

Our Daily Walk

Daily Meditations and a Prayer for Each Day

By
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VOLUME One

About the Author:

The ministry of Dr. F.B. Meyer was one of the most widely influential in the twentieth century. He had memorable pastorates in York, Leicester and London, which were sufficient of themselves to establish his lasting fame. But his influence was worldwide. Like John Wesley, he was an incessant traveller. Everywhere his intimate and memorable presentation of the Gospel brought blessing to multitudes. His biographer, Dr. W.Y. Fullerton, has described Meyer as “one of the greatest heralds of the faith delivered to the saints”. His outstanding gifts as preacher, expositor, pastor and administrator were all subordinated to his supreme aim—to win men and women to Christ, and to lead believers into closer fellowship with Him.

About this Series:

Here is the perfect gift book of daily devotional readings by one of whom it may truly be said that the world was his parish and Christ was his life. Each day’s reading for the year is given a theme based upon a text of Scripture and provides a concise exposition followed by a prayer. *Our Daily Walk* is a veritable treasure house of wisdom and courage and whoever possesses and uses it for a year will surely find his devotion to Christ deepened, his zeal for Christian service quickened and his life enriched.

Note: This devotional can be accessed at: www.lifebpc.com/devotions
It is also available for downloading on to Palm handheld devices.

MAKING A FRESH START

Ephesians 4:22-24 “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Romans 13:14 “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

WE can all start afresh! However far we have ascended, there is something higher; and however far we have fallen, it is always possible to make a fresh start. We need to take our place in the School of Christ and be taught by Him (Eph 4:20-21).

“The old man” which we must “put off” is clearly our former manner of life. If we have not put it entirely away, let us do so now by an immediate act of faith in the living Spirit. It does not take long for a beggar to put off his rags and take instead a new suit of clothes, and it need not take a moment longer to put away habits and thoughts, ways of speech and life which are unworthy of the children of God. Do it now, and look up to the Holy Spirit to keep renewing you in the spirit of your mind.

But more than this, let us “put on the new man,” which is the life of Jesus Christ, that ideal which is in the likeness of God, and which the Lord created for us by His blessed life and death and resurrection. But to enable us to live this life we need the daily help of the Holy Spirit. He entered our hearts at the moment of regeneration, and has been with us ever since. We may not have realised His entry, but we believe it because of the assurance of 1 Cor 6:19; Rom 8:9; Eph 3:16. For my part, I like to begin every day, before lifting my head from the pillow, by saying, “Thou art within, O Spirit of Christ, though I feel Thee not.”

If the Holy Spirit be ungrieved He will witness to our sonship; He will enthrone Christ as King of our life; keep the self-life in the place of death; give us a hunger for the things of God and give us power in witness-bearing. In order to have a strong and blessed Christian experience, the one thing is to see that we do not grieve the Spirit. I do not think that we can grieve Him away, but we may greatly limit and restrain His gracious work by insincerity of speech, the nursing of an unforgiving spirit, any kind of over-reaching or fraudulent dealing, impurity of speech, or failure in love. We may be bound, so as not to be able to move our arms, by a number of cotton threads, quite as tightly as by a strong rope-thong. Let us take care not to grieve Him by such inconsistencies.

PRAYER—*Fulfil in me, O God, those desires of goodness which Thou hast created in my heart, and perfect the work of faith, that Jesus Christ may be glorified in me. AMEN.*

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

Philippians 2:5 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

IN the paragraph from which these words are taken, the wonderful description of our Lord's descent to share our shame and sorrow is cited by the Apostle, that it might become a living impulse and inspiration to ourselves, not to look upon our own things, not to hold them with a tight grasp, but to be willing to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ, who became the instrument through which God wrought out His redeeming purpose.

Guided by the Spirit of God, the Apostle opens the compasses of his imagination and faith, and places the one point upon the throne of the eternal God, and the other upon the cross of shame where Jesus died, and shows us the steps by which He approached nearer and nearer to human need and sin; that, having embraced us in our low estate, He might carry us back with Himself to the throne of God; and that by identifying Himself with our sin and sorrow, He might ultimately identify us with the glory that He had with the Father before the world was.

"Let this mind be in you." Kepler, the great astronomer, said, when turning his telescope to the stars: "I am thinking over again the first thoughts of God." But we can think earlier thoughts than have been written by the finger of God on the heavens and earth. We are able to think some of the thoughts that filled the heart of Jesus, when, before the foundation of the world, He stood forth as the Lamb to be slain.

The Apostle bids us think as Jesus thought; do not look exclusively upon your own interests; do not count anything of your own worthy to stand in the way, but always be prepared to deny yourself that through you God's redeeming love may pass to those that need His help. We must be willing to lay aside ambition and glory that we may be the better able to succour others. There is no other way to sit with Jesus on His throne; no other method of assisting Him in His great mission. Many who would sit on the right and left of His throne will never reach it, because they refuse to bear His cross, to submit to shame and spitting, to misunderstanding and hatred. We must take the low seat, do the unnoticed tasks, refuse the honour which comes from human lips, or we can never be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man.

PRAYER—*We ask, O Lord, that we may be so filled with these thoughts throughout the day, that our earthly life may be inspired with the spirit of Heaven. May we go to and fro about our business as those who have seen the face of God, and with the light of the other world upon our faces. AMEN.*

CHRIST OUR FRIEND

John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

I HAVE read somewhere that when Michaelangelo was in the height of his fame, a boy named Raphael—destined to be his worthy successor—was introduced to him as a promising pupil. At first the lad was employed in the simplest duties of the studio, cleaning brushes and mixing paints, but as he developed the qualities of exactness, punctuality, and sympathy, he became entrusted with increasing responsibility, until the master made him his friend and confidant. So we come to Christ, first, as redeemed from the slavery of Satan, to be His servants, and He calls us His friends.

A friend will reveal himself. All the world may suppose that it knows a famous man, but after all, if he calls me his friend, I expect to get closer to him and hear from his own lips items of confidential information. Thus it is with the Lord Jesus. He manifests Himself to those who love Him, and keep His word, as He does not to the world.

A friend will interest his friends in his undertakings. It is a joy to Christ when those whom He loves are able to take a share in His worldwide redemptive schemes. For us, of course, it is a high honour, but it is as great a pleasure and delight to Him as it is for some loving soul to have the pleasure of working with that other twin-soul, to which it is attached. It is wonderful that Jesus is glad to have us as His fellow-workers.

A friend will be interested in our failures and successes. Not otherwise is it with our Lord. When He sees some peril menacing us, does He not make the trial-hour one of special intercession? If *we fail*, He meets us with the same tender affection, not alienated from us, but only intensely sorry, ready to point out the cause of our failure and to encourage us to try again. If *we stand our ground*, He meets us as we come forth from the fight, glad for us, eager to refresh us in our weariness, careful to heal any wound that we may have received.

Such is the friendship of Jesus. He is always the same, His love never wanes, its manifestations are never remiss. Is it not worthwhile to make every effort so to keep His commandments that our entire abandonment to Him may induce His entire abandonment to us?

PRAYER—*Heavenly Father, we pray that Jesus Christ may become dearer to us. May we love Him as a personal Friend, and hide ourselves in the hourly consciousness of His presence. May we have no taste or desire for things which He would disapprove. Let His love constrain us not to live unto ourselves, but to His glory. AMEN.*

OUR CAPTAIN

Hebrews 2:10-11 "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,"

THE Word translated in this passage "Captain" might be rendered *File-leader*. It was thus used by Peter when he said, "Ye killed the Prince, *i.e.* the File-leader of life." Our Lord is beheld stepping up from the grave in Joseph's garden, to which, apparently, the hatred of His foes had brought Him; and as He passes forth, He is discovered to be the First, or Leader, of an endless procession, which, in single file, is ever ascending from the grave to stand with Him, and to follow Him through all the subsequent ages.

In the earlier part of that great procession, we can see the glorious company of the Apostles, behind them the goodly fellowship of prophets and the noble army of martyrs. Polycarp and Ignatius are there, Chrysostom and Augustine, Luther and Calvin, Wesley and Spurgeon. Our ancestors follow, and our parents. We are there, and our children will follow. We follow Christ our Captain through Gethsemane to Calvary, through death to life, through the grave to the Ascension mount.

When Isaiah anticipated Christ's advent, he said that God had given Him to be a leader and commander to the people (Isa 55:4). He has the pre-eminence, not only because of His original glory, as Son of God, but since He has won it in His obedience as man. Never has the will of God been wrought out so perfectly as by our Lord; and in this we are called upon to obey and follow Him. He was made perfect through sufferings, so shall we be; and as He is now crowned with glory and honour, so shall we be.

The only way in which Christ could bring us to share in His glory was to submit to suffering and death. In no other way could He act as the Mediator of the divine life to us who are His brethren. Similarly, if we would become the mediators of help and blessing to others, we also must be prepared to suffer. We must learn to do despite to our own will and way. The way of the cross is the only path to the throne. We can only reach our highest by the constant saying of "No" to self-life. This will involve suffering and pain; but only so can we follow our Captain.

PRAYER—*Teach us, O Lord, not only to bear, but to love Thy Cross. As we take and carry it, may we find that it is carrying us. AMEN.*

CHRIST OUR LIGHT

John 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

IT was the Feast of Tabernacles when our Lord uttered the words of our text, and it is supposed they were lighting the two great candelabra, which commemorated the fire-cloud that led the desert march. It was in direct allusion to the fiery pillar that our Lord used this metaphor. What that was to Israel, He is to His Church.

The wilderness was a trackless waste to Israel. The people absolutely depended on the cloud to show their path, and to find a resting-place at night. When it gathered itself up from the Tabernacle on which it brooded, the people must strike their tents and follow. However desirable the site of their camp, they must leave it; however difficult the desert paths, they must traverse them; however uninviting the spot where it stopped, they must halt there, and remain as long as it tarried. To linger was to run the risk of wandering aimlessly in the desert till death supervened. Only where the cloud rested did the manna fall, the water flow, or divine protection avail.

There are resting-times in our lives. God graciously arranges green pastures and quiet waters, and makes us to lie down. His voice sounds amid the turmoil of our existence, and bids us come aside and rest awhile. But often we fret against enforced rest, we persist in hurrying to and fro, and give way to bitter repining. When the cloud stays, remain where you are. When you do not know what to do, stop until some indication points your path.

There are times for action. The trumpet is heard with its summons, to which we must give immediate attention. When the sleeper refuses to arise instantly at the sound of the alarum, he soon becomes so accustomed to it that it does not disturb him. So we shall gain a keen sense of hearing when we accustom ourselves to instant obedience. The peace and usefulness of our earthly life will be in direct proportion to our appropriation of the Lord Jesus for all the demands of our pilgrim condition. Nay, more, for as in the train, the electric light comes on before the dark tunnel is entered, and lingers after it is passed, so the presence of Christ will precede and follow times of special need. "I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight" (Isa 42:16).

PRAYER—*O send out Thy light and Thy truth, and let them lead me and bring me at last to my Father's house in peace. AMEN*

CHRIST OUR TEACHER

John 3:2 "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

THERE was no doubt that Christ was a Teacher come from God! Some teachers come evidently enough from man; they speak only of earthly things; their speeches are full of quotations; they imitate, in voice, manner, and method of stating truth, some commanding human teacher at whose feet they have sat. But there was a freshness, a self-witnessing truthfulness, a depth, an authority in the words of the Master, which bore the mint-mark of Deity. Our Lord addressed Nicodemus as "the teacher of Israel" (John 3:10, KJV: "master of Israel").

Jesus taught with *authority* (Mat 7:29). This was the verdict of the people. He needed not to quote Gamaliel or Hillel, because the conscience of His hearers said, He speaks the truth. He taught with *tenderness and sweetness* (Luk 4:22). To those who resisted His words, as the Pharisees did, His tongue was a sharp two-edged sword; but for the sinful, weary, and heavy-laden, grace was poured on His lips. He taught with plenty of *illustrations* (Mar 4:34). From all quarters He gathered them, from the sky and the earth, from the vulture and the sparrow, from the lightning-flash and the sunrise, from the household candle and the temple lamp, from the woman's dough and the ripened corn, from the children's games and the housewife's jewellery, from the feasts of the rich and the bare larder of the poor. How picturesque and beautiful His talk was! The apples of gold were in pictures of silver. His speech was full of windows through which the light poured. What wonder that the people thronged around Him, and hung with absorbing interest on His words.

But we must come to Him as *Saviour*. Before we can understand His teaching, we must be converted, and become as little children. To us, He says, as to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." To reverence Him as "Teacher" will not avail, until the soul has cast itself in the dust before Him, crying, "Have mercy upon me"; for "I am a sinful man, O Lord."

There is a marked gradation in the Teaching of Jesus. He began by speaking about earthly things, and led His disciples on to understand heavenly things. He gave milk to babes, but to those of understanding, strong meat, that is, hard and deep things. How differently He taught the woman at Sychar's well, and the disciples in the upper room.

PRAYER—*Give us grace to perceive Thee, blessed Lord, to hear Thy voice, and to receive the gracious teaching which comes from Thine heart. AMEN.*

CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT BLESSEDNESS

Psalm 1:1-2 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

OUR Lord lived inside the City of Blessedness, and in Mat 5:1-12 He reveals to all men the eight gates by which that City may be entered. For myself, I cannot go in by the Gate of Poverty of spirit, for I am not humble enough; nor by the Gate of the Mourners, for I am not grieved enough for my own sins or the sins of others; nor by the Gate of the Meek, for I often resent injury; nor by the Gates of Mercy, or Purity, or Peace. But I may claim to enter by the fourth Gate, for I *Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness*. And as I go in, I find myself inside the City, and in the company of all holy souls that have entered by the other gates. For in the Heavenly City, to enter by any gate is equivalent to having entered by all; and one grace which is inwrought by the Holy Spirit will ultimately lead on to all the rest.

What is Blessedness? According to our Lord's teaching, it is a condition or state of heart. Outward circumstances are not mentioned, unless it be reproach and persecution, as though they were matters of indifference. Blessedness is altogether independent of our outward lot, whether prosperous or perplexed, rich or poor. Blessedness begins and ends with a contented recognition of the royalty of Christ's Kingdom; in the power of seeing the good in everything, and so inheriting the earth; in being satisfied, in obtaining mercy, in seeing God and being called His sons and daughters. Is it not worth while to strive to enter in at these wide-open doors? And if you can say that you really do yearn after better things, hungering and thirsting for more likeness to Christ, and more fitness for His Kingdom; if that desire really represents the purpose of your life, you may account yourself as being already admitted within the Gates of the Blessed Life.

We must not suppose that Our Lord allocated the award of Blessedness to the possessors of certain attributes with an arbitrary and royal prerogative. He simply declared what was true in the very nature of things. To be true, pure, merciful, and meek, is to have in your possession the seed-germs of the harvest of Blessedness. If you turn from this wonderful enumeration of Christian qualities to Gal 5:22, you will find all of them set forth in the list of the fruit of the Spirit. May He work in us and through us a well-balanced and full-orbed Christian character.

PRAYER—*Lord, take my lips, and speak through them; take my mind, and think through it; take my heart, and set it on fire. AMEN.*

CHRIST, THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:19 "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

OUR Lord Jesus does not destroy, but fulfils, as the summer fulfils the promise of spring. Do not be afraid of Him, as though He takes pleasure in dashing the cup from thirsty lips, and disappointing innocent and natural desires. He will certainly show Himself hostile to every wrong means of gratification, but He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him in the best way, so that they will be satisfied for ever.

This is true religion. Christ *constructs*. He is more positive than negative; more Yea and Amen than Nay! He sends the pulse of the new sap into the trees, and as it passes to the tip of every branch, the old dead leaves flutter silently to the ground. Give yourself to Him, and ask Him to fulfil in you the principles of righteousness. Christ fulfils the Law and the Prophets, which evidently stand for the authority and principles of the Old Testament (Mat 5:17-18). The *jot* was the smallest Hebrew letter; the *tittle* was a small part of a letter. What a contrast there is between the teaching of Christ and the attitude of some modern critics. They appear to take pleasure in destruction, in pulling down and overthrowing the foundations of faith, giving nothing in their place.

The righteousness which our Lord teaches is altogether different from that of the Pharisees, which was outward and formal, and essentially selfish, since by it they desired to earn admittance to God's favour. Christ, on the other hand, demands a righteousness which is inward, vital, and spiritual. We stand before God in the imputed righteousness of His finished work, and then He imparts to us an inner righteousness through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Notice how the Lord distinguishes between "them of old time" (Mat 5:21) and Himself: "*I say unto you.*" What majesty is in those words. He counted it not robbery to be equal with God, yet He was meek and lowly in heart. How can we reconcile these statements except by the belief that He was Emmanuel—God with us?

PRAYER—*O Captain and Leader of the Holy War, may I have truth as the girdle of my loins, righteousness as my breastplate, salvation as my helmet, peace for my feet, and faith for my shield. May I have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them by my consistent life and faithful words. AMEN.*

CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT TRUST

Matthew 6:31-32 "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

LET us trust God to care for us! This was the life that Jesus lived. He would not even make stones into bread; nor eat until His Father bade Him and sent the angels to minister to Him. He speaks out of His heart when He bids us trust our Father's care.

It is better to trust in God than to accumulate riches. Moth and rust destroy, thieves steal, all earthly goods are perishable and precarious. How many have placed their savings in stocks and shares, in banks and companies, and have lost every penny! Whilst others who have been unable to save and have lived to help their fellowmen, have found that God has made provision for them and carried them "even to hoar hairs."

Trust in God gives clearness of vision. When we are thinking partly of doing God's work in the world, and partly of lining our own nest, we are in the condition of the man whose eyes do not look in the same direction. There is a squint in our inner vision. We are endeavouring to serve two masters, and our judgment is therefore distorted. Who has not often experienced this? You have tried to ascertain God's will, or form a right judgment about your life, but constantly your perception of duty has been obscured by the thought that, if you decided in a certain direction, you would interfere with your interests in another. Your eye has not been single, and you have walked in darkness. When, however, you feel so absorbed in God's interests that you are indifferent to your own, all becomes clear, and you leave Him to care for all results. "Mind my business," said Queen Elizabeth to one of her ambassadors, "and I will look after yours."

Let us not think that God is niggardly and stinting in His gifts. He gives fish as well as bread when He feeds the crowds; colours as well as leaves when He clothes the flowers. You have been adopted into His Family, and may call Him "Abba, Father." Surely this act of grace shows a special love on His part. Would He have taken such care of the spiritual, and have none for the physical? The ungodly may worry about their maintenance; but a child of God may be sure that his needs will be supplied.

PRAYER—*Thou art our portion, our God, our Father. Thou art more than father and mother to those who trust Thee. Thou lovest us with a tender pity that never fails or wearies. Encompass us with Thy guardian care, and realise in us Thy highest purposes. AMEN.*

CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT JUDGING OTHERS

Matthew 7:1-2 "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

OUR Lord evidently does not, in these words, condemn that honest judgment which, for our own safety and for the good of society, we are compelled to form of men and women with whom we come in contact. Such judgments are inevitable. But He condemns censorious and uncharitable judgment which is always finding fault, always neglecting the good and dwelling on the bad, always spreading unfavourable and inaccurate reports, and which are often founded on very superficial and insufficient grounds.

How true it is that we are measured by the measure we use for others. There is a remarkable Nemesis in life, which is the judgment-seat of God. The evils we inflict on others, like the boomerang, which becomes almost a speck in the sky, come back on ourselves. If you are generous in your estimate of others, you will be estimated generously. If you are mean and stingy, others will treat you in the same spirit.

We are all would-be oculists! Nothing pleases us better than to try our hand at recovering motes of sawdust, as well as splints, from the eyes of others, while we are indifferent to the beams of timber which obstruct our own vision. Christ is always saying to us, "Cast out the filthiness from the holy place"; and as His light falls deeper and deeper into our nature, it must reveal hidden evils which need to be put away. Let us be true to the inner light, and then with tender and chastened spirits, from which all consciousness of superiority has departed, we shall help others to be rid of their own obstructions.

In Mat 7:15-20, Christ gives us the infallible test. He suggests that in every age there will be those who care for the fleece more than for the flock, and who come into the fold under a most winsome and bewitching guise. Beware of such people, and judge them, not by their doctrine, but by their fruits. The Devil is the most orthodox theologian in the world: "I know Thee, who Thou art, the Holy One of God."

"By their fruits ye shall know them." You cannot judge what a man is by hearing him repeat a creed; but as you observe his character, his disposition, his behaviour; not in public, but in private; not for a day, but for a year, you can come to an almost certain judgment as to whether God or self be the ruling consideration of the inner being.

PRAYER—*Make us merciful, O Christ, in our judgments of others. May we think no evil. May we forbear and forgive one another as Thou dost forgive us. AMEN.*

CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT BENEFICENCE

Luke 10:27,29 "And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. ... But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?"

WE cannot live alone. No one of us can be entirely independent of others. I am not only a centre, but I am part of another man's circumference; and every other man, woman or child I know is part of my circumference. We are members one of another. In other words, we all have neighbours; and a complete human life, which has windows opening to the Infinite Creator, must have doors opening on the street towards our finite fellow-creatures.

When we talk about neighbours, we naturally think of those who live next door, and we are apt to reduce the divine command to those who reside in the same street. If these are very comfortable and well-to-do, it seems as though there is not much scope for helping them. This definition of *neighbours*, however, is altogether too narrow and contracted, as our Lord shows in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The lawyer asked who was his neighbour, and Jesus said, "*Be a neighbour to someone else.*" And if it be asked what kind of people I am to neighbour, the answer comes: "Make no distinction of race or creed; but wherever you come across a man who has been stripped, beaten, robbed, and is half-dead, don't wait for other men to succour him but bind up his wounds; minister to him, and treat him as though you loved him with the natural love of brotherhood."

A rich man might have paid an agent to patrol that dangerous road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and to look after those in distress, but it would not be so blessed in its effect on his own character, or on the men who were helped, as a personal ministry would be. We ought to combine the two, because our personal experience of such cases will enable us to direct our agents, and live in their efforts, so that they may become our own. Perhaps the better policy is to get elected on the Council, or Magistrates' bench, so that we may put down the gangs of thieves which infest life's highways.

Remember that a gift of money is by no means the only way of helping your neighbours. What men and women need most is compassion, sympathy, your hand and heart-help. "Silver and gold have I none" has been the confession of some of the greatest benefactors of our race. Above all, it was true of our Lord Himself, who became poor that He might really help us, as He never could have done had He remained rich. Let Him be our Example, Who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

PRAYER—*Show me, today, O Lord, that one of Thy little ones to whom I am to give a cup of water in Thy Name. AMEN.*

CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT RESURRECTION

John 11:25-27 "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

THIS crowning miracle of our Lord's life is generally described as the Raising of Lazarus. I am not sure that it might not with equal truth be called the Awakening of Martha, for it is certain that the Lord lifted this soul, whom we have been wont to count prosaic and matter-of-fact, to a most remarkable elevation of faith and hope, as they stood together in the shadow of a great sorrow.

In common with the majority of religious people, Martha believed in a general resurrection at some still future date, but she had not realised that *God lives in the present tense*, that the Eternal is *here and now*, and that faith must learn to reckon on God's *I AM*. We are always putting the manifestation of the Divine in the far past, or the far future. The heaven is high above the earth on which we stand; only at the horizon, behind us and before us, do heaven and earth touch. We all need to learn the lesson that here, in the prosaic commonplaces of life, Jesus Christ is the present and immediate answer to every need.

Christ's teaching about resurrection differs widely from immortality. Plato believed in the immortality of the soul, but had no conception of resurrection. Resurrection is the reunion of the soul with the body, when it shall be raised in a form identical with, though different from the body laid in the grave, as the sheaf of corn is identical with, though different from the seed-corn cast into the soil amid the tears of autumn.

Martha could hardly understand all these marvellous disclosures, but she answered Yea to them, on the ground of what she knew Christ to be. He was the Messiah, and whatsoever He said, it must be so. So it is that we may still accept much, that we cannot understand, on the bare word of Jesus.

Christ always needed faith in someone, as the fulcrum on which to rest the lever of His mighty power, and He found it in Martha. What can He not do, even here and now, in the hearts of those who are slow to believe, and those who are dead in trespasses and sins? Believest thou this?

PRAYER—*O God of Life and Love, Thou hast filled our hearts with joy unspeakable. We thank Thee that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, and that those who believe in Him shall never die. He lives, and they live, and we live! We thank Thee, we praise Thee, we bless Thee. AMEN.*

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Luke 10:21 "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

IN that hour. It was an hour of great congratulation for the little band of disciples. The seventy had returned with joy. They had tried the talisman of His Name with demons and disease, and it had triumphed. Our Lord yielded to the gladness of His followers, and gave Himself up to an unusual burst of happiness.

Notice His habitual mode of address to God. Twice He speaks to Him as *Father*. Thus in joy, equally as in the sorrow of Gethsemane and the anguish of death, the Fatherhood of God was the Rock of Ages to the Man Christ Jesus, in the cleft of which He hid Himself. Only Jesus knew what God was and could be to the lonely soul. As the mountain is reflected in the lake at its foot, so the Father saw Himself perfectly reflected in Jesus.

Inscribed over the portico of an Egyptian temple are these words: "I am he that was and shall be, and no man hath lifted my veil." In this connection it is significant that when our Saviour died, the veil of the Temple was rent from the top to the bottom. Before that hour the knowledge of God had been confined to the few elect souls, and to these it came as through a glass darkly; but from that hour the innermost secret of God's love has been disclosed. And that unveiling of the Father's heart is typical of the work of our Lord for us all.

We must be childlike. The ways of God are revealed unto babes. The child is pure; is humble. It is to the transparent and simple heart that Jesus waits to give Himself.

We must be prepared to say Yes to God. Our Lord was face to face with one of the great mysteries of providence; why certain things are hidden from some and revealed to others; but He rolled the whole perplexity back on the Father, and was at rest. When in a deaf and dumb school, a visitor wrote on the blackboard: "Why did God make you deaf and dumb, and me able to speak and hear?" One of the children took the chalk and wrote beneath: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

We must pass on to others what we know. He will not teach us merely for our own gratification, but that we may benefit others thereby.

PRAYER—*Teach us, O Lord, to pray. Pray in us by Thy Holy Spirit. May our hearts be filled with His deep yearnings, and our lips become the medium by which He shall find utterance.. AMEN.*

POWER AND PRAYER

Mark 9:22-23 "And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

IN our Lord's life there was no divorce between the life hidden in God and a ready response to the call of human need. As in Raphael's great picture of the Transfiguration, which combines the scenes of the mountain and the valley on the one canvas, so must it always be in true life. There must be the systole and the diastole—the heart must drive the blood to be aerated in Heaven's ozone, and then pulsate to the extremities of hand and foot.

How many there are who seem to be possessed with evil spirits which are wrecking health and peace, and how many make the mistake of this man in bringing their relatives or friends to disciples who as yet have not been baptised with the power of the Holy Spirit, and have not entered into the secret place of power. Of course it is not possible for such to afford any real help, and the demon laughs them to scorn! We must learn our own inability to deal with the forces of evil that are sweeping through the world, unless we have received power from on high (Luk 10:17, Luk 10:20; Act 1:8).

Notice the way in which our Lord casts back the responsibility on the father. He said: "*If Thou canst do anything*"; but Jesus answered: "the *if* is not with *Me*, but with *you*. It is not a question of *My* power but of *your* faith. Can you believe?" Then the father threw back the responsibility on the Master, saying in effect: "I fear that I have not faith enough, but I trust Thee to create it in me. *Help Thou mine unbelief.*"

You and I often fail in our faith because of ignorance and besetting sin. There is the mighty ocean of power all around us, but for some reason we cannot tap it. It is like the electric current, which refuses to help us unless we have instruments precisely adapted to transmit the driving-power. Faith is absolutely necessary for the conveyance of God's power to meet the need and sin and sorrow of the world. But when we find it deficient, when our heart believes not, when we find ourselves face to face with Jerichos that are closely shut, and with mountains that seem to mock the tiny levers with which we propose to move them, then we must turn to Christ and say: "I trust Thee for faith, I trust Thee to keep me trusting: I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

PRAYER—*We open our nature to let in Thy blessed fullness, and if our capacity be small, we pray, O Lord, that it may be enlarged, that we may miss nothing that is possible to man. We are sure that we are never straitened in Thee, but in ourselves. AMEN.*

THINGS TO BE LEFT BEHIND

Hebrews 12:1-2 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

LEAVE behind your past sins. They have been many and great, more than you can count. But if you have confessed and forsaken them, they have been put away, "as far as the east is from the west." Nothing could be more explicit than 1 Jo 1:9. It is useless to brood over the past. God has buried it in the grave of Christ. Go and sin no more!

Leave behind your bad habits that encumber you. You know what they are, and how they cling—ill-temper, jealousy, pride, evil-speaking, and many another! You have fallen again and again, overtaken by them, tripped up, your robes stained and torn. There should be some finality in your life, a mark on the grass from which you start to run the race. The command to put off the old man is in the definite tense (Col 3:8-9). It bespeaks one sudden strong act of the will, God-nerved and God-empowered. This, then, is the hour when you must strike for liberty "Ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Leave behind your accomplished ideals. They were once far in front and above you. As you climbed they seemed almost inaccessible, and mocking voices rang out their defiance of your attempt. But by the grace of God things that once you dreamt of are now realised, and you are sitting on the peak that once seemed to laugh you to scorn. But you must leave it behind! Look up! Look forward! Are there not fresh ideals calling to you? Leave behind your attainments and strike your tents. One battle is fought, but a yet stronger foe bars the way immediately in front. It is suicidal to rest on your oars; to do so will expose you to the inevitable backward drift.

The best way to leave behind is to press forward. The Spirit of God bids us "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." He is our Forerunner, always before us, always leading us on. His crest, like the plume of Henry of Navarre, is always in the very thick of the fight. Let the soul follow hard after Him, and it will become almost oblivious to what it leaves behind. The boy who is running for the goal, in his eagerness to win the prize, strips himself of one and another article of clothing. He will not count their worth, so long as he may win the prize. So run that ye may attain! Apprehend that for which you were apprehended! Lay hold on the outstretched crown of life!

PRAYER—*Most gracious God, quicken me by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may run in the way Thou hast marked out for me. May I ever be kept looking unto Jesus. AMEN.*

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

Matthew 1:21 "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

JESUS was "born a Saviour." Being what He is, the King of Love, it is wonderful that He entered into so close an identification with our human race that needed Him so sorely. Could Infinite Love have stood idly by? Every soul which enters into the human family helps to quicken or depress its vitality. How much our race owes to the great souls that have been born into it, but how much more to Him who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God! He laid aside the use of the mighty power, which as Creator He might have employed, and stooped to be born in a stable, that He might share the life of the humblest and poorest.

What love for men must have burned in the heart of Jesus! His zeal for mankind ate Him up. There was a true enthusiasm for humanity in His heart. Why should there not be the same with us? Let us ask that the "love of Christ—*i.e.* the very love which burnt within Him—constraineth us." Let us be willing to subject ourselves to inconvenience, to limitations, to the wrapping of swaddling clothes, if only we may get near to others, removing all sense of distance and aloofness.

"*Glory to God in the Highest*" (Luk 2:14). Nothing has so augmented the glory of the Father as this stooping to death, even the death of the Cross. (Phi 2:6-11). Men have turned to God with adoring reverence, as they could not have done if they had known Him only in nature. Whenever we seek the glory of God as our main end and purpose, it will always result in peace on earth. Live for the glory of God, and you will have peace in your heart, and your life will flow forth in goodwill and blessing for others.

The outburst of song from the shepherds, "glorifying and praising God," as they wended their way back to their flocks, must have amazed all whom they met, and it bespoke the wonder that had transformed their lives. We are so ordinary and commonplace, so unemotional and impassive, we cannot forget ourselves, and are never carried beyond ourselves. David said that while he mused the fire burned! Let us muse on the love of God in descending to our world, in living our life, and dying for us on the Cross. Then we shall burst out into songs, and shall come back to our ordinary life with the flow of a new spirit (Luk 2:20).

PRAYER—*My Father God! Let the motto of my life henceforth be, "Glory to God in the Highest," for only so can there be peace in my heart and goodwill towards men. May my heart be kept in unison with the Angel's song. AMEN.*

WALKING NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT

Romans 8:1,4 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ... That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

THE Apostle here is dealing with the conditions of a holy life; and the condemnation to which he refers is that caused by the constant failure so graphically described in the previous chapter. From my own experience, I think that the introspection which is often induced by ill-health and weakness makes us very sensitive to the failure and shortcoming of the inner life. We know that we are accepted in Christ, and that our sins are forgiven us for His sake; but we are deeply conscious that in us (*i.e.* in our flesh) dwelleth no good thing. (Rom 7:18).

The Reservoir of Eternal Life.—“the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.” We perceive what physical life is when a child comes bounding into our room in a very ecstasy of health and joy. We know what intellectual life is as we see the mind developing under the process of education. We know what the moral life of a stoic is, repelling by force of will the appeal of the senses. But above all these, there is *Life* which is resident in Jesus Christ, stored in Him, abounding in Him, which He longs to communicate to every soul that trusts in Him. This was the witness of those who knew Jesus most intimately in His brief human life—that “God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son.” “He that hath the Son hath Life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life.” This more than outweighs the down-pull of the self-life. The law of that life makes us free from the law of sin and death, for it has mastered death and the grave.

This Life is communicated and sustained by the Holy Spirit. We must be *one* with Christ; we must be *in* Him, as the sponge is in the ocean. We must be *in* Him, not only in our standing, but also in our *daily walk*. We must be *in* Him as the branch is in the vine, and the vine-sap in the branch. And this must not only be a theory, but an hourly experience. We must abide in Him and He in us. But how can this become our daily experience? There is but one way. Through the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, as we walk in Him (Gal 5:16). He is the essence of the Life which is in Christ Jesus. “The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

PRAYER—*Almighty God, I beseech Thee to raise me from the death of sin to the life of righteousness by that same power that brought the Lord Jesus from the dead, that I may walk in newness of life through the aid of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.*

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Romans 8:2 "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

THE simplest child knows something of the law of gravitation. The word is from the Latin *gravitas*, which is the attraction of weight by weight. What gravitation is to matter, the down-pull of the flesh is to the spirit. There is not a single one of us, who is seeking to live the better life, that is not conscious of this down-pull. Indeed the laws of gravitation in the natural world have their counterpart in our inward experience. There is always a down-pull to the centre of gravity, *i.e.* to self—what *I* like, what *I* choose, what *I* prefer! The fall of the soul toward the flesh—or self-life—becomes increasingly rapid, so that every time we yield it becomes easier to yield, and the velocity becomes headlong. The child of God would fall with velocity equal to that of the depraved sinner if it were not for the law of the Spirit of Life which is in Christ Jesus which makes him free from the law of sin and death.

Overcoming the Earth-pull. You may see it in the soaring of the lark, singing as it rises, until you think it will split its tiny throat with song. One of the delights of an ocean voyage is to watch the gulls, as regularly, evenly, and easily they keep level with the progress of the boat. The bird does not float in the air; it balances itself; it measures its wings against its weight, and defies the earth-pull. But if the means of flight are maimed, it drops helplessly on land or water. Alas for the bird, though it be an albatross, that happens to alight on water covered by the oil discharged from an oil-driven vessel. When once its wings have become glued to its body, by immersion in that oil-bath, there is nothing for it but a miserable end!

The Spirit works according to Law,—"the law of the Spirit of Life." Do not grieve Him by any act of insincerity or hatred. If you are aware of the subsidence of His energy, go back till you have discovered where you dropped the thread of obedience to His gentle promptings. Pick it up by confession and restitution, and again you will become conscious of His mediation to you of a Law of Life that laughs at sin and death! Yours will be the wings of an eagle's flight, the soaring of a lark, sunward, heavenward, Godward! But you must take time to be holy—in meditation, in prayer, and especially in the use of the Bible.

PRAYER—*Help me, O Lord, to find my life according to Thy promise. I thank Thee that Thou hast implanted the germ of Thine own nature. Leave me not, neither forsake me in the upward climb. Teach me to charge my strength and mount up with the wings of eagles. AMEN.*

ABIDING IN CHRIST

John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

OUR Saviour's perennial joy was due to His unceasing endeavour to minister help and blessing to others. He saved others; He could not save Himself. He said: "I am the *true* Vine," *i.e.*, the vine was made by Him in creation to represent a certain phase or characteristic of Himself. It is the reflection in the waters of materialism of eternal principles deep-seated in His own divine nature. The study of the vine is, therefore, specially precious in its teaching.

Behind the vine, as we know it, there is an immense pressure of energy. In the spring-tide, it seems as though the love of God were pressing for expression in the corn that supports life, in the oil that makes the face to shine, and in the grape that cheers. The vine cannot bear fruit, of itself; it is only the channel along which the energy of God flows in its endeavour to gladden the heart and life of man. So Jesus is the channel through which the life and love of God reach us, that we may pass them on in loving ministry, and in so doing we are creating and storing up for ourselves infinite joy.

Let each of us learn to *abide in Christ!* With the heart open to Him on the one hand, and open to men, women and children on the other. Then let us trust Christ to pour His love and grace into our hearts, that the pressure within may lead us to perform acts of tender sympathy and helpfulness of which we would not otherwise have been capable. Let us resolve to let no day pass without doing something at cost to ourselves, to make the burden lighter and the path easier for someone else. Our willingness for Christ to do these things through us will always meet a response from Him; and His Spirit being in us will show us exactly what to say or do. It may be only a smile, a touch of the hand, or a word! Thus life will be filled with joy, and this will be perpetuated surely in that other life, when we shall awake and be satisfied. As we mingle with the throngs of happy spirits who have come out of great tribulation—the martyrs, prophets, apostles, and saints of every age—the greatest wonder of all will be that *we* are there. "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or athirst, and gave Thee drink? And He will say, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these ... ye did it unto Me."

PRAYER—*May I never forget, O Lord, that the best and happiest life must be lived in communion with the needs, sorrows, and trials of others. Give me closer sympathy with Thyself, who didst not please Thyself, but whose blessed life was perpetually laid down for others. AMEN.*

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

Revelation 1:8 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

IT is hardly needful to explain that these are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. They represent all the intervening letters which they enclose as in a golden clasp. This majestic announcement refers to the Eternal God. His nature underlies the whole created Universe, all races of being, the entire work of redemption, the destiny of His children, and the ultimate victory of righteousness and peace. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory for ever." Let us, for a moment, join with the ceaseless chant of Heaven, saying: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which is and which was and which is to come." We must never rush into His presence without due preparation and reverence of heart.

Jesus Christ is the Complement of our Need. From the alphabet of His Being we may obtain all the letters and words which will make good our own deficiencies. It is a question whether some of us would ever have learnt the fullness of Jesus, if we had not been brought face to face with the infinite needs of our own nature and condition. You may engage your guide in an Alpine village, but you only realise all the qualities that lie hidden within him when you have crossed the glaciers, bridged the yawning chasms, and escaped the descending avalanche through his knowledge and care. So as we walk with Jesus we find in Him the complement of our need.

Loneliness is an opportunity for Jesus to make Himself known as the Living One (Rev 1:17). When, like the beloved Apostle on the Lord's Day in his lonely isle, you seem to hear songs and prayers on which you can only join in spirit, turn to the Lord Himself, and reckon on Him to bear you company. That loneliness constitutes a claim on Him! Call upon His name out of the lowest dungeon. He will not hide His ear at thy breathing or thy cry. He will draw near in the day when thou callest upon Him, and will say, Fear not! He will plead the causes of thy soul; He will redeem thy life. The site of Polycarp's death is still visible above the Smyrna coastline and harbour; but Jesus stood there with him, enabling him to be faithful unto death, and encircling his brow with the Crown of Life. Be thou faithful unto death; the First and the Last is with thee! "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, *for Thou art with me!*"

PRAYER—*Be Thou, O Lord, the Alpha and the Omega of every year, month, day, hour, and act of my life. Let all things be begun, continued and ended in Thee. AMEN.*

REIGNING IN LIFE

Romans 5:17 "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

IT would take a lifetime—nay, it will demand eternity—to explore the treasures of this paragraph from which our text is taken. Let us not, however, stand gazing into heaven, but avail ourselves of the privilege offered us during our earthly life of reigning through the One, even Jesus Christ. Do not postpone the fulfilment of this promise! We may have to wait for the future life to unfold depths of meaning which now transcend our thought; but any fair reading of this radiant verse compels us to appropriate it for here and now.

But, "*how can these things be?*" Ah, a master in Israel asked that question of Christ! This blessed life of victory is only possible to those who have been born from above. By nature we were born *from* below into the first Adam, who was "a living *soul*." We must be born *from above*, into the second Adam, who becomes to all who trust in Him a Life-giving *spirit* (1 Co 15:45). That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and cannot of itself rise into the Spirit; the Holy Spirit must stoop to lift it into union with Himself. But He will do this for you, if only you will lift your heart to Christ in simple faith and surrender.

The difference it will make! Each life has been planned by God with the intention of training it for high service here and beyond; and whatever happens in life, there is always an abundance of grace awaiting our use. But how often we are as blind to it as Balaam was to the Angel that stood on the wayside! We make our plans! We lie awake half the night in a fever of anxiety! We go to this friend or that! But we do not claim that abundance of grace which is intended to meet the need of the hour. It is only as we *receive* it by a childlike faith that we can *reign* in life. That word "abundance" in its Latin original speaks of ocean-waves. Stand on the shore and look out on that infinite expanse, and do not be content with scooping up enough to fill an oyster-shell!

What will result? A royal life! If a throne means *power*—we are strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. If it means *victory*—we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. If it means *largess*—we have always all sufficiency in all things, and abound to every good work.

PRAYER—*Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for the trials and pains that are ever working for my good, and making me a partaker of Thy holiness. May I receive the abundance of Thy grace, and reign in life here and hereafter. AMEN.*

DISLOCATED LIMBS

Hebrews 13:20,21 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

THE Greek word here rendered *perfect* really means "to put in joint, to complete." In his original creation man's will was intended to register the Will of God, to say Yes to it, and to pass the divine impulses and commandments to the rest of our being. Sometimes on board ship, before the phone made it possible for the captain to speak to every part of the ocean-liner, I have heard Him quietly utter his orders to a subordinate officer beside him, who in turn repeated them in a loud voice through a speaking-trumpet or tube. That intermediary may represent the will which was intended to receive its directions from the Will of God, and pass them throughout the economy of our being. Such was our Lord's attitude throughout His earthly life. He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me"; "I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"; "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

But in the Fall, the dominance of God's will and the loyal response of man's will became disorganised; and the human will instead of functioning in harmony with the Will of God, began to obey the will of the flesh in its grosser or more refined forms. Not what God wills, but what "I" will, has become the working principle of the great majority. Thus it has come about that the will, by constant misuse, has become dislocated, warped, "out of joint." Tennyson says: "Our wills are ours to make them Thine!" Just so, but they are too stubborn for some of us to manage. Hence the suggestion that we should pass the matter over to the "God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus."

Sometimes at football, or on the ice, a player may lose his balance, or be tripped up, and in the fall his shoulder may become dislocated. His arm is still in the body, but out of joint, so that it hangs useless by his side, until the surgeon by one strong wrench forces the bone back into its proper place. Is not that true of us? We are in the Body of Christ by redeeming grace, but we need to be *set*, *i.e.*, to be brought into articulated union with the Will of God in Christ Jesus. Let us humbly ask the great Surgeon, by the pressure of His strong and gentle hands, here and now, to joint our wayward wills with the Will of God, and then to work in us and through us that which is well-pleasing in His sight!

PRAYER—*Gracious Father! I yield to Thee my will and desires, my members and faculties, the life of my body, the thoughts of my heart, and the aspirations of my spirit—perfect, I pray Thee, that which concerneth me. AMEN.*

THE GARDEN OF THE CROSS

John 19:41 "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid."

IT was in a Garden that Paradise was lost, and in a Garden it was regained! The sweet flowers of spring waved their incense-cups around the Cross, on which their Creator, to whose thought they owed their beauty, was dying for man's redemption.

Amid all the anguish of this human world, nature pursues her unbroken routine. Spring with its green, summer with its glory, autumn with its gold—these in perennial beauty carry on their unbroken succession through all the days of human sorrow. Sometimes her unchanging order almost drives men to madness. It seems as though she has no sympathy with man in his stern battle for existence! Yet surely it is better so! Our tears and strife and storm are transient, whilst the order of creation will be the basis of that "new heaven and earth" for which we wait. Yes, there were flowers at the foot of the Saviour's Cross, and they have blossomed at the foot of every cross since His!

Where there is a Cross, there will be a garden. Of course, the cross must be properly borne. We must suffer for others, not careful about ourselves. We must take the cup from the hands of the Father, even though it is presented by the hands of a Judas! We must suffer silently. No man or woman, who really suffers deeply for another's salvation, talks about it, save to God. Suffer for others in your Gethsemane-garden, and when you have been crucified after that fashion, then look for a garden in bloom. Set up a Calvary in your own heart! Let the cross there be a splint from the Cross of your Saviour! Bring thither your self-love, your ambitions, your moods and vagrant, selfish thoughts. Fasten your self-life, vain and proud as it is, to the Cross of Jesus, and let it remain there. Then in the garden of your character will arise a profusion of the rarest and sweetest flowers. If the world shuns your company, if you go lonely and unappreciated through life, yet you may find that the Lord Jesus will walk in the glades of your garden in the cool of the day, as He did in Paradise.

*Your heart's a garden God has sown
To give your life the work it needed.
Some day He'll come to pluck His flowers,
So mind you keep your garden weeded.*

UTTERMOST SALVATION

Hebrews 7:25 "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

THE attraction of the Divine Nature. We draw near because we are drawn. As the sun is ever exerting a drawing power on each planet and each particle of stardust in the solar system, so God is ever attracting us to Himself. To all eternity we shall be ever drawing nearer to Him, though there will be an infinite distance to traverse. When Jesus was lifted up on the Cross He began to draw all men unto Himself, and that magnetic attraction has continued through the centuries.

There is no reason for us to be afraid of God. He is Love! He is a consuming fire to our sin, but His Nature is essentially lovely. Moses exceedingly feared when he ascended Sinai, amid the trembling of the mountain and the heavy clouds that enclosed the Divine Light. But, as we learn from the 12th chapter of this Epistle, when we approximate to God, we encounter three circles. The innumerable *Hosts of Angels*, including the Cherubim and Seraphim, with their burning love and purity! The *Church of the Firstborn*, the purest and noblest of elect spirits! *The Spirits of the Just made perfect*, inclusive of our own beloved ones that have passed over. Surely where these are, we may venture without fear. The God in whom they live and move and have their being cannot be other than infinitely beautiful to know and love. Lord, Thou hast been the dwelling-place of all generations, and Thy secret place shall be our home for ever. "Draw us, and we will run after Thee!"

Our fears are met by the Risen and Living Saviour. First, He will ever live to make intercession for us; but next He will go on sanctifying us lower down, even to the uttermost. To the depths of our nature, He will carry His gracious work. Salvation has three stages. It begins with deliverance from the penalty of the past. Our sins are blotted out. The penalty is remitted or turned to benediction. Then we are saved lower down. The process of purification goes deeper and deeper into our nature. Finally, our body is renewed through the resurrection-grace of Christ. And surely there is a sense in which the grace of Christ will ever sink deeper, giving us a profounder realisation and participation in the things that will open before us in the eternal progress. Here we see in a glass darkly, there face to face. Here we know in part, there we shall develop in the knowledge and love of God. Salvation to the uttermost!

PRAYER—*I draw near to Thee, Almighty and Ever-living God, in the Name of Jesus Christ, my High Priest and Mediator, who hath passed into the heavens, where He ever liveth to make intercession for sinners. Forgive and accept me for His sake. AMEN.*

GRACE ABOUNDING!

2 Corinthians 9:8 “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:”

ABUNDANCE is characteristic of God! Go forth on a spring morning, and look on the flowers with which He has carpeted the woodlands. Daisies and buttercups, primroses and cowslips in myriads, bear witness to the prodigality of His thought and power—His thought to fashion, His power to produce. But this profuse carpeting of the earth’s nakedness is equalled in the heavens! There, depth opens beyond depth, lighted and inlaid with constellations, and the wonders of the sky answer to those of the earth. How multitudinous is God’s creation!

But what shall we say of His grace? His joy is unspeakable, His peace passeth understanding, His love is beyond knowledge! Get great thoughts of God, who holds the ocean depths as a drop in the hollow of His hand, and weighs the mountains as grains of dust in His scales. Lie upon that bank of flowers, and consider their multitude; sweep the skies with a telescope and see if you can tell the stars; number the sand-grains upon the shore, and count the shells strewn along the strand; and when you have considered the gifts of His hand, ascend to the wealth of His heart. Study the infinite map of God’s nature; compare it with the need of your little life, and then remember that the Father loves you infinitely, so much so that for *your* salvation and *mine* He gave His only-begotten Son. He has set His love upon you, and will certainly deliver you! He will set you on high because you have known His name. All the resources of eternity and infinity are at His disposal, and He can make all grace abound toward you, that always having all sufficiency in all things, you may abound to every good work.

It is a very wonderful text! Count the number of universals in it. *All* Grace—*Always!* *All* Sufficiency! *All* things! God abounding to us that we may abound. The word translated abound might be rendered literally “to flow or pour over.” “My cup runneth over.” Our Lord said: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more *abundantly*”; “Where sin *abounded*, grace did much more abound.” (Joh 10:10; Rom 5:20).

Let us remember that God does not pour in unless we pour out. If we are filled with the presence and grace of Christ in our hearts, we must give ourselves to others.

PRAYER—*Give me grace, O Lord, to see the beauty lying at my feet in the commonplaces of life; and to feel that Thou art as near, and that life is as wonderful today, as when men beheld Thee in the days of Thy flesh. AMEN.*

KNOCKING AT THE DOOR!

Revelation 3:19,20 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

CHRISt knocks at the door when His judgments are on the earth. That God has arisen to shake mightily the earth is hardly doubtful. This is a day of the Lord of Hosts, when judgments are upon all that is proud and haughty, upon the cedars and the oaks, upon the high mountains and the uplifted hills. But it is at such a time that He draws near to reassure us (Isa 2:11-21; Joe 3:16).

On the eve of the overthrow of the Cities of the Plain, He came to the door of Abraham's tent, partook of his fare, and gave promises of assurance to Abraham and Sarah which unfolded the divine purpose. Standing before the Lord, Abraham was prepared for the tragedy of the morrow, and was permitted an intimacy in which he seemed possessed by a passion for God's rectitude and righteous dealing.

Do not fear the things that are coming, but open to Him who knocks for admission. He has come to spend the dark hours in your fellowship, as a mother runs to her child's cot, when a sudden thunderstorm sweeps the sky.

Christ knocks when we are preparing for some great task. You are going forth on one of His errands, and expect misunderstanding or opposition, or you are uncertain as to your reception. Like Moses, you say: "Send by whom Thou wilt send, but let it not be by me." With Jeremiah, you plead: "behold, I cannot speak: for I *am* a child." Like the Apostles, you have to face a world in arms. At such a time, He waits at the door to encourage and inspire. On the night following the upheaval in the Sanhedrin, where Paul was nearly torn to pieces, the Lord stood by him, and said: "Be of good cheer!"

Christ knocks when bereavement enters our homes. We all know what it is to be full of longing "for the beloved ones, whom we cannot reach by deed or token, gesture or kind speech." The ship's masts have sunk below the rim of the horizon, in the sunset, and we turn back to homes out of which all light has gone. It is then that you may surely expect a gentle knock at the door, and He who came to Bethany when Lazarus died, that He might mingle His tears with those of the sisters, will certainly come to the door of your heart, and knock for admission that He may help to fill the gap.

PRAYER—*Come nearer to us than the nearest. Enter our hearts, saying, Fear not, I am with thee, I will help thee. Give us all that we need to enable us to fight the good fight, and finish our course with joy. AMEN.*

CHRIST PLEADING FOR ADMISSION

Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

DO not forget the majesty and glory of Him who asks for admission! In the following verse, He declares that He is able to give the right of sitting with Himself on His throne. He *stands*, that some day we may *sit*! O child of two worlds, shut your ear to the chatterings and noise of this passing age, and listen to Him who stands at the door of your life and knocks!

Of course, we know that the Saviour never withdraws Himself from hearts that are really His own. He *abides* in them, as they abide in Him. But with us there may be ebbs as well as flows. The current may drop from feet to inches. The light may linger in the sky, while clouds obscure the face of the sun. The heat of the body may remain, but the extremities may become chilled. It is under these circumstances that the Lord of all worlds comes to the door of our poor tenement, and stands, and knocks, and asks for admission!

We may expect His knock when our love is cooling. Once our hearts beat quickly when we heard His approaching step; now, when He is at hand, we keep Him waiting on the doorstep till His head is filled with dew, and His locks with the drops of night. Do we not all know what it is to be "neither hot nor cold"? Somehow our heart has gone dead! It is then that we may expect to hear the knock of Christ. He only asks us to admit Him and He will restore the soul to love, and love to the soul.

We may expect His knock when we must go forth from this world. The moment comes when the post will present us with a letter like that received by Christiana: "The Master expecteth thee to stand in His Presence, in clothes of immortality, within ten days." The same summons will come to Mr. Honest and Mr. Ready-to-halt; to Mr. Despondency and to Miss Much-afraid; to Mr. Stand-fast and Mr. Valiant-for-truth. But in each case there will be the accompanying knock of Jesus, saying: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine." (Isa 43:1).

PRAYER—*We thank Thee, O God, that Thy love has come to us in a human Form, that it shines from the Face of the Man Christ Jesus, and speaks to us in gentle tones we can understand. We thank Thee that He stands at the low doorway of our hearts, and knocks, and waits to come in and dwell with us for ever. We humbly ask that the Holy Spirit may open our eyes more fully to behold Him, and our hearts more ardently to love and welcome Him. AMEN.*

DAY-BREAK ON THE BEACH

John 21:4 "But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus."

THE previous evening had been full of interest and hope. Those seven fishermen had long been separated from their craft, and thinking probably that they were not to see their Master again, they betook themselves, with considerable zest, to the shore of the Lake. They entered the old familiar boat, and that night they caught nothing! It was the last fishing expedition they were to have. They were to navigate other waters, use other nets, and sail under other skies. The greatness of their disappointment was to block the door in that direction and open it in another. No longer fishermen on the shores of Galilee, but shepherds, pasturing their flocks on the celestial mountains, whence views are to be obtained, in fair weather, of the Eternal City.

Has your life been a disappointment? Did you start out, years ago, with good heart and hope? Perhaps the winds were soft, the starlight brilliant, and there was a chance of the moon breaking through. But the sky soon clouded over, and the years have gone wearily! It isn't that you have been idle, but for some reason everything has miscarried; and now there seems nothing for it but to land on the shore of Eternity, as Paul did on the shore at Malta. But do not be too sure of this! When the morning breaks on that coastline, it is more than likely that you will see Jesus standing on the beach. He will know the time of your arrival, and will come down to meet you, as He did for the first martyr, Stephen, and has done for a multitude beside.

It is very pleasant, as in the big ship, you emerge from the night, to see familiar faces greeting you, or even one dear face with a smile of welcome awaiting your coming! It may happen to be the landing-stage at New York, Bombay, Melbourne, or Liverpool, but what a difference it makes! And when the Day of days shall break, and the shadows flee away, and the little boat of our life grates on the shore, it will be good indeed to see Christ standing there, with His outstretched hand to welcome, to help us disembark, to lead us to the prepared place on which He has expended thought and care. "I go to prepare a place for you ... I will come again, and *receive* you unto Myself."

*Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiv'n through His abounding grace—
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.*

LOVE'S REVELATIONS!

John 21:7 "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea."

LOVE will see most quickly. James was there, full of practical common sense; Thomas also, who doubted, but afterwards believed; Peter, who wanted to die with Him, but afterwards denied Him; and the rest of them; but it was John whom Jesus loved, and who afterwards became the Apostle of Love, that first recognised the Master, whether by the intonation of His voice, or the thoughtfulness of His inquiry, or the readiness of His help, does not appear. The intuitions of love are as sure as they are swift. Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish. None of these things will help as much when we come to that last hour. *But Love will never fail*, and those who have loved will see most quickly, most certainly, most satisfyingly.

It is Love that unites us, and we believe that Jesus is as eager for the hour to come when we shall be with Him where He is, as we are to get there. Do you not believe that the friend who has come to the landing-stage to greet you, after a long voyage, is even more eager than you are to see that breadth of water dwindle from miles to furlongs and furlongs to yards? Do you think that Peter thought the water cold, when he plunged in, or that he would spoil his fisher's coat? Will not the chill of the river be forgotten when at last we see Jesus just beyond?

In that fair morning we shall recognise and help each other. The disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, "It is the Lord," *and gave him the preference!* Surely John would have been excused by all the rest, if he had immediately cast himself into the sea and had met Jesus first! But no! He knew how Peter had suffered, how he longed for the chance to do something to obliterate the past, how he would prize the few extra moments of private fellowship; and so he said, "It is the Lord," knowing full well what an effect would be produced on his impulsive friend.

That probably is the etiquette of Heaven! We sometimes suppose that there will be such a throng there, that we shall not be able to get near the Lord. But the greatest saints will always be the humblest and the kindest. They will come to the outer ranks, where some of us may have to stand, and say, "Come, take my place!" John will say to Peter, "It is the Lord."

PRAYER—*Impart unto me, O God, I pray Thee, the spirit of Thy Love, that I may be more anxious to give than to receive, more eager to understand than to be understood, more thoughtful for others, more forgetful of myself. AMEN.*

DESCENDING AND ASCENDING

Ephesians 4:10 "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things."

THIS is an amazing verse! Why did our Lord descend? In the Council-Chamber of Eternity, when the creation and fall of man were foreseen, it was agreed that He should deliver man; but how could this be effected, unless He had experienced conditions of human life? Mere power, though it were that of Omnipotence, would not have availed. Even perfect love might have failed in absolute sympathy, for lack of actual experience. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, ... that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest" (Heb 2:14-17).

How low did He descend? He bowed the heavens, and came down, and darkness was under his feet. Down to the Virgin Mother and the manger-bed; down to Joseph's home in despised Nazareth, and the carpenter's shop; down to hunger and thirst, to agony and bloody sweat, to the Cross and Passion; down to Death and burial even in a borrowed tomb; down to the dim shadow-world of Hades, to the spirits in prison, and if there be any lower depth, *thither!*

But He ascended from these low depths, with the keys of Death and Hades at His girdle. He ascended on high, leading captivity captive; and as He passed upward, He annexed each province as He went. This same Jesus who descended is now ascended, with no change in His nature, that He may fill all hearts, all lives, all homes, with the grace and love and help that He exhibited during His earthly ministry. When I saw that, only the other day, I said to myself: "Jesus Christ is literally in this room. It is true that He is at the right hand of God, but this is only to allow Him the more easily to fill my heart, my need, my life. He is the very same as when Martha and Mary welcomed Him to their home in Bethany. I will read the Gospels again, not so much as a record of the past, but as a mirror of the living present" (Heb 13:8).

Is there one person who reads this page, in loneliness, poverty, sickness, sorrow, and pain, that can fail to get this comfort? Read the Gospels again as the Diary and Day-Book of the Living Saviour! He that descended is the same also that ascended; and He ascended that He might fill the lowest depths of human need. Though ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, He is the same loving, tender Saviour as when the children flocked around His knees, and His tears brimmed over at the grave of His friend.

PRAYER—*I bless thee, O Son of God, that there is no need for me to go up to Heaven to bring Thee down, or into Thy grave to bring Thee up. Thou art here, in this hour, and at this place. AMEN.*

TURNING THINGS UPSIDE DOWN

Isaiah 29:16 "Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?"

WILL you let your Saviour frame your life and make it what He will? All power is His in heaven and on earth. Do not resist His moulding touch, or say that He has no understanding of your peculiar difficulties or temperament. Let Him appoint your place in life, and endow you with the wisdom and strength needed for the right discharge of its responsibilities.

By the Holy Spirit He forms in us His own life, leading us to walk in the way that pleases Him best, not following our own desires and wishes, but His; yielding to Him our will and obeying His instruction.

PRAYER—*Great Potter, fashion us! Wise Artificer, frame us! Pierced Hands, guide us where we should go. We will not be perverse children, but submit to Thy wise understanding and trust where we cannot see, committing the keeping of our souls to Thee in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. AMEN.*

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

John 18:37 "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

THIS was our Lord's answer to Pilate's inquiry, and to a certain extent each of us may appropriate His words. Wordsworth's immortal lines suggest that we stood before God to receive our commission, ere we became clothed with this body of humiliation. Whether or not the poet is right in his surmise, that "not in utter nakedness or forgetfulness do we come from God, who is our Home," we need not argue. It is enough that God, who hates nothing that He has made, sent us forth to realise an ideal, to fulfil a purpose, to bear witness to some phase of truth! Shall we not ask ourselves, as in His presence, whether we are fulfilling the divine purpose of what the Apostle calls "the high calling"? (Phi 3:14).

God created each soul with a purpose. The potter takes in hand a lump of clay with a distinct design. He means, when he places it on the horizontal wheel, to make of it a vessel to adorn a temple or palace, or he has in mind to serve some household use. The revolving wheel on the one hand, and his skilful manipulation on the other, will evolve and complete his purpose. "Cannot I do with you, as this potter? saith the Lord."

"Thou hast made me and fashioned me. Thou didst choose the time and circumstances of my birth, my parentage and heredity, my mental equipment and my physical frame. From the first Thou didst know the constitution of my body, which Thou didst fashion in secret, and curiously work in the lowest places of the earth."

To our humble challenge: "*Why hast Thou made me thus?*" God does not always give an audible reply. His answer is often voiceless, it steals in upon the soul insensibly, and we *know* that we are fulfilling His purpose. If you are engaged in some unwelcome task, which evidently is your duty; if you are shut up as companion with some uncongenial charge; if you are called to minister to people who seem unresponsive or unsympathising, ask that the Saviour and you may be yoked together, that His Will may be done through you, that His love and kindness may bear and forbear in you, and that you may witness to the truth, as it is in Jesus.

PRAYER—*O God, some of us shrink from our life-work, from those with whom we have to associate, from unwelcome toil and irksome tasks. Enable us to see Thy plan, and to trust Thee who art working out Thy plan in our lives. May the love of Christ constrain us no longer to live unto ourselves, but to Him.*
AMEN

THE MYSTERY OF REGENERATION

John 3:3,4 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

MARVEL not! said Jesus to Nicodemus—but notwithstanding, it is difficult not to marvel at the wonder and mystery of the new birth. Birth, as in the case of the little chick, is emergence. It is the emergence of a tiny creature from darkness and confinement into the great world, with its over-arching blue, its mantle of green, and its abundant wealth. So the mineral may be born into the vegetable, the vegetable into the animal, the animal into the human, the human into the divine. But in each case the process is the same. We are born *from above*. (Joh 3:3-7.) In other words, the kingdom above us must stoop down and take us into union with itself.

This new birth from above is the heavenward side of faith. Just as the outstretched hand has two sides to it, the palm and the back, so the act by which we are incorporated into life eternal has two sides to it—the angels speak of it as being born into the life of God; we describe it as trusting Jesus Christ for salvation. If we are believing—trusting in Him—we are born from above. "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life*." To them that receive Him, Jesus gives the *right to become* the sons and daughters of God. "Now are we the sons of God."

This is the mystery of the new birth. "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in Thy Book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot attain unto it." It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He, the First-Born from among the dead, shall appear, *we shall be like Him!*

It is a marvel, that in some mysterious manner we awake to find ourselves attached by the ties of birth and nature to this wonderful world. What are we! Whence came we! What is the true significance of this discipline of pain and weariness intersected with joy and gladness—we cannot tell! But is it not more marvellous that we should find ourselves belonging to that eternal world through Jesus Christ our Lord; that He is the Ladder linking this world to His own, and that where He is, we shall be also?

PRAYER—*We thank Thee, O Saviour, that Thou hast taught us to know Thee, and to love Thee; but we thank Thee most of all for adopting us into Thy family, and making us the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. May we walk as children of light, and go through the world fulfilling the ministries of Heaven. AMEN.*

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

John 4:14 "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

ONE morning, when the land was carpeted with flowers of spring, a woman awoke in the little town of Sychar that lay in the lap of the twin mountains, Ebal and Gerizim. Little did she realise that that day would revolutionise, not her own life only, but that of untold thousands. Throughout its happenings her story would be embalmed in the history of the race, and she would take the first step which, as tradition says, ended in martyrdom.

Her nature was passionate and intense. The well was deep! She had sought to satisfy her heart with human love, but in vain, and she had ceased to believe in love. Her character was gone, and her neighbours would not tolerate her presence at the ancient well, so that she had no alternative but to carry her pitcher hither in the sultry noon, instead of in the cool of the late afternoon, when the women came to draw their water.

She was not destitute of religion. There was the ancient tradition of Jacob's faith, for he had lived within sight of these hills and had drunk of that well. She believed in this ancestral religion, which had existed in its sublime simplicity before the division arose between Jew and Samaritan, and had listened to many discussions as to the rival claims of the temples at Jerusalem and Gerizim. She also believed that some day the long-awaited for Messiah would appear, and explain all things. In the meanwhile, however, she was sick and weary at heart. Her daily lonely visit to the well seemed to epitomise her inner experience. "Give me, Stranger," she seemed to say, "anything that will appease this soul-thirst, and restore to me the years that the locust and cankerworm have eaten. Then I shall cease to thirst and come all the way hither to draw!"

Is she not the type of myriads? Some among my readers have drunk of all the wells sunk by human hands, and have found them brackish or empty. They have turned from them all with the ancient verdict: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Is it thus with you, my friend? Then, it may be, that He who came far out of His usual way to find and help this distraught soul, is near to you also, waiting to open those hidden springs of which, if a man drink, he shall never thirst again.

PRAYER—*O Christ, Who didst sit at Jacob's well, give me to drink of the water of life, and to hear Thy voice, which is as music; let that spring, of which Thou didst speak to the woman, rise up within my heart unto eternal life. AMEN.*

SPRING UP, O WELL!

Revelation 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

TRUE religion is the union of the Spirit of God with the human spirit and this is effected in and through Jesus Christ. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit." Jesus is the Mediator between God and man. He reveals the Father, unites us with the Father, and comes with the Father to make His home with us (Joh 14:21-23).

Continuing our thought in yesterday's reading, it is thus that our religious life becomes a springing-fountain. The woman spoke of "the well," our Lord of "the spring in the well." She spoke of the fatigue of drawing-up, He of the rising-up. With too many, religion is not spontaneous, but derived. They must have religious services, or a rousing preacher, or books of religious stimulants. We all profit by outside helps, but we must not depend upon them. Learn the habit of being still before God, till His love rises yearningly and earnestly within you.

Whatever impedes the uprising of the Fountain must be abandoned. A curious thing once happened at a training college. The house was full of students, when suddenly the entire water-supply failed. After every effort had been made to trace the failure, a plumber was sent for, who went at once to the junction between the main supply and the house-pipe. On opening this a big toad was discovered, which had filled the orifice and made it impossible for the water to pass through. It had come in as a tiny tadpole, had lodged in the joint, living on the water, until, full-grown, it sealed the passage.

Something like this may happen in our lives. Hidden sin may grow within, unchecked, until it chokes the incoming love of God. Jesus knew that in the woman's heart there was unconfessed sin, which blocked her reception of the Living Water. In mercy, He uncovered the evil thing, the obstacle was removed, and the Fountain of Life immediately arose. She ceased her arguments, and became a disciple. She forgot her prejudices, and leaving behind the water-pot, started off to the town, telling everyone she met that at last she had found the Messiah. Presently she returned with the whole town behind her, and Jesus knew that harvest-time had arrived!

PRAYER—*O Saviour of men! I am nothing better than common earthenware; but may I be cleansed and purified, and then filled with Thy heavenly treasure. Dip me deep into the water of life, and give refreshment through me to many parched and weary hearts. AMEN.*

GOD'S GUIDING HAND IN OUR LIVES

Psalm 23:1 "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

John 10:4 "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."

DO you need guidance in your life? Look unto Jesus; it is always possible to discern His form, though partially veiled in mist; and when it is lost, be sure to stand still until He comes back to find and reestablish the blessed connection. Do not look to impressions which often contradict one another, which rise and fall with variable fickleness, and are like eddies upon a flowing current; do not seek for guidance from friends who will differ from each other, and no two of which will give the same advice on the same grounds, but look away to Christ; throw on Him the responsibility of making you know the way you are to take; leave it to Him to make it so abundantly clear that you cannot do other than follow; even tell Him that you will stand still until He puts His arms under you, and carries you where He would have you be. Do not get anxious or flurried. Put the government of your life upon His shoulder, and leave Him to execute His plan.

Sometimes He guides us to the rest of the green pastures, and the quiet of the still waters. In other words, we are left through happy months and years to fulfil the ordinary commonplaces of life, content to fill a little space, and receiving great increments of spiritual force for future service. At other times, we are guided from the lowland pastures up into the hills. The way is sunny, above us the precipitous cliffs, beneath the dark turbid stream; but this is well; we would not always be lying in the pastures or walking softly by the waters. It is good to climb the heights with their far view and bracing air.

In the late afternoon the Shepherd may lead his flock back into the valleys, through the dark woods, where the branches meet overhead and the wild beast lurks in ambush, but we know that in one hand He has the rod or club, with which to belabour anything that may attack; and in the other the crook to drag us out of the hole. He would not lead us into the dark valley which He had not explored, and whose perils He was not prepared to overcome. Darkness, sorrow, or death do not prove that we have missed His guidance, or have taken the wrong path, but rather that He counts us able to bear the trial by faith in Himself.

PRAYER—*Tell us, O Lord, where Thou art leading Thy flock today, that we may follow upon Thy track. We do not ask Thee to come our way, but to teach us Thine. AMEN.*

THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL

Philippians 3:13,14 "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

AN ideal is a mental conception of character after which we desire to shape our lives. It is the fresco which we paint on the walls of our soul, and perpetually look at in our lonely hours; and since the heart is educated through the eye, we become more and more assimilated to that which we admire.

Our Ideal should be distinctly beyond us. We must be prepared to strain our muscles and task our strength, attempting something which those who know us best never thought us capable of achieving. Like St. Paul, we must count the ordinary ambitions of men as dung, must forget the things which are behind and press forward to those before.

We should choose as an objective some *ideal which is manifestly*, in our own judgment or that of others, *within our scope*. It is a mistake to set before our minds an ideal which is altogether out of harmony with the makeup of our nature. Therefore we should learn, to say with the Apostle: "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Be sure that God created and redeemed you for a definite purpose. Discover that purpose, and set yourself to make it good.

Our Ideal should give unity to life. Happy is the man who is able to prosecute his ideal through each hour of consciousness, and who can say: "This one thing I do!" Such people are the irresistible ones. Those who know one subject thoroughly, or who bend all their energies in the prosecution of one purpose, carry all before them. The quest for a holy character may be prosecuted always and everywhere. In every act and thought we may become more like Christ.

The Christ ideal is the highest ideal. "That I may win Christ, and be found in Him." But such an ideal will only be realised at the cost of self-denial. You must put aside your own righteousness to get His; you must be willing to count all things loss; you must ignore the imperious demands of passion. So shall you be prepared for the hour when even "our vile body" shall be transformed to the likeness of the glorious body of Christ. His working is on your side; in you and for you He will subdue all things to Himself.

PRAYER—*Thou, O Christ, art all I want. May Thy grace abound towards me, so that having all sufficiency in all things, I may abound unto every good work. AMEN.*

VISION AND PURPOSE

Acts 22:10 "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? ..."

Philippians 3:12-14 "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: ... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

WHEN the Apostle Paul was suddenly brought into the presence of the Eternal, the whole course of his life was changed. In that flash of Light he saw the exalted Saviour, and learnt that he was antagonising the purposes of redeeming grace, and that vision altered the whole of his purposes and actions. From that great hour he forgot the things that were behind, and endeavoured to apprehend that for which he had been apprehended by Christ Jesus. It was his ambition to build his life on the pattern shown him on the mount.

Years after, as he reviewed his life-work, the churches he had founded, the cities he had evangelised, the epistles he had written, surely he might have reckoned that he had apprehended; but ever as he climbed, he envisaged heights beckoning beyond his attainments. Is not that the case with us, as we compare the vision of God's purpose with what we have realised? Oh, give us back the years that have gone, that we may do better, be more accurate and successful in the transmission to living fact of those fair ideals, which called to us years ago! The vision in the sanctuary may never be perfectly realised by these bungling apprentice-hands. Yet God accepts and forgives the mistakes, as the mother accepts the cobbled stitches of her little girl who tries to help her with her sewing. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after," and God forgives and accepts our poor patchwork!

What must we do to achieve our ideals? We must be more often in the sanctuary, in fellowship with Christ, to whose image we are to be conformed. With the Psalmist we must say: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." As we look on Him, we shall be changed into His likeness. As He is, so shall we become. Martyrs on the night before their agony; reformers hesitating at their tasks; scholars wondering whether their long self-denial was worth while; fathers and mothers; teachers and workers; preachers and missionaries, all these have stood in the sanctuary of God, until they have seen the vision and ideal. Then they have reckoned that what God had taught them to long for, He was prepared to enable them to effect. "All things are possible to him that believeth."

PRAYER—*Grant unto me grace, O Lord, that I may both perceive and know what things I ought to do, and may also have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same. AMEN.*

FAITHFULNESS IN DAILY LIFE

Ephesians 6:7 "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:"

THE common drudgery of daily life can be a divine calling. We often speak of a young man as "being called to the Ministry"; but it is as fitting to speak of a carpenter being *called* to the bench, the blacksmith to the forge, and the shoemaker to his last. "Brethren," said the Apostle, "let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

Remember that your life has been appointed by God's wise providence. God as much sent Joseph to the drudgery and discipline of the prison as to the glory and responsibility of the palace. Nothing happens to us which is not included in His plan for us; and the incidents which seem most tiresome are often contrived to give us opportunities to become nobler, stronger characters.

We are called to be faithful in performing our assigned duties. Not brilliance, not success, not notoriety which attracts the world's notice, but the regular, quiet, and careful performance of trivial and common duties; faithfulness in that which is *least* is as great an attainment in God's sight as in the greatest.

In every piece of honest work, however irksome, laborious, and commonplace, we are fellow-workers with God. We must help God to give men their daily bread. It is for Him to cause the growth of the corn, but man must reap and thresh, grind out the flour, make and distribute the bread. The tailor is God's fellow-workman, helping Him to clothe the bodies which He has made to need garments of various textures. The builder cooperates with God in housing His children. The merchant helps to bring the products of the East to refresh and enrich the toiling masses of the West. God uses man in a thousand ways to serve the children of men.

Take up your work, then, you who seem to be the nobodies, the drudges, the maid-of-all-work, the clerk, or shop assistant. Do it with a brave heart, looking up to Him who for many years toiled at the carpenter's bench. Amid the many scenes and actions of life, set the Lord always before your face. Do all as in His presence, and to win His smile; and be sure to cultivate a spirit of love to God and man. Look out for opportunities of cheering your fellow-workers. Do not murmur or grumble, but let your heart rise from your toil to God your Maker, Saviour, and Friend. So the lowliest service will glisten, as grass-blades do when sun and dewdrops garnish them.

PRAYER—*Be not far from me, O Lord, this day; and through all its hours may I be found doing those things which are well-pleasing in Thy sight. AMEN.*

RENEWING OUR STRENGTH

Isaiah 40:31 “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

IT is more than probable that these lines will be read by some who have lost heart. They are fainting beneath the long and arduous strain of life, and ready to give up in despair. It seems as though God had forgotten to be gracious, and in anger had shut up His tender mercies. To all such, Isaiah says: God is not tired: you think He is because you are. Wait upon the Lord, and *renew* your strength.

The question is not as to altering your environment, but altering your courage, your power of endurance, your assurance of victory; then, notwithstanding every hindrance and difficulty, you will mount up on wings like eagles, you will run without being weary, you will walk without being faint.

The inevitable order. Mounting up—running—walking! We should have supposed that it should have been *walking* in the beginnings of religious experience; then the walk breaking into the run; and finally the runner leaping on wings into the azure, like the eagle a black speck against the blue! But experience confirms the prophetic order. Isaiah is right! We mount, we run, we walk!

Let us claim the promise—“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” Too often in the past we have depended on the stimulus of services, sermons, conventions which have made the embers glow again on the heart’s altar. We have gone back to our homes, to our daily calling, with a new zeal and impulse that has lasted for weeks or months. Then we have found ourselves flagging again; we have run and got weary; we have walked and become faint.

To all such comes the word; if you would once more mount up and run and walk, you must renew your strength. Time tells on us! Moods influence us! Circumstances impede us! Satan blows cold blasts on our heart-fires and cools them! Sins pile up their debris between us and God! From all these let us turn once more to Jesus and wait on Him. “My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” Look not back, but forward! Not down, but up! Not in, but out! Never to your own heart, but keep looking to Jesus, made near and living by the grace of the Holy Spirit. So shall you renew your strength, as you wait upon the Lord.

PRAYER—*Thou knowest, Lord, how often I am sorely let and hindered in running the race which is set before me. May Thy bountiful grace and mercy come to my help, that I may finish my course with joy, and receive the crown of life. AMEN.*

THE WATER OF LIFE TURNED TO WINE!

John 2:5-7 "His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim."

DO not forget the necessity of obeying the inner voice of Christ, which may be recognised by these three signs—it never asks questions, but is decisive and imperative; it is not unreasonable nor impossible; it calls for an obedience which costs us some sacrifice of our own way and will. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it!"

Do as you are told. It was a severe test to obedient faith to fill up those big jars, which stood in the vestibule of the house. Each would contain about twenty gallons, and as they were probably nearly empty, it would be a long and tedious business to fill them, especially at a time when guests required other attention. "They filled them up to the brim!"

In your obedience, *always give Christ brimful measure.* It may be a very small thing He asks you to do—to teach a class of children, to pay a visit to some sick man or woman, to write a letter, to speak a word of comfort, to hold out the helping hand, to give the glass of cold water, but see to it that your response is hearty and brimful! The jar is your opportunity! A very common and ordinary one! An act that may seem needless or inconvenient; but out of it may come the greatest achievement of your life! When the Lord calls you into partnership, be sure not to say: "Please do not ask me!" Nay, serve Him to the brim! He never asks you to do one small act for Him, without being prepared to add His Almighty grace to your weakness, thereby perfecting the act. It is an amazing thing that He should want our help. Let us give Him to the brim, and, as we do so, we shall see a wonderful and beautiful thing, which is hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes. "The servants which drew the water *knew.*"

Many of us realise that this miracle is constantly taking place. We fill our water pots to the brim with water; but at the end of days of careful preparation we sadly review the result, and say to ourselves: "After all, it is very poor stuff, *only water* at the best!" But as we pour it out in service to others, we know that the Master has been collaborating with us, and has *turned the water into wine!* There are secrets between the Lord and those who obey Him! It is blessed when we are workers together with Christ. He knows, and you know. A smile passes between you and Him, and it is enough! The best wine is always kept in reserve!

PRAYER—*Enable me to do not only what I like to do, but what I ought. Cause me to be faithful in a little, and in common tasks to learn Thy deep lessons of obedience, patience, and conscientiousness. AMEN.*

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

Isaiah 33:21,22 "But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us."

VERSE 21 may also be translated "Jehovah will be with us in Majesty." The reference can only be to our Saviour, who is the Divine Vice-regent of the world. Through Him it was created, by Him it has been redeemed, in Him its government is vested. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. His are the Glories of the Cross, of Victory over Death and Hell, of the Ascension, of Pentecost, of the Millennial Reign, of the Judgment Seat!

And this Glorious and Transcendent Saviour is willing and eager to be the complement of our deficiencies and needs. We look around, and some of us, as we compare our lot with others, lament, even if we do not audibly complain, at our disadvantages. Others, whom we have known from childhood, seem to have all that heart could wish—a happy married life, a spacious and beautiful home, hosts of friends, buoyant health, opportunities of travel and enjoyment that are denied to us. We have been plagued all the day long, and chastened every morning. We have spent a shut-in, cloistered life. The bare necessities of life have been our only portion, and a sense of anxiety as to our future has haunted our dreams.

But we are not alone in this experience. When every one went to his own home, our Lord Jesus spent the night on the Mount of Olives. The birds had their nests, and the foxes their holes, but the Son of Man had no where to lay His head, but, like Jacob, was wont to make a stone His pillow. You are not singular, therefore, if your life is barren and lonely, for many of God's noblest saints have lived from hand to mouth, wandering in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented.

Remember that such experiences are designed to bring into prominence what the glorious Lord is prepared to be and do. In mathematics we speak of the complement of a curve—that which is needed to make a curve into a complete circle. So Jesus is willing to complete our lives, however imperfect and ineffective they may be. He is able to compensate for all deficiencies, and to become in your experience "a place of broad rivers and streams." A river to intercept dreaded evil, and a stream to refresh and fertilise the drooping thirsty heart.

PRAYER—*Be to us, O Glorious Lord, a place of broad rivers and streams; our Judge, our Lawgiver, our King, our Saviour. Make the wilderness of our lives a pool, and the dry land water springs. AMEN.*

EVERYDAY RELIGION

1 Peter 3:15,16 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."

THERE is no doubt that if every Christian person were to begin to live up to the New Testament ideal, avoiding always what Christ would not be, and seeking to be always what He would be, there would be little need for preaching, for the beauty of the Christian character would in itself be sufficiently attractive to win men for Jesus Christ.

Let us examine ourselves by the suggestions in this chapter, from which we have selected our text (1 Pet 3:8-18). Have we the mind of Christ, which makes us willing to be of no reputation, and to stoop even to the death of the cross, for others? Are we compassionate, sympathising in the joys and sorrows of others? Do we love the brethren, not always *liking* them perhaps, but treating them kindly, and making their interests more important than our own? Are we tenderhearted and pitiful towards the afflicted and distressed? Are we courteous, with true Christian politeness which differs from the world's code of manners? How do we reply to injury? Do we bless when we are cursed, or do we retaliate with hot and indignant words? Are we willing to leave our vindication with God?

Do you want a happy life and good days? Then leave God to vindicate and deliver you. Set yourself against evil, and live at peace with all, as much as in you lies. The one thing for all of us to be really anxious about is to *enshrine Jesus Christ in our hearts as Lord*. Is there a door in your heart opening on a throne room which is reserved for Jesus only? Have you written on that door such words as these: "Other lords have had dominion over me, but henceforth He only is my King."? *Be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you*. This is what Peter, on one memorable occasion, failed to do; and we shall fail also but for the help of the Holy Spirit, who will teach us what we ought to say (John 14:26). *Have a good conscience*—one that can look God and man in the face, and is not conscious of willful violation of what is right and good. Follow the gleam; obey the inner light; listen to the still small voice, which is ever saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it."

PRAYER—*Help me, O God, so to live that those who are associated with me, directing or serving me day by day, may long to have the love and joy which they see in me. Show me how to apply to the common things of daily life the heavenly principles of the risen life. AMEN.*

GOD'S PARTNERSHIP WITH MAN

Exodus 3:10,14 "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. ... And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

NOTHING is more needed today than God's partnership as a realised fact in Christian experience. Many of us may assent to what is written in these lines, and then put it aside, as a dream which is too ethereal to be of practical service. But when the Apostle said that "our fellowship, *i.e.* our *partnership*, is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" it is surely meant that we should enter upon our inheritance. "I AM..." says our great Partner; "fill in your need, and I will meet your demand, according to the riches of My glory in Christ Jesus." Let us tear out the order-forms from God's service-register, fill them up, and present them for delivery. Not one of them would be dishonoured. And if it happened that we had wrongly diagnosed our need, He would erase the demand based on our imperfect knowledge, and substitute what we would ask if we knew. There is nothing more certain than that the more we ask of God, the more pleased He is to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think.

Our Lord made use of this incident when He was challenged by the Sadducees to adduce proof of the future life from the Books of Moses. He answered by quoting this paragraph of the burning bush, calling special attention to the fact that Moses referred to God as the "God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." He said that the use of the present tense—I AM—proved that God is not the God of the dead but of the *living*, and that all live unto Him.

What a comfort there is in this thought, that our beloved who have passed from us are breathing the same atmosphere as we are. We all eat the same spiritual meat and all drink the same spiritual drink. *We see in a mirror darkly, but they face to face*; but this identity of fellowship, of partnership with the "I AM," the ever-present God who fills heaven and earth, is a proof and a pledge that they have not altered essentially. They are drinking of the same stream higher up and nearer its source: One family "we dwell in him."

PRAYER—*Accomplish thy perfect work in our souls, O Father. As yet we are bound with many chains; we tarry among things seen and temporal; we are exposed to the storms of the outer world, and are wrestling with its ills. But we are not dismayed, for we are more than earth and dust, we are akin to Thee, O Spirit of the Lord, and can experience Thy heavenly influence. Fill us with faith and love and hope. AMEN.*

GOD'S PARTNERSHIP IN OUR AFFLICTION

Isaiah 63:9 "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

MANY are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. There is the *affliction of ill-health*, which compels us to stand aside and leave our tasks to others. The languor of sleepless nights, the inactivity and loneliness of the long days, the fear of being burdensome to others. The anxiety as to how this or that interest may fare in inexperienced hands. The sense of helplessness and weakness. These are the ingredients of that cup which many have to drink!

There is the *affliction of poverty*, when every door seems closed against our appeal; when hundreds of applicants are answering the same advertisement; when the cruse of oil has been drained of its last drop, and the barrel scraped bare; when the rent is overdue, the boots are wearing out in vain journeys, and the faces and clothes of the children begin to tell the tale of privation—then the iron seems to enter our soul!

There is the *affliction of uncongenial companionship*. "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" To how many the Psalmist's words would express their precise position: "My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war." There is even profounder suffering, when man or woman is mated for life with one who is out of Christ, or is the one Christian disciple in an irreligious family. It was with a deep knowledge of human nature that the Apostle urged his converts not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

There is also the *affliction of temptation*. Jealousy, pride, discontent, self-will—these assail us from without, and too often they find a response from within, as though there was an accomplice in hiding.

Such are some of the problems and afflictions which darken our experience. The mistake is that we face our troubles without God's fellowship, consciously realised. We carry our burdens, without casting them upon the Lord, and claiming the grace which waits to help us in our hour of need. We do not realise that He has come down to deliver us, because He knows our sorrows. In all our afflictions He is afflicted.

PRAYER—*O God, we have no help but Thine, nor do we need another arm save Thine to lean upon. Teach us how to gain strength from Thee hour by hour, in the glance of an eye, the breathing of a sigh, the brief ejaculation, may we take into ourselves that strength which Thou hast stored for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN.*

TRANSFIGURED LIVES

Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

2 Corinthians 3:18 “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

IN our texts the word rendered *transformed*, or *changed*, is the same as is used in Matt 17:2; and this must have been in the mind of the Apostle when he said, “Be ye transfigured,” and “we are transfigured into the same image.” How can this transformation be effected? First, from within, by the renewing of the mind; and second, by beholding the glory of the Lord.

The renewing of the mind. This is no matter for emotion or ecstasy, but of bringing our minds into close and constant contact with the truth as contained in the Holy Scripture. You have not to study yourself in the mirror, to see whether you are becoming transfigured; but as day by day you steep your mind in God’s Word, without your realising it, you will become transfigured. Moses wist not that his face shone. It was for the crowd that waited for him at the mountain-foot to see it, not for him.

Our Lord said: “Abide in Me, and I in you.” This is somewhat mystical and profound; but He said again: “If ye abide in Me, and My *words* abide in you”—that is surely within our reach. “It is not too high, not too deep, not too inward, not too mystical,” said Dr. Whyte on one occasion; “and when the Master asks that His words shall abide in me, He can mean nothing else than that I shall often recall and recollect His words, and shall repeat them to myself at all times.”

As a man thinketh in his heart so is he; and if we think those thoughts of self-giving, which characterised our Lord’s forecast and determination on the Mount of Transfiguration—if we are animated by the resolve to present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God; as we steep our minds in His mind—the transfiguring glory of that high resolve will insensibly pass into our faces, thus irradiating our meanest actions, our simplest speech.

Beholding and reflecting the Glory of the Lord. The mirror again is Holy Scripture. We find there the reflection of our Lord’s highest glory, which is patent, not in His creative but in His redemptive work. As we gaze on Him who, for our salvation hid not His face from shame and spitting, but became a willing sacrifice on our behalf, we shall be changed.

PRAYER—*O Lord Jesus Christ, grant me such communion with Thyself that my soul may continually be athirst for that time when I shall behold Thee in Thy glory. In the meanwhile, may I behold Thy glory in the mirror of Thy Word, and be changed into the same image. AMEN.*

THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR US!

Philippians 2:5,7 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ... But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:"

THE Lord Jesus stripped Himself of everything save love, that He might more readily meet each human soul on its own level. Being in the form of God, and equal with God, He emptied Himself, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, for our sakes. He stripped Himself of all that He might give to us fair clothing instead of the fading fig-leaves of apologies and excuse. He descended so low as to put the everlasting arms beneath the most hapless and hopeless. He desired to get so low, that none could get lower. He was set on proclaiming His gospel so that even the dying thief might enter Paradise, and that not one prodigal in all the human family should think that he had sunk too low or gone so far as to be excluded from the hope of salvation. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

Surely it is inexcusable that any soul of man should evade the love of God, when the Son of His love has made so great an effort to acquaint us, not only with its height and breadth and length, but with its *depth*. Why are we so cold, so unmoved, so inert? The Apostle speaks of the love of Christ constraining him, of the love of God shed abroad within us and flooding our hearts. How is it that, with God's love so near, so close, so easily within our reach, we are so apathetic and unresponsive?

The cure is, in part, the consciousness that God's Love is all around us, which we cultivate by meditation. "Thy Omnipotence," says St. Augustine, "is not remote from us even when we are remote from Thee"; and we may say as much of His love. Even when we feel cold and distant, we are beset by God's love behind and before, and His grace is overshadowing us with infinite tenderness. Do not try to kindle love by thinking of the Cross as far away back in the past, but by musing and meditating on Christ's love as being as tender and real as when He said to His Mother, "Behold thy son," and to John, "Behold thy Mother."

Jesus knows the needs of our hearts, and is even now close at hand to lead us by the Holy Spirit into the realisation of His love. Let us open our nature to the blessed Comforter, and He will not be slack in His response. "The fruit of the Spirit is Love."

PRAYER—*May the Holy Spirit so fill my heart with the consciousness of the love of Christ my Lord, that there may be no room in my life for anything inconsistent with His love. AMEN.*

SERVING THE LORD

Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

THE first thing for all of us to do is to present ourselves to God as alive from the dead, and our bodies as living sacrifices. The path of blessedness can be entered by no other gate. It is only as we refuse to be conformed to this world, and yield ourselves to be transformed by the free entrance of the Holy Spirit into our minds, that we can learn all that God will do for us. We are nothing; He is all. And He is prepared to be and do all things in us, if only we will be open to Him as the land lies open to the summer sun.

Those who really live the yielded life, do not need to ascertain God's will by signs. They recognise it by the whisper of His voice and the touch of His hand. It is as we refuse to be moulded by the world, and give ourselves up to the transfiguring Spirit of God, that we prove what is His good, acceptable, and perfect will. But more than that, we begin to live for others, and draw by faith from the fulness of God, that we may minister to them aright.

First, we understand what the will of God is; then we present our bodies that it may fulfil itself through us; then we discover that it means goodwill to men, and we become the happy channels of heavenly ministry to those around us in one of the spheres enumerated in verses 6-8 of this chapter. It is impossible to cherish jealousy, because the Head may use this member or that; it is equally impossible to be proud, because we have nothing that we have not received. Let us always remember that each has a special ministry to fulfil, and that we shall find in our daily lot the opportunity of fulfilling it. How many resemble the landowner of the Eastern story, who sold his property in order to go in search of diamonds, and lo! the man who purchased his property found it full of diamonds. Indeed it was the famous Golconda region. In the daily drudgery of life you will find your heavenly opportunity. How many who are pining for a great mission, will never be permitted to enter it, because they despise the low and narrow door of humble service to those in their immediate neighbourhood.

But we can never realise these divine ideals of service merely by an external obedience. We must be constrained by a holy love to our Lord and to one another. What a despair these ideals would be apart from the Holy Spirit. That holy love comes from Him.

PRAYER—*O God work in me, not only to will but to do of Thy good pleasure; and may I work out in daily life what Thou dost work in. AMEN.*

THE CRY OF THE OPPRESSED

Isaiah 38:14 “Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.”

THIS prayer is so indefinite that it will suit any emergency, and yet brimful of faith that God will undertake all responsibility. Are you oppressed with the sense of failure, with temptation, with the consciousness of sin? Or oppressed with poverty, or debt, or the fear of unemployment, or with inability to find work? Or cast down with bitter persecution within or without your home? Or sorely beset and hindered by ill-health, the hopelessness of recovery? All these easements of oppression are included in this petition, and may be handed over to your faithful Creator, with the certainty that He is as willing as He is able to undertake for you. He is never weary of hearing your cry; the everlasting arms are never tired; and our God neither slumbers nor sleeps.

What may we expect from a prayer so simple, yet so comprehensive? *We shall know God.* “What shall I say, He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it” (Isa 38:15). Hezekiah had been a religious man, had maintained the Temple Services, had enjoyed the close friendship of Isaiah, yet it was in none of these things that he had met God face to face. But when he turned his face to the wall, and poured out his soul-anguish, He touched God, knew Him after a fresh fashion, heard Him speak, saw Him work. Only through sickness, loneliness, and the pressure of overwhelming sorrow, do some men rightly learn to live, and discover that unseen and most real world, where the life of the spirit unfolds to God as a flower in spring.

At the pit we learn God's Love (Isa 38:17). How can we measure God's love? They say that a man's fist is the measure of his heart. Come and stand beneath the stars! There is God's hand! Now judge His heart! It is illimitable! By that love He has put our sins behind His back into the ocean depths! With that love He has drawn us out of the pit of our sins! By that love He bears with our cold response and languid petitions! Through that love He will bring us to glory! His is a love that will never let us go!

Take the hand of Jesus to steady you; look down into the hole of the pit from which you have been redeemed, and then look up to the throne of God to which He passed at His ascension, and recall His own words: “Where I am, there shall ye be also.” Trust Him to undertake for your little life!

PRAYER—*I pray Thee, O my Father, to shut me up to a simpler and more confiding faith. May I trust more than I know, and believe more than I see; and when my heart is overwhelmed within me, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. AMEN.*

THINGS FOR AND AGAINST

Genesis 42:36 “And Jacob their father said unto them, *Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.*”

Romans 8:31,37 “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? ... *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*”

THY complaint is very bitter, thou Prince of Israel! What ails thee so sorely? Is there none to comfort?

“I do well to be sorrowful! The days of my years have been few and evil! Driven from my father’s home; a stranger in a strange land for thirty years; in constant dread of my brother; compelled by the misdeeds of my sons to flee the country; bereaved of my beloved Rachel; lamed through my resistance to God’s Angel—I had already suffered to the uttermost; but now we are straitened by famine and want; Joseph is not, Simeon is detained in prison as a hostage, and they are demanding Benjamin, the son of my old age and my right hand.”

Let us beware of passing hasty judgments on God’s dealings with us. He cannot work out His fair design without some cross-stitches on this side of the canvas. The black clouds are only His water-cisterns, and on the other side they are bathed in sunshine. Do not look at your sorrows from the lowlands of your pilgrimage—but from the uplands of God’s purpose. No chastening for the present is joyous but grievous, nevertheless, afterward ... dwell on that *Afterward!* If Jacob had not been led along this special path, he would never have come out on the shining tableland, where God Himself is Sun.

“*In all these things we are more than conquerors!*” These are brave words, thou strenuous soul, how darest thou reverse the findings of the patriarch? Hast thou sounded the depths? Hast thou been in the pit?

“Ay! I have most certainly been there! I have experienced tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword; thrice beaten with rods, once stoned. In journeyings and perils, in hunger and thirst, in cold and pain. But nothing has succeeded in separating me from the love of Christ; and I am persuaded that neither life nor death, things present nor things to come ... shall ever separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Yes! Thou great Apostle and Lover of Christ, thou art right! In all these things *we are more than conquerors*, through Him who has loved us—our Saviour, Jesus Christ!

PRAYER—*Help me, O Lord, to believe that what seem to be my losses are really gains, and that each ounce of affliction is adding to the weight of glory, not hereafter only, but now! AMEN.*

JOY IN THE HOUR OF TRIAL

James 1:2,3 "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

WE are bidden to count our trials as pure joy, since our patient endurance leads ultimately to the finished product of a holy character. All the trials and afflictions that beset us are seen and shared by our Heavenly Father. God did not save Israel from the ordeal of affliction, but passed through it with them (Exo 3:7-9; Isa 63:9). Evidently there was a wise purpose to be served by those bitter Egyptian experiences. So with ourselves. There is a reason for our trials which we do not understand now, but we shall do some day, when we stand in the light with God. Afflictions are not always chastisement, though in some cases that may be so; but more often we are in grief through manifold trials, that the proof of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Let us therefore rejoice, and magnify His lovingkindness. What a theme is here for praise! Sweet psalms and hymns have floated down the ages, bearing comfort for myriads, because those who wrote them passed through searching discipline. And it may be that we who have passed through great tribulation will be able to contribute notes in the heavenly music that the unfallen sons of light could never sing. The Psalter of Eternity could not be complete without the reminiscences, set to music, of the grace that ministered to us in our earthly trials, and brought us up out of the furnace of pain.

Then we shall tell how God's glorious arm went also at *our* right hand, as at the right hand of Moses; of how the stony paths became soft as mossy grass; of how He led us out of the scorching heat into green pastures and waters of rest; and how He provided for us to make for Himself a glorious name. Yes, we will make mention of the Lord, according to all that He shall have bestowed upon us, according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His lovingkindness. We will tell the story of how the Angel of His presence saved us; how, in His love and pity, He redeemed us; and how He bare and carried us all the days of old. We shall have a great story to tell! "My flesh and my heart faileth: *but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*" "None of them that trust in Him shall be desolate."

PRAYER—*Give me, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no unworthy affection may drag downwards; give me an unconquered heart, which no tribulation can wear out; give me an upright heart, which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside. AMEN.*

THE REFINER'S FIRE

Malachi 3:3 "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."

1 Peter 1:7 "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"

NOTHING is harder to bear than the apparent aimlessness of suffering. They say that what breaks a convict's heart is to set him to say carry stones from one side of the prison to the other, and then back again! But we must never look upon the trials of life as punishments, because all penalty was borne by our Lord Himself. They are intended to destroy the weeds and rubbish of our natures, as the bonfires do in the gardens. Christ regards us in the light of our eternal interests, of which He alone can judge. If you and I knew what sphere we were to fulfil in the other world, we should understand the significance of His dealings with us, as now we cannot do. The Refiner has a purpose in view, of which those who stand beside Him are ignorant, and, therefore, they are unable to judge the process which He is employing.

Dare to believe that Christ is working out a plan in your life. He loves you. Be patient! He would not take so much trouble unless He knew that it was worth while. "We do not prune brambles, or cast common stones into the crucible or plough sea-sands!" You must be capable of some special service, which can only be done by a carefully-prepared instrument, and so Christ sits beside you as the Refiner, year after year, that you may miss nothing.

Whilst the Fire is hot keep conversing with the Refiner. Ponder these words: "He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver." The thought is specially suitable for those who cannot make long prayers, but they can talk to Christ as He sits beside them. Nicholas Hermann tells us that, as he could not concentrate his mind on prolonged prayer, he gave up set times of prayer and sought constant conversations with Christ. Speak to Him, then, in the midst of your daily toil. He hears the unspoken prayer, and catches your whispers. Talk to Christ about your trials, sorrows, and anxieties! Make Him your Confidant in your joy and happiness! Nothing makes Him so real as to talk to Him aloud about *everything!*

PRAYER—*Let the Fire of Thy Love consume in me all sinful desires of the flesh and of the mind, that I may henceforth continually abide in Jesus Christ my Lord, and seek the things where He sits at Thy right hand. AMEN.*

THE LADDER TO HEAVEN

Genesis 28:12 "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."

John 1:51 "And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

BETHEL was a bleak moorland in the heart of Canaan. The hillsides and level downs were strewn with huge boulders. As he fled north wards, Jacob suddenly found himself overtaken by the swift eastern night while he was traversing this desolate moor. There was nothing for it but to lie down on the hard ground, taking one of the big stones as a pillow for his head. As he slept, he dreamed; and in his dream his mind wove together his last waking thoughts in fantastic medley. It seemed as if the big slabs of limestone came together, and built themselves into a gigantic staircase, reaching from where he lay to the starry heights above him; and on that staircase angels came and went, peopling by their multitudes that most desolate region, and evidently interested in the sleeper who lay beneath.

Let us think of that mystic ladder which is Jesus Christ our Lord, by which He descended to our humanity and ascended to the throne of God. He is "the Way" by which "the sons of ignorance and night" can pass upward to the eternal light and love. Where are you? It may be on a moorland waste, in a ship's cabin, a settler's hut, in a humble cottage, in the crowded city, lying on a bed of pain in the hospital ward! Wherever you are, Jesus finds you out and comes just where you are. The one pole of the ladder is the gold of His deity, the other the silver of His manhood, which is placed against your life. Transmit to Him your burdens of sin and care and fear. "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" None of us is outside God's loving thought and care. There is always a linking ladder between ourselves and Heaven, and God's angels still pass to and fro, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. Let us see to it that we wait at the foot of the ladder to claim our share in the blessings which they bring to earth.

PRAYER—*We thank Thee, O Father, that from whatever place Thy children seek Thee, there is a ladder reaching up beyond the stars to Heaven; that Jesus is the Way to Thyself, and we may come to Thee in Him; nay, Thou dost come to us, and dost send Thine angels to minister to our need, that Heaven is near to earth, with sympathy, help, and succour. AMEN.*

THE LESSON OF THE THORNBUSH

Exodus 3:2-4 “And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.”

MOSSES was an old man of eighty years! For forty years—the spring-tide of his life—he had basked in Court favour. The son of the palace, though born in a slave-hut. According to Stephen, renowned in deed and word, eloquent in speech, learned in the highest culture of his age, accustomed to lead victorious armies in the field, or to assist in raising pyramids or treasure-cities in peace—all that the ancient world could offer was at his feet (Act 7:22; Heb 11:24-27). But this had been followed by forty other years—of exile, poverty, and heartbreak. Instead of the riches of Egypt, he was engaged in tending the sheep of another and the years slowly passed away in obscurity. He was a disappointed and perplexed man. His own record was that when a man’s life reaches fourscore years, it is labour and sorrow, and he welcomes the cutting off of the web (Psa 90:10).

One afternoon suddenly a common thornbush seemed wrapped in flame. The blaze was pure and clear, and as he watched, “Behold! The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” Small wonder that he arose from the shelter which screened him from the sun, and drew near to “see this great sight.” Then he heard that inner voice, familiar to all pure and humble hearts, which bade him realise that the fire was no ordinary flame, but the pledge and sign of God’s presence.

We must not suppose that there was more of God in that common bush than in the surrounding landscape. It was simply the focusing of His presence which had always been there, as it is always everywhere. God is as near to each reader of these pages as He was to Moses at that moment! Take this to heart, you most forlorn, most downhearted, most helpless soul! Be of good cheer! God comes to you, though humbled and scorched, and at the end of yourself! He wraps around you, interpenetrates you, and concentrates Himself on your need, saying: “I AM”—leaving you to fill in His blank cheque, and to claim what you need most. “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee.”

PRAYER—*Some of us sorely need Thee, O God; we have been disappointed many times in the things we thought would yield us profit and satisfaction. When we are most absorbed in our necessary business, may Thy Presence be manifested to us. May we realise that we are not wondering aimlessly upon the trackless desert, because Thou art leading us. May every common bush be aflame with God. AMEN.*

SONGS FROM A DUST-HEAP!

Isaiah 26:19 "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

THIS cherry summons to awake and sing is addressed to those who dwell in the dust! The world is filled with them—those who dwell in the dark cells of disappointed love and faith, or who have failed in their life's purpose, or who, like Bartimaeus, are blind and reduced to beggary. Hope has been painted as blindfolded, her head downcast, her lyre broken in her hand. Sitting on the axis of the earth, which is making its difficult way through the storm and cloud, she presses to her ear the one unbroken string, as though catching at the music of a better time. It is thus that in many lives string after string has become broken and failed, and they have come down to sit in the dust of death and despair.

It may be that you have lost all sense of God's nearness and love—not because of any known sin, but through physical weakness, mental exhaustion, or the loneliness of sorrow and suffering. It may be that you have been seeking an experience of God, instead of God Himself. You have been seeking Him *without*, whilst He is *within*.

It may be that you are perplexed by the mystery of unanswered prayer. "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent." Yet no answer comes back from the Infinite, and your prayers seem like vessels lost at sea.

It may be that your life has not realised its early ideals. As the years go forward they carry us into disillusionment and heartbreak. Life has its prizes and rewards, but they are not for us!

To all such we pass on Isaiah's words: "Awake and sing, ... for thy dew is as the dew of herbs." The dew is used here of the grace and love of God. Instead of *dust* there will be *dew*, which steals so gently and silently over the earth. The more dry and sapless a patch is, the more tenderly does the dew caress it! Even to graveyards it extends its gracious operations, bidding them awake and sing with the certainty of Resurrection.

Sing! Because your moods, which the Psalmist called "down-sittings," do not affect your standing in Christ. We are all subject to fits of despondency. "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He has not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD:"

PRAYER—*We thank Thee that many evils that we dreaded have not come to us. Storms have expended themselves outside the circle of our lives. Thy mercy has been greater than our sin, Thy supplies larger than our need, Thy grace more abundant than the pressure of temptation. AMEN.*

JESUS CHRIST TRIUMPHANT

Isaiah 63:1 "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

WE can never speak of our Lord as we would! We select the richest metaphors of Scripture, the ideals of poets, the masterpieces of the rarest art; but none of them suffice. We steep our thought with fragments from the diaries and autobiographies of the saints. We meditate on His words till our hearts begin to burn! But we come back to the light of common days, and the summons of daily tasks, knowing that we have Him, but what He is neither tongue can tell nor heart conceive. We await, therefore, with some impatience, till the veil will part asunder and we shall see Him as He is.

The wistful yearning after Christ, which has characterised every age, has broken out again and again in transcendent expression, but among all the imaginings of sanctified and glowing souls, it is hard to find one more suggestive and inspiring than this pre-vision of Isaiah. He is standing on the foothills of the Judean table-land, looking due south toward Edom, when he is startled by an unexpected and extraordinary spectacle. A mighty Conqueror is descried in the distance, of commanding appearance traversing slowly and majestically the desert-wastes, His back toward Edom, His face toward the Judean frontier. He is clearly alone. Whether He had led an army, or had completed His work without an army, is not immediately apparent; but He approaches, travelling in the greatness of His strength. It is only natural that the astonished seer should challenge Him with the cry: "Who is this that cometh from Edom?" Across the intervening space the answer comes: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save!"

Clearly, then, He is no enemy, but an Ally, and much more! The word save suggests that there is no reason for fear, but every reason to hope. Notice the special aspect of Jesus Christ which appears in this scene. It is not Jesus on the Cross, but in His resurrection and ascension glory. He it is who stands Sentry between us and the power of the flesh, for which Edom stands. He is not simply the Forgiver of Sin, but the Conqueror over all Sin. He is more than a Conqueror for Himself—He is responsible for all who trust Him.

PRAYER—*O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Captain of Salvation, who discernest the malevolence and working of evil spirits against my soul, deliver me, I entreat Thee, amid the manifold temptations and trials by which I am beset, make a way for me to escape, succour me by Thy mighty power, and cause me to become more than a conqueror. AMEN.*

THE EXALTED LORD

Isaiah 6:1 "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."

WE live in troubled times, but always in human history, when outward events seem most distracting and distressing. God's servants are drawn in to the secret place of the Most High, and are shown the reassuring vision of God's overruling providence, and the ordered regularity of His eternal reign. When the land was passing through dark distress, and revolution was imminent, Isaiah beheld the stability of God's throne.

"It was high and lifted up," far above all other authority, power, or dominion in heaven, on earth, or under the earth! It was crowned with love—"above it stood the Seraphim." Seraph is derived from *fire*, and the Seraphim stand for radiant love. If the throne stands for stability, for judgment, and for power, then above all these attributes, and over-arching Him who sits there, is *Love*. This is the loftiest conception possible to mortals—Love supreme. The Lamb that was slain is in the midst of the throne.

The one man who was chosen out of all Israel to see was Isaiah. In all humility he ascended the Temple-steps, hustled by the crowds that went there as a mere religious form. Any of them appeared to need a revealing vision more than he did, but it was the man who had seen, who now saw the Lord; it was the one saint in all Israel who appeared to be most in touch with God, who was brought into still closer touch. The rest saw only the Temple, the high altar, and the ritual, but he saw the "skirts of glory" filling every cranny of the holy place.

Let us not be satisfied with the outward and sensuous, with ritual however splendid, with sermons however magnificent! Those who are humble and persistent in their quest for God will hear notes which other ears cannot catch, will detect a presence that evades ordinary sight, will enter the realm of the spirit which is closed to the outward observer.

The world may be full of tumult; the floods have lifted up their voice, but the Lord on High is mighty, and He shall overcome, for through death, resurrection, and ascension He is Lord of lords and King of kings!

PRAYER—*We cannot understand the meaning of the darkness and tumult around us, but we know that Thou art Love, and that Thou dost reign. May we see Thee raised above principality and power, might and dominion. Glory and blessing, honour and power be unto Thee, O Son of God, who art the Man amid the sapphire Throne, AMEN.*

PRACTISING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Philippians 4:5,6 "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

THE word anxiety comes from the same root as anger, and suggests the idea of choking. Worry chokes the life of faith. It does not help us to overcome our difficulties, but unfits us for dealing with them. No weapon that is formed against us shall prosper; every tongue that shall rise against us shall be condemned; our bread shall be given, and our water sure. God will perfect that which concerneth us, and His goodness and mercy shall never cease. Roll thyself and thy burden on the Lord, and *leave them there*. Too many take them back again!

In the darkening autumn evenings, we light our lamps earlier, or turn on the switch, and lo! There is a burst of light which had been waiting to be called upon. So let us keep a smile upon our faces. As we put off our heavy and rain-soaked clothes in the vestibule, so let us leave our anxieties with God, until we have to resume our destined path.

The Lord is at hand! Let us often repeat these words, amid the commonplaces of life, as well as when anticipating His near advent! Say it when Euodia and Syntyche are giving you trouble! Say it when you are irritated and think that there is no reason why you should accept rebuffs and slights so meekly! Say it when you are worried and anxious! Say it, till you come again into that presence, which is as the light of the morning when the sun riseth. Practise the presence of God! Hold fellowship with Him! Even in business, or in the midst of daily toil, often lift your heart for a moment into the atmosphere of His presence! There is a great difference between faith and its intellectual expression. We must rise above the intellectual into spiritual fellowship with God. It is not for us to excite a transient feeling of love towards God. This will soon evanesce. Our business is the absolute surrender of the heart to Him. Not the rapture of the mystic, but the consciousness of the spirit, which is aware of an unimpeded union with the life of the Infinite. To be ever—tranquilly, joyously, and strenuously—at one with the blessed will of God—that is the Heavenly Paradise, and each of us, by His grace, may walk with Him in happy fellowship, as Enoch did of old, and then we can make *known* our requests!

PRAYER—*We ask not, O Father, for health or life. We make an offering to Thee of all our days. Thou hast counted them. We would know nothing more. All we ask is to die rather than live unfaithful to Thee. Living or dying we would be Thine. AMEN.*

A FAITHFUL CREATOR

1 Peter 4:19 “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

THE more one ponders these words, the more wonderful they appear! That God is faithful is as clear as noonday. He is faithful in the return of the seasons and the orbit-order of the stars; faithful in holding back the flood, that it should not overflow the world and destroy the homes of men; faithful to every living creature that He has made, providing for its exact sustenance. Even the odd sparrow, which Christ must have seen thrown in by the dealer, when His Mother bought four others, does not fall to the ground without His notice.

God is the Faithful Creator in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. We are not surprised, therefore, to find His faithfulness the theme of Holy Writ; but why does Peter lay emphasis on His faithfulness as Creator, when ministering to the special circumstances of suffering believers? Is not this the reason? We are apt to concentrate our thoughts on the Birth, the Cross, the Grave, the Intercession of our Lord, and to forget that behind all these, deep in the nature of God—the Almighty Creator—there are ever-welling fountains of faithfulness, love, and tenderness. We are summoned to go back beyond the story of Redemption to the infinite silence of Eternity, when each of us was a distinct thought in the mind of God. In His book, all our members were written, when as yet there was none of them. Whether we have realised that eternal purpose is open to serious questioning, but everyone of us has a right to look into the face of God, and say: “Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.”

We may not question God’s dealings with us. They are immutably wise and right. But we may claim that in some way He should make good our deficiencies, so that though sorrowful, we should be always rejoicing; though poor we should make many rich; though having nothing, we should scatter our wealth, as though possessing all things. There is no reason why our life should be a failure, no reason why we should not minister richly to others, no reason why, by His grace, we should not be more than conquerors! We may humbly make this claim on the Almighty Creator, and He will not allow His faithfulness to fail!

PRAYER—*Help us to commit ourselves to Thee in well-doing, O God, our Faithful Creator. May we find a solace for our own griefs and disappointments, in sympathy and ministry to others. AMEN.*

THE BANISHMENT OF PAIN

Revelation 21:4 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

THERE are few lives in the world that escape *pain*. Beneath the outer surface of our physical frame there is a network of nerves, every fibre of which may become the source of suffering. We hardly realise that health is due to the combined action of thousands of delicate fibres, each moving in perfect accord with all the rest; but if one of these minute chords is jarred or out of tune, there ensues the discord of pain.

Our minds and hearts are as susceptible to suffering as our bodies. Probably there is more suffering generated in the world through the derangement of the soul than of the body. A wounded spirit, who can bear? The sensitive network of our affections, of our hopes and fears, of our attitude toward God or our fellowmen, and our self-consciousness, are capable of inflicting suffering, so acute and imperious, as to be an agony which can make us almost oblivious to physical pain.

Pain has a purpose. It is a danger-signal, which compels us to refrain from the things which have caused it, or to have recourse to the physician for alleviation. In the moral world, God has made the way of transgressors *hard*, and sown their paths with thorns, so as to dissuade and turn evildoers from their wicked ways. In the spiritual world, the sharp sting of remorse, the scourge of conscience, the agony of conviction, when, like Peter, we have denied our Lord, are of inestimable value in reminding us that we have run off the line and are tearing up the track.

Our Lord Jesus suffered pain. He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was moved with compassion as He beheld sorrow and suffer-hag, and was constantly relieving pain and healing diseases. In this He gave an evident sign that one day He would abolish it.

Why did the Seer at Patinas affirm that pain should be no more? Because pain arises from dislocation, and in that fair world, every limb and joint will work without fret or friction. Because pain is the result of sin, and sin shall be no more. Because pain was induced by the fruit of the knowledge of evil, and we shall eat of the tree of life, whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations. Then there will be songs instead of sighs, and anthems instead of heartbreak.

PRAYER—*Grant, O Lord, that we, and all whom we love, and all weary and tired souls, may rest in peace, and may finally enter into the city where there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, nor sin, for the former things shall have passed away. AMEN.*

WALKING IN GOD'S WAYS AND PATHS

Psalm 25:4 "Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths."

Micah 4:2 "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

THERE is a clear difference between a *Way* and a *Path*. The one is filled with the throb and stir of the world's life; the other is comparatively lonely and unfrequented. The roll of vehicles and noisy traffic fills the one, whilst the other is, for the most part, trodden by the individual, being too narrow and quiet for the crowd. It is a great comfort that God has paths as well as ways.

God's Ways are the great principles on which He acts, the mighty thoroughfares of Creation, Providence, Revelation, Human History, and final Judgment. On these His goings-forth have ever been of old, even from everlasting. To know them is the passionate desire of the purest and loftiest natures. Moses prayed: "Shew me now Thy ways, that I may know Thee," and God graciously granted his request, for to Moses He made known His *Ways*, but to Israel only His *Acts*. There is need for us all to know God's *Ways*, especially in this momentous era because only so can we enter into His rest. In the Old and New Testaments the same warning is repeated: "they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest." (Psa 95:10-11; Heb 3:9-10). We can look out calmly on this troubled world when once we have learnt to know the divine program of gathering up all things in Christ, who is the Head when we walk with Him who is the *Way* to God (Joh 14:6).

The Paths of the Lord may be taken to describe His personal dealings with the individual, who through sickness, or the care of others, or by lonely duty, is isolated from the ordinary worship of the Church, and shut away from fellowship and Christian Ministry. All such may expect and reckon upon the saving help which will come through God's private communications.

God is faithful to the soul that utterly trusts Him. He always comes on time—not a moment before, nor a moment too late. Remember that *all* His *Paths* are mercy and truth. Dare to believe that He is coming along a secret pathway to bring the assurance of His mercy and grace to help in this time of need.

PRAYER—*Be with me, Lord, as I step out on the untrodden way of this month. I know not what it may bring of joy or sorrow, of temptation or service; but I humbly commit myself and my way to Thee. Make the best that Thou canst of me for Thy glory. AMEN.*

KNOWING AND FOLLOWING

Hosea 6:3 "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

SOME people do not seem to desire to advance in the knowledge of God. They have not seen the heavenly vision. Religion to them consists in saying, over and over again, the same prayers that they have used for years, and reading a prescribed portion of Scripture. This is better than nothing, but they cannot appropriate David's comparison between himself and the hunted deer that pants for the water-brook, or our Lord's blessing for those that "hunger and thirst after righteousness."

But with others, there is a longing for a further advance. Like the Apostle, they are pressing toward the mark, though it seems to evade them and to recede! They are like the blind man, on whom our Lord wrought the miracle. First, he saw men as trees walking, dimly appreciating the glory of perfect vision; but, presently, as those dear hands touched him again, he saw clearly. Is there one who reads this page who does not long for this clear vision, this knowledge of God! Let us not desist in our quest, but follow on! When the last lesson is learned, the last and deepest surrender taken, the final act of faith accomplished, the partition will remove, and we shall know what Pascal meant when he wrote: "The world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee. Joy! Joy! Joy! Tears of Joy!" "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Co 13:12).

God has a Way of His own for each of us. "His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain." Some are smitten by a sudden sense of the reality and vision of the eternal world, that hides behind the veil of sense. Others, as they partake of the bread and wine of communion, have such a vision of the love of Jesus, that they are more than satisfied. At any time a heavenly door may open before the knock of the seeker; or, we may suddenly look up and see His face, and exclaim with St. Paul: "The Lord is at hand!" We shall see His hand beckoning to us, and we shall arise and follow into that world of reality and love that is so near, but sometimes seems so far!

PRAYER—*Lord Jesus! Give us this second sight, we beseech Thee! Lift us up, by Thy strong arm, above the mists and darkness of the valley, to walk with Thee on the high level of Thy manifested presence and glory. AMEN.*

THE VIEWPOINT OF THE SANCTUARY

Psalm 73:28 "But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works."

THE good Asaph was greatly troubled about the prosperity of the wicked of his time. He refrained from speaking to others on the matter, lest it should impair their religious life but the iron went deep into his soul! Here were people, who seemed always at ease, though they set their mouths against the heavens, while he, though he cleansed his heart, and washed his hands in innocence, was plagued all day long. It was in a very perturbed and distressed condition of mind, therefore, that he went one day into the sanctuary of God. It was there that God spoke to him and unveiled the future, and showed the glorious contrast between the wicked and himself, when time had given place to eternity, and heaven had corrected the uneven balances of earth.

Each of us has, or should have, a sanctuary—the house of God, or it may be a quiet room, or some sacred spot in the woods or garden or beside the sea. Greatly is the soul to be pitied that has no sanctuary, where it can shelter from the rush and noise of life. Like Abraham, we need to have some place where we can stand before the Lord (Gen 18:22-23).

Let us remember the injunction to build according to the sanctuary pattern (Exo 25:8, Exo 25:9, Exo 25:40). We must not drift aimlessly through life, at the mercy of every current and every gust of wind; nor must we be content to be our own pattern-makers, or mere copyists. Before we enter upon some change or fresh objective in our life, let us ascend into the sanctuary of God's mountains, and get to know His mind and will. Be sure that He has a plan and program for each of us, extending even to the cords and tassels of our life; and if we are true to the leadings of His Spirit, we shall be led out and on to things that eye hath not seen, nor heart conceived.

Frances Ridley Havergal writes: "I am struck with the possibilities of the Christian life! In my own case, what once were far-off possibilities are now actualities; while a new horizon opens before me of possibilities, which also in God's time shall become actualities."

Forget the past! Your failures and sins; the fading laurels of past successes; the bitter memories of abortive efforts. Leave them with God! Let the dead bury their dead! Work out your life-plan knowing that God is able and willing to make the necessary grace abound toward you.

PRAYER—*Grant unto me, O Lord, the blessedness of the one whom Thou chooseth, and causest to approach unto Thee. AMEN.*

GOD'S CONDESCENSION TO MAN

Psalm 8:3,4 "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

A CERTAIN writer ridiculed the idea that the Almighty Ruler, who inhabits the stellar spaces, can have any knowledge of such a cheese-mite as man. He says: "Put yourself in the planetary space, a mere dot, and do you think that the Almighty Maker can have discernment of *thee!*" But bigness is not greatness! The infant in the cradle is worth more to the parents and the nation than the royal palace in which he was born. The age which discovers the telescope, with the infinite abyss above, discovers also the microscope, with the infinite abyss beneath.

How absolutely different is the outlook of the Psalmist! He stands under the eastern heavens, blazing at midnight with myriads of resplendent constellations, and cries: "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth, who has set Thy glory above the heavens!—They are *Thy* heavens, the work of *Thy* fingers; as for moon and stars, *Thou* hast ordained them. How great *Thou* art!" Then he turns to think of man, and says: There must be something more in man than a superficial gaze is competent to discover. He must surely possess an unrealised dignity and worth, since the great God, the Maker of these worlds, stoops to call him *friend*.

But the question arises: How can God find pleasure in visiting (i.e. in having fellowship with) a race so full of evil as ours? Granted that He might have fellowship with Moses or Elijah, with Daniel or John, but how can He stoop to intercourse with ordinary people like ourselves? What is Zaccheus, that the Son of Man should visit at his house—is he not a publican? Yes, but of late he had been restoring his ill-gotten gains, and Jesus sees in him the possibility of a son of Abraham! What is Simon Peter, that Christ should visit him? He, but he will one day become the rock-man, the foremost leader of the Church! So does Christ our Lord see what we may become, and He stands at the door of our life, seeking admission. Let us heed His knock and bid Him come in.

PRAYER—*O God, may our whole nature be consecrated for Thine indwelling and use. Let there be no part in us dark, but may the clear shining of Thy presence dispel all shadows, and fill us with peace and joy. AMEN.*

STANDING BEFORE GOD

1 Samuel 6:20 "And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?"

THE phrase "to stand before God" designates a high-toned religious life; it includes the knowledge of God, the faculty of executing His commands, and the power of interceding for others. The phrase was a favourite one with Elijah, as expressing the spirit of his great career, and we surely desire that the spirit and attitude of our life may be designated thus. But if this is to be something more than a vague wish, or idle dream, there must be a close adhesion to great principles.

Amongst many it is the general tendency to follow the practice of the majority. We drift with the current, and allow our lives to be settled by our companions or our whims, our fancies or our tastes. If we have a momentary qualm, in contrasting our lives with the standards of primitive simplicity, of which Scripture, or the biographies of the saints are full, we excuse ourselves by saying that so long as the main purpose of life is right the details are unimportant. But what we are in the smallest details of our life, that we are really and essentially.

What a revolution would come to us all, if it became the one fixed aim and ambition of our lives to *stand before God*, and to do always those things that are pleasing in His sight. It would not make us less tender in our friendships, or less active in our service. It would not take the sparkle from the eye; the nerve from the grasp; or the warm glow from the heart. But it would check many a vain word, arrest many a silly jest, stop much selfish and vainglorious expenditure, and bring us back to whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely and of good report.

We must hold lightly to the things around us. It is difficult to say what worldliness consists in, for what is worldly to some people is an ordinary part of life's circumstance to others. But all of us are sensible of ties that hold us to the earth. We may discover what they are by considering what we cling to most, what we find hard to let go, even into the hands of Christ. Whatever it is that hinders us from living on the highest level; if it is a weight that impedes our speed heavenward, it should be laid deliberately on God's altar, that we may be able, without let or hindrance, to be wholly for God.

PRAYER—*May the Holy Spirit enable us to realise in daily life our true position in Thy purpose. May we in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell. May our affections be set on things above, not on things of the earth. AMEN.*

THE SECRET PLACE OF PRAYER

Matthew 6:6 "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

IN prayer there must be deliberateness—the secret place, the inner chamber, the fixed time, the shut door against distraction and intruders. In that secret place the Father is waiting for us. He is as certainly there as He is in Heaven. Be reverent, as Moses was when he took the shoes from off his feet! Be trustful, because you are having an audience with One who is infinite sympathy and love! Be comforted, because there is no problem He cannot solve, no knot He cannot untie!

God knows even better than we do what we need and should ask for. He has gone over every item of our life, every trial, every temptation—the unknown and unexpected, the glints of sunshine on the path, and the clouds of weeping. He listens to our forecast and requests, and rejoices when they accord with His infinite foreknowledge; or He may give us something better and more appropriate to our case.

"He will recompense thee." If He does not remove the cup, He will send an angel to strengthen; if the thorn remains unremoved, He will give more grace. You may be sure that, in some way or other, your Heavenly Father is going to meet your particular need. It is as certain as though you heard Him say: "Go your way, your prayer is heard: I will undertake, trust Me, leave all in My hand!" When you have once definitely put a matter into God's hands, leave it there. Do not repeat the committal, for that suggests that you have never made it. Your attitude thenceforward is to look into God's face, not to ask Him to remember, but to say: "Father, Thou knowest, understandest, carest! I know whom I have trusted, and am persuaded that Thou wilt not fail."

There is a prayer which is without ceasing; but surely that is not the reiterated request for the same thing, but the blessed interchange of happy fellowship. Use not vain repetitions, as do the heathen, who think that they will be heard for much speaking, but count Him faithful that promised! This reckoning of faith is probably the loftiest attribute of prayer, for faith is the quiet assurance of things not yet seen!

PRAYER—*Lift us into light and love and purity and blessedness, and give us at last our portion with those who have trusted in Thee, and sought in small things as in great, in things tempered and things eternal, to do Thy Holy will. AMEN.*

THE MODEL PRAYER

Matthew 6:9 "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

THE Lord's Prayer is a temple reared by Christ Himself—the embodiment of His ideal, and as we repeat these simple and wonderful sentences, we cannot but think of the myriads who have been moulded by them, and have poured into these petitions their hearts' desires.

Our Lord was not always insisting on prayer, but was constantly praying to His Father Himself. His disciples knew His habit of getting away for secret prayer, and they had on more than one occasion seen the transfiguring glory reflected on His face. Happy would it be for us if the glory of fellowship and communion with God were so apparent that men would come to us saying, "Teach us to pray" (Exo 34:35).

Prayer must be simple. The Jewish proverb said, "Everyone who multiplies prayer is heard," but our Lord forbade senseless repetition by His teaching of the simple, direct, and intelligible petitions of this prayer.

Prayer must be reverent. The tenderest words, the simplest confidences, the closest intimacy will be welcomed and reciprocated by our Father in Heaven. But we must remember that He is the great King, and His Name is Holy. Angels veil their faces in His presence. Let us remember that "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

Prayer must be unselfish. Our Lord so wove intercession into the structure of this Prayer that none can use it without pleading for others. Sorrow or sin may isolate us and make us feel our loneliness and solitude, but in prayer we realise that we are members of the one Body of Christ, units in that great multitude which no man can number.

Prayer must deal with real needs. Daily bread stands for every kind of need, and the fact that Jesus taught us to pray for it, suggests that we may be sure that it is God's will to give.

Prayer must be in faith. We cannot but believe that we are as certain to prevail with God, as the good man of the house with his friend; and if among men to ask is to get, how much more with Him who loves us with more than a father's love (Luk 11:9-13).

PRAYER—*O God our Father, help us to live in the spirit of prayer today. Breathe Thy Spirit into us as we kneel before Thee, subduing the selfishness that makes discord, and uniting our hearts in the fear of Thy Name. AMEN.*

TURNING PASSION INTO PRAYER

James 5:17 "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months."

WHEN we read that Elijah was a man subject to the same passions as ourselves, we are apt to suppose that we have the clue to the driving force of his life. But Scripture shows that the results of his wonderful career were achieved, not by his passion, but by his prayer! Elijah, though capable of the same vehement earnestness with which we are all endowed, refused to accomplish his life-work by the employment of lower energies, but set himself to obtain the results he desired through prayer. He was a man of like passions with ourselves, but he prayed earnestly. He turned his passion into prayer.

There was no salient element of a strong nature of which his was destitute. There was the passion of *patriotism*, as when he was prepared even to witness the sufferings of his people, if these would bring them back to God; of *tenderness*, as when he bore the dead body of the child to his room; of *righteousness*, as when he slew the false prophets; of *love for Nature*, as when he fled into the wilderness to die; of *devotion to God's glory*, as when he cried, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts." All these passions dwelt strongly within his breast, but if he had relied on them alone, his life-work would have faded as the mirage on the glistening sand.

There is a marvellous contagion in vehement feeling. As a tiny pith-ball, light as a feather, by continually impinging on a suspended bar of iron, will make it move, so one soul can move others. The brain is able to create waves of thought, and the heart waves of emotion. But we must learn to secure through God results which some try to achieve by the energy of their own nature. Let us pray more. Let us seek to be filled with a passionate love to our Lord Jesus, and to the world of men—with a love so hot that the most passionate words of St. Bernard or Faber may not seem extravagant. Then let us divert the glowing metal into the mould of prayer—which may express itself in an intense silence of intercession, or with strong cryings and tears. At least let us not dare to be tepid and apathetic in the midst of this wonderful universe which is electric with living energy! (Rev 3:15-16.)

PRAYER—*O Christ, who baptizest with fire, kindle in our hearts the flame of Thy love, that we may not be lukewarm or cold. We would not trust in the force of our emotions, lest they fail us, but in the power of prayer and of Thine intercession for us. AMEN.*

RESOLVE AND DEFEAT

John 13:37 "Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."

PPETER'S impulsive spirit could ill brook delay—"Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now?" It is far easier to rush into the battle, where excitement and passion may be trusted to render us oblivious to pain and discomfort, than to stand at our post through the long cold nights on sentry duty.

He made the mistake of miscalculating the might and power of the Adversary. It was the hour of the power of darkness. The moment was at hand in which the prince of this world would make the supreme effort to hold his own, and refuse to be cast out.

He miscalculated his own strength, and relied upon the fervour of his emotion. He had no conception of how much need there was for something more than the strong fervour of passionate affection.

He miscalculated the weapon by which to overcome. He had a literal sword, and thought that it would be sufficient to draw it and smite with all his might, as he did cutting off the ear of Malchus. He expected that with his fervent passion for Christ on the one hand, and cold steel on the other, he would be able to follow wherever Jesus led. But it is not possible for human enthusiasm to sustain the soul, when it comes to close grips with the great Adversary of the Kingdom of God.

He miscalculated the help that comes through prayer. So confident was he that he slept instead of praying. Thrice the Lord came to remind him of the urgent need for watching against the hour of trial, but His words were unheeded, because the advice seemed needless. Why should he pray, when he had already made up his mind!

Then the crash came, and he went out a broken-hearted man! He, we too have failed in like manner. We have brandished the cold steel of strong resolve. But the disillusioning process has set in, and we have sorrowfully proved that it is not by flesh and blood that we can enter the Kingdom. Let us not forget our Lord's comforting words to Peter: "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards."

PRAYER—*Lord, we would follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest, but we are weak and helpless, and our own strength will fail in the final test. May we not trust in our own resolutions or vows, but in the saving strength of Thy right hand. AMEN.*

BROKEN CISTERNS

Jeremiah 2:13 "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

John 7:37 "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

WHAT an infinite mistake to miss the fountain freely flowing to quench our thirst, and to hew out broken cisterns, in which is disappointment and despair. Many such may read these words—each with soul-thirst craving satisfaction; each within reach of God, whose nature is as rock-water for those that are athirst, but they are attempting the impossible task of satisfying the craving for the infinite and Divine, with men and the things of sense.

There is the cistern of *Pleasure*, engraved with fruits and flowers, wrought at the cost of health and peace; the cistern of *Wealth*, gilded and inlaid with costly gems; the cistern of *Human love*, which, however fair and beautiful, can never satisfy the soul that rests in it alone—all these, erected at infinite cost of time and strength, are treacherous and disappointing.

At our feet the fountain of God's love is flowing through the channel of Jesus Christ, the Divine Man. He says to each of us: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." We must descend to the level of the stream, if its waters are to flow over our parched lips to slake our thirst. We must come back to Calvary, take our stand at the foot of the Cross, hear again the words of Him who died there for us, saying "I thirst," that He might be able to give the Water of Life freely to all who come to Him.

You who are weary of your toil, drop your tools, and come back to God. Forsake the alliances, the friendships, the idolatries, the sins which have alienated you from your best Friend. Open your heart, that He may create in you the fountain of living water, leaping up to eternal life. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come! And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

*"I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that Life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him."*

PRAYER—*Teach us, O Lord, the art of so living in fellowship with Thyself that every act may be a psalm, every meal a sacrament, every room a sanctuary, every thought a prayer. AMEN.*

FOR ME AND THEE

Matthew 17:27 “Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.”

PETER had been fairly well-to-do. He had his house, and boat, and nets. There was no lack in the fisherman’s house. But when Jesus said, “Come after Me,” he left all, and there was an immediate cutting off of the former sources of supply, so that when the tax gatherer came, there was nothing to meet his claim. Our Lord maintained that He personally was under no obligation to meet the demand. As a child, to use His own words, He was free; but He immediately identified Himself, as He always does, with His troubled disciple. We can never leave anything for Christ, without His recognition, and His being ready to defray whatever cost may accrue from obedience.

The identification was so absolute between the Master and His disciple, that He refrained from providing *two* coins, which might have indicated some severance of interest. Was it not His intention to put beyond all controversy that He and His are one, and that in every act of His on our behalf, in His willingness to meet the demands made upon us, there is no severance of interests, no mere patronage, but an absolute identification with all that concerns us.

There are profound lessons here. Demands are constantly knocking at the door of life, which we find it hard, sometimes impossible, to meet. There are needs of food and clothing, of the rent collector and the tax gatherer. But is not Christ aware? Is He not faithful? Will He let us go under in the struggle? Never! Whatever demand made on the servant is assumed by the Master—*That take, He says, and give unto them for Me and thee.*

As He enters the wilderness of temptation, He reminds us—it is “*for Me and thee.*” As He hangs upon the Cross, and passes forth from the grave, radiant with triumph, He turns to us and says: “This victory over death and the grave is *for Me and thee.*” Yes, and through all the ages that are yet to be, amid the marvels of unfolding new worlds, nothing shall accrue to Him of which He will not say: “That take, and give, or use, for Me and thee.” Only remember, we must *take*, and *give*. We must *appropriate* the unsearchable riches of Christ, we must *impart* them, or they will not profit us.

PRAYER—*We thank Thee, our Father, for our union with the risen Christ. May we share more largely in His glorious life, and live as the heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. AMEN.*

THE POSSIBILITY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

Luke 17:5,6 "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

YOU are asking me to perform the impossible, I am sure that I can never become a great tree, said a tiny mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, as it lay on the soft mould where it had dropped. Suddenly it was caught up with a spadeful of earth, and buffed, it seemed, fathoms deep; in reality but a few inches! There it lay in darkness and neglect. After some weeks, a tiny green shoot appeared above the ground, and looked up to where the great parent-tree was growing. It whispered softly to itself, "Perhaps I shall be able to do it after all." "Do what?" "Perhaps I shall become a great tree in which the birds may shelter." "But a few weeks ago you said it was impossible." "Ah! then I had no idea that Mother Nature would work in me as she has done; if she goes on pouring herself into me as she has been doing of late, there is nothing that I cannot do; yet not I, but her life which dwelleth and worketh in me."

There is no need to explain or enforce the meaning of the allegory. Our Lord had bidden His disciples forgive "until seventy times seven," and they had replied that such a thing would be impossible, without a great increase of faith. "No," said the Master, "you do not need quantity but quality."

All God's fullness will flow through the tiniest channel that faith opens out on His Almighty power. Faith is the open heart towards Him, and through the channel of faith Christ lives in and through us. Hudson Taylor heard God say: "I am going to evangelize inland China, and if you will walk with Me, I will do it through you." D.L. Moody said that the beginning of his marvellous ministry was the remark made in his hearing: "The world has yet to learn what God can do through a man wholly yielded to Him." It is not what we do, but what God does through us, that counts; and His mighty power, passing through the tiniest aperture of faith, keeps hollowing it wider.

PRAYER—*Most gracious Lord, Thou didst truly say, "Without Me ye can do nothing." We know that this is so by our past failures, when we have wrought in our own strength. Help us to use the little faith we have that it may become the channel for Thy wondrous power. AMEN.*

MAIMED: BUT FULLER LIFE

Mark 9:43 "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:"

OUR Lord calls all who love and would follow Him to present themselves as living sacrifices, even though in the process they should be exposed to salt, with its searching sting, and fire, with its consuming flame (Mar 9:49). In such moments He reminds us of something which He sees to be hindering our highest ideals, and there is only one alternative—though it be dear as right hand or foot, we must cut it off! Of course it is best to retain the members and faculties of our body in purity and righteousness; they are most important assets to the working-force of a successful life. No one has a right to perform an amputation, unless it is the only alternative to death, or the uselessness of Gehenna which was the rubbish-heap of Jerusalem.

Our Lord well advised, when He said, "Cut it off!" The one swift, irrevocable blow is the easiest in the end. It may be a friendship which is causing us to stumble; or an evil habit, sapping our nervous energy; or a form of amusement, which may be innocent enough in itself—but whatever hinders us in our spiritual progress, if we cannot master it and keep it in bounds, must be yielded to the knife. We often expose ourselves to more anguish in our effort to retain and restrain, than to remove absolutely and for ever.

Maimed lives are nevertheless strong and full. Notice those words: "Enter into *life* maimed." Some lay the emphasis on their losses, sacrifices, and privations; others dwell upon *life*, and refuse to consider the straitness of the gate through which they press. True, they are maimed, but by the forfeiture of the lower they gain the higher, and by the way of the Cross enter into the Joy and Glory. There are great compensations for us all, if we dare to follow the ideals that beckon to us from the snow-capped pinnacles above. Surrender all that impedes and hinders your highest life, and fountains will burst forth in an abundance that will make the desert blossom and sing. Is not this better than to be a castaway from the hands of Christ as unclean and useless?

PRAYER—*Most blessed Lord, may we drink so deeply of Thy Spirit that we shall be willing to surrender all that hinders us in following Thee absolutely and always. AMEN.*

DIVINE DELIVERANCE

Psalm 91:2 "I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."

IT is supposed that this Psalm, like the preceding one, was composed by Moses, "the man of God" and that each may be applied to the flight of Israel from Egypt.

To "abide under the shadow of the Almighty" reminds us of the words of our Lord, when He said: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not." Bunyan says that the hen has four calls—the call when night is near; the call for food when she has found some dainty; the call of peril when the hawk is nigh; and the call of brooding love when she wants to feel her nestlings under her wings. Today God is calling to each of us, saying: "Come My children, make the secret place of My presence, of My environment, of My constant keeping, your home; for he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the wings of God." When night is nigh, when money and food is scarce, when the hawk is in the air ready to pounce on us, when loneliness or desolation oppresses, let us hear the brooding cry of God our Father and nestle beneath His shadow.

God is prepared to keep us in *all* our ways. Many of us believe that somehow God will bring us out at last, but we have no expectation that He can keep us in blamelessness of soul; we expect to be brought to Heaven, but that we shall be battered, and beaten, and despoiled on the way. But surely our God can do better for us than that! He can keep us from yielding to passionate temper, jealousy, hatred, pride, and envy, as well as to the grosser forms of sin.

The promise is clear: "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in *all* thy ways"—the business ways, the social ways, the ways of service into which God may lead us forth, the ways of sacrifice or suffering. Let us simply and humbly ask for the fulfilment of the promises in this Psalm. He will answer your prayers. He will be with you in trouble. He will satisfy you with many years of life, or with living much in a short time, and He will show you the wonders of His salvation.

PRAYER—*Lord, be Thou within me, to strengthen me; without me, to keep me; above me, to protect me; beneath me, to uphold me; before me, to direct me; behind me, to keep me from straying; round about me, to defend me. AMEN.*

RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

ON the day of Pentecost all who were gathered together in the upper room were filled with the Holy Spirit—women as well as men, obscure disciples as well as illustrious apostles. Deacons called to do the secular business of the Church must be men filled with the Holy Ghost. That he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, was a greater recommendation of Barnabas than that he had parted with his lands.

The majority of Christians have seemed to suppose that the filling of the Holy Spirit was the prerogative of a few—they have never thought of it as within their reach; and the Church has been paralysed for lack of the only power that can avail in the conflict against the world, the power which was distinctly pledged by her ascending Lord. Pentecost was meant to be the specimen and type of all the days of the years of this present age, and we have fallen far below this blessed level, not because of any failure on God's part, but because the Church has neglected its privilege.

We must desire to be filled for the glory of God. We must seek the Spirit's power, not for our own happiness and comfort, nor even for the good that we may be the better able to effect, but that "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

We must bring cleansed vessels. God will not deposit His precious gift in unclean receptacles. We must be washed in the blood of Christ from all conscious filthiness and stain, ere we can presume to expect that God will give us what we seek.

We must appropriate Him by faith. There is no need for us to wait, because the Holy Spirit has been given to the Church. We need not struggle and agonize in the forcefulness of plea, but have simply to take what God is waiting to impart. He gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey Him (Act 5:32).

We must be prepared to let the Holy Spirit do as He will with and through us. There must be no reserve, no holding back, no contrariety of purpose. Let us believe and reckon that we are being filled with new power and joy which shall be for the glory of God and the service of man.

PRAYER—*We pray, O God, that the Holy Spirit may so infill us, that sin and self may have no dominion over us, but that the fruits of the Spirit may abound to Thy honour and glory. AMEN.*

OUR ETERNAL DESTINY

Matthew 13:47-49 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,"

THERE is a contrast, and yet a similarity, between this parable and that of the tares. In the latter we learn that it is impossible in the present age to separate the evil from the good in the professing Church of Christ; in the former we see that with an inevitable pressure, we are all being drawn towards the discrimination of the judgment-seat of Christ.

What a confused mass of dead and living things are brought to shore by a net—weed, mud, shells, unwholesome things as well as those which are good for food and lie in a confused heap together. So it is with the professing Church. It embraces every variety of character—good fish amid a certain amount of rubbish, and there is no society of men and women in which this mixture does not obtain. Our Lord teaches that when the great net of the Gospel dispensation has been drawn into the shores of eternity, then, with unerring judgment, the angels will begin their work of separation.

The distinction which separates the good and the bad is determined by the service we can render in God's Kingdom. He wants those who will cooperate with Him in the work of redemption, who are living unselfish and consecrated lives, through which His Spirit may work for the highest purposes of salvation. Those whom He rejects are the selfish, worldly, and sense-bound natures, who refuse to be the implements and instruments of His redemptive purpose.

To which of these two classes do we belong? Are we willing to be identified with Christ in His Cross and shame? Do we delight in mercy, self-sacrifice and holy service? If so, we may anticipate the future without fear. But if, on the other hand, we are shut up within ourselves, even though it be the enjoyment of religion, without tears for men's sorrows or yearning for their salvation, we may question whether it may not be our lot to be cast away on the rubbish heap (1 Co 9:27).

PRAYER—*O Lord, we acknowledge Thy dominion over us; our life, our death, our soul and body, all belong to Thee. Grant that we may willingly consecrate them all to Thee, and use them in Thy service. AMEN.*

GOD WRESTLING WITH MAN

Genesis 32:28 "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

THIS story of the angel wrestling with Jacob is an instance of God's earnest desire to take from us all that hinders our best and highest life, whilst we resist with might and main. There was much evil in Jacob that needed to be laid aside, and so the love of God drew near to him in the form of an angel to wrestle with him. At first he held his own, but whatever it is that enables a soul whom God designs to bless to stand out against Him, God will touch. It may be as *natural* as a sinew, but if it robs us of spiritual blessing, God will touch it; it may be as *small* as a sinew, but its evil influence will compel the Almighty Lover of our souls to take notice of it, to cause our scheming to miscarry, and the sinew of our strength to dry up.

Then Jacob abandoned the posture of defence and resistance, and clung to his Adversary. It is good when we come to this attitude, for there is nothing which God will not do for the soul that clings to Him in absolute weakness (2 Co 12:7-9).

Three things happened: *The changed name*, which indicated a changed character. Israel means "prince with God." The supplanter, cheat, and weak vacillator became royal! There is only one road to royalty, it is the path of self-surrender and faith. *Power*: as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. He who would have power and authority with his fellows must first secure it by yielding to God. *The Beatific Vision*: "I have seen God face to face." Our moments of vision come after the night of wrestling. The price is high, but the vision more than compensates. Our sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed. Such is life! As the dawn of heaven breaks we see the Angel of Love, and as Christ meets us we awake to the royalty of the sons of God.

PRAYER—*We thank Thee, O God, that our backslidings and transgressions, our failures and inconsistencies, cannot turn aside Thy compassionate love. We would yield ourselves to Thee. Make us as rock to the seducing influences of the world and of the flesh, but soft as clay to the least touch of Thy hand. Strive mightily in us by Thy Holy Spirit, and perfect that which concerneth us. AMEN.*

CONSECRATION

1 Corinthians 6:19,20 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

THE fact that we have been bought with a price, not with corruptible things as silver or gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, lies at the foundation of all consecration (1 Pe 1:18). In consecration we do not make ourselves Christ's but recognise that we are His by an unalienable right. In the slave market human beings were sold like cattle; but this institution is set forth as the first step in our devotion to the service and person of Jesus Christ, the Lord who bought us. Slaves pass from one master to another. Among the Hebrews an Israelite would sometimes sell himself into slavery until the year of Jubilee, or until one of his kinsmen redeemed him (Lev 25:47-50). So our Kinsman, Christ, bought us back from sin and guilt and condemnation. He says, as He buys us: "Ye shall be for Me, ye shall not be for another."

Our Lord's claim upon us is built on His own supreme sacrifice. "He gave Himself for us," says the Apostle Paul, "that He might redeem us from all iniquity" (Tit 2:14). He gave Himself up to the death of the Cross, that we might reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin. The Apostles constantly speak of themselves as "the slaves of Jesus Christ." Oh, that we might all live like this, counting nothing as our exclusive possession, but believing that all we have has been given to us to use in trust for our Lord and Master. He assigns to us each and all the work that we can do best. Some are called to work for Him in the high places of the Church, and others to toil in lowly obscurity, but everything is important in the great House of the Master, and all He requires is faithful service. I shall never forget when I first entered into the realization of the ownership of my Lord; that I was His chattel, and had no longer any option or choice for one's enjoyment or emolument. The life which was commenced then has been one of perfect freedom, for this is the enigma of His service, that Christ's slaves are alone free; and that the more absolutely they obey Him, the more completely do they drink of the sweet cup of liberty!

PRAYER—*O Lord, I give myself to Thee. I am born to serve Thee, to be Thine, to be Thy instrument. I ask not to see—I ask not to know—I ask simply to be used. AMEN.*

RISEN WITH CHRIST

Colossians 3:1 “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

IF! Some one will say, “Ah, there’s the rub! I’m afraid that is not true of me; my life is sinful and sorrowful; there are no Easter chimes in my soul, no glad fellowship with the Risen Lord; no victory over dark and hostile powers.” But if you are Christ’s disciple, you may affirm that you are risen in Him! With Christ you lay in the grave, and with Christ you have gone forth, according to the thought and purpose of God, if not in your feelings and experience. This is distinctly taught in Eph 2:1-10 and Rom 6. The whole Church (including *all* who believe in our Lord Jesus) has passed into the light of the Easter dawn; and the one thing for you and me, and all of us, is to begin from this moment to act as if it were a conscious experience, and as we dare to do so we shall have the experience.

Notice how the Apostle insists on this: “You *died*, you were raised with Christ, your life is *hid* with Christ. Give yourself time to think about it and realise it.”

The Cross of Jesus stands between you and the constant appeal of the world, as when the neighbours of Christian tried to induce him to return to the City of Destruction. This does not mean that we are to be indifferent to all that is fair and lovely in the life which God has given us, but that the Cross is to separate us from all that is selfish, sensual, and savouring of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 Jo 2:15-17).

Set your mind on things above (Col 3:2). “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” With many of us there is little attempt to guard our thoughts. The door of our heart stands open, with none to control the ingress or egress of the tumultuous throng of thoughts that wander in and out. If only we would ask the Holy Spirit to control our thoughts, so that we might think only the things that are true and of good report, a wonderful change would pass over our life (Phi 4:7-8).

Realise that Christ is your life—He is in you! See to it that nothing hinders the output of His glorious indwelling. Never mind if the world of men misunderstand you. Some day your motives and reasons will be manifested (Col 3:4).

PRAYER—*Grant, most gracious God, that we may love and seek Thee always and everywhere, and may at length find Thee and for ever hold Thee fast in the life to come. AMEN.*

STOOPING TO RISE

Philippians 2:8,9 "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"

WE wake up from the unconsciousness of infancy to find ourselves in a world of revolt, and learn that so far as the memory of man reaches back into the past, this convict has been recognised as existing between man and himself, man and his fellow, man and God. Is there no help? Will not God some day bring peace and goodwill into these troubled scenes? Yes, indeed! This paragraph tells us that the time will come when every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Christ is Lord, and that God will be glorified. And this is being effected by Christ through means that we did not expect.

When our Lord stooped to live visibly amongst men, He refused to avail Himself of the homage due to His original nature. He had been in the form of God, but was content to veil His glory, to assume the form of a servant, to be made in the likeness of men. In the cradle of Bethlehem, in the home of Nazareth, in the voluntary limitations of His earthly ministry, in His obedience to the death of the Cross, there was the hiding of His power. He refused to use the attributes of His intrinsic deity, that He might manifest the love of God, that He might bear away the guilt of the world, and work out and bring in an eternal righteousness. Therefore He is exalted and bears evermore the name of Jesus—the Saviour of the world.

The Apostle says, let this same mind be in you; think these thoughts; follow in the steps of Jesus. We must show a holy emulation as to who shall stoop the lowest, and follow the master the closest. The most urgent matter for each of us to consider is not whether we are orthodox in our creed (though that is not unimportant), but whether at any cost we have the mind which was in Christ, whether at any cost to ourselves we are manifesting the love of God to those around us.

PRAYER—*Our Heavenly Father, give us the patience, the tender pity, the humility of Jesus our Lord; who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor. Make us obedient even to the death of the cross. Help us not to save ourselves, that we may save others. AMEN.*

A NEW BEATITUDE

Matthew 11:6 "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

OUR Lord put within the reach of His noble forerunner the blessedness of those who have not seen and yet have believed; of those who trust Him though they are slain; of those who await the Lord's pleasure; and of those who cannot understand His dealings, but rest in what they know of His heart. This is the beatitude of the un-offended, of those who do not stumble over the mystery of God's dealings with their life.

This blessedness is within our reach also. There are times when we are overpowered with the mystery of life and nature. The world is so full of pain and sorrow, strong hearts seem breaking under an intolerable load. God's children are sometimes the most bitterly tried. For them the fires are heated seven times; they suffer, not only at the hand of man, but the heavens seem as brass to their cries and tears. The enemy of souls has reason to challenge them with the taunt, "Where is now your God?"

You and I have perhaps been in this plight. We have said, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" We are tempted to stumble; we are prone to fall over the mysteries of God's dealings with us. But it is then that we have the chance of inheriting this new beatitude. If we refuse to bend under the mighty hand of God—questioning, chafing, murmuring at His appointments—we miss the door which would admit us into rich and unalloyed happiness; we fumble about the latch, but it is not lifted. But if we will quiet our souls like a weaned child, anointing our heads and washing our faces, then light will break in on us from the eternal morning. The peace of God will keep our hearts and minds, and we shall enter upon this blessedness of which our Lord speaks.

PRAYER—*Forgive our sins, our faithless tears, and our repining murmurs. Lift us on the tide of Thy love into fuller, richer, deeper experiences. May we know what it is to have Christ in us, the hope of glory. AMEN.*

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

Philippians 2:5 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

FAITH is not simply an intellectual experience of a statement of fact, but it is our personal trust and confidence in Him of whom the fact is true. We are not saved merely because we believe that Jesus Christ died for us on the Cross, but because *we trust in Him* who died. It is the personal touch between Christ and ourselves that causes His life to pass into our nature, making us sound and healthy, as well as secure and safe.

What does the Cross mean to you and me? Does it not mean that there our Lord gave Himself absolutely to the Father's will? Never in any way did He make Himself the origin and fountain of His action, but was ever the empty channel through which God poured Himself. "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It seemed as if He went down lower and lower, on rung after rung of the ladder until He reached Hades, giving up everything only to follow the will of God; but out of the lowest depths God raised Him to the eternal throne.

In each one of us there is strong self-will. You say, "I am resolved to be a good man or woman, to live a noble life, to give up bad habits—I will!" But it can never be accomplished in that way. It is only when we are willing to see ourselves, our own energy, our good self as well as our bad self brought to an end on the Cross of Jesus, that we shall be able to enter into and live His eternal life.

At this moment I would summon you to stand beneath the Cross and to see there One who entirely yielded up His own will. More than that, I want you to see your self-life nailed there, and turn from it to God in adoration, saying that you are prepared to be weak and helpless so far as your own energies are concerned, that He may put forth in your life the mighty energy of that power which raised Christ from the dead. It is only when we are weak that we are really strong; it is only when we surrender ourselves to the power of the Cross, so that we realise that we have been crucified with Christ, that we are able to share in His eternal victory over the devil and the power of evil.

PRAYER—*O God, Thou hast revealed Thyself to us in Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We love Him, because He endured the Cross, and despised the shame in order to save us. May we follow Him by the way of the Cross, bearing His reproach, sharing His griefs, obedient even unto death, that we may also live and reign with Him here, and more perfectly at last. AMEN.*

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

Romans 6:4 "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

THE keynote of this inspiring paragraph is life in union with the Risen Christ. Behind us lies the death of our Lord, which severed for His people their fellowship with the world. As the voice of praise or blame cannot reach the dead, but are arrested at the fast-closed ears, so it is intended that the murmur of the world should not affect us, but that we should be set only on the will of God.

It is not wise, however, to dwell always on the negations of the Christian life. It is true that they are always present, but to dwell on them is to miss the power by which self-sacrifice and self-denial become easy. Do not live on the *dying* but the *risen* side of the Saviour's work. Behold Him as He goes forth upon His upward way to the throne of glory. Seek to experience union with Him in the likeness of His resurrection (Phi 3:10).

There ought to be finality in our experience. It is good for us to recognise the break with our past life. It must be clearly defined; we must have done with it forever. It is possible that we may be tempted, and come temporarily beneath the dominion of old sins; but in principle, like the Israelites, we have passed from Egypt, never to return to it, and the Red Sea of Christ's redemption severs us from our former condition. We do not reckon ourselves to be dead to sin in the sense that our nature is henceforth incapable of sinning. If we think thus, we shall soon be disillusioned, and find that tendencies and strivings are within us which prove the contrary. But we must reckon that we *have* died to sin, and whenever temptation comes, that it has no claim upon us. Nelson turned his blind eye to the signal to retreat from action, and we are to turn blind eyes and deaf ears to the tempter.

The Apostle says that we are to present our members as instruments of righteousness to God. Do not look at the tempter, but at Christ. Yield the eyes, ears, heart, and mind to Him, that He may make the best possible use of them; and that which becomes the habitual practice of the outward life will inevitably affect the soul and spirit.

PRAYER—*Constrained by Thy love, O Lord, we would here present ourselves, spirit, soul, and body, not to live unto ourselves, but unto Thee who didst die, and rise again. AMEN.*

FOOLISH EXCUSES

Luke 14:17,18 “And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, *Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.*”

IN this parable our Lord seems to show that the temptations of life lie in three directions. *Our Property.* So long as we are pilgrims and strangers, with no settled piece of land to call our own, with no stake in the country, with no accumulation in the bank, we reach out our hands towards the city that hath foundations (Heb 11:10-13). But when we buy a field, we are often preoccupied and engrossed with it, and all it stands for. We must lay it out for building, or plan the crops we are to raise; we think how we can sell it again at some advantage; we hope the railway company may need it. And so, though we may be outwardly punctilious in our religious observance, yet our affections are not set on things above (Col 3:1-4).

Our Activities. There is nothing wrong in having a team of oxen; on the contrary, it is a great and noble thing to plough up the virgin soil, and to make corn grow for the sustenance of the toiling millions of our fellow men. The oxen of Christ's time have their counterpart in the machinery of today—the traction engine and the motorcar. All these things marvellously preoccupy our minds. Men become so deeply interested, that they have no time or energy for anything else. They may not give an absolute negative to the invitations of Christ, but their urbane and polite excuse covers a practical refusal—“I pray Thee have me excused.”

Our Home and Family Life. Our Lord said no word against these. Did He not honour a wedding feast with His presence and first miracle? But He knows that we are apt to set aside the claims of the spiritual life when we are surrounded by all the joys and comforts of material happiness.

The excuses which were offered were very shallow—the land would not have disappeared if its owner had postponed visiting it for a day; the cattle had surely been proved already, or they would not have been bought. As to the newly-married wife, there was no reason why she should not have accompanied her husband, there was plenty of room for both. Let us respond to the love which Christ offers to us, lest we be refused by Him at the last (Heb 12:25).

PRAYER—*We beseech Thee, our most gracious God, to preserve us from the cares of this life, lest we be too much entangled therein. AMEN.*

MUSIC AND DANCING!

Luke 15:25-28 "Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him."

THE elder brother heard the sounds of music and dancing as he drew nigh to the house. They were the chord of the house, because they were the chord which was ringing through the heart of the Master and Father. Every household is more or less attuned to the spirit of those who are at its head. There is a warning here for us not to carry our moods and worries home, lest we lower and depress the tone of all the inmates of our family circle!

The father's joy at the return of his younger son was highly infectious. As the Greek suggests, there were three grades of servants in the house, evidently a great household—and the whole of them were abandoned to exuberant joy. Not a girl who did not smarten up and dress herself in her best; not a lad who did not polish his buttons. The effect was the more remarkable as contrasted with the dark clouds which, during the last few years, had enveloped them all, the reflection of the sorrow of the master!

But ought there not to have been a similar outburst of joy in respect to the elder brother? Not that he had come back, but that *he had never gone astray!* Not that he was a forgiven wastrel, but that he had never transgressed at any time his father's commandment! But no fatted calf was killed in his honour, no music and dancing celebrated his adherence to the home! Was this quite fair?

But there were compensations. "Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is Thine." "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." All things are ours in Him. Like Enoch, we may always walk with God and have fellowship with Him. The prodigal may have his music and dancing, but is it not better to have a life cultured in love, radiant with peace and joy, unbroken in its even tenor and happiness? No! We will not grudge him one hour of exultation, but give us God's best and sweetest gift—an unclouded heart, rest, serenity, peace, the daily love of God our Father shed abroad within us, as we live in His dear presence!

PRAYER—*Take from my heart, heavenly Father, all hatred and malice, all envy and jealousy, and everything which would cause a breach between me and others; that nothing may prevent the inflowing of Thy love to my heart, and its outflowing towards others. AMEN.*

THE MORNING COMETH

Genesis 1:5 "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

SIX times these words are repeated, and the one lesson that rings out is that God counts His periods, not as man does from night to night, but from evening till morning. "Not first the light, and after that the dark; but first the dark, and after that the light." God saw that each night would end in daylight, and that the end of all the nights and all the days would be the eternal day in which there can be no darkness at all. This is what St. John saw: "There shall be no night there, ... for the Lord God giveth them light" (Rev 22:5). The sun of materialism sets in a black ocean, unlit by the star of hope. But as long as God is, we believe that He will make a new heaven and new earth; and from out of what seems disappointing and hopeless. He will bring a fairer creation than before. Creation shall participate in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Watchman what of the night? The morning cometh! The darkness will finally pass away before the radiance of the dawn, and this because God is God; He is Love and Light and His Word creates.

So it is with the individual. Life may be dark. Sin is darkness; sorrow is darkness; ignorance is darkness, and these three may be part of your daily lot. But the night is far spent, the day is at hand. For you the morning star is in the sky. The education of your soul is like that of a child at school. How hard and difficult those first days, but when the rudiments were mastered; when the discipline had played its part, then were reaped the harvests of sowing, and darkness was turned to day. Be of good cheer! Even in death there is nothing to fear. "That night they caught nothing; ... but when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore." The dark waves, as they break around the boat of your life, are bearing you onward to the morning meal upon the golden sands, where you will find that Love has gone before you with its preparations! It shall be evening and morning and lo! The day without night.

PRAYER—*O God, the darkness and light are both alike to Thee, and the night shineth as the day. Help us to follow Thee even through the valley of the shadow, and to trust Thee whatever be our lot; until the day dawns, and the shadows flee away. AMEN.*

THE LORD IS AT HAND

Matthew 28:20 "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

THERE is an added beauty and meaning in these words when we translate the Greek into literal English: "*I am with you all the days.*" How fresh and vital and inspiring they are! Though familiar as household words, they refresh us like the breath of a spring morning laden with the ozone of the sea.

We shrink back from the mysteries of life, and dread its pain, less for ourselves than for those who are so closely twined into our life. We need wisdom, strength, guidance, a brother's love, a Saviour's intercession—but all is here, if only we can appreciate and receive the benediction of the wonderful fact of *the perpetual presence of Christ.*

There are conditions which we must fulfil. *Obedience.* If a man keep My words ... I will manifest Myself unto him. The path of your life is marked out by the providence of God, either in the levels of ordinary existence, or in some special mission and calling. As you bravely tread it, you become aware of a glorious presence coming to meet you, and walking by your side.

Purity; "the pure in heart see God." This is the finding of the Holy Grail, of which Tennyson sang! *A quiet heart.* I do not say a quiet life—that may be impossible, but a heart free from care, from feverish passion, from the intrusion of unworthy ambition, pride or vanity. The habit of meditating on God's Word helps to induce the quiet heart and devout spirit which realises the Lord's presence. The Bible is like the garden in which the Lord God walked in the cool of the day; read it much and prayerfully, and you will meet Him in its glades.

Recollection. There will be times when the sense of His presence will be wafted into your soul. At other times, it is a great secret to say: "Thou art here, O Lord! I do not feel or enjoy Thee. My heart is desolate, but Thou art beside me!" Faith, not feeling, is the realizing faculty. Without it, you would not have perceived His presence, though you had been beside St. John on Patmos; with it we may find Him as near in London today as in Palestine, long years ago!

PRAYER—*Lord Jesus, Thou art with us all the days. Give us eyes to see Thee and ears to hear Thy voice, that Thou mayest become more real than the dearest and closest of our friends. AMEN.*

THE SOUL'S AMEN

Jeremiah 11:5 "That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD."

JEREMIAH was conscious of the special current of divine energy which was passing into and through his soul. The word had come to him "from the Lord" and he felt it as a burning fire which he could not contain. He must needs give vent to it, but when it has passed his lips, and he has time carefully to consider it, he answers the Divine message by saying—"So be it, O Lord!"

The soul's affirmation. Let us guard against mistake. It is not always possible to say "Amen"—Yes—to God, in tones of triumph and ecstasy. Sometimes our response is choked with sobs that cannot be stifled, and soaked with tears that cannot be repressed. It was probably so with Abraham, when he tore himself from Ur of the Chaldees; when he waited weary years for his son; when he climbed the steep of Moriah. These words may be read by some who suffer year after year constant pain, by those whose earthly life is tossed upon the sea of anxiety, over which billows of care and turmoil perpetually roll. It is not improbable that these will protest as to the possibility of saying "Amen" to God's providential dealings, or they will ask: Of what avail is it to utter with the lips a word against which the whole heart stands in revolt?

In reply, let all such remember that our blessed Lord, in the garden, was content to put His will upon the side of God. He knew it was enough if, in the lower parts of the earth to which His human nature had descended, He was able, unflinchingly to affirm, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Dare to say "Amen" to God's providential dealings. Say it, though heart and flesh fail, and you will find that if the will doth acquiesce, the heart comes ultimately to choose; and as the days pass, some incident, some turn in the road, some concurrence of unforeseen circumstances, will suddenly flash the conviction on the mind and reason that God's way was right, the wisest, and the best. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," is the assurance of our Guide. Dare to trust Him, and in the strength of that trust to say, "Amen, O Lord."

PRAYER—

*For all things beautiful, and good, and true;
For all things that seemed not good yet turned to good;
For all the sweet compulsions of Thy Will
That chased, and tried, and wrought us to Thy shape—
We thank Thee, Lord.*

THE CHILD IN THE MIDST

Matthew 18:2,3 "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

OUR Lord desired to show wherein true greatness consists. First of all, it begins with *Humility*. Without this, no one can be His disciple (Mat 18:4). A child is naturally humble until parents and friends begin to spoil it by directing its attention to itself. For us, as for the proud Naaman of old, our flesh must become as a little child. Some people are rather proud of their humility, and expect to be praised for it, but that is not the genuine humility of which Christ speaks.

The next qualification for greatness is *Love*. We must recognise and welcome Christ-like souls, however lowly their lot. What a contrast between the boy, whose pitiful ease is described in the previous chapter (Mat 17:14-18) and this little child. But to each the Lord Jesus proved Himself to be a loving Friend. The one He restored to sanity and health, the other He gathered in His arms. Probably the child was standing or playing quite near to Him, so that it only needed a very slight gesture to bring him to the Master's side, and he became the text of the sermon that followed. We must not despise one of the least, for they are the objects of Christ's special regard. Our Lord draws aside the veil from the eternal world, and shows that the youngest and weakest ones are they to whom the loftiest angels are allotted as their guardians. The holy ones of the presence-chamber, who always behold the face of God, are set to watch over the children.

The third step to true greatness is in the disposition which is unsparing of self, and thoughtful for all others. We dare not put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall before one of Christ's weakest disciples; we must be prepared to cut off the right hand, or pluck out the right eye rather than grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Our attitude about many things which might appear perfectly harmless must be determined by the effect of our influence upon others.

PRAYER—*Give unto us, O Lord, true humility, a loving and friendly, a holy and a useful manner of life; bearing the burdens of our neighbours, denying ourselves, and studying to benefit others, and to please Thee in all things.*
AMEN.

THE PERFECTING OF CHRIST

Hebrews 5:8,9 "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;"

FOR the long and steep ascent of life, our Father has given us a Companion, a Captain of the march, a Brother, even Jesus our Lord, who passed through the suffering of death, and is now crowned with glory and honour (Heb 2:9-11). He has passed along our pathway, and climbed our steep ascents, that He might become our merciful and faithful Friend and Helper. In this sense He was perfected, and became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation.

As regards His nature, it was impossible for Him to be otherwise than perfect. In Him all the fullness of the divine nature dwelt without let or hindrance. But since the children partook of flesh and blood, He also Himself partook of the same; it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren. To each of us He says: "I have trodden this path before Thee, and know every inch of the way." Christ is the Great-Heart, the Companion for all pilgrim souls.

But if we are to walk with Him, and realise His eternal salvation, *we must learn to obey*. This is the lesson taught to the scientist by nature. He must be exact, minute, microscopic in his attention and obedience to details. If he should fail in one tiny point, his best-conceived plans and experiments must fail. Exact obedience is essential to the engineer. The slightest inadvertence will clog and stop the mightiest machine that human ingenuity ever invented. It is, however, in the spiritual sphere that disobedience brings the greatest and most momentous catastrophes. We must learn to obey, even in the dark! Not ours to make reply, or to question God's dealings. He withholds His reasons, but demands our obedience.

The strength to obey is God given. There appeared an angel from Heaven to strengthen Christ, and to each of us treading dark and hard paths, that angel comes still. But you never know the angel till you reach your Gethsemane. It is because our Lord learned these things by experience, that He is perfected to impart eternal salvation to every soul of man.

PRAYER—*Eternal Saviour, who knowest each step of this difficult pathway of life, we come to Thee for Thy gracious help; enable us to obey Thy promptings, and in every hour of mortal weakness and fear stand beside us to be our very present help. AMEN.*

THE LIFE-GIVING STREAM

Ezekiel 47:9 “And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.”

Revelation 22:1 “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

IN this wonderful chapter in Ezekiel the influence of restored Israel is compared to a life-giving stream issuing from the divine dwelling-place (Eze 47:1). When the waters rise in the heart, they flow out, as our Lord promised, in ever-deepening, widening rivers of blessing to mankind (Joh 4:14; Joh 7:37-39). The *ankles* may mean the steps of daily life; the *knees* our prayers and intercessions; the *loins* our affections and passions. Our influence for God should perpetually deepen and extend. In every life, there must be the unfathomable depth of fellowship with God—“a river that could not be passed over” (Eze 47:5).

PRAYER—*O God our Father, the Ocean of Love to whom all streams tend, but in whom there is no ebb! The depth of our need calls to the depth of Thy grace, but Thy grace is deeper than our need. May we drink deeply of the river of the water of life and overflow in blessing to the thirsty worm around. AMEN.*

CALENDAR FOR READING THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD IN A YEAR

By the late Rev. R. M. M'CHEYNE, M. A.

THE ADVANTAGES

- 1. THE WHOLE BIBLE WILL BE READ THROUGH IN AN ORDERLY MANNER IN THE COURSE OF A YEAR.** - The Old Testament once, the New Testament and Acts twice. I fear many of you never read the whole Bible, and yet it is all equally divine. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect.”* If we pass over some parts of Scripture we will be incomplete Christians.
- 2. TIME WILL NOT BE WASTED IN CHOOSING WHAT PORTIONS TO READ.** - Often believers are at a loss to determine towards which part of the mountains of spices they should bend their steps. Here the question will be solved at once in a very simple manner.
- 3. THE PASTOR WILL KNOW IN WHICH PART OF THE PASTURE THE FLOCK ARE FEEDING.** - He will thus be enabled to speak more suitably to them on the Sabbath: and both pastor and elders will be able to drop a word of light and comfort in visiting from house to house, which will be more readily responded to.
- 4. THE SWEET BOND OF CHRISTIAN LOVE AND UNITY WILL BE STRENGTHENED.** - We shall often be led to think of those dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, who agree to join with us in reading these portions. We shall oftener be led to agree on earth, touching something we shall ask of God. We shall pray over the same promises, mourn over the same confessions, praise God in the same songs, and be nourished by the same words of eternal life.

DIRECTIONS

1. The centre column contains the day of the month. The first two columns contain the chapters to be read in the family. The two last columns contain the portions to be read in secret.
2. The head of the family should previously read each chapter for family worship, and mark two or three of the most prominent verses, upon which he may dwell, giving a few explanatory thoughts and asking a few simple questions.
3. Frequently the portion named in the calendar for family reading might be read more suitably in secret: in which case the head of the family should intimate that it be read in private, and the chapter for secret reading may be used in the family.
4. The portions read, both for family and private readings, would be greatly illuminated if they were preceded by a moment's silent prayer - "*Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.*" (Ps. cxix. 18).
5. Let the conversation at the family meals frequently turn upon the chapter read. Thus every meal will be a sacrament, being sanctified by the Word and prayer.
6. Let our private reading precede the dawning of the day. Let God's voice be the first we hear in the morning. Mark two or three of the richest verses, and pray over every line and word of them. Let the marks be neatly done, never so as to abuse a copy of the Bible.

January								
Family					Secret			
Genesis	1	Matthew	1	1st	Ezra	1	Acts	1
Genesis	2	Matthew	2	2nd	Ezra	2	Acts	2
Genesis	3	Matthew	3	3rd	Ezra	3	Acts	3
Genesis	4	Matthew	4	4th	Ezra	4	Acts	4
Genesis	5	Matthew	5	5th	Ezra	5	Acts	5
Genesis	6	Matthew	6	6th	Ezra	6	Acts	6
Genesis	7	Matthew	7	7th	Ezra	7	Acts	7
Genesis	8	Matthew	8	8th	Ezra	8	Acts	8
Genesis	9-10	Matthew	9	9th	Ezra	9	Acts	9
Genesis	11	Matthew	10	10th	Ezra	10	Acts	10
Genesis	12	Matthew	11	11th	Nehemiah	1	Acts	11
Genesis	13	Matthew	12	12th	Nehemiah	2	Acts	12
Genesis	14	Matthew	13	13th	Nehemiah	3	Acts	13
Genesis	15	Matthew	14	14th	Nehemiah	4	Acts	14
Genesis	16	Matthew	15	15th	Nehemiah	5	Acts	15
Genesis	17	Matthew	16	16th	Nehemiah	6	Acts	16
Genesis	18	Matthew	17	17th	Nehemiah	7	Acts	17
Genesis	19	Matthew	18	18th	Nehemiah	8	Acts	18
Genesis	20	Matthew	19	19th	Nehemiah	9	Acts	19
Genesis	21	Matthew	20	20th	Nehemiah	10	Acts	20
Genesis	22	Matthew	21	21st	Nehemiah	11	Acts	21
Genesis	23	Matthew	22	22nd	Nehemiah	12	Acts	22
Genesis	24	Matthew	23	23rd	Nehemiah	13	Acts	23
Genesis	25	Matthew	24	24th	Esther	1	Acts	24
Genesis	26	Matthew	25	25th	Esther	2	Acts	25
Genesis	27	Matthew	26	26th	Esther	3	Acts	26
Genesis	28	Matthew	27	27th	Esther	4	Acts	27
Genesis	29	Matthew	28	28th	Esther	5	Acts	28
Genesis	30	Mark	1	29th	Esther	6	Romans	1
Genesis	31	Mark	2	30th	Esther	7	Romans	2
Genesis	32	Mark	3	31st	Esther	8	Romans	3

February								
Family					Secret			
Genesis	33	Mark	4	1st	Esther	9-10	Romans	4
Genesis	34	Mark	5	2nd	Job	1	Romans	5
Genesis	35-36	Mark	6	3rd	Job	2	Romans	6
Genesis	37	Mark	7	4th	Job	3	Romans	7
Genesis	38	Mark	8	5th	Job	4	Romans	8
Genesis	39	Mark	9	6th	Job	5	Romans	9
Genesis	40	Mark	10	7th	Job	6	Romans	10
Genesis	41	Mark	11	8th	Job	7	Romans	11
Genesis	42	Mark	12	9th	Job	8	Romans	12
Genesis	43	Mark	13	10th	Job	9	Romans	13
Genesis	44	Mark	14	11th	Job	10	Romans	14
Genesis	45	Mark	15	12th	Job	11	Romans	15
Genesis	46	Mark	16	13th	Job	12	Romans	16
Genesis	47	Luke	1:1-38	14th	Job	13	I Corinthians	1
Genesis	48	Luke	1:39ff	15th	Job	14	I Corinthians	2
Genesis	49	Luke	2	16th	Job	15	I Corinthians	3
Genesis	50	Luke	3	17th	Job	16-17	I Corinthians	4
Exodus	1	Luke	4	18th	Job	18	I Corinthians	5
Exodus	2	Luke	5	19th	Job	19	I Corinthians	6
Exodus	3	Luke	6	20th	Job	20	I Corinthians	7
Exodus	4	Luke	7	21st	Job	21	I Corinthians	8
Exodus	5	Luke	8	22nd	Job	22	I Corinthians	9
Exodus	6	Luke	9	23rd	Job	23	I Corinthians	10
Exodus	7	Luke	10	24th	Job	24	I Corinthians	11
Exodus	8	Luke	11	25th	Job	25-26	I Corinthians	12
Exodus	9	Luke	12	26th	Job	27	I Corinthians	13
Exodus	10	Luke	13	27th	Job	28	I Corinthians	14
Exodus	11-12:21	Luke	14	28th	Job	29	I Corinthians	15

March								
Family					Secret			
Exodus	12:22ff	Luke	15	1st	Job	30	1 Corinthians	13
Exodus	13	Luke	16	2nd	Job	31	2 Corinthians	1
Exodus	14	Luke	17	3rd	Job	32	2 Corinthians	2
Exodus	15	Luke	18	4th	Job	33	2 Corinthians	3
Exodus	16	Luke	19	5th	Job	34	2 Corinthians	4
Exodus	17	Luke	20	6th	Job	35	2 Corinthians	5
Exodus	18	Luke	21	7th	Job	36	2 Corinthians	6
Exodus	19	Luke	22	8th	Job	37	2 Corinthians	7
Exodus	20	Luke	23	9th	Job	38	2 Corinthians	8
Exodus	21	Luke	24	10th	Job	39	2 Corinthians	9
Exodus	22	John	1	11th	Job	40	2 Corinthians	10
Exodus	23	John	2	12th	Job	41	2 Corinthians	11
Exodus	24	John	3	13th	Job	42	2 Corinthians	12
Exodus	25	John	4	14th	Proverbs	1	2 Corinthians	13
Exodus	26	John	5	15th	Proverbs	2	Galatians	1
Exodus	27	John	6	16th	Proverbs	3	Galatians	2
Exodus	28	John	7	17th	Proverbs	4	Galatians	3
Exodus	29	John	8	18th	Proverbs	5	Galatians	4
Exodus	30	John	9	19th	Proverbs	6	Galatians	5
Exodus	31	John	10	20th	Proverbs	7	Galatians	6
Exodus	32	John	11	21st	Proverbs	8	Ephesians	1
Exodus	33	John	12	22nd	Proverbs	9	Ephesians	2
Exodus	34	John	13	23rd	Proverbs	10	Ephesians	3
Exodus	35	John	14	24th	Proverbs	11	Ephesians	4
Exodus	36	John	15	25th	Proverbs	12	Ephesians	5
Exodus	37	John	16	26th	Proverbs	13	Ephesians	6
Exodus	38	John	17	27th	Proverbs	14	Philippians	1
Exodus	39	John	18	28th	Proverbs	15	Philippians	2
Exodus	40	John	19	29th	Proverbs	16	Philippians	3
Leviticus	1	John	20	30th	Proverbs	17	Philippians	4
Leviticus	2	John	21	31st	Proverbs	18	Colossians	1

YEAR 2007
O For a Closer Walk with God!

The Christian life is all about our walk with God. The source of every believer's spiritual vitality is the intimate fellowship he enjoys with his Lord day by day. Such fellowship can only be sustained through a healthy prayer life and a fervent desire to love God and know Him through His Word and the Holy Spirit. While sin may disrupt our walk with the Lord, confession and true repentance restores it. The 28 passages of Scripture in this booklet have been carefully chosen to help you to grow in your walk with the Lord. May you be drawn much closer to Him as you memorise them and meditate on them.

January 7 & 14 – Confession to God

1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

January 21 & 28 – Confession to God

Psalm 139:23-24 – Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

February 4 & 11 – Forgiveness from God

1 John 2:1 – My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

February 18 & 25 – Prayer

Hebrews 4:16 - Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

March 4 & 11 – Prayer and the Peace of God

Philippians 4:6-7 – Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

March 18 & 25 – Answer to Prayer

Jeremiah 33:3 – Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

April 1 & 8 – Attitude for Prayer

2 Chronicles 7:14 – If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

April 15 & 22 – Walking with God

Micah 6:8 – He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

April 29 - Gospel

Acts 4:12 – Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

May 6 & 13 – Knowing God

Psalm 46:10 – Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

May 20 & 27 – Knowing God

Jeremiah 9:23-24 – Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

June 3 & 10 – Communion with God

Psalm 27:4 – One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

June 17 & 24 – Communion with God

Psalm 84:10 – For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

July 1 & 8 – Communion with Christ

Revelation 3:20 – Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

July 15 & 22 – Love for God

Mark 12:30 – And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

July 29 – Gospel

Titus 3:5 – Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

August 5 & 12 – Love not the World

1 John 2:15-16 – Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

August 19 & 26 – Assurance from God

Romans 8:28 – And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

September 2 & 9 – Confidence in God

2 Timothy 1:12 – For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

September 16 & 23 – Protection from God

Psalms 37:23-24 – The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

September 30 – Gospel

Isaiah 55:6-7 – Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
