

## The Lord's Thoughts

Preached at Jewry Street Chapel, Aldgate, on Thursday Evening, July 22, 1847

"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me."  
Psalm 40:17

There is one passage of Scripture frequently read, and as frequently quoted, and yet, it is to be feared, little understood, and less laid to heart. The passage to which I refer is that striking one, Isaiah 55:8, 9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Two distinct and marked things are here said of "God's thoughts." *first*, that they are not "our thoughts;" in other words, that they are diametrically opposite; and *secondly*, that "as the heavens are higher than the earth," so are the thoughts and ways of God higher than the thoughts and ways of man. This solemn declaration of the Most High is not true merely in one or two instances; it runs through the whole of the divine economy; it is the description of what all God's purposes are as distinct from the purposes of man. And, therefore, this opposition of divine ways to human ways, and this infinite superiority of the thoughts of God to the thoughts of man, will not be merely in one or two particulars, but will run in diametrical contrast with every thought, natural thought, of the human heart, and with every way, natural way, of the human mind.

This we may see by casting a glance at the world around us, where, as the Lord says, "the things which are highly esteemed among men are an abomination in the sight of God." The pride, ambition, pleasures, and amusements, in

which we see thousands and tens of thousands engaged, and sailing down the stream into an awful gulph of eternity, are all an abomination in the sight of God; whereas the things which men despise, such as faith, hope, love, humility, brokenness of heart, tenderness of conscience, contrition of spirit, sorrow for sin, self-loathing, and self-abasement; looking to Jesus, taking up the cross, denying one self, walking in the strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life—in a word, *the power of godliness*—is despised by all, and by none so much as mere heady professors, who have a name to live while dead.

It would appear from the words of the text (which are true in the first instance especially of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is he that speaks throughout, though true also with respect to every faithful follower of the Lamb), that the Psalmist cast his eyes around him, and as he saw men at large pursuing every device and imagination of their heart, and beheld how the world lavished its smiles, honours, and approbation upon the great and rich, that he threw a glance at his own state naturally and spiritually, and summed up the feelings of his soul in this divine reflection, as though he would contrast himself with the giddy multitude, "But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me." 'Men may despise and trample me under foot, and cast me out, yet the Lord Jehovah thinketh upon me. What need I more? Let me then still be "poor and needy," if the Lord thinketh upon me, I have every thing that my heart can desire.'

Our text consists of two clauses. With God's blessing, we may take these up as the two leading divisions of our subject.

I.—"But I am poor and needy." What an honest confession! How suitable to the experience of every God-taught soul! Let

us contrast this humble confession with the boast that fell from the lips of the Laodicean church, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Mark the contrast! The dead, carnal, lifeless professor, boasting, "I am rich!" and the exercised, tried, tempted child of God, confessing, "I am poor!" The one, full of pride, and glorying in self: the other, broken, humble, contrite, and laid low at the footstool of mercy!

"But I am poor and needy." There must be some distinction between these two expressions. The Holy Ghost, who inspired God's holy word, we cannot think would use tautology. We may not indeed be always able to see the minute differences of inspired expressions; yet we may be sure that God the Spirit could not write in any other way than in language most expressive, and most divinely suitable to set forth the mind and will of God. We may, therefore, I think, safely establish some distinction between these two expressions, as descriptive of the felt emptiness and nothingness of the living soul.

i. First, then, with respect to the expression. "*I am poor.*" What does it imply? Does it not, at the very least, presuppose the absence of riches? But, of course, we are to understand the word in a spiritual sense. We are not to consider the Psalmist, in using these words, was speaking altogether of natural poverty. It is true, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the great exemplar of his people, and from whose lips these words prophetically fell, was a poor man; for he had not where to lay his head, and was sustained by the contributions of his followers. And there were times in David's life, in which he too was poor, when hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, and had to look to men, as in the case of Nabal, to support him with the bread that perisheth. But we should sadly limit the mind and meaning of

the blessed Spirit, if we restricted the word "poverty," here to natural poverty; for there are many who are deeply involved in natural poverty, who can never from a feeling heart say: "Yet the Lord thinketh upon me."

It is *spiritual poverty*, then, that the Spirit specially speaks of when he puts this language into the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his spiritual followers: "I am poor;" for though the majority of the Lord's people are poor literally, yet all are poor in spiritual things, when made so by a work of God the Holy Ghost upon their hearts.

But in order more fully to open up the mind of the blessed Spirit here, we will, as the Lord may enable, enter into a few particulars, wherein the child of God is made to feel himself poor.

1. First, then, with respect to his own *righteousness*. No man can really say before a heart-searching God, "I am poor," who has any shred of creature righteousness left, and who is not utterly stripped of all dependence on his own doings or performances. If a man has not, by the powerful hand of God in his conscience, been stripped of every rag and thread of creature righteousness, he cannot, he dare not, if an honest man, say before God, "I am poor." Now, it is the special work and teaching of the Spirit in the soul, to strip us of all our own righteousness. To it by nature we ardently cleave; we weave our spider's web, and, like Adam of old, would fain pluck leaves off the fig-tree, that we may stand clothed before God in them. But the blessed Spirit, in his divine work on the conscience, will never suffer us to stand before God in one rag or thread of our own righteousness, but will strip us completely bare. And this he does by working in us from time to time such a sight and sense of what we are in the sight of God; by giving us such views and solemn discoveries of

God's purity, majesty, and holiness; and by such an opening up of the breadth and spirituality of the law in our conscience, that we are forced to fall down before him, and cry, "Unclean, unclean."

2. But not only have we by nature these tatters of legal righteousness, from which we must be completely stripped; but we have also a great stock of *creature strength*. It is often a long time in the experience of God's people before they are brought to be, as the apostle says, "without strength;" to be completely weak. Many of the Lord's people often have some lurking hope that they can do something—that surely they can obtain something in answer to prayer—that they can read and understand God's word—that they can cast themselves at the footstool of mercy—that surely they may take hold of some promise suitable to their case—that they may stretch forth their hands, and bring into their souls some little encouragement out of God's own invitations.

There is in many a heart even when circumcised to fear God's name, this lurking creature strength; of which and out of which it has to be completely stripped. But when we are brought by painful teaching into that spot where we cannot raise up one spiritual thought, cannot breathe forth a spiritual groan, if by so doing we could save our souls from the bottomless pit; and feel as dependent, as completely dependent, upon the almighty power of God, as the clay is dependent upon the potter's hand to work it into a vessel fit for the master's use; then may we be said to be "poor" not merely as regards our own righteousness, but "poor" also as regards all our own strength. There is a common idea, that after the Lord has quickened the soul, man has power to do something. But I believe the children of God are deeply convinced, through a long series of painful exercises, that they have no more power to draw forth living into actual exercise, living hope into actual operation, or living love into

actual enjoyment, than they had power in the first instance to kindle faith, or hope, or love in their souls.

3. But again. It is a long time before we are completely stripped of all *creature wisdom*. This is one of the strong holds out of which we are driven as from a last refuge. We have, perhaps, heard and sat under ministers who have preached the gospel with a considerable degree of clearness, and set forth the doctrines with marked ability, and perhaps superior eloquence. These doctrines we have imbibed from their lips; and until the Lord was pleased to exercise our souls; we may have thought a knowledge of the doctrines was the ultimatum, the sum and substance, the Alpha and Omega of vital godliness. But after a time the Lord was pleased to lead us into darkness, and not into light; perhaps some powerful temptation beset us, or sin began to work as sin never worked before; or Satan was allowed to tempt us as Satan never was allowed to tempt us before. Or there was, as Mr. Hart speaks 'a breaking up of the fountains of the great deep within.' And under this solemn view, as ruined bankrupts, most wretched sinners, we begin to find that all our once fancied wisdom has made to itself wings and flown away; that when we are brought into spiritual trials, powerful temptations, and deep waters of affliction, all our wisdom, all our knowledge of the doctrines of grace, and all that clear scheme which we once thought we so well understood, fail us at the very hour that we need it most; and we are brought to see and feel that nothing but divine manifestations, the powerful testimonies of God to our conscience, and the lifting up of the light and life of his blessed face can raise us up out of these waters wherein we are sunk.

4. But again. Poverty not merely implies an utter want of everything to which we can look, everything on which we can hang, and everything of which we can make our boast; but it

also implies a *poverty of spirit*; as the Lord says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:3.) A man can only be poor in heart, as he is brought down in his soul to be sensible of his utter poverty in divine things. Nor can he be truly and really "poor in spirit," until he has seen an end of all perfection, and is made by the hand of God to feel himself nothing but ruin, guilt, and misery. This creates poverty of spirit; not merely the *doctrine* of poverty of spirit, which we may adopt as well as any other doctrine; nor mere letter experience, in which we may make ourselves wise as well as in the doctrines of truth; but a real broken, humble, contrite spirit before God. So that when we come into the presence of his divine Majesty, we feel what we profess to be, nothing before him, absolutely nothing; "poor and needy;" being nothing and having nothing in ourselves but a mass of wretchedness and ruin.

ii. But we pass on to consider what may be applied by the expression "*needy*." I think, without straining the phrase, we may take it to mean—needing everything suitable to our poverty: "poor," first—"needy," afterwards: "poor," as being stripped of all fancied good; and "needy," as being made to need those mercies and blessings which are adapted and suitable to that state of poverty.

We may look at it *naturally*. How many wretched mendicants are there in our streets! They are "poor," because they have nothing; and "needy," because they have need of everything. Thus *spiritually*. The child of God is "poor," when he has not in himself anything spiritually good; when he is brought to utter destitution; when he looks within, and feels he is nothing but a mass of beggary, bankruptcy, insolvency, and complete ruin before God. And he is "needy," when the blessed Spirit, who has brought him down into the depths of poverty, sets before his eyes and raises up in his heart a

sense of, and a desire for, those things which are so blessedly adapted to the wants of a soul taught its spiritual poverty. And indeed, poverty must ever be the necessary preparation for need. The two cannot be inverted. Poverty comes first to strip us of all fancied good. And then, after poverty, need is deeply felt. Thus, when the blessed Spirit has been pleased to make us poor, really poor, before the eyes of a heart-searching God, and raised up in us that poverty of spirit which Christ has so specially blessed, he is also pleased to set before our eyes, in sovereign mercy, those spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, which are so suitable to the state of poverty into which he has brought the soul. For instance,

1. I have been endeavouring to show, if we have been taught our spiritual poverty, we have been completely stripped of all *creature righteousness*. Does not this open up a way for the manifestation of a righteousness which is suitable to us? Being stripped of our own, and brought in guilty before God, how suitable, how blessedly suitable is the righteousness, the glorious righteousness of the Son of God, when displayed before our eyes, and brought with some divine power into our conscience! But it is the preceding poverty, the having no righteousness of our own, that instrumentally makes us long after, and deeply prize the righteousness of Christ imputed unto us, and made known to us by the power of the Spirit. Thus, the "needy" seek and long after, and when revealed, cleave unto, the spotless obedience of Immanuel, as an all-justifying robe, shielding and sheltering them from the justice of an offended God.

2. But we need *strength* also, when we are brought into real poverty of spirit: so that we can feelingly take up the language on our lips, that we are "poor and needy," when stripped of all creature strength. Yet there is a desire in our

souls to believe. 'O, could I but believe!' the soul will sometimes cry. And is there not a desire raised up in the heart to know and to hope in the Lord, to feel him precious, to enjoy the sweet manifestation of his mercy and love, and experience the blessed application of his atoning blood to the conscience? Yet poverty, heart-felt poverty, has brought us into that state before God,—that we have no strength to know, to believe, to love, to hope in God's mercy, to enjoy his presence, to delight in his manifestations, and realize a sense of his eternal favour to our souls.

Thus, *poverty*, by leading us into a knowledge of our utter weakness, leads us also into a feeling *necessity* for the strength of Christ to be made perfect in our weakness. And when the Lord is pleased to raise up faith in our souls whereby we look unto Jesus, to give us a good hope through grace, "an anchor within the veil," to shed abroad the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and to communicate some testimony of our interest in his atoning blood, how suitable, how blessedly suitable are all these heavenly blessings to our poverty and necessity!

3. Again. I observed that in real poverty we have *no wisdom*. It is all dried up. We might once have slaked our thirst at human pools, and thought to make ourselves wise in the letter of the word. How many are running after human attainments, as though these could profit them in the things of God! But sooner or later, we are brought to this spot, that nothing short of divine teaching can make us wise unto salvation; that nothing but that wisdom which cometh from above can really profit us; and that everything short of divine illumination, divine manifestation, and divine application, leaves our soul empty, ignorant, naked and bare.

Thus, through poverty of spirit, as regards a feeling sense of

our ignorance in divine things, we come to be "needy." And this need manifests itself in leading us from time to time to sigh and cry for that special teaching which makes the soul wise unto salvation.

This experience will be the experience of every child of God. It is not a particular standard erected of so many feet high, and all that comes short of this must have their heads cut off. But it is the experience of every child of God in proportion to the Spirit's work upon the heart. All cannot perhaps go into the same depths; all are not equally exercised; all have not their heart ploughed up with the same measure of conviction; all are not brought down into the same sense of their ruin and wretchedness; and yet all, so far as they are under divine teaching, are "poor and needy;" all are stripped of creature righteousness, creature strength, and creature wisdom; and all are made to need, deeply need, atoning blood, justifying righteousness, and the manifestations of divine mercy and love, so that nothing can satisfy them but God's manifested favour to their souls.

This evening I look around me, and see many assembled here, and, doubtless, many who profess to know the truth in Jesus—let me ask you, in all affection and tenderness, can you, can you from the bottom of your heart, say, "I am poor and needy?" 'Lord, when I look up unto thee, I feel myself nothing in thy sight; all my strength, all my wisdom, all my righteousness, all my once boasted attainments, all my creature religion, all my fleshly holiness, everything I once leant upon and highly prized, I see it all wretchedness and ruin. Before thee I stand, the heart-searching God, having nothing and being nothing, and yet at times breathing forth the desires of my soul that thou wouldst teach me, guide me, lead me, bless me, and manifest thyself to my soul!"

II.—Now, if you can go thus far with me, we will go a step further, which leads me on to our second division,—*"Yet the Lord thinketh upon me."* Great words, great words! How do I come to know them? What evidence, what testimony had David that the Lord thought upon him? Had he been taken up to the third heaven, and looked into God's thoughts? or had an angel let down the book of life, and shewn to his bodily eyes that his name was there, and therefore God thought upon him for good? O no; it was an internal testimony in the court of conscience; an evidence not visible to the outward eye, nor audible to the outward ear, but dropped into his soul from the very court of heaven itself.

But this it will be desirable further to illustrate. There is some deep truth couched here; God enable us to look at it in the light of the Spirit. God's thoughts were always upon his church from all eternity; and his thoughts were upon her for good.

i. It was in consequence of Jehovah's thinking upon her that ever she had *a being*. And how did Jehovah manifest that he thought upon his Zion? By making an eternal covenant on her behalf; by choosing her in Christ before all worlds; and by designing and planning a wondrous way by which she should be eternally interested in this eternal covenant, "ordered in all things and sure." God thought eternally upon his Zion; and everything brought forth in time is the result of those eternal thoughts that were ever in his bosom. When he spake this world into being, his thoughts were still set on his Zion. It was for her that this world was created. This earth in which we live is but a scaffolding, by which the temple of mercy is built up. All the arrangements around us were entered into prospectively for the benefit of the church of Christ.

ii. He thought upon her when he sent *his dear Son* for her benefit and on her behalf; when, in the appointed time, the only begotten Son came forth from the bosom of the Father, and took in the womb of the Virgin Mary our human nature into union with his divine Person.

iii. God thought upon his Zion while the Lord Jesus Christ was journeying here below, in this vale of tears. Jesus thought upon his Zion continually, for he was then working out a glorious righteousness whereby she should be eternally saved. When grovelling in the garden of Gethsemane, his thoughts of Zion forced the sweat, the bloody sweat, from his agonizing brow. When he was stretched a bleeding victim upon the cross, between heaven and earth, deserted by man and forsaken of God, then he thought upon his Zion; he thought of her as her sins passed in solemn array before his eyes, and he underwent the penalty due to each and thus, while thinking of his Zion, he bought her with his own blood. When he ascended up into glory, and took his exalted station at God's right hand, he thought upon his bride. And still he thinks upon his Zion. Her name is cut deep upon his heart, and worn upon his breast. His thoughts towards her are thoughts of love, thoughts of peace and not of evil. She is continually in his thoughts, perpetually in his heart's affections.

iv. But let us bring this down more closely into personal experience, because it is of personal experience the Psalmist here speaks—"The Lord thinketh upon me." When the Lord brought you into being, he thought upon you; the parent from whom you sprung, the situation of life in which you were born, and all the circumstances which have accompanied you up to the present hour, were all the subject of his thoughts, were but the results of what had passed through his infinite and eternal mind. He thought upon you

during the careless hours of childhood, and the wreckless years of manhood. He thought upon you when you were sporting with your souls, and trifling with eternity. He thought upon you in sickness, when he raised you up from the brink of the grave. He thought upon you when surrounded by dangers on the right hand and on the left, and kept you from being hurried by them into eternity. His eye was upon you for good during every hour and every moment of your unregenerate life; and when the time came for him to visit you with his grace, and bring you to a sense of your lost and undone state before him, he thought upon you. And because his thoughts were upon you, the arrow of conviction flew from his bow and lodged in your conscience. He thought upon you during all the time you were suffering under guilt and trouble; and so thought upon you that conviction brought not down your soul into absolute despair. He thought upon you when a word from time to time came to relieve your mind, when some gleam of hope shone upon your soul, when some sweet invitation came into your heart with life, feeling, and power. He thought upon you when he brought you under the preached word. He thought upon you when he sent some testimony of his mercy and love into your soul. And he so thinks upon you, if you are a vessel of mercy, as if there were no one else to think of; as though you engrossed all the thoughts of the Godhead; for such is the infinite nature of the Godhead that he can think upon all his elect at the same moment, and yet think of each, as if each occupied the whole of his eternal mind.

'But,' say you, and say I, 'we want to have some in eternal testimony that the Lord thinketh upon us. We want to say, with a feeling heart, as the Psalmist said, "The Lord thinketh upon me," and to know that he does.' Let us trace this out.

1. Have you never been in straits in providence? Have you

never been exercised about your daily bread, how doors would be opened to provide you with an honourable maintenance? You have; we all have, in a measure. Now when the Lord was pleased to open *this* door and open *that* door, or raise up *this* friend and raise up *that* friend, at the very time you needed it; sent you just that sum of money to pay that bill you were so anxious about; or, by the hand of an enemy, as Elijah was fed by the ravens, fed your poor perishing body—was not this some evidence that the Lord thinketh upon you? If he had not thought upon you for good, would that friend have come, or that letter have arrived, just at the very nick of time? would that door have been opened, or that relief have appeared, which was so suitable to your case? Surely, if you can trace out one or two, or more such marked instances, if you can thus see the finger of God, you may say, "The Lord thinketh upon me."

2. Again. If you have been tried with any peculiar temptation, or anything has been laid very powerfully upon your conscience, so that you were compelled, absolutely compelled, to make it a matter of prayer; **did you not** [**perhaps, you did not?**] come to the Lord in a cold and formal manner, or say, 'I will pray about this thing, as it is my duty to do; but prayer was pressed out of you by the force of circumstances—by a weight and burden which compelled you to cry to the Lord, because there was no other quarter whence relief could come; if your prayer was then heard and answered—if it was clearly manifested that the Lord heard the cry and sigh of your soul—can you not write upon that answer to prayer, "The Lord thinketh upon me? "If the Lord had not thought upon you, he would never have heard that prayer. It is a testimony in your soul that the Lord thinketh upon you, if he ever heard and answered any petition that went up out of your labouring bosom.

3. But again. You may have been in some peculiar trial of mind, such as you never were in before; and therefore you needed special relief. This is the way, I believe, the Lord deals with his people. He does not deal with them in generals. He brings them into particulars—into special spots, where none but himself can appear, relieve, and bless. Now if you have been brought into a special trial of soul, have laboured under a special temptation, or have been entangled in a special snare, and then the Lord was pleased to apply a promise to your heart, or drop a word into your soul exactly suitable to your state and case, so exactly suitable that if you had taken the Bible to pieces and selected a text, you could not have found one so appropriate—if the Lord dropped such a word into your soul, and it brought with it sweet relief—can you not say, "The Lord thinketh upon me?" If he did not think upon you, if your concerns were not near to his eternal mind, if your case did not lie upon his heart,—would he, could he, have dropped that precise promise into your soul, that very word into your heart, which was made so sweet and precious?

4. Or, again, you may have turned aside from the right path. And who is not guilty here? Who does not inwardly backslide, if kept from open backslidings? But the Lord sees our backslidings, and sends us reproofs for them. If we are chastened, it is an evidence that we are God's children, for all are partakers of chastisement who are sons. Now, if the Lord sees that you are going out of the path, become proud and lifted up, slipped into carnal security, satisfied with a name to live, got into that miserable state of self-sufficiency and wretched dead assurance in which so many are wrapped up—if the Lord, seeing this, begins to work upon your conscience, to rebuke you, and even to lay on his chastening hand, by bringing affliction on your body, and trouble into your soul, you can say, "The Lord thinketh upon me;" for if

the Lord did not think upon you, he would not thus use his chastening hand to bring you out of these ways of evil.

5. Again. If your soul, from time to time, has been revived in the things of God; if when you have been dark, cold, carnal, hard-hearted, and unfeeling, and have come under the ministry of some of God's sent servants, the word has been blessed to break you down, to melt you, to refresh you, to encourage you, to bring you once more to the feet of Jesus with godly sorrow for your backslidings, and earnest desires to live to his glory—there is a testimony that God thinketh upon you.

6. Again. If the Lord has ever given to you a testimony of your interest in the love and blood of the Lamb; if he has ever sealed the pardon of your sins upon your soul, shed abroad his love in your heart, and whispered into your conscience that peace which passeth understanding—there is another evidence, another convincing testimony, that the Lord thinketh upon you; for if he had not thought upon you, he never would have shed abroad his love in your soul, he never would have applied the precious blood of sprinkling to your conscience.

But there doubtless are those among us who can scarcely rise up to the language of the text. I would observe that we have in it the strongest language of assurance; and yet, remark how it is blended with the deepest self-abasement! I believe in my conscience that the two always go together. We never can have assurance, except so far as it stands in a broken heart and a contrite spirit; for God does not throw away his favours. He does not give the sweet assurance of his love to harden the heart, to make us carnal and worldly-minded, to let us think lightly of sin and the wretched evils that accompany sin. But where the Lord breaks a soul down

into contrition and penitence, into self-loathing and godly sorrow, by giving him a sight and sense of pardoned sin—in that soil alone does the tree of assurance grow. There can be no real assurance, springing from the testimony of God, unless it stands in a broken heart and a contrite spirit. If, then, you hear ministers always preaching about assurance, and see them proud, covetous, worldly-minded, and their conversation one tissue of levity, jocoseness, and frivolity, you may be well assured that their assurance does not come from the mouth of God to their soul. On the other hand, when you see a poor, needy, broken-hearted child of God lie low at the footstool of mercy, and the Lord is pleased to raise up in his heart some sweet testimony of his interest in the love and blood of the Lamb, enabling him to rejoice in the Lord, and to feel how precious Jesus is to his soul—that assurance springs from the testimony of God, for it stands in a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

But, I say, there may be children of God here who cannot rise up to this language. They may *hope* that the Lord thinks upon them, but they cannot speak it with that feeling of confidence which the Psalmist does. They can say "I am poor and needy;" but to carry it out with full assurance, "yet the Lord thinketh upon me," they cannot, they dare not. And yet they have testimonies, could they but view them in the light of the Spirit, that the Lord thinketh upon them. Why did the Lord, in the first instance, awaken you to a sense of your lost and ruined state? Why did he shoot his arrows of conviction into your conscience? Why did he bring you with weeping and supplication to the footstool of mercy? Why did he make Jesus precious to your soul? Why did he ever give you a heart to seek his face, to cleave to him for mercy and salvation, and to take a delight in his name? Why did he ever visit your soul with his promises and sweet invitations, and raise up in your heart that spiritual-mindedness which is life

and peace? Why did he show you the glory of Christ and illuminate the eyes of your understanding to see his suitability to every want of your soul? Why has the Lord appeared for you in providence, heard your prayers, delivered your soul, and brought you out of temptation? Why has he, from time to time, laid upon you his afflictive hand, his chastening rod? Because he thinketh upon you. Nay, I may add one word more—do you think upon him? If you think upon him, there is evidence that he thinketh upon you. There is a promise to those that think upon his name; "a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." (Mal. 3:16.) And thus the church confesses, "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." (Isa. 26:8.) Are there not solemn seasons in your soul, when you think upon the Lord? When you lie awake, perhaps at midnight, thinking upon God, upon his truth, his love, his word, his dealings with your soul, and your desires, prayers, and breathings all flow forth to his sacred Majesty—is not this some evidence that you are thinking upon his name? And be assured that if you think upon him, he has thought upon you. Look at the giddy multitude. Do they think upon God? Is he in all their thoughts? Are their minds ever fixed upon the solemn things of eternity? Is Jesus ever felt to be precious to their souls? Do they pant after him as the hart after the water brooks? No, their language is, "There is no God." It is not their spoken language, but it is their inward language. But through mercy you can say, that you think upon God; and thus there is some evidence, though you cannot rise up to the assurance of it, that he thinketh upon you. And if he thinks upon you, his thoughts are thoughts of good, thoughts of peace, and not of evil. Does he not read your heart? Does he not know your trials? Does not his holy eye look into the very secret recesses of your soul? And if he thinks upon you, will he leave you, give you up, abandon you in the hour when

you need him most? No; he who thought upon you in eternity, will think on you in time, in every hour of trial, every scene of temptation, every season of sickness, and in the solemn hour when soul and body part. Through life and in death, he will still be thinking of you; and will bring you at last to that heavenly abode where these two things will be blessedly combined—the Lord's ever thinking upon his Zion, and his Zion ever thinking upon him.