

***"My soul cleaveth unto the dust;  
quicken thou me according to thy word."***

Psalm 119:25

Sin is no trifle to a child of God. It is his heaviest sorrow. Thus David--thus the Great Apostle found it. (Ps. xxxviii. 4. Rom. vii. 24.) And where is the believer who has not full sympathy with their complaints? To have a *soul cleaving to the dust*, and not to feel the trouble, is the black mark of a sinner, dead in sins--dead to God. To "know the plague of our own heart" (1 Kings, viii. 38), to feel our misery, to believe and to apply the remedy (Rom. vii. 24, 25), is the satisfactory evidence of a child of God. *Dust* is the portion of the world, and they wish for no better. But that the soul of the man of God should continually *cleave to the dust*, is most strange and humbling. And yet such is the influence of his evil nature--such the power of self-will and self-indulgence--such the regard to human praise, and cherishing of self-admiration, that were it not that he "abhors himself" for the very *dust that cleaves* to him, he would question the existence of a renewing change. He knows what he ought to be. He has tasted the blessedness of "mounting upward on eagles' wings." (Isa. xl. 31.) But every attempt to rise is hindered by the clogging weight that keeps him down. It is, however, the *cleaving of his soul* that is so painful--not occasional, but constant--not like the bird of the morning that descends for a moment, and then soars his upward flight; but it seems as if, like the "serpent--dust was to be his meat" (Isa. lxxv. 25); as if the spiritual, heaven-born soul was to sink and grovel below. And then, as the dust of the summer-road blinds the eye, and obscures the prospect: how does this earthliness of soul darken the view of the Saviour, dim the eye of faith, and hide the glorious prospects which, when beheld in the clear horizon, enliven the weary pilgrim on his way!

But this complaint is the language of conflict and humiliation--not of despondency. Mark the believer carrying it to the Lord--"Here I lie in the *dust*, without life or power. Oh! thou Saviour, who "camest that I might have life, and that I might have it more abundantly" (John, x. 10)--*Quicken me: Breathe into me thine own life, that I may rise from the dust, and cleave to thee.*" This cry for quickening grace is the exercise of faith. We have a covenant to plead. Faith is the hand that takes hold of the promise--"*according to thy word.*" Can this word fail? "Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than one jot or one tittle pass" from the engagements of a covenant-keeping God. "He is faithful that hath promised." (Heb. x. 23; with Luke, xxi. 33.) The man who takes hold of this plea, is "a Prince who has power with God, and prevails." (Gen. xxxii. 28.)

But how different is the character of the mere professor! ready probably to make the same confession, yet without humiliation, without prayer, without faith. Nothing is more common than to hear the complaint--"*My soul cleaveth unto the dust.*" The world has such power over us--we are so cold--so dead to spiritual things: while, perhaps, the complaint is never once brought with wrestling supplication, but rather urged in indolent self-complacency, as an evidence of the good state of the heart before God. Yet it is not the complaint of sickness, but an application to the physician, that advances the recovery of the patient. We do not usually expect to better our condition, by mourning over its

badness, or merely wishing for its improvement. Nor is it the confession of sin, but the application to the Great Physician, that marks genuine contrition before God. That confession which evaporates in heartless complaints, belongs not to the tenderness of a renewed heart. But the utterance of genuine prayer is the voice of God's own "Spirit making intercession for us;" and then, indeed, how cheering the encouragement, that he "that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God!" (Rom. viii. 26, 27.) Some are ready to give up or delay their duty, when they have been unable to bring their heart to it. Thus does "Satan get advantage of us" by our "ignorance of his devices." *Quickening* grace is not the ground or warrant for duty. Indisposition to duty is not our weakness, but our sin--not therefore to be indulged, but resisted. We must mourn over the dulness that hinders us, and diligently wait for the 'help we every moment need.' God keeps the grace in his own hands, and gives it at his pleasure, to exercise our daily dependence upon him. (Philip. ii. 12, 13.) The acting of grace strengthens the habit. Praying helps to pray. If the door is closed, "Knock, and it shall be opened." (Matt. vii. 7, 8.) Assuredly it will not long be shut to him, who has faith and patience to wait until it be opened.

Now let me sift the character of my profession. Is it an habitual, persevering, overcoming conflict with sin? Do I not sometimes indulge in fruitless bemoanings of my state, when I had far better be exercising myself in vigorous actings of grace? If I find "*my soul cleaving to the dust*," am I not sometimes "lying on my face" (Josh. vii. 10), when I ought to be "taking heaven by violence" (Matt. xi. 12), by importunate petitions for *quickening* grace? Are my prayers invigorated by confidence in the word of God? Oh! let me remember that "they that wait upon the Lord" shall shake off *the dust* to which they have *cleaved* so long, and "shall mount with wings like eagles" (Isa. xl. 31), to take possession of their heavenly home.

O Lord, make me more deeply ashamed, that "*my soul should cleave to the dust*." Breathe upon me fresh influence from thy *quickening* Spirit. Help me to plead thy word of promise; and oh! may every fresh view of my sinfulness, while it prostrates me in self-abasement before thee, be overruled to make the Saviour daily and hourly more precious to my soul. For defiled as I am in myself, in every service of my heart, what but the unceasing application of his blood, and the uninterrupted prevalence of his intercession, give me a moment's confidence before thee, or prevent the very sins that mingle with my prayers from sealing my condemnation? Blessed Saviour! it is nothing but thy everlasting merit, covering my person, and honouring my sacrifice, that satisfies the justice of an offended God, and restrains it from breaking forth as a devouring fire, to consume me upon my very knees.