

SUBSTANCE THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS

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"I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." Prov. 8:20, 21

The word "Wisdom" occurs very frequently in the Proverbs of Solomon. And we find on several occasions that Wisdom is represented as addressing herself to the children of men; in other words, she speaks as if she were a person. For instance, in the beginning of this chapter: "Doth not Wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths; she crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors: Unto you, O men; I call, and my voice is to the sons of men" (Prov. 8:1-4). And so in the latter part of the first chapter of this book: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she uttereth her words" (Prov. 1:20, 21). Now this is no poetical or oratorical personification of wisdom; I mean as orators and poets sometimes personify qualities—that is, represent them as persons, and put into their mouths such language as persons only can utter. Nor is it Christ's pre-existing human soul that here speaks under the name of Wisdom. The dream of the Pre-existarians is utterly and directly contrary to the truth of God; and those that are wrapped up in this delusion found much of their argument upon this eighth chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon. I call it a delusion, and a dangerous delusion too, because it strikes at the very root of the atonement. For if Christ's human soul existed before the foundation of the world, then that human soul of Christ was

never under the law; but we read that "He was made of a woman, *made under the law.*" But if that soul existed before that law was given, there could be no subsequent, *ex post facto* operation of the law upon that soul; and if it was never under the law, then Christ never could have wrought out the righteousness demanded by the law; and therefore it strikes a deadly blow at Christ's righteousness and Christ's atonement. And this is the case with all errors and heresies; Satan will never introduce a trifling error into the Church—his object is to strike a covert, secret blow at a grand fundamental doctrine; and therefore he will bring forward these errors and heresies in such a masked way that men shall scarcely see their tendency, and yet their real aim shall be to strike at some of those fundamental doctrines, on which depend all the hope and salvation of the Church.

Nor, again, does Wisdom here represent God abstractedly; it does not represent Jehovah speaking merely as being the only wise God.

What, then, does it represent? If it represents neither wisdom poetically personified, nor Christ's pre-existing human soul, nor Jehovah abstractedly considered, what does it signify?

Why, I believe it signifies the Head of the Church, speaking in His covenant relationship—the second Person of the glorious Trinity, who "of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." And if we look at Wisdom as representing the Son of God standing up in the eternal councils as the Head and representative of His Church and people, we shall see what harmony and beauty are thrown upon all that He utters in this relationship. For instance: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting,

from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water," and so on; "then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and My delights were with the sons of men." How aptly and sweetly does this represent the Head of the Church in His covenant relation—the Son of God who was in time to take flesh, Him that was in time to take a perfect human body and a perfect human soul, viewed and looked upon in the eternal councils as the covenant Head of His Church and people, and as such delighting in them!

It is the Son of God, then, as "made unto us wisdom," that speaks in these words. And now, having seen who the Person is that speaks, our ears may be more open to hear what this gracious Person utters.

What then does He say? "I lead in the way of righteousness in the midst of the paths of judgment; that I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures."

I. The covenant Head of His Church, then, is here represented as "*leading*" His people; as the good shepherd that goes before his sheep and leads them step by step. We cannot move a single step without Him; only so far as He is pleased to guide us step by step and foot by foot into the way of eternal life, have we any wisdom, strength, or power to walk therein.

"I lead in the way of righteousness." These words are applicable to His blessed work in the soul, whereby He leads each one whom He is pleased to quicken into eternal life into "the way of righteousness." We will, with God's blessing,

then see how He leads them, and into what He leads them.

1. We will commence with the first beginnings of His work upon the soul; for in the very first commencement of His work upon the heart it is true that "He leads in the way of righteousness." And how does He first "lead in the way of righteousness?" By opening up the righteousness of God's holy law, and thus leading the soul into the law. He leads the soul into "the way of righteousness;" which way of strict unerring righteousness is in the law. For the law requires perfection; the law demands unwavering, unflinching obedience; the law is "exceeding broad," and takes cognizance of every thought of the heart, word of the mouth, and action of the life. As long as this law is in the mere letter of it, as long as it stands written upon the tables of stone, it affects us not; we are, as the apostle says, "alive"—("I was alive without the law once"); that is, we are not yet killed by it, not yet brought in guilty, not yet slaughtered, so as to fall down at the feet of God, seeking His mercy. But the way in which Jesus, as the "Wisdom" of His people, leads them at first, is by leading them into the righteousness of the law. He says, "I lead in the way of righteousness;" that is, He leads them into the law by opening up to their astonished minds its length, and breadth, and height, and depth, its holy requisitions, its eternal sanctions, its awful curse, its devouring flame. Thus He leads them into this "way of righteousness;" He opens up this strict unerring righteousness to their heart and conscience, and shows them that they are guilty, and unable to do that which the law demands.

Now this work upon the soul does not in all cases amount to the same depth of conviction. It is not always carried on with the same terrors; nor is the soul, under the application of this righteous law to the conscience, always plunged into the same depth of anguish and trouble. We can chalk out no

regular path of this nature; we cannot say that the convictions shall be so deep, or that the convictions shall be so long. But this we can say—that they must be so deep as to go down to the root; and that they must be so long as to do the work in an effectual manner; but how deep and how long must be left to the unerring wisdom of God. This experience must be wrought with power in every quickened soul—that the mouth should be stopped, and that it should become guilty before God. If the mouth is not stopped, if the soul is not become guilty, if every hope is not cut off, if every prop is not gone, if every rag of righteousness is not cast away as a filthy thing, the law has not done its work; and it must go on extending itself, and widening itself, and spreading its deep roots in the heart, until that work is effectually done. We may illustrate this by a natural figure. We must all die; that sentence passed on Adam must take place in the body of every one of us; but is that sentence executed on every person in the same way? Some are cut down with a raging fever, others linger long under a wasting consumption; some are ill for years before they drop into the grave, and some are cut off in the space of a few days. But all die; they are all brought to the same place; they are all confined in the same narrow tomb. Thus with the law in its effects upon quickened consciences. All the vessels of mercy must be killed by the law; all must be brought to have no hope, no help, and no strength; but we cannot lay down the precise mode, nor fix the uniform manner, in which every quickened soul has that death inflicted upon it. As the apostle speaks, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves;" but we cannot say how sharp this sentence of death may be, nor how long in taking place. I am always more anxious to know to what spot the soul is brought, than to know the road by which it has come. The grand thing to look to is, not so much causes, as effects; not so much the tree itself, as the fruit which that tree produces. If we see the soul brought down

into nothing, and being nothing but a mass of sin and guilt— if that is really and experimentally felt—shall we question the work merely because the path has not been set up by our line, rule, and compass, and not chalked out in that particular way in which God was pleased to lead some of us?

Jesus, then, leads His people *first* into "the way of righteousness," by leading them, through the Spirit's teaching, into an acquaintance with the spirituality and requisitions of this holy, strict, and condemning law.

2. But this righteousness the creature never could fulfil. Nothing less than a perfect unwavering obedience to it can satisfy its demands. And therefore Wisdom leads also in the way of righteousness by leading the soul into an experimental knowledge of Him who has rendered this obedience, who has wrought out this perfect righteousness. And as He, and He only, can lead the soul step by step into the length and breadth and depth and height of the law, so can He and He only lead the soul into the length and breadth and depth and height of His own glorious righteousness, for He says, "I lead in the way of righteousness." And how does He lead it? By casting a mysterious light into the soul to see what the Word of God has revealed; and shedding abroad a mysterious power in the heart, whereby faith is created to receive, lay hold of, and credit that which God has made known. We may read the Word of God for ever in vain, unless that Word is made life and light to our souls; and therefore it profits us nothing merely to read in the Word of God, "This is the name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness;" but when the Lord the Spirit, whose covenant office and work it is to take of the things of Jesus and reveal them to the heart, sheds a mysterious and blessed light upon those scriptures which speak of Jesus as the law-fulfiller, as having brought in a glorious

righteousness, as having finished the work which the Father gave Him to do—when He is pleased to shed forth on these scriptures a blessed and mysterious light, and at the same moment raise up faith and power in the heart to receive, credit, embrace, lay hold of, and handle that which He has thus revealed in the letter of the Word—then by His own persuasive power He leads the soul "in the way of righteousness." And O! what a wonderful way it is!—that God should ever find out such a way, as to make all His people righteous by imputing to them another's righteousness! It will be the wonder of all eternity; it will be the theme of the song of the saints through countless ages; it will exhaust all the depths of their finite wisdom to look into these secrets of wisdom, love, and power. Yea, the angels themselves, who so far exceed men in wisdom, are represented as "desiring to look into" these things; and therefore when the ark was made, and the mercy-seat put over the tables which were inclosed therein, the seraphim were framed as looking down upon this golden mercy-seat, representing how the height and breadth and length and depth of these mysteries overpass even the faculties of the angels themselves.

But He leads the soul "*in this way of righteousness.*" It is not merely "walking round about Zion, and telling the towers thereof;" it is not as I might walk round some palace, and admire the harmonious proportions of the building; but it is being led into it—into the personal experience of it, into a rich acquaintance with it, into the sweet enjoyment of it. It is this which sweetly satisfies the soul; and nothing but this can satisfy it. Before petitioners are admitted into the presence of the king, there are ante-chambers and many rooms to pass; but he that is brought into the interior of the building will be led step by step and chamber by chamber into the presence of the king himself. Many poor doubting and fearing souls have but (as it were) just got their feet within the threshold;

and they see perhaps others introduced into the presence of the king; and as the chamberlain opens the doors, their eye can catch a glimpse of the glittering apartment, and perhaps even of the person of the king himself; but the door is shut, their turn is not yet come. By this faint gleam, however, they have seen enough of "the king in his beauty" to ravish their hearts; and they are longing for the time when they shall be admitted into his presence. We read of the Lord opening in "the valley of Achor a door of hope;" and so His own dear family, before they are led into the rich enjoyment of these things, so as to see the King and admire His beauty, are led step by step, and have to wait their turn and bide their time, before they are enabled to fall down at His feet, wash them with the tears of their eyes, wipe them with the hairs of their head, and clasp Him as their all in all.

3. But again; whenever the Lord works by His Spirit in the soul, He implants sincerity and godly uprightness; and a man's religion is rotten at the root if there be not sincerity and godly uprightness in his heart. Now these are not the fruits of nature; for "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jesus, then, leads His people "in the way of righteousness" by implanting this spirit of uprightness in them, this spirit of simplicity and godly sincerity. Thus He not only makes them righteous externally, by the imputation of His glorious righteousness; but He makes them righteous internally, by the communication of a righteous nature. "The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold." Here we have this double righteousness. The "clothing of wrought gold" is the external robe of righteousness, which Jesus wrought upon earth and finished on Calvary; and she is "glorious within," by having the implantation of a principle of uprightness, sincerity, godly fear, and that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." He leads the soul, then, "in the way of righteousness,"

by making it sincere and upright before Himself, before the Church, and before the world. He makes us sincere in our prayers, sincere in our searching of the Word, sincere in our communion with His family, sincere in the words that drop from our lips, sincere in the actions which we have daily to transact, sincere in all the various relations of life, sincere before Him, as looking to One who "searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins."

In these several ways, then, does Wisdom—that is, the Son of God "made wisdom" as the covenant Head of His Church and people—"lead in the way of righteousness."

II. "I lead in the way of righteousness, *in the midst of the paths of judgment.*" Those that I have mentioned are not the only lessons that Jesus has to teach. Some conceive that all the teachings of the blessed Spirit are teachings of consolation. This is an error. "Blessed is the man whom Thou *chastenest*, and teachest out of Thy law." It is of this chastening, rebuking, reprovng work that the Lord seems to speak in these words: "I lead in the midst of the paths of judgment." Wherever He commences a work of grace upon the soul, He sets up a court of conscience within. His vice-regent is the fear of God dwelling in a tender conscience. This fear of God thus implanted becomes "a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death;" and it is by virtue of this fear of God in a tender conscience that Jesus leads us "in the midst of the paths of judgment."

But some may say—Why is it that He speaks of "the way of righteousness" in the singular number, but of "the paths of judgment" in the plural?—as though there were but one "way of righteousness," but "many paths of judgment." It is so. There is only one "way of righteousness" (the others I have mentioned being either preparatory to, or flowing from it)—

that is, the way whereby He justifies sinners, by the imputation of His own glorious righteousness; but there are many "paths of judgment"—that is, there are various dealings of the blessed Spirit upon the soul, whereby from time to time He acts as "a Spirit of judgment and a Spirit of burning;" there are various modes that He takes to lead the soul into a knowledge of itself, and various means that He employs to chastise and rebuke God's children for their pride and iniquity. And these ways are manifold, though they all centre in one.

"He leads" His people, it is said, "in the midst of the paths of judgment." Not on one side of them, but in the midst of them; and therefore there is no crooked walking here. He leads them "in the midst" of those paths; implying that from time to time He leads them into one path, and from time to time into another.

1. Now these "paths of judgment" are when He with His holy eye scrutinises the heart, and brings to light its secret workings. Nature is continually bringing up from the bottom of a deceitful heart something that is contrary to the Word and work of God; and hypocritical and deceitful nature is continually cloaking and masking over whatever it secretly brings forth. For instance, it will bring forward presumption, and call it faith; it will come forth with vain confidence, and term it a good hope through grace; it will produce various excuses for sloth, and carelessness, and indulgence of the flesh, and then to cover them will speak loudly of the helplessness and impotency of the creature. And thus nature is continually dressing up some of her deep corruptions, and covering them over "as a potsherd is covered with silver dross," with false names. But when God leads His people "in the midst of the paths of judgment," He detects, opens, and uncovers the various deceits of nature, and calls things by

their right names. How some of us have been entangled in presumption, and at the time did not know it was presumption—have stepped beyond our experience, and advanced ahead of God's teaching in our souls! This is presumption. Whatever ground we stand upon which God has not Himself set us down upon with His own hand, that is presumption. Many of God's people are entangled here. They are drawn on by the example of others. They do not like to come forward in their real character; especially if they belong to a church in which presumption is rife; especially if they sit under a minister who breathes forth presumption with every word that he speaks. "Evil communications corrupt good manners;" and thus by rapid strides they go on in presumption; often mistaking their way, and thinking they are walking in faith. Now when God leads His people "in the midst of the paths of judgment," by His secret rebukes in the conscience, and by the internal reproofs of His Spirit in the heart, He checks and brings to light this presumption. Presumption is the sin of Calvinists; self-righteousness is the sin of Arminians; and if we shoot our arrows at Arminians for their self-righteousness, they may well shoot their arrows against many who nominally belong to us for their presumption. God's Spirit will never foster nor pass over presumption. How signally has God punished it! When Uzzah touched the ark, he was struck dead on the spot for his presumption. When the men of Beth-shemesh looked into the ark, more than fifty thousand were cut off for this act of daring presumption. God has visited signally with most awful marks of His anger those that have been guilty of this sin; and that a child of God may be entangled in it is plain from these words, "Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins." But when God leads His people "in the midst of the paths of judgment," He discovers this presumption, and rebukes it "with the rod of His mouth." He reproofs the soul sharply for having gone into this dangerous path. And of all

spiritual sins (that is, sins which a spirit may commit) there are none that cut deeper into the conscience of a living soul than this, because he says "If deceived on this point, may I not be deceived on all?" If he has been treading upon false ground here, why may not every step have been wrong? And thus when he is reproved and rebuked for the presumption into which he has been led unawares, it seems to throw a desponding hue upon every part of his experience—beginning, middle, and end. Thus, then, when God leads His people "in the midst of the paths of judgment," they are judged. As the apostle says, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

2. So, again, hypocrisy is a sin which God's people are much guilty of. Not that they are hypocrites; there is a vast distinction between being a hypocrite and having hypocrisy. A deceitful heart must needs have hypocrisy in it; but a hypocrite is one in whom it reigns and rules. So that the children of God are not hypocrites; but they are very often deeply entangled in hypocrisy. Have you never smoothed your countenance? Have you never put on a holy look? Has hypocrisy never in prayer before others brought out expressions from your lips which at the time you did not feel in your heart? Have you never, when a Christian friend has been going from your company, had reason to mourn and sigh that you have been speaking so hypocritically? Not allowedly; but hypocrisy came out of your mouth, whether you would or no. But when God leads His people "in the midst of the paths of judgment," He reproveth this foul spirit in them; He rebukes this hypocrisy; and He cuts them deeply, and lashes them severely for it.

3. And so, too, when the soul has backslidden—when it has

been entangled with some filthy idol—as the apostle says, has "fallen from grace" (that is, not fallen from its standing in grace, but fallen from the reign and power of grace)—has "hired lovers," like Ephraim—when the Lord begins to open up His Word in anger and indignation against those that so start aside from Him, He scourges, rebukes, and chastises the soul.

Thus, then, He leads "in the midst of the paths of judgment," by setting up a court of judicature in the heart, arrainging the soul at His bar; not with vengeance, as punishing a criminal, but as a parent, after the child that has been playing truant all day brings that child to book at night, reproves him for his conduct, and perhaps chastises him severely. And think nothing of your religion if you do not know these "paths of judgment;" they are very cutting things, but they are very profitable.

III. "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; that *I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.*"

Here we see why Jesus "leads in the way of righteousness," and why He guides the soul "in the midst of the paths of judgment;" it is that he may cause those that love Him to "*inherit substance.*"

The most of men are hunting after shadows. A dim, visionary religion, is all that most professors are possessed of. And it is nothing but the internal teaching of God the Holy Ghost in the soul, that can ever banish these shadows, and give "substance" in their stead.

1. But what is "substance?" It is something solid, weighty, powerful, real, and eternal. It is something that will not fly

off at the last, like the chaff out of the floor, and the smoke out of the chimney. It is something which does not float merely in the visions of the brain. It is power, and feeling, and life, and dew, and the blessed kingdom of God set up with authority in the soul.

But whence springs it that God causes His people "to inherit substance," by "leading them in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment?" A few instances will show us. When He leads them first into the way of righteousness by opening up His holy law, it drives away all shadows. We had been heaping together, with great toil, chaff, and hay, and straw, and stubble; we had been like the man spoken of in Scripture, who "dreamed, and behold, he ate, but he awoke and his soul was empty;" so we were dreaming our life away continually with shadows, with a name to live, with a formal religion, with a mere external show of godliness, content with a few ordinances and sermons, and thinking that these would shelter us in the day of wrath. These were only shadows; of no more avail to deliver our souls from the wrath to come than the shadowy form of a mountain in the morning sun. But when the Lord began to "lead us in the way of righteousness," these shadows vanished. Something was then wanted to conciliate the favour of God; something was needed whereby the soul could escape those piercing eyes that looked it through and through; and the soul began to look after "substance," want realities, need a voice within from the Lord Himself, a testimony of His eternal favour, and a manifestation of His love. There was "substance" needed. The soul began to "hunger and thirst after righteousness," to pant and long after the manifestation of Jesus' love, and to be restless and discontented and weary of everything short of the work and witness of the Holy Ghost. When the mouth is stopped, and the soul has become guilty before God, it wants pardon,

peace, mercy, blood, and love; nothing else can satisfy it, and after this it pants with unutterable longings. And when Jesus leads His people "in the way of righteousness" by showing to them His glorious righteousness, they begin to "inherit the substance" after which they were panting. There is no substance under the law; it is but a preparing the soul to receive substance; it is emptying the soul, that it may be filled; it is stripping the soul, that it may be clothed; it is wounding the soul, that it may be healed; bringing down the soul, that it may be lifted up. But when He "leads in the way of righteousness," that wonderful way whereby the soul is justified by His imputed righteousness, He causes that soul to "inherit substance;" to inherit it even now upon earth, to have a taste of it, the beginnings of it, the earnest of it, and the first-fruits of it.

2. Again; when He leads the soul "in the midst of the paths of judgment," as He by the cutting rebukes and reproofs of His Spirit brings to light the mere shadowy dreams in which we are so often entangled, He makes the soul long after Divine teaching. When He by the internal light which He casts into your heart showed you your presumption (for instance) under the name of faith, He raised up in your soul earnest breathings and cries after the communication of Divine faith to your heart. Taking away the counterfeit made you poor, but taking away the counterfeit prepared your heart for the genuine coin. So that when He leads you "in the midst of the paths of judgment" to take away presumption, He causes you to "inherit substance" by raising up in your heart the sigh and the cry after faith, and then communicating it and breathing it in power into your souls; for "faith is the substance of things hoped for," and therefore he that inherits faith inherits substance. And, again, when He discovered the hypocrisy of your carnal mind, and covered you with shame and confusion of face, that you should have been so inveigled

and entrapped into hypocritical looks, hypocritical thoughts, and hypocritical words, He cast a desponding hue over all your religion; but when He did this He raised up in your soul sighs, desires, pantings, and longings after sincerity and uprightness, godly awe, fears to be wrong, and desires to be right; and then, when He breathed into your soul this spirit of sincerity, uprightness, and godly fear, He "caused you to inherit substance." There is something substantial in sincerity; there is something which has power in it, and reality in it, and life in it, and real weight in it, when the Lord breathes sincerity and uprightness into your heart. And so, when you have backslidden from Him, and got entangled with some idol, and your heart secretly departed from your God, and you had the idol taken away and the backsliding manifested, and your soul was brought to sigh and cry after the manifestation of Him whom you loved, and He was pleased once more to lift up the light of His countenance upon you, He "caused you to inherit substance." Oh! what a dreamy, shadowy thing is a mere profession of religion! And what a delusive cheat is all the pleasure to be gained by sin! How it leaves a soul naked, and bare, wounded, stripped, and guilty before God! We have often promised ourselves pleasure in sin; and what have we found? The wormwood and the gall. All the anticipated pleasure vanished; and its flight left us full of guilt and shame. But if ever God indulged our souls with sweet communion with Him, if ever He brought our affections to centre in Himself, if ever He melted our souls at His feet, if ever He blessed us with the communications of His eternal favour and distinguishing love, there was substance in that, there was weight, there was power, there was the foretaste and earnest of a never-ending eternity.

Thus He "causes those that love Him to inherit substance," by giving them a substantial religion, something real,

something that is dropped into the soul from His own blessed self, something that comes out of Himself and out of the fulness of His own loving heart, to make them rejoice and be glad. And I believe that no living soul can be satisfied with anything short of "substance." Oh! how he fears to have "a name to live while he is dead," to be cloaked up in hypocrisy; how he dreads to be wrapped up in the delusions of Satan, and so die under the wrath of God! He wants to have something heavenly, something supernatural, something breathed into his heart by God Himself. He may very weak, and very doubting, and very fearful and trembling, full of his own vile corruptions, and mourning under them; but with all that, he must have "substance," he must have something solid and real, something from God and from God alone. He cannot trust in doctrines, nor in opinions of men; all these things are mere shadows to him—he wants that which shall draw the soul up into the love of God, and fill it with that "peace that passeth all understanding." This is "substance." And the devil does not care what a man's head is filled with, if he can keep substance out of his heart. It matters not to him what your creed is, or where you come to worship, or what your head is filled with. It is against "substance," the kingdom of God in love and power in the soul, that Satan directs his attacks.

3. "That I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance, and *I will fill their treasures.*" Now this "treasure," is the treasure of the heart. We read, that "a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things." When the Lord, then, promises that He will "fill their treasure," He means that He will fill their treasure-houses; that is, He will fill their hearts out of His own blessed fulness.

And how does He fill them? With the sweet manifestations of Himself. That fills the heart; and nothing else can fill it. Everything but Jesus revealing Himself to the soul leaves an aching void. All hopes, and all feelings, and all desires, and all pantings, and longings, and hungerings, and thirstings—these do not fill an aching void. Appetite is not food; thirst is not the refreshing beverage; and the mere hungering and thirsting after righteousness, though it is a sign of life, and a sweet testimony of God working in your soul, is not real feeding upon Jesus as the bread that came down from heaven. Nothing short of Jesus in the heart as the hope of glory can ever satisfy a quickened soul. And when He does shed abroad His love, when He vouchsafes His gracious presence, when He applies His atoning blood, the heart is filled. It wants no more; it is satisfied—abundantly satisfied. It has all it can enjoy, and all it wants to enjoy. And were it always to enjoy this, it would be heaven below.

"I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." You see, my friends, who those are that God gives this blessing to. It is to those that love Jesus. And who love Him but those who have felt their need of Him, and have had faith raised up in their hearts to believe in His name? "Unto you, therefore, which believe, He is precious." This faith that works by love He implants when He leads in the way of righteousness by giving a glimpse of His lovely Person and glorious righteousness. This is the commencement of the kingdom of God in the soul, the first discovery of the treasure hid in the field of the Word. And this treasure enriches the heart by beggaring it, and writing poverty upon everything else in it but itself. The soul is thus made willing to follow as He leads, even through the paths of judgment, that its treasures may be filled. What are a few coins? They are soon spent and gone. But they teach

what gold is, and make the heart long for more. Even the paths of judgment become, if not welcome, at least endurable, when in them treasure is found. But many times we would be glad to have "our treasures filled," but we do not like God's way of filling them. But this is what He says, and can His words be altered? We must be led by Himself in the way of righteousness, we must be guided by Himself in the midst of the paths of judgment, and then at times He will cause us "to inherit substance," and we shall find what a substance there is in His love; and He will fill our hearts with those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, love and power, which it hath pleased the Father should dwell in Him, that out of Him we may receive, and grace for grace.