the idea contained in the word "commit?" It is to take one's burden, and lay it humbly at the Lord's feet; to bring our case, and put it in the Lord's hand; in whatsoever state, whatsoever trial, whatsoever experience, to take it, and lay it at the Lord's feet—this is to commit our way unto

the Lord. But before we can do this, we must be divorced and weaned from looking to the creature. How prone we are to do this, to measure our experience by that of others, to trust to the good opinion of men or of a minister, to try to gain the approbation of a church—something or other distinct from God's approbation in the soul, something or other distinct from the witness of the Spirit in the heart! Now, the reason, the main reason, why the Lord exercises his people so with perplexities and trials, shuts them up, makes the way dark before them, is to take them off the creature, and bring them to this spot—"none but the Lord himself can save my soul, pardon my sins, relieve my distress, and give me that which alone can satisfy me I am his." Whenever this is wrought in the soul (and it is for the most part wrought there by a series of cutting disappointments), it is enabled to commit its way to the Lord, to lay its case at his footstool. This is an act and exercise of living faith. How many of the Lord's people there are who have a way in which they are walking, and this way they think altogether peculiar: that no saint has ever walked in the path before them! Theirs, they complain, is such a strange, such a strait, such a difficult, such an entangled road, that they cannot think any child of God ever travelled in it.

Now, whatever be the way, the precept runs—"Commit thy way unto the Lord." Art thou dark? Commit thy darkness. Art thou unbelieving? Commit thy unbelief. Art thou tempted? Commit thy temptation. Art thou exercised? Commit thy exercises. Art thou perplexed and embarrassed as to what course to take? Commit thy perplexity and embarrassment to the Lord, in the actings of simple faith, in the pouring out of spiritual desire, in the goings forth of hope and love from the heart Godward.

But some may say, 'Why, you are setting before us an

impossibility.' It is so: but God works these impossibilities. What is impossible to man, is possible to God, for "with God all things are possible." Nay, I will tell you another thing—if you have never committed your way unto the Lord, you are no Christian; you are nothing but a dressed-out professor; you have never had the teachings of the Spirit in your conscience, nor the actings and exercises of living faith in your soul. You may have the doctrines correctly—you may have a sound system, creed, and theory—but you have never felt the operation of God the Spirit upon your conscience, if you have never committed your way to the Lord. I know the difficulty, as well as you do, of committing one's way to the Lord—the workings of unbelief, the temptations of Satan, the harassings of the enemy of our soul; the infidelity and scepticism, the doubting and fearing of a perplexed mind. But I know also what it is to commit that way. We must know both sides. We must not take the infirmities, the sins, the unbelief of God's children, and because we have that which all men have, conclude we have the other. We must know both sides of the question. We must know the impossibility, and we must know the possibility. We must know the difficulty, and we must know the ease. We must know the want of power, and we must know the communication of power. We must know what it is to cry under our burden, and we must know what it is to lay that burden at the Lord's feet. And this committing of our way unto the Lord is as solemn an exercise of living faith in the soul (though not so clear, not so sweet, not so satisfying), as much an act and operation of God the Spirit, as delighting ourselves in the Lord.

IV.—But the text adds—"*Trust also in him,*" which is a further expansion, a more complete development of what it is to commit our way unto the Lord. There is this difference betwixt the two—*trusting* is a further act of faith. I will illustrate my meaning by a comparison. Say you have a sum

of money in hand; and this, for various reasons, you do not wish to keep in your house. You have a friend, a trustworthy friend: you go to him, and say, 'Will you take charge of this little sum of money I have?' Now, putting into his hands this sum, is committing your money unto him. It is committing to his charge and keeping what is dear and precious to you. After you have left the money, perhaps, a certain fear comes over you—'suppose he should spend the money; suppose he should not give it back when I want it; suppose he should employ it for his own purposes; what becomes of me? what becomes of my engagements?' But if after you have committed the money to your friend, you feel implicit confidence that when you ask for the money it will be returned, then you *trust* in him. You first *believe*, then you *commit*, then you *trust*. If you did not believe your friend was trustworthy, you would not commit it to him. After you have committed it to him, a doubt may rise in your mind as to whether he is really trustworthy; but when your confidence in him is so well-grounded, that you are sure he will return the money when wanted, then you can trust in him that when you go for it he will return it fully and fairly into your hands. Look at it spiritually. Our 'way' is that most dear to us. Nothing can be so dear to a man as the way by which the Lord leads him. His experience is all in all. If that be right, all is right—if that be wrong, all is wrong. If he part with that, he parts with all he holds dear. When then he believes, by the actings of living faith in the soul, that the Lord Jesus is revealed that he should commit his way to him; that as God, he has almighty power—as man, a tender, sympathizing bosom—as God-Man, he is "over all, God blessed for ever;" when in the actings of this faith, he commits his way to the Lord, he puts his soul into his hands, puts all his difficulties, perplexities, exercises into his hands, into his very heart. But there may rise doubts, fears, suspicions—'Will the Lord hear me? will he appear for use? Is

he all that I believe him to be?' Infidelity will work—doubt, suspicion, and fears may arise, 'Is the Lord what I believe him to be? am I what I believed myself to be?' But when we are enabled to feel that he will keep what we have committed unto him, and that he is able and willing to keep us who have committed it, then we are enabled to trust as well as to commit.

V.—Now follows the promise—"And he shall bring it to pass; and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day." "He shall bring it to pass." What? The thing that lies deepest in thy heart—"thy way." Does not thy way lie deepest in thy soul—the path that God has led you by, the path that God is now leading you; your path of temptation, trial, and perplexity; your past or present experience; the case and condition in which you now are? You may be troubled in your soul, doubting in your mind, fearing in your heart, distressed in your feelings; you may sink down to the lowest point that a child of God can sink to; yet that way, in which you are so deeply sunk, if the Lord enable you from time to time to commit it to the Lord, and trust in him, he will bring to pass above what your heart desires. Look at the movements of your heart Godward; look at your embarrassments, temptations, and exercises; look at that which rolls backwards and forwards in your mind, and which is tossed to and fro on the waves of your anxious bosom—what lies nearest, dearest, and deepest,—let honest conscience speak. *That*, whatever it be, the Lord tells you, and sometimes enables you to commit to him, to put it into his hands, to trust it to him. Now whatever it be, so committed and so trusted, the Lord has declared in his unerring word of truth, he "will bring it to pass; "he will fulfil it when his time has arrived. Does darkness envelop it? do mountains of difficulty stand up in the way of its fulfilment? Never mind; God will bring it to pass in the face of all, over

mountains and through difficulties, in spite of, and in the midst of, all surrounding obstacles. He "will bring it to pass,"—that which lies deepest in your heart, nearest your affections, and that which you are enabled in the actings of living faith sometimes to commit into the hands of the Lord God Almighty.

But, in order to clear up the point, God the Spirit has added, by the pen of the Psalmist, this explanation, "*And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.*" The word "righteousness" in the Scripture has more than one signification. I will not take up the time, as it is wearing away, by explaining the different senses; but merely observe two. One is, 'the righteousness of God,' which is imputed unto and put upon all them that believe; the other is, uprightness, sincerity, and honesty of heart in the child of God, as a part of his new nature. Now both these different kinds of righteousness will God bring forth as the light. I have been endeavouring to show that the precept, "Commit thy way unto the Lord," is a precept adapted to the exercised, tried, tempted, and distressed. Now do you want your righteousness to be brought forth as the light, that you may see Christ's righteousness, and that you may see your interest in it, as clear, plain, and palpable as the light of day? And if you have committed your way unto the Lord, your doubting and fearing way, he will one day give a clear discovery of this righteousness to your heart. What the everlasting God has said, that he will fulfil, "He will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day." It shall spangle before your eyes, glisten in your heart, and shall be manifest in your soul's happy experience as the light of day when it arises to gladden the earth.

But there is another sense—the uprightness, sincerity, and integrity of a man's heart Godward. There is much of this

spoken of in the Old Testament Scriptures; the sincerity and uprightness of a man's heart. It is a cutting feeling to us, (and yet we must have the experience of it), to have our motives misunderstood, and the things that we do and the things that we say from pure motives (and so far as they spring from the new man of grace they are pure) put down to base ones. Few things are more mortifying or more trying to me, than to have my words and actions attributed to the worst of purposes, such as, that they are said and done merely to exalt and glorify myself, when it is the very furthest from my thoughts. Now we shall all have to lie under this imputation, that pride may be mortified. We would glory in our pure motives, in our integrity, did our professing brethren, did the real brethren admire them. We should glory in man, and rob God of the glory. Therefore he permits that your motives, thoughts, and actions should all be misrepresented, and put down to base motives. But the time will come when the Lord will bring forth your righteousness (so far as you have acted in any point from pure and simple motives) as the light. It shall shine in the eyes of men. It shall be as bright to those that have spiritual discernment as the light of the sun, which shines forth clearly in its own intrinsic glory. Now, this may be your lot. You have acted from motives really, in the sight of a heart-searching God, simple and pure. You are now lying under misrepresentation. It is no use your trying to remove it—your attempts to remove it will only make it worse. But the Lord will one day bring forth your righteousness, the integrity of your motives, the sincerity of your actions, as the light, so that men shall be forced to acknowledge that you were honest and upright in intention.

"And thy judgment as the noon-day." The word 'judgment' here means *case*—the case to be decided by the judge, the point in hand that perplexes a man's soul, the grand trial at

issue. Every man has a case, a cause—something to be decided; a cause that he looks to God to give him an issue upon. Now, if you are enabled to commit your way to the Lord, and trust in him, he will surely fulfil these promises. He will bring forth your imputed righteousness as the light to gladden your soul with its beaming rays. He will bring forth your integrity and uprightness to shine and glisten before the eyes of your believing brethren. He will also bring your judgment—the case in hand, the trial at issue, the point that lies most upon your heart, the thing that presses most deeply upon your conscience—he will bring this judgment forth as the noon-day. You shall see Satan defeated, sin pardoned, your enemies baffled, your case brought out to the light as clear as ever you have seen the noon-day sun walking in his brightness, and casting forth his beams of glory and splendour to enlighten the world.