

# Our Daily Walk

*Daily Meditations and a Prayer for Each Day*

By  
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**VOLUME Four**

### **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 traveler. ... 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.

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

## THE DIMENSIONS OF GOD'S LOVE

*Ephesians 3:17-19* "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

**T**HE DIMENSIONS of the Love of Christ! It is *broad* as humanity, "for God so loved the world"; the *length*—God's love had no date of origin, and shall have none of conclusion. God is Love, it continueth ever, indissoluble, unchangeable, a perpetual present tense. Its *height*—as the Flood out-topped the highest mountains, so that Love covers our highest sins. It is as high as the heaven above the earth. Its *depth*—Christ our Lord descended into the lowest before He rose to the highest. He has touched the bottomless pit of our sin and misery, sorrow and need. However low your fall, or lowly your lot, the everlasting arms of His love are always underneath.

The Apostle talks by hyperbole, when he prays that we may attain to a knowledge of the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ. We cannot gauge Christ's love, but we can enjoy it. Probably the only way to know the love of Christ is to begin to show it. The emotionalist, who is easily affected by appeals to the senses, does not know it; the theorist or rhapsodist does not know it, but the soul that endeavours to *show* the love of Christ, knows it. As Christ's love through you broadens, lengthens, deepens, heightens, you will know the love of Christ, not intellectually, but experimentally (1 John 4:11, 12; 20, 21).

But you say, "there are people in my life whom I cannot love." Granted, but you must distinguish between love and the emotion or feeling of love. You may not be able to feel love at the outset, but you can be willing to be the channel of Christ's love. I cannot love, but Christ is in me, and He can. Is it too much to ask that all this should be realized in ourselves and in others? No, because God is already at work within us by His Holy Spirit, and He is able to do infinitely beyond all our highest requests or thoughts. Ask your furthest, think your highest, and the Divine Love is always infinitely in advance.

**PRAYER**—*We thank Thee, O God, for the infinite love which Thou hast given us in Jesus Christ. We have no measure for its heights and depths, its breadths and lengths. Teach us with all saints to know more because we love more. AMEN.*

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## THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S LOVE

*1 John 4:16,19 "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. ... We love him, because he first loved us."*

**G**OD IS Love. Jesus Christ first brought to men the conception that man loves God only because God has first loved him. In vain we search for such an idea in the philosophies of Greece and Rome. The men who fixed this thought in the literature of mankind were followers of Jesus Christ. Might and majesty were the dominating ideas of B.C., but since A.D., we think of Love enthroned in the Divine Nature.

*His Love passeth knowledge.* We may apply to it the masterly arraignment of Psalm 139. It winnows our rays. It besets us behind and before. It lays on us its gentle restraining hand. It is high, we cannot attain to it. If we ascend into heaven, it is there; if we make our bed in the grave, it is there to lift us to His heart; if we take the wings of the morning, it shines as sunrise; if we pass into the darkness, it makes the midnight shine as the day. It covered us in our birth, it will tend us in old age. How precious it is, and how multitudinous in its expression, no mortal lips can tell.

*Even our sin will not lessen that Love.* That Peter sinned deeply, who can doubt, but did it put a screen between him and Christ? Nay, for when Christ arose, He sent specially for him. In the garden He restored him, and at the lakeside He taught him that His love would be as acceptable as ever (Mark 16:7; John 21:15).

His Love will not spare. Jesus looked on the young roan and loved him! But He read him through and through, and mercifully gave the unwelcome verdict: "Go, sell all that thou hast ... and follow Me." He went away sad, and Christ went away sad! But He loves us too well to spare us! God's love is consistent with stern dealings at those things which may cause us to fail of the best.

*We believe in God's Love when it seems not so.* "We have known," says the Apostle, that "God is Love," unutterable and changeless! But there are times when we have to *believe* in it, i.e. in the perplexity of life's problems. We are often facing incidents and providences that strike us as inconsistent with God's Love. Then we must believe that the same Love is there. God Is Love, and nothing can reach us save through His Love.

**PRAYER**—*May I not be satisfied with talking or musing on Thy Love, O God. Grant me the grace of manifesting it, not only in great crisis, but amid petty annoyances and the daily fret of life. AMEN.*

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## THE WONDER OF GOD'S LOVE

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

**A**S CHILDREN we read "Alice in Wonderland," but at the end of life we shall still find ourselves in Wonderland! Perhaps there is a deeper truth than we know in the description of old age as a second childhood, because the child-spirit ever lives in a Paradise of mystery, questioning and wonder!

There are causes for wonder in the small compass of this verse! The first is that *God loved and loves the world*. We are not surprised to learn that He *made* the world, because—except where men have spoilt it—it is so beautiful. Or that He has a name for it, because He calleth them all by name, as He bringeth out their hosts by number. So small is our world amid the myriad constellations, but nevertheless it is belted, environed, encompassed by the Love of God!

The second Wonder is *that the Only Begotten Son came to dwell with us*. Is it not wonderful that the Son of God should have passed by all other worlds, and come to this. That this earth was trodden by His blessed feet; that He has incorporated its transfigured dust into the texture of His Divine Nature—this is all so wonderful, that we are disposed to believe that our world must be the pivot of the universe—its nursery, college, and training ground.

The third wonder is *that Eternal Life is within the reach of whosoever*. God gives us not quantity but *quality* of life. Time is a method of thought necessitated by our human limitations, and therefore some day will come to its end. Eternal Life is an ever-present *NOW*—of Love and Life and Light, enjoyed in fellowship with God. And this is for *Whosoever!* Each of us may insert his or her name in the blank, and say, "that *I* may have eternal life." It is *so* wonderful, that the thought could not have been invented or suggested by the wit of man. It bears the imprint and seal of God Himself, who made us in His image, and after His likeness, that we might become the partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (Gen 1:26; 2 Pet 1:4).

**PRAYER**—*The world is dear unto Thee, O Heavenly Father; Thou didst send Thine Only Son to save it, and Thy Spirit to comfort and renew. May He brood over the chaos of this distracted world, and may order and peace and love reign among men. AMEN.*

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## LOVE AND LIBERTY

*Romans 14:7-8 "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."*

**T**HE KEY to this wonderful chapter, so full of sound judgment and sanctified common sense, is the reiterated reference which the Apostle makes to the Lord, which occurs some ten times in fourteen verses. The fact of Jesus being Lord both of the living and of those who have died, and are living on the other side of death, is the solution of the difficulty as to what the Christian should do or leave undone. Let each of us stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, or at least before the reflection of that tribunal which is mirrored in the tranquil expanse of conscience, and we shall have an unerring guide for conduct.

The question agitated in Rome was as to the observance of the seventh or first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath; and, what principle should direct the use of food—that of Leviticus, or of common use. The Apostle insists that these are not questions which affect either our personal salvation or our acceptance with God. In his opinion they are matters for each individual Christian to settle and decide for himself. There are certain factions clear as light, or black as night, about which there can be no controversy; but there are other questions for the solution of which each must apply one or other of these general principles for guidance through the maze.

What would Jesus Christ, my Lord and Master, wish me to do? I am His servant, and He will let me know His will by the teaching of His Spirit in my heart. Whether I act or forbear, it must be done unto Him; and in my liberty or abstinence I must give Him thanks.

What is best for others? I have an influence over some; perhaps more look to me for guidance than I know. I must be on my guard not to put a stumbling block in another's way. Though certain things are innocent to me, yet, if they will destroy, directly or indirectly, one for whom Christ died, it will be better for me to abstain from them.

What is best for myself? I ask God not to lead me into temptation, but I must not put myself into it. I must put aside all weights as well as sins, that I may follow Christ as He goes forth to the conquest of evil.

**PRAYER**—*O Lord and Master, may we be faithful to Thee in the little things, always following the inner light, till it lead us into the perfect day.*  
**AMEN.**

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## LOVED AND LOOSED

*Revelation 1:5-6 "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*

**W**HATEVER ELSE the Blood of Christ may mean, it certainly means that Christ has viewed our sin as of tremendous gravity. With Him it is no slight malady to be cured by a regimen of diet and exercise. It is deep-seated, radical, perilous, endangering the fabric of our soul's health and the scope of its outlook on the future.

No religion that ignores this elemental fact in human consciousness is destined to permanence. To say with Buddha—sin can be wiped out with good deeds; or with Mahomet—God is good, and will not be hard on you—is not enough. The religious creed that deals most radically and drastically with sin is the one which will ever appeal most strongly to the human heart, and it is because Jesus Christ has not treated sin lightly, but has loosed men from it by His blood, that He is enthroned for ever.

It is thus that He speaks to every sin-burdened soul, profoundly conscious of its heavy binding links, sighing for the liberty of the sons of God. This forgiveness and loosing is for thee. What Christ was as Alpha, He is as Omega. He is the same today as in the yesterday of the past. All that He did for those first believers in Himself, He waits to do for us, if only with humble penitence and faith we will claim it at His hands. He loveth us! He purchased us for Himself, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with His precious blood. He breaks the power of cancelled sin, and tells us that we are loosed from its bondage. He has made us free, and we need not again yield to the evil things of which we are ashamed, any more than the woman whom He healed needed to continue to be bent double (Luke 13:11-13). Let us lift up ourselves, and go forth to glorify God in an upright walk and conversation; *to reign in this life* through the one Man, Christ Jesus (Rom 5:17).

**PRAYER**—*Most holy and adorable Lord, who hast loosed me from my sins, I thankfully accept the redemption which Thou hast purchased, and the glad freedom from the guilt and power of sin. Enable me henceforth to walk in newness of life. And to Thee, my Lord and King, shall be glory and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN.*

## GOD'S RESTORING LOVE

*Hosea 14:2,4 "Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. .. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him."*

*John 21:16 "He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep."*

**T**HE CAUSES of backsliding are many. We have pretended to be living a more devoted life than was actually the case; we neglected to watch unto prayer; we allowed secret sin to eat out the heart of our piety, 'as the white ant works destruction in the East; or we yielded to temptation, and then sought to justify ourselves against the remonstrances of conscience; or we yielded to the fear of man, and drifted with the multitude to do evil; or we became prosperous, and trusted only in our wealth; or poor, and succumbed to covetousness and the bitterness of despair.

The world despises the fallen, and does not believe in the possibility of entire restoration. It is always suspicious of those who have fallen from their high estate—the prisoner in the cell, who was once an honoured financier; the beautiful woman who has come under the degrading influence of drink or drugs; the minister or doctor who has incurred shame and disgrace—all such find it hard to be reinstated. But God stoops over the outcast with infinite compassion and love, and promises forgiveness and restoration to all who will return to Him.

It was thus that our Lord dealt with Peter. He knew that in spite of his grievous fall, there was a strong undercurrent of devoted love, and He did not hesitate to entrust to him the care of His sheep and lambs. In a certain museum there is a lovely marble statue which was found broken into hundreds of pieces. The fragments were carefully collected, and with infinite patience fitted together. Finally a seemingly impossible task was accomplished, and the statue stands in all its original completeness and beauty. So the Lord Jesus will take the broken pieces of any life that will come to Him, and with His skilful and tender touch will remake it into something useful and beautiful in His service. This is the meaning of Redemption. The one thing that Christ asks of any of us is that we should follow Him. Whether we can walk, or need to be carried; whether life is young within us, or waning, let us follow Him, love Him, obey Him, and He will turn back our backslidings, and never mention them again.

**PRAYER**—*O Lord, we would be Thine; let us never fall away from Thee.*  
**AMEN.**

## STEPPING HEAVENWARD

2 Thessalonians 3:5 “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

**T**HE BELOVED disciple greets his companions as sharing “in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9). It is a noble combination; as though the royalty of Christian character were in proportion to the share we have in the quiet waiting of our Lord. He waited patiently from all eternity, until the fullness of the times had come, and the hour of His Incarnation struck; He waited patiently for thirty years in Nazareth, whilst preparing for His life-work. When He returned in triumph to the Father, He sat down at His right hand until His enemies were made His footstool. Throughout the ages He quietly waits, in sure expectation of the destined end, when all rule and authority and power shall be put down. All the anguish of the world lies on His heart; every question as to the righteousness and equity of God is felt by Him. He bears all with unflinching patience, because He sees the end, and knows that at the last God will be All in All. It is into this love and patience that we are to be led.

“*Into the Love of God.*” Every time we dare to affirm that, notwithstanding appearances, God is Love; every time that we evince that love to others, even though our own heart is breaking; every time we say No to self and Yes to God, we make further progress into His Love. Dare to believe in the love of God, even when the darkness seems to veil it. Dare to believe that it is over all, and through all, and in all.

“*Into the patience of Christ.*” Let us exercise Christ’s patience until the sorrows and trials of life have achieved their destined purpose. There is a sufficient explanation for the present condition of the world, if we knew it. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, but be of good cheer, and stablish your hearts, for your God will come and not keep silence. In the meanwhile let us keep the word of His patience, and manifest that patience and faith of the saints.

**PRAYER**—*Most Blessed Lord, guide our wandering feet, we beseech Thee, into the love of God and into Thine own infinite patience. Forgive us that we have so often been impulsive and headstrong, that we have murmured against Thy apparent slowness in answering our prayers. Hush our unquiet hearts with Thine own peace. AMEN.*

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## PRACTISING CHRISTIANITY

*1 John 3:14 "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."*

**I**T IS a great comfort to find that *Love* is not regarded by the Apostle as though it were merely an emotional or sentimental matter, for every reference points to *action*! The love of God was manifested in the laying down of His life, and we are to be willing to follow in His steps (1 John 3:16). The injunction is that we should love in our *deeds*. We are not to shut up our hearts in compassion, but to help our brother in need. If we begin with *doing* kind and loving actions, we shall end by *feeling* the same. Often when people come to me, saying that love has completely died out of their life towards some other person, I have bidden them go back again, and act with love, making the other one the centre and object of helpful ministry; the invariable result is the refreshing and rekindling of the hot geyser-springs of affection.

Do not wait to feel love, but begin at once to show it, because it is right, and your duty, and as you step out in simple faith you will find that God will make this to abound towards that also abound in grace you may this good work. Love of such kind is self-giving and it is the gift of the Spirit of God. This exotic bloom cannot flourish on our wintry soil; the heart of man cannot furnish it. There may be a few wild growths, but they bear small comparison to its beautiful flower and fruit. Love is of God. It proceeds from His Nature, and is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. "The fruit of the Spirit is love," and as we are united with Christ by faith, the love of God will be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and we shall be able to love with God's love.

We know that we have been born from above as soon as we find ourselves willing to put the interests of another before our own, not because we have a natural affection or affinity for him, but because he and we belong to God. If there is hatred or dislike in our hearts towards any, let us beware! We must uproot it by generous action, or it will bring darkness into our own lives (1 John 2:9-11).

**PRAYER**—*Enable us, O God of patience, to bear one another's burdens, and to forbear one another in love. Oh, teach and help us all to live in peace and to love in truth. Subdue all bitter resentments in our minds, and let the law of kindness be in our tongues. AMEN.*

## MY BROTHER!

*Genesis 4:9 "And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"*

*1 John 2:11 "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."*

**M**AN'S FALL, whatever else it may have been, resulted in a complete change of the centre of his being. He was made in the likeness of God, and God's nature is absolutely selfless. God's will and purpose was the one rule of man's existence until the moment came when our first parents substituted the gratification of self for the will and law of God. From that hour the self-life became the dominant principle of mankind, and the world is what it is because the essence of life is the service of self.

We do not know what really caused the difference in the disposition of Cain and Abel. There are hints and suggestions, but the fundamental reason why these two brothers differed so is veiled in mystery, though the like of it still shows itself in our homes. St. John gives us the clue in his first Epistle, where he says that Cain slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

God remonstrated with Cain and warned him that sin was lying at the door of his heart, waiting to enter. He exhorted him to watch and not allow it to intrude. When the dreadful deed was done, Cain found that all nature was in arms against him, and he became an outcast. The blood of Abel cried against Cain, for all sin cries to God, and He is the Avenger and Vindicator of wronged ones who in simplicity and faith have cast themselves upon Him. Thank God, also, there is a cry louder than that of Abel's, which pleads not for judgment but for mercy (Heb 12:24).

This world is full of envy, jealousy, strife, and murder, because men keep themselves instead of keeping their brothers; because our own instead of another's welfare revolves round the pivot of "I". The first Epistle of St. John is the antipode of this story in Genesis, and contains its corrective, for it is when we love God first and best that we love our brother, and as we open our whole soul to the tidal wave of God's love, we are lifted above the jagged rocks of the self-life into the broad full ocean of life which is life indeed (1 John 3:14-17).

**PRAYER**—*Our Father! Help us to consider the interests of others, and to act generously towards them, because we are Thy children, and Thy infinite resources are at our commands. AMEN.*

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## FORGIVENESS

*Matthew 18:21 "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"*

**T**HE RELIGIOUS teachers of Christ's day taught that *four* times was the extreme limit of forgiveness. Peter exceeded this in his estimate, but how far even he fell short of the Divine ideal! Seven was to the Jews the number of perfection, so that no expression could more forcibly convey the impression of ever-renewed, eternal, repetition than "*seventy times seven!*" What comfort there is for each one of us here! For if God expects man to forgive his brother thus, how may we not count on His forgiveness!

This parable shows the great wrong we do to ourselves as well as to our brother, when we fail to forgive. Here was a man who had been forgiven the enormous debt of two million sterling, but was not softened and chastened by its remission, for he went immediately from his Master's presence to lay violent hands on an unfortunate fellow-servant, who owed him less than a five-pound note. He is deaf to the reasons which had filled his own mouth previously, and oblivious of everything except that this debt should be paid instantly.

Are we not all tempted to abuse the forgiving love of God, and to be censorious, vindictive, implacable, and unforgiving? If you want to be the reverse of this, consider how much you have been forgiven! Sit down and count up your enormous debt to God, and how freely He has forgiven you. Only the forgiving are forgiven—"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." If we are unrelenting, slow to recognize merit, quick to observe faults, cherishing ill-will and resentment for injuries inflicted, perhaps years ago; and if we cling to and nourish this spirit, we may be sure that we have never been forgiven.

How are we to attain the state of mind which forgives so often, and can win the most wayward? The parable teaches us that we must receive God's pardon in a right spirit, that we must remember our own failures and sins, and that we must ever be willing to cast the mantle of forgiving love over the sins and failures of those around us.

**PRAYER**—*O Lord, may we hear Thee say to us: Thy sins which are many are all forgiven; Go in peace; and may we, in our turn, forgive as we have been forgiven, and may the sun not go down upon our wrath. AMEN.*

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## OUR POSSESSIONS

*Luke 12:15 "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."*

*1 John 5:21 "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."*

**T**HE PETITION addressed to Christ, in this paragraph from which our text is selected, has been constantly made to Him in subsequent ages. Men are always demanding that He should divide the inheritance more equally. But our Lord did not come to adjust human relationships by the exercise of His autocratic will. He deals rather with the overreaching and grasping avarice which leads the rich to withhold, and the discontent which compels the poor to murmur. He saw in the demand of the suppliant a tendency to the same covetousness which prompted the other brother to withhold the portion of the inheritance, which was not justly his.

Our Lord announced the far-reaching truth that life does not consist in what we possess, but in what we are. We are rich, not in proportion to the amount standing to our credit in the bank, or to the acreage of our inheritance, but to the purity, strength, and generosity of our nature. When we lay up treasure for ourselves, we become paupers in God's universe. The only way of dealing with covetousness, which makes an idol of money or possessions, is to regard our property only as gifts entrusted to us for the benefit of others. Let us mortify the spirit of greed, which is so strong within us all, by sowing the acreage of our life as indicated in 2 Cor 9:1-15.

Sensual appetite is an idol with many (Phil 3:19). Eating and drinking, feasting and pleasure-seeking are idols before which many prostrate themselves. And there are other idols than these, for whenever any earthly object engrosses our soul, and intercepts the love and faith that should pass from us to God, it is an idol which must be overthrown. Whenever we can look up from anything that we possess into the face of God, and thank Him as its Giver, we may use and enjoy it without fear. We are not likely to make an idol of that which we receive direct from the hand of our Heavenly Father, whose good pleasure it is to give good gifts to His children (1 Tim 4:4-5).

**PRAYER**—*O Lord, the Portion of our Inheritance, give us grace, we pray Thee, never to aim at or desire anything out of Thee. What we can enjoy in Thee, give us according to Thy Will; what we cannot, deny us. AMEN.*

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## GOD'S LARGESSE AND BOUNTY

*Psalms 78:19,20,29* “*Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? ... So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;*”

**T**HIS IS always the cry of unbelief, *Can God?* whilst the triumphant assertion of faith is: *God can.* What a difference is wrought by the collocation of words! Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? God can spread a table, even in the wilderness, and in the presence of our enemies our cup can overflow. Can He give bread also? He can satisfy the desire of every living thing, by the opening of His hand. Canst Thou do anything for us, our child is grievously possessed of the devil? If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

The wanderings of the Israelites for forty years were due to the fact that they looked at their difficulties and questioned if God could overcome them. Amongst the people, only Caleb and Joshua looked away from the Canaanites and their fortified cities to Him who had brought them where they were, and was pledged to extricate them. Some people speak of Giants with a capital G, and forget to magnify the power of God. What wonder that they account themselves as grasshoppers, and lose heart! Let us not forget that we are sons and daughters of God, “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” (cf. Num 13:33 and Rom 8:17.)

Look back on the past; see what God has done for you; remember He is pledged to finish what He has begun. If He gave water, He can certainly give bread.

“They did eat, and were well filled.” When we are poor and needy, we are inclined to humble prayer. But if suddenly our lot is changed, and there is abundance instead of poverty, how often there is a change in our demeanour. We are apt to become self-indulgent, and forgetful of the needs of the world. Instead of remembering that we are still God’s pensioners, we magnify ourselves as though we were exclusive owners. Probably this is why God keeps some of us in poverty, for no greater temptation could befall us than to find ourselves with riches. In this way He answers our daily prayer, “Lead us not into temptation!”

**PRAYER**—*We thank Thee our heavenly Father, for the new mercies of each returning day, for all that Thou hast given to us, and not less for that which Thou dost withhold. May we be receptive of all things that pertain to life and godliness. AMEN.*

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## THE BLESSING OF THANKFULNESS

*Ephesians 5:20 "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;"*

*Hebrews 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."*

**S**OME PEOPLE seem born with a sullen and feverish temper, and it is very difficult for them to brighten into smiles and songs. But whatever our natural disposition may be, if we belong to Christ it is our bounden duty to cultivate a thankful heart. A melancholy person has a bad effect upon others. It is miserable to have to work with or under a confirmed pessimist. Nothing is right, nothing pleases, there is no word of praise or encouragement. Once, when I was at Aden, I watched a gang of Lascars trans-shipping the mails. It was a pleasure to see them, one after another, carrying the bags cheerily because their leader kept them all the time singing as they did their work. If, instead of finding fault with our employees or servants we would look out for things for which we could commend and thank them, we should probably find a miraculous change in their attitude.

The advantage of joy and gladness is that it is a source of strength to the individual soul, and to all others who come within its range, and commends our Christianity! Sidney Smith says: "I once gave a lady two and twenty recipes against melancholy; one was a bright fire; another, to remember all the pleasant things said to her; another, to keep a box of sugarplums on the chimney-piece, and a kettle simmering on the hob. I thought this mere trifling at the moment, but have in after life discovered how true it is, that these little pleasures often banish melancholy better than more exalted objects." We may interpret the advice of this humorist and essayist by turning into joyous praise all the incidents of our daily life, arising with gratitude and thankfulness from every good and perfect gift to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world is sad, and has to pay her jesters and entertainers; it is a mystery to her that the face of the Christian should be bright and smiling, although the fig-tree does not blossom, and there is no fruit in the vine. Let us count up our treasures and blessings, and we shall find that even in the saddest and loneliest life there is something to turn our sorrow into singing (2 Cor 6:10).

**PRAYER**—*Help us, O Lord, to rejoice always; to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. AMEN.*

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## BURDEN-BEARING

*Galatians 6:2* “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

**I**N THESE words the Apostle is evidently thinking more especially of the trespasses and sins into which men and women fall. We are not to rejoice over their failure, nor talk about it to others, but to consider ourselves, remembering our own liability to fall in the event of temptation. We are to be tender, gentle, and compassionate, helping to bear the burden of temptation, remorse, and shame. There is great comfort for us all in these words, for surely, if our Lord expects us to forgive and restore our brother, we may count on Him to do as much for us!

But sin is not the only burden we are to bear with our brethren. The young man or girl who fails to make good; the business man who meets with sudden reverse; those who suffer bitter disappointment; when faces are averted, and tongues are busily engaged in criticism—let us seek out the one who has consciously disappointed everybody, and help by our strong and tender sympathy. It is like the coming of the good Ananias into Saul’s darkness, with the greeting: “Brother Saul!”

We may help to bear the burden of bereavement—when the husband is suddenly stricken down, or the mother is taken away and there is no one to care for the children, then we may show our practical sympathy and helpfulness. All through His life on earth our Lord sought to carry the burdens of the people, and we are to follow in His steps. Sympathy means *suffering with*; and as we endeavour to enter into the griefs and sorrows of those around us, in proportion to the burden of grief that we carry do we succeed in lightening another’s load. You cannot bear a burden without feeling its pressure; and in bearing the burdens of others, we must be prepared to suffer with them.

This was the law of Christ, the principle of His life, and the precept which He enjoined on His followers to fulfil. Let us remember, also, that in carrying the burdens of others, we often lose our own.

**PRAYER**—*For friends above; for friends still left below;*

*For the rare links invisible between.*

*For sweet hearts tuned to noblest charity;*

*For great hearts toiling in the outer dark;*

*For friendly hands stretched out in time of need,*

*For every gracious thought and word and deed;*

*We thank Thee Lord! AMEN.*

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## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Luke 14:33 "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

**T**HREE TIMES over in this chapter, our Lord says these solemn words: "he cannot be My disciple." There are three conditions of discipleship. First, we must be prepared to put first things first; second, we must be willing to suffer daily crucifixion; third, we must be detached from all things, because attached to Christ. The conditions seem severe, but they must be fulfilled, if we would enter Christ's School.

*Disciple stands for learner.* Our Lord is prepared to teach us the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; but it is useless to enter His class unless we have resolved to do as He says. *Put first things first.* When our Lord uses the word *hate*, He clearly means that the love we are to have for Him is to be so much greater, that comparatively our natural affection will be as if it were hate. No one could have loved His Mother more than our Lord did. In His dying agony His special thought and care was for her, but on three different occasions He put her aside. We are sometimes called to put aside those who are nearest and dearest, if their demands conflict with the claims of Christ.

*The daily cross.* In each of us there is the self-principle, and for each of us there is a perpetual necessity to deny self. Some talk about bearing the cross in a glib fashion, but its true meaning is shame, suffering, and sorrow, which no one realizes but God, and which perhaps strikes deeper down into the roots of our being as we grow older. There is an opportunity in your life, in respect to some person or circumstance, for an ever-deepening appreciation of union with Christ in His death, and for which you must be dally prepared to surrender your own way and will.

*Renunciation.* It may be necessary to surrender all we have for Christ, or it may be that He will ask us to hold all as a steward or trustee for Himself and others. No one can lay down the rule for another. The main point to decide is this: "Am I willing to do what Christ wants me to do; to yield my will for Him to mould it, and my life for Him to work through it?" If so, all else will adjust itself.

**PRAYER**—*O Lord, save me in spite of myself. May I be Thine; wholly Thine, and, at all costs, Thine. In humiliation, in poverty, in self abnegation, Thine. Thine in the way Thou knowest to be most fitting, in order that Thou mightest be now and ever mine. AMEN.*

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## THE JOY OF THE LORD

*Nehemiah 8:10 "Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength."*

**J**OY AND gladness is a very necessary element in human wellbeing. We cannot live our best life if sorrow and depression holds undisputed sway. There are three sources of joy mentioned in this chapter.

*The people understood the Divine Word and profited by it.* Their eagerness to hear, as Ezra opened the Sacred Book, was remarkable (Neh 8:3,5,12,18,10). Let us also delight in God through His Word. Let us not read the Bible as a task, but dwell upon it, until its beauties become woven into our thoughts and lives. It is thus that life becomes purified and enriched. We shall no longer desire base or corrupting things, but God will give us the desires of our heart, and we shall be satisfied, if we delight ourselves in Him.

*They communicated good things to those for whom nothing was prepared* (Neh 8:10-12). There is no cure for sorrow and heartbreak like healing broken hearts. There is no such comfort for ourselves as that which we administer to others. Nehemiah could not have given better advice than when he bade his people share their joys and sweets with those whose lives were bare of comfort and luxuries.

Of course Christianity has within it other sources of joy. Our Saviour gives us His joy, because He reveals the Father to us, makes us to rest in Him, and gives a worthy object for our lives; He makes work light because He has appointed it, sorrow supportable because He shares it, and death desirable because He has opened the door of the Father's Home. In His joy we may participate (John 15:11; John 16:22-24).

*Their obedience.* As soon as they understood the words they heard, they began to put them into practice. No wonder there was joy, for in the keeping of God's commandments there is great reward. It was during the Feast of Tabernacles that our Lord spoke of the Holy Spirit entering the heart to remove its thirst, and to pour forth as rivers to a dying world (John 7:37-39). We cannot do much apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Only through Him can we be right with God; only through Him can we be really glad; only through Him can we pass on joy and comfort to others.

**PRAYER**—*We thank Thee, O God, that we may have fellowship with our Lord in His redemptive purpose. May the gifts which He has received even for the rebellious fill our hearts and lives with joy and gladness. AMEN.*

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## MAKING A COVENANT WITH GOD

*Nehemiah 9:38 "And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it."*

*Hebrews 8:6 "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."*

**I**T IS good for a soul to make a covenant with God. On his twenty-third birthday Milton wrote these memorable words:

*"Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be still in strictest measure even  
To that same lot, however mean or high,  
Toward which Time leads me and the will of Heaven.  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye."*

This was his covenant with God; and through all the years, now in his prime under Cromwell, and again in his lovely old age under Charles II, he never swerved from the path he had selected.

Who can forget those magnificent lines of Wordsworth, which tell how he was returning from a village merrymaking, which had lasted through the night, and lo, the glory of a summer-dawn was breaking over the hills! He describes its beauty, and adds:

*"Vows were made for me,  
That I should be, else sinning greatly,  
A dedicated spirit."*

There are certain principles outlined in these chapters in Nehemiah, which may well be included in our covenant with God: (1) Never to allow anything in private or business life which is not in keeping with the high ideals of the Bible. (2) To set aside a certain proportion of our income and time for the maintenance of the Work and House of God. (3) To observe the Rest-Day.

But a covenant is between two. No resolution of ours is strong enough to keep us true. The most fervent protestations and vows may fail us in the day of trial, and our covenants are permanent only so far as God is party to them. But if Jesus is our Co-Signatory, there will be a safeguard and certainty which all the powers of evil will not be able to overthrow.

Livingstone's covenant with God was that he might heal the open plague-spot of the Arab slave-trade. A covenant like this, in some cases, has been signed with blood. This was D. L. Moody's prayer, as a young man: "Great God, let the world learn, through my life, what Thou canst do by a man wholly devoted to Thee!"

**PRAYER**—*We present to Thee, O God, ourselves to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, our reasonable service. Fulfil through us the good pleasure of Thy goodness, and the work of faith with power. AMEN*

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## PREVAILING POWER

*Acts 4:31 "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."*

**T**HE PRAYER which prevails is that which is initiated by the Holy Spirit. He is the medium of communication between heaven and earth, and reveals to us the thoughts and desires of God, so that we do not ask amiss. Just as the ether will connect up one continent with another, so long as the transmitter and receiver are in accord, so the Holy Spirit is the Medium between ourselves and the glorified Redeemer. Prayer is transmitted from our hearts, borne forward by the Spirit, and registered in the heart of our Lord. It is perhaps better to say that it originates there, is transmitted to us, and sent back from us to Him. We know that by our thought-waves we can help our friends in distant places, so it is surely possible for our thought-waves to reach the Lord Jesus. Oh, that we may be ever in such sympathy and accord with Him that there may be no loss of His thoughts toward us.

There are four kinds of prayer. *The Prayer of Communion and fellowship.* It is like a father asking his little boy why he keeps coming into his study, and discovers that the child has no special reason, but only wants to be with him. So we should not be satisfied with the knowledge of God our Father which ordinary men possess, but have such aptitudes and yearnings which can only be satisfied by fellowship, communion, and adoring love.

*The Prayer of Request.* Perhaps we make more of this at the beginning of life than after. As life goes on we are content to leave ourselves in the wise and tender hands of our Heavenly Father, and it is enough that He cares. We learn to be thankful that some prayers have not been answered, and to realize that God is doing for us ever so much better than we ask or think.

*The Prayer of Intercession.* This is nearest to the mind of Christ. He wears our names on His heart, and ever fives to intercede.

*The Prayer of Conflict.* At times we are called to enter into the Garden, and to bear with Him some of the burden of His conflict for souls against the principalities and powers of evil. At such times there is urgent need to watch and pray!

**PRAYER**—*Warm my cold heart, Lord, I beseech Thee. Take away all that hinders me from giving myself to Thee. Give me grace to obey Thee in all things, and ever to follow Thy gracious leading. AMEN.*

## THE FAR COUNTRY

*Luke 15:17-19 "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."*

**WE** NEED not travel far to reach the far country—the *thought* of sin, the wings of passionate evil desire, the lightning flash of a look, may land us as far from God as the east is from the west. The essence of the far country is selfishness. Notice the stress of the prodigal's emphasis upon himself—"give *me* the portion of goods that falleth to *me*." It is not wrong to make use of and enjoy all the good and perfect gifts with which God strews our life, so long as they are held in thankful recognition of and fellowship with Himself. But when we depart from God, there is *waste*, for we lack the one object which gathers up all our activities for a worthy focus; *riot*, because in the absence of God there is no sufficient corrective or antidote for strong and masterful passion; *want*, because the soul was made for God, and can never be satisfied till it rests in Him.

How foolish it is for a man to disjoin himself from God, and to join himself to a citizen in the land of forgetfulness! The citizens of this world have nothing to give to the starving soul of man, save to send it forth to feed the swine, which stand for the lower desires of our nature. This is the alternative which too many wiseacres suggest: "See life, take your fill of pleasure; fill the passing hours with revelry, amusement, dissipation." But the hunger of the soul cannot be appeased thus. Though husks are good for swine, they wilt not suffice for the sons of men. Like the wise man of old, we cry, "He hath put eternity in my heart—vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" We cannot rest in that which contents others. From the putrid swine-troughs we long for the food which the servants enjoy in our Father's home; from the stagnant pools we thirst for the crystal water.

It is under such circumstances that we come back to ourselves—that we come back to our Father. Let us believe in the love of God our Father, which yearns after us in our absence from Him, which sees us while we are yet a great way off, and will run to welcome us, as we return, with forgiveness and restoration.

**PRAYER**—*Thou knowest, O Lord, what most I require; help me, and out of the treasury of Thy goodness, succour Thou my needy soul. AMEN.*

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## VICTORY OUT OF DEFEAT

*Hosea 2:15 “And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”*

**T**HE VALLEY of Achor is the emblem of defeat, failure, and the fainting heart. Down its long pass the terrified fugitives had fled, bearing to Joshua the story of defeat (Joshua 7). Is there a single life without its valley of Achor? Is there one of us who has not gone up against a foe, which in the distance appeared quite insignificant, but it has proved to be more than a match for all the resolutions with which we had braced ourselves to meet it. Can good come out of such evil, and sweetness from such bitter despair?

The tragic story told in the seventh chapter of Joshua tells how that defeat wrought good. The disaster led to the searching out of the sin of Achan, and the cutting away of gangrene, which, otherwise, would have eaten out the heart of Israel. It led to humiliation, self-examination, prayer and faith, and finally to victory. May we not say as much of our defeats? Certainly, it would have been better had they not cast their shadow on our past; but they have not been without their lessons of priceless value. Each valley of Achor has had its door of Hope. Sin has reigned unto death, but the grace of God has reigned unto eternal life. Through our sins we have learned, as never before, to appreciate God’s forgiveness; through our failures we have been taught our own weakness, and led to magnify the grace which is made perfect in weakness.

Out of such experiences comes the song—“She shall sing as in the days of her youth.” You say that the spring and gladness of life are gone for ever. You insist that you must go mourning all your days, and that life will only bring added grief. But God says that you *shall* sing! Though the summer is gone, there will be a second—an Indian summer, even mellowed than the first. God wants to give you a new revelation of His love, to draw you into His tenderest friendship and fellowship, to lift you into the life of victory and satisfaction. And when all these things come to pass, and they may begin today as you return to Him, you will find that He has put a new song into your mouth, even praise unto our God.

**PRAYER**—*Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for opening doors of Hope in the valley of Achor, for giving us beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning. Put a new song into our mouths today, and let us taste afresh the glad sense of Thy pardoning love. AMEN.*

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## A NEW CREATION

2 Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

**T**RUE CHRISTIANITY is very different from much that we see around us, and which is known as such, and is summed up in orthodoxy of creed, in religious service, in gifts and deeds which cost little or nothing. If Christianity is anything, it is self-giving, even to death. If Christianity means anything we must renounce self as the centre of our life and be willing to sacrifice ourselves for others. Nothing will save the world, which is cursed with the spirit of selfishness, but the repetition and filling-up as far as possible of Christ’s sacrifice by those who profess to be His servants and followers. Selfishness is destructive, but the love that gives itself even to blood and tears is constructive.

But we must be sure that the supreme thought of every word and act must be Christ who died and rose again (2 Cor 5:14,15). Let us not live only for humanity, but for the Son of Man, and as we live for Him the bitter will be sweet and the rough smooth, and we shall find ourselves living for the whole race of men for whom He died.

When this becomes the law of life, we are necessarily a new creation; we live under a new heaven, and walk over a new earth. There is a new aspect upon the most familiar objects of our environment. It is not that they have altered, but that we are changed from self to the spiritual; from the old life of sin to the new life of which the centre is the glorified Saviour. In his book “Grace Abounding,” Bunyan gives expression to this thought of the wonderful change that passes over the face of creation, and the aspect of human life, so soon as the heart is full of the love of God.

Let us notice the emphasis of 2 Cor 5:18. God was *in* Christ when He bore the burden of the world’s sin upon the Cross and that we have been brought to know and love Him as of His grace. It is God also who has given us the right to carry the message of mercy and forgiveness to all within our reach. “He hath given to *us*,” that is, to you and me, “the ministry of reconciliation.” It is for us to go forth into the world, our hearts filled with Christ’s love, telling men and women that this is a redeemed world, and that God is waiting for them to accept His love and mercy. This is the message of Christianity.

**PRAYER**—*O Lord, forgive what I have been; sanctify what I am; and order what I shall be. AMEN.*

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## THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*Acts 2:17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"*

**I**N HIS sermon, on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter quoted the latter part of this prediction by the Prophet (Joel 2:28). Not much is known of this prophet, who probably lived in Judah during the reign of Uzziah. But evidently his anticipation of the outpouring of the Divine Spirit had its fulfilment in those memorable scenes in which the Christian Church was born.

Before the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit had descended only upon the elect souls of the Hebrew race—upon Abraham and Moses, upon Samuel and Elijah, upon Isaiah and others of the prophets. This supreme gift of God was reserved in those days for the spiritual aristocracy of Israel, for the men who were called to eminent office and responsibility, as kings, prophets, or leaders. But Joel said that the time would come when the Holy Spirit who had been reserved for the few, was to be poured out upon the many—the young men and maidens would prophesy; even the slaves and the most despised classes of the community would partake of the Divine experience.

Whatever Pentecost means—it is open to the reception and enjoyment of us *all*, "Every one of you," said St. Peter, "shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." *To you is the promise*, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (Act 2:38-39). Let us take this to heart.

Some years ago, electricity was the perquisite of the few, but now the poorest girl or lad may utilize it and be carded along in the electric car; and it is the boast of our scientists and inventors that they are able to bring the benefits of their discoveries within the reach of the most needy amongst us. And Pentecost resembles this, in that the forces and gifts of the Eternal Spirit are now within the grasp of the feeblest hand which is stretched out to appropriate them. But there must be first the putting away of evil, the emptying of our hearts, the hunger and thirst of the soul for righteousness, before God can give us our share in the Gift which was made once for all to the Church, but must be claimed by each successive believer.

**PRAYER**—*Let Thy Holy Spirit dwell in me continually, and make me Thy temple and sanctuary. AMEN.*

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## THE ROLL OF FAITH

*Hebrews 11:32-33 "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,"*

**F**AITH IS the link between our souls and God. It is the capacity of entering into fellowship with the Eternal Love and Power, so that we are able to do all things with the sense that it is not we who do them, but God in us and with us. Faith is the open door and window towards God. In faith our heart goes out towards God in clinging dependence, and God comes in to strengthen us with His Divine fullness.

In human life, when we trust a man, we draw from him all that he is able to supply; in the Divine life, faith draws upon the resources of God, so that they flow freely into our nature, and the results of our life-work are immensely increased. Faith is possible amid a great deal of ignorance. It is clear that Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah were ignorant of the truth which the Gospel has revealed, and yet we learn that their work was largely due to their faith. Dispensations come and go; the revelation of God grows from less to more; but the attitude of faith is always the same—in the simple woman that touched the hem of Christ's garment, as in St. John the beloved disciple, who had years of training in Christ's School.

Faith achieves very different results. In some, it produces the heroic strength that turns the battle from the gate; in some, the passive suffering that endures the long ordeal of pain. Here, it turns the edge of the sword; there, shuts the mouths of lions. We know how electric force may be applied to all the various machinery of human life. In one place used for the beaming light, in another to drive the motor car, or to flash the message of music and speech from one continent to another. So Faith is able to appropriate God's might for any purpose that lies within the compass of the life-task, whether active or passive. (See Heb 11:32-34, Heb 11:35-39.)

God bears a *witness* to all who trust Him. He never fails us in the hour of need. His response is the echo of our appeal. As soon as the uplifted arm of the tramcar touches the overhead wire, there is the spark, and the immediate entrance of electric power. So God answers faith.

**PRAYER**—*O God, we are full of need, but we have learnt that Thou givest power to the faint and to those that have no right. Change our weakness into Thy strength; our ignorance into Thy wisdom; our changefulness into Thine everlasting constancy. AMEN.*

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## CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD

*John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."*

**G**OD DOES not mean merely benevolent and kind, but genuine and true. It is contrasted with the *robber* and the *hireling*. Up to a certain point the latter may do his work creditably. He will not desert the flock for trifling considerations; he will earn his pay! But when it comes to the supreme test of sacrificing his life, the hireling breaks down and leaves his flock to the peril of the wild beast. There are such shepherds who have taken up the pastoral office as a livelihood.

How different is our Lord—the Good Shepherd—who gave His life for the sheep. Why did He love us so? It will always be a mystery! He seeks those who belong to His fold, but have wandered off into the dark paths of sin. Jesus goes after the one which is lost *until He finds it!* That is the way of the Chief Shepherd.

An alternative rendering brings out the intimate knowledge of Christ of His flock: "I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me; even as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father." None knoweth the Father save the Son, and none the Son save the Father. But in this same intimacy and certainty the Lord Jesus knows each of us. He knows our down-sitting and our uprising; our motives, sometimes misunderstood; the anxieties which overcast our joys; our fears and hopes. He assuages, as no stranger, can, our heart's bitterness. It is good to be known thus, for we need enter into no laboured explanation of ourselves.

Christ seeks those who do not belong to a fold (John 10:16). Probably there will always be many folds, for by the constitution of their minds men are ever disposed to view Truth from different angles. Some do not see this, and hold that if we do not believe just as they do, we have no right to assume that we belong to the flock. They forget that there may be many folds, yet *one flock*. Whatever may be your special fold, the one great question to answer is: Do you hear and obey the Shepherd's voice? If so, you certainly belong to the one flock, and no one shall snatch you out of the Shepherd's hand (John 10:27-28).

**PRAYER**—*O Lamb of God! Who art in the midst of the Throne, but wilt be our Good Shepherd and tread the rough pathway of this worm with each trembling heart. May we be abundantly satisfied with Thy provision and follow in Thy footsteps. AMEN.*

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## OUR LORD'S PRAYER

*John 17:11 "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."*

**T**HIS MARVELLOUS seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel has been called the Incense Altar of the New Testament. It is full of the sweet fragrance of our Lord's intercession for His own. Let us linger over it for a little, that its wondrous depths may unfold before our eyes. It is a window into His inner consciousness, from which we may read some of the thoughts that habitually filled His soul.

*Christ's self-obliviation.* The motives that animated our Lord's earthly ministry were all for the Father's glory. He anticipated, in fact, those great words of the Apostle: "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever" (Rom 11:36). In this we have an example, that we should follow His steps. *We* also must find our fresh springs in Him, as He found them in God; *we* also must be willing to forsake and surrender all things to Him, holding them as His stewards; *we* also must appropriate, moment by moment, His unsearchable wealth; If any glory should ever fall to our lot, we must lay it at His feet, and share it with those entrusted to our charge.

*Christ's self-assertion.* Though our Lord obliterated His own interests, there were many things which were inalienable and of which He could not dispossess Himself. He knew that He had ever been One with God, and ever would be, that the love which had existed between the Fatherland Himself was to be shared by a multitude that no one could number. It is ours to know that we are loved with an unchanging love, that in Christ we are enriched into the measure of God's unchangeable fullness. Oh, why do we not more deeply share the self-obliviation of Christ for others, that we may stand with Him on these glorious heights, beyond the reach of doubt and fear?

*Christ's self-realization.* Listen to His joyous words: "I am glorified in them." "I in them, Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." It is only as He sees His joy glowing in myriads of redeemed souls, and finds His love reproduced in their lives, that He is fulfilled and satisfied.

**PRAYER**—*We thank Thee, our heavenly Father, for the gift of Jesus our Lord to be our Saviour and Friend. Draw us into closer union with Him, that we may know Thee better through Him, and be conformed to Thine image. AMEN.*

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## THE BLAMELESS LIFE

*1 Thessalonians 5:23-24* “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

**H**E WILL do it. There is a tone of confidence in these words which bespeaks the unwavering faith of the Apostle in the faithfulness and power of God to do for these early Christian folk what indeed is needed by all of us; first, to be sanctified wholly, and secondly, to be preserved without blame until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We can hardly realise how much this meant for men and women reared amid the excesses and evils of those days, when religion was another name for unbridled indulgence. Blamelessness of life, the stainless habit of the soul, self-restraint—these were the attributes of the few whose natures seemed cast in a special mould. And yet how strong the assertion of the Apostle that, in the face of the insurmountable difficulties, the God of Peace would do even as much for them.

We must distinguish between *blamelessness* and *faultlessness*. The latter can only be ours when we have passed into the presence of His glory, and are presented faultless before Him with exceeding joy (Jude 1:24). The former, however, is within the reach of each of us, because God has said that He will do it. The Agent of the blameless life is God Himself. None beside could accomplish so marvellous a result, and He does it by condescending to indwell the soul. As His glory filled Solomon’s Temple, so He waits to infill the spirit, soul, and body of those who trust Him.

He will do it as the *God of Peace*. The mightiest forces are the stillest. Who ever heard the day break, or detected the footfall of Spring? Who thinks of listening for the throb of gravitation, or the thud of the forces that redden the grape, golden the corn, and cover the peaches with bloom? So God works in the hearts of those who belong to Him. When we think we are making no progress, He is most at work. The presence of ozone in the air can only be detected by a faint colour on a piece of litmus-paper, and God’s work in the soul is only apparent as the bloom of perfect love is shown in the life.

**PRAYER**—*Almighty God, who lovest us, and to whom are known our yearnings for this blessed life; work Thou within us, quietly, gently, mightily, ridding us of the love of sin, and producing within us that blamelessness of soul which in Thy sight is of priceless value. AMEN.*

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## SPRING IN THE HEART

*Isaiah 35:1 "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."*

**T**H**ERE** ARE three things that make Springtide in the soul. *The sense of God's Presence.* We know that He is near, though the woods are bare, the frost holds the earth in its iron grip, and the wind gathers together the dead leaves; but we feel Him nearer when every hedgerow is clothed with flowers, every bush burns with fire, every tree claps its leafy hands, and every avenue is filled with sweet choristers. *The optimism of an illimitable hope.* Spring is the minstrel of Hope. She takes her lyre and sings of the fair Summer, which is on her way, Life pours through a myriad channels, and shows itself stronger than death for Spring is victorious over Winter, as good shall prove to be over evil. *The exuberance of Love.* Spring is the time of love. The whole creation is attracted by a natural affinity, and love rules in forest and field.

These three elements met in the hearts of the returning exiles, and made the world seem young and fair again. The heart views the outer world in lines borrowed from itself. When life is young and gay, all the echoes ring with joy notes; but when the joy of life is fled, what mockery comes back on us from even the tenderest outward scenes!

For us, the lesson is clear. Cherish the sense of the Presence of God; cultivate an illimitable Hope; be conscious of a Love flowing towards you and from you. Dwell on the loving-kindness and tender mercy that have preceded and followed you all the days of your life, and for you, too, the wilderness and solitary place will be glad. After all, life is not altogether what circumstances make it. They may be everything that heart can wish, and yet the Frost-King may reign within and east its icy mantle over all; whereas there are men and women who have everything adverse in their circumstances, but because they have Spring in their hearts, they find flowers and songs everywhere.

The thirsty land shall become springs of water. You know what thirst means—for human affection, for appreciation, for a word of cheer, for success! He, that thirsty land! But when your heart is full of God you will find it musical with streams, and in the places where dragons lay there will be a greenery of rushes.

**PRAYER**—*Lord Jesus, bring us back from our captivity. Fill our hearts with the sense of Thy presence that they may be transformed and renewed, and filled with the spirit of Heaven. AMEN.*

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## GIRD AND SERVE

*Luke 17:8 “And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?”*

**T**HERE ARE TWO aspects of rural industry—agricultural, ploughing; pastoral, keeping the sheep. Between them they also cover our service to men for Christ’s sake. Some of us are engaged in ploughing. In the short wintry days, when the last leaves are falling from the trees, and the skies are covered by dense and dripping clouds, we go forth with our plough, or bearing precious seed. In loneliness, depression, and fear, we tread athwart the furrows, and return crying: “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” Or we are called to *keep the flock*, seeking the straying, defending the attacked, tenderly nursing the sick and weak. In either of these avocations we often become weary, and in that condition “come in from the field.”

When the spell of hard work is finished, how apt are we to relax! Surely, we think, we may give ourselves to the indulgence of natural and innocent appetite! But that is exactly what our Master does not intend, because He knows the subtle temptation of hours of ease. When we return from our labour, He does not say, “Go and sit down to meat,” but He meets us on the threshold, saying, “Make ready and serve *Me*, till I have eaten and drunken, and *afterward* thou shalt eat and drink.”

From this parable we are surely to infer that our Lord says in effect: “You have been working for *Me*, but I have missed you. You have been so engaged in guiding the plough through the heavy clay, or watching against the lion and bear, that you have forgotten *Me*, and have allowed the hours to pass without speaking to *Me* a single word, or listening for *My* voice.”

When Christ’s work is done, let us turn to our Lord Himself and minister to Him; prepare for Him a feast of faith and love and joy; of heart-melody and voice-music. After this we may eat and drink. He will even gird Himself, and come forth to serve us (John 13:4-14).

**PRAYER**—*We desire, dear Lord, that Thou shouldest be more to us than Thy work. It is not enough for us to plough Thy fields or keep Thy sheep, we want to serve Thee most of all. Help us to keep Thee in view all day, and whatsoever our hands find to do, may we do it in love to Thyself. AMEN.*

## KEPT FOR JESUS CHRIST

*Jude 1 "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:"*

**T**HE WORD *keep* rings like a refrain throughout this letter. It suggests a power which originates in the Divine will and operates through the Holy Spirit's energy within us. Behind our willing and working, our choosing and electing; behind all the influences that are brought to bear upon us, there is a gracious and Divine movement, in virtue of which we are being "*kept for Jesus Christ.*" Our spirit is being kept for His Spirit to tenant it; our soul is being kept that His mind may energize it; our heart is being kept as the bowl of a fountain that His love may flow in and out; our imagination and fancy are being kept, that He may utilize them as He did Bunyan and Rutherford; our body is being kept that He may have the use of its members—a vessel meet for the Master's use! Let us realize how much Christ needs each one of us, and how much we shall miss if we neutralize the very purpose for which we were born and sent into the world.

Do not presume on the Divine keeping power, for there is always the dread possibility of neutralizing it. Keep yourselves therefore in the love of God! Have you the light? Follow the gleam! Are you in mid-current? Do not get turned off into a back eddy! Are you being used by God? Keep under your body and bring it into subjection, lest after having preached to others you may yourself be rejected.

There is One who is able to keep us from stumbling, not only from within, by a garrison, but from without, by sentries which keep watch and ward. We are greater than worlds or suns, greater than time or space, greater than the universe in which we are found, as the child is greater than the royal palace, because the Lord hath need of us. We are "*kept for Jesus Christ*"; let us not be unmindful or ungrateful, for, throughout the ages, this prayer never ceases to rise from the heart of our Redeemer: "I pray, not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

**PRAYER**—*We thank Thee, Heavenly Father, that Thou hast called us into the fellowship of Thy Son. Keep us by Thy mighty power through faith unto Thy salvation and service. AMEN.*

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## THE TIMELESS CROSS

*Hebrews 9:14 "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

**WHAT** IS the meaning of that great word *eternal*? Too often it is employed as though it were synonymous with everlasting. But the two words stand for two very different things. *Everlasting* conveys the idea of the duration of time; whereas *eternal* stands for the quality and character of the existence referred to, which is absolutely timeless. The eternal is that which is not measured by duration, which has no succession of years, which cannot be described as past or future. It is the dateless present, and can only be used, therefore, of God, the AIM, because He lives in the *eternal now*. He never *was* and never *will be* anything that He is not at this present moment, and only that which partakes of His Being can be termed eternal.

When, therefore, we are told that our Lord offered Himself to God through the Eternal Spirit, we must believe that in the Cross there was this element of Timelessness. Our Lord was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). The Cross of Christ has been contemporaneous with all the generations of mankind, and it is this attribute of Timelessness which gives the Cross its perennial power. There is a sense in which Christ is always being wounded by our transgressions, bruised by our iniquities, chastised for our peace, and bearing the stripes that procure our healing.

The Cross of Christ stands with open arms to welcome every sinful soul. The nails are not rusted or blunted by the years that have passed since they were driven into the flesh of Christ our Lord. And as we humble ourselves, and submit our proud and selfish soul-life to be nailed with Him to the Cross, in the power of the Eternal Spirit, out of suffering comes life to those to whom we minister, as we serve the Living God, and we can say with the Apostle: "Death worketh in us, but life in you." (2 Cor 4:10-12).

**PRAYER**—*We bless Thee, Lord Jesus, that Thou didst not withhold Thyself from the Cross. Enable us by the Eternal Spirit to surrender our life to Calvary, that Thy risen life may become manifest in our mortal flesh. AMEN.*

## GIVING GOD PLEASURE

*Psalm 147:11 "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."*

**G**OD TAKES pleasure in our faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him"; but surely the alternative is true, that our faith is precious in His sight, though it be only as the touch of the hem of His garment.

*God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.* The Apostle says that we ought to *walk so as to please God*. How can we walk thus? It is not within our power. But how blessed to know that if only we will work out what He works in, and abandon ourselves to Him, He will perfect us in every good work to do His will (Heb 13:21).

*There are many ways in which we may please God.* Generosity is a sacrifice well-pleasing and acceptable unto God; obedience is well-pleasing unto the Lord; a holy and humble walk with God, like Enoch's, will elicit this testimony, that it has pleased God. Let us not disappoint Him, but "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."

**PRAYER**—*O God, we pray that Thou wouldst make us what Thou wouldst have us become, that we may perfectly please Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name. AMEN.*

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## WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

*Galatians 5:16* “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

**W**HEN WE walk in the spirit we shall be led by Him. In the early stages of life we are apt to be headstrong and impulsive, as Moses when he felled the Egyptian. But as we grow in Christian experience, we wait for the leadings of the Spirit, moving us by His suggestion, impressing on us His will, working within us what afterwards we work out in character and deed. We do not go in front, but follow behind. We are led by the Spirit.

The man or woman who walks in the Spirit has no desire to fulfil the lust of the flesh. The desire for the gratification of natural appetite may be latent in the soul, and may flash through the thoughts, but he does not fulfil it. The desire cannot be prevented, but its fulfilment can certainly be withheld.

When we walk in the Spirit He produces in us the fruit of a holy character. The contrast between the *works* of the fleshly—i.e., the selfish life—and the *fruit* of the Spirit, which is the natural product of His influence, is very marked. In works there is effort, the clatter of machinery, the deafening noise of the factory. But *fruit* is found in the calm, still, regular process of Nature, which is ever producing in her secret laboratory the kindly fruits of the earth. How quiet it all is! There is no voice nor language. It is almost impossible to realise what is being effected by a long summer day of sunshine. The growing of autumn arrives with noiseless footsteps. So it is with the soul that daily walks in the Spirit. There are probably no startling experiences, no marked transitions, nothing special to record in the diary, but every year those who live in close proximity witness a ripening wealth of fruit in the manifestation of love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.

**PRAYER**—*Gracious Lord! May Thy Holy Spirit keep me ever walking in the light of Thy countenance. May He fill my heart with the sense of Thy nearness and loving fellowship. Order my steps in Thy way, and walk with me, that I may do the thing that pleaseth Thee. AMEN.*

## THE MESSAGE OF PENTECOST

*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."*

*Ephesians 5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"*

**I**T IS good to know that there is just as much of the Holy Spirit's presence today, wherever two or three are gathered in Christ's Name, as there was in the upper room at Jerusalem. The difference is that we have not the same receptive attitude. We cannot say of God, who is infinite, that there is more of Him in this place than in that, or at one moment more than another. He is always equally everywhere. But where hearts are prepared, as were those of the disciples, can there be other than Pentecost! We may have the counterpart of all these wonderful experiences that came to them. The Spirit of God may inspire *us*, the fire of Divine love may kindle in *our* hearts, and *we* may obtain a new and marvellous power in speaking to men of the wonderful works of God.

They were all filled with the Spirit, and this is the command laid on us also. Let us ask whether this is our abiding experience, which is not intended for apostles and prophets only, but for the mother with her children, the businessman in his store, the young men and women in the office or shop.

The result of this baptism of spiritual power was very remarkable. Thousands were converted and baptized, and they continued *steadfastly*. Such converts are a gain to any church, and it becomes invested with a Divine attractiveness and adhesiveness.

The teaching of doctrine, breaking of bread, and fellowship in prayer were the beginning of Our Church-ordinances. When young converts are given to any Church, provision should be made for services in which they may take part. The principle of having all things in common seems to have been abandoned by mutual consent. It seemed necessary at the outset that the new converts might be trained in Christian living, but it was evidently liable to abuse, and might have been allured into the ranks of the Church lazy and undesirable impostors. It is probably a much wiser principle to administer our property for God than to give it away. (See Matt 25:20-21; Luke 12:42-44.)

Notice their exuberant joy (Act 2:46-47). It is characteristic of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life, and the result of which is love, joy, peace, etc., which is wonderfully attractive.

**PRAYER**—*We ask of Thee, Heavenly Father, and claim of Thee by faith, this best of all good gifts, Thy Holy Spirit, that He may abide with us for ever, and that the fruits of the Spirit may abound in us. AMEN.*

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## THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

*John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;"*

**T**HE GIFT of the Holy Spirit was due to the intercession of our Lord, and St. Peter refers to it when he says: "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" (Act 2:33). In 1 John 2:1, the word *Comforter* is translated *Advocate*—"One who makes us strong by His presence, as Helper, Guide, and Instructor." Think what this means, to have always beside us, not a vague influence, but a Divine Person, who waits to be our strength in weakness, our peace in trouble, our wisdom in perplexity, our conqueror in temptations, our consoler in sorrow. The Lord meant that the Holy Spirit should be to us all that He Himself had been. This is the meaning of *Another*. There are two Advocates, or two Paracletes. When the One ascended to the glory, the Other descended into the hearts of His disciples. "He abideth *with* you, and shall be in you."

"I will not leave you comfortless: *I will come to you.*" Christ had been speaking of sending Another; now He says, I am coming Myself, so that we learn that He is the indissoluble One with the Holy Spirit, Whom He sends, that the coming of the Spirit is His own coming. Do not look for the Spirit apart from Jesus. As the sun comes in the light, so does Jesus come in the Spirit. When we are filled with the Spirit, we shall not think of Him, but of Jesus to whom He bears witness, and when our hearts are taken up with the Lord, we may know that we have received Him, who is the Gift of gifts.

Open your whole nature to the entrance of the Holy Spirit. Unlock every door, uncurtain every window, that entering He may fill you with the glorious indwelling of the Father and the Son. "I will prepare *a mansion,*" Jesus said; and, "We will make the holy soul *Our Mansion.*"

"*He shall teach you all things.*" His lesson-book is the life and words of our blessed Lord. We may think that we are fully informed of all that He has said, but as we study the Bible, the Holy Spirit brings us back to them again and again, always revealing new light, and undreamt of depths. Never let a day pass without reading some of the words of Jesus under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**PRAYER**—*Thou hast not left us comfortless, O God. May life be renewed in its springs, by the gracious operation of Thy Holy Spirit dwelling within us, and leading us from grace to grace. AMEN.*

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## THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT

*Psalm 143:10 "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."*

**T**EACH ME to do Thy Will, i.e. throw the responsibility of your life back on God. The one important thing for you to be absolutely sure about is that you desire, at all costs, to do God's Will. If you do not so *desire*, at least you must be willing to be made willing. Cast on God this burden of making you willing, and believe that He undertakes it. His people shall be made willing in the day of His power. When this point is settled, then God by His Holy Spirit will sooner or later teach you what He wants to be done, and enable you to do it. Like Samuel, if you say: Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth, you will hear the Voice behind you saying, This is the way, walk in it; this must be said, say it; this needs to be done, do it; and as you endeavour to obey the gentle promptings of the Spirit, you will discover that adequate strength and grace are being poured into your soul.

"Thy Spirit is good." There is our only hope. If it were not for the infinite goodness, the patient gentleness, the loving forbearance of the Holy Spirit, we could have no chance, for nothing but infinite Goodness could bear with our frailties and backslidings, our lapses into coldness and indifference, our perverseness and obstinacy. But because God's Spirit is good, we may reckon on Him pervading us with His holy influence till our evil nature is overcome by His goodness, and we also in our measure become good. It is said of Barnabas that he was a "good man," because he was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.

"Lead me." The Psalmist's prayer is—Teach me, lead me, quicken me. Let us make this prayer our own. What better guarantee of being led aright than for us to yield ourselves to our gentle gracious Guide. We are like little children that require to be led, as the mother or nurse takes the child by the hand and leads him to the schoolhouse, and fetches him again. Some of us are blind, and need a kindly hand to guide us as we grope in the dark. Let us walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, and be very sensitive to the Spirit. Then we shall instinctively know God's Will, and do it.

**PRAYER**—*I need a hand to lead me through the darkness,  
For I am weak and helpless as a child;  
And if alone I have to take my journey,  
My feet will stumble on the mountains wild. AMEN.*

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## WITNESS-BEARING FOR CHRIST

*Acts 1:8 "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

**A**LL MACHINERY needs driving-power. A motorcar may be bright and new, the wheels tired with rubber, and it may contain the latest contrivances for speed and comfort, but it will not move an inch until the driving-power is applied. So it is with the Gospel message. Christ died and rose again, and the work of redemption was finished. His disciples were appointed to carry the tidings of salvation to the world of men, but they could do nothing until they received the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a serious question for each of us—Have I received the Holy Spirit, to be in me the source of power? (Acts 19:2). If not, is it to be wondered at that we are weak, and our testimony for Christ faltering?

Notice the circles of our life: witnesses in Jerusalem—our home; in Judaea—the society in which we mingle and work; in Samaria—the city or town or village in which we live; the uttermost part of the earth, which represents the claim of the heathen world upon us all. For each of these we have some responsibility. Let us begin at Jerusalem, in our home, and God will lead us on step by step to the great world beyond. Alas, there are many who are eager enough for the "uttermost parts," while they neglect Jerusalem, and ignore the claims of Judaea!

God wants *witnesses*. A witness is not expected to reason or argue, but simply to state what he saw or heard, and to give facts. We are required to tell people what we have found Jesus to be to ourselves—to say what we have known and tasted and handled of the Word of Life (1 John 1:1-3). Our witness-box may be the shop in which we are employed, or the position in life where we are daily called to rub shoulders with those who know not Christ. Men cannot see Him, unless they see Him in us. As the moon reflects the sun during the dark hours of the night, so the Church of Christ bears witness to her unseen Lord. In every emergency, let us lift our hearts to Christ, and ask that His Holy Spirit may enable us to be true witnesses for His glory.

**PRAYER—** *My gracious Master and my God,  
Assist me to proclaim  
And spread through all the earth abroad  
The honours of Thy Name. AMEN.*

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—LOVE!

*1 Corinthians 13:13 "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."*

**L**ET US lay the emphasis on the word *fruit*, as contrasted with the *works* of the law. In work there is effort, strain, the sweat of the brow, and straining of the muscles; but fruit comes easily and naturally by the overflow of the sap rising from the root to bough and bud'. So our Christian life should be the exuberance of the heart in which Christ dwells. The Apostle Paul prayed that Christ might dwell in the heart of his converts, that they might be rooted and grounded in love. It is only when the Holy Spirit fills us to the overflow that we shall abound in love to all men.

We must distinguish between *love* and *the emotion of love*. The former is always possible, though not always and immediately the latter. Our Lord repeating the ancient words of the Pentateuch, taught us that we may love God with our mind and strength, as well as with our hearts. We all know that the mind and strength are governed not by our emotions, but by our wills. We can love, therefore, by determining to put our thought and energies at the service of another for the sake of God; and we shall find our emotions kindle into a sacred glow of conscious affection.

In the chapter from which our text is taken, St. Paul distinguishes between the Gifts of the Church and Love. After passing them in review he comes to the conclusion that all of them, without Love as their heart and inspiration, are worth nothing.

The greatest word in the world is the unfathomable phrase, "God is Love." You can no more define the essence of love than you can define the essence of God, but you can describe its effects and fruits. I give Dr. Weymouth's translation: "Love is patient and kind, knows neither envy nor jealousy; is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent; she is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance."

We ought to take each of these clauses, and ponder whether our lives are realizing these high ideals. May God send us a baptism of such love!

**PRAYER**—*O Lord, my love is like some feebly glimmering spark; I would that it were as a hot flame. Kindle it by the breath of Thy Holy Spirit, till Thy love constraineth me. AMEN.*

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## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—JOY

*John 15:11* “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

**T**HE JOY is a spontaneous thing. The joy of a little child, like the carol of the lark, arises naturally and easily when certain conditions are fulfilled, so if we would experience the joy of Christ we must realize the conditions He lays down. If we are grafted into the true Vine, there is nothing to check the inflow of His love to us, if we do as He tells us, and forbear doing what He forbids—then Joy will come to us as a flood.

“*Abide in Me*”—it is inferred, of course, that we are *in* Christ. It was not always so. Once we were outside, separate from Christ, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” We were shoots in the wild vine, partaking of its nature, involved in its curse, threatened by the axe which lay at its roots. But all this is altered now. The Father, who is the Husbandman, of His abundant grace and mercy, has taken us out of the wild vine, and grafted us into the true vine, and we have become one with Christ. When, therefore, we are told to abide or remain, it is only necessary that we should stay where He placed us. You are in a lift until you step out of it; you are on a certain road until you take a turning to the right or left, although you may be too engrossed in converse with a friend to think of the road; so amid the pressure of duties and care, you remain *in* Christ unless you consciously, by sin or unbelief, thrust yourself away from the light of His face into the darkness. When, therefore, the temptation arises to leave the words of Christ for the maxims of the world, resist it and you will still remain in Him. Whenever you are tempted to leave the narrow way of His commandments to follow the desires of your own heart, reckon yourself dead to them, and you will remain; whenever you are tempted to forsake Christ’s love for jealousy, envy, hatred, resist these impulses and say, “I elect to remain in the love of God.”

Thus abiding in Him you will learn to know His mind, and will naturally ask those things which His love is only too willing to grant. “*Ye shall ask what ye will.*” We must remove any hindrances from the indwelling of Christ, then His love will break out into song, and we shall share in His joy. It will remain in us, and our capacity for joy will be fulfilled.

**PRAYER**—*O Thou who art the True Vine, I desire to abide in Thee, that I may bear abundant fruit for Thy glory, and my life be full of Thy joy. AMEN.*

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## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT PEACE

*John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

**B**EING JUSTIFIED by faith in His blood we have peace! What peace can there be so long as our guilty conscience dreads each footstep, lest it be for its arrest. Though some rich evildoer is surrounded by the trappings of wealth and state, what is their value, when at any moment he fears that the story of his crime may get out. The first condition of peace is to see your sin borne by Christ in His own Body-on the Cross.

The second condition is to keep His words, His commandments. See in every pressing duty your Master's call. Do everything in His name and for His glory. This is the way that Jesus lived. He came down, not to do His own will, but the Father's; and in every incident, as it is offered, He felt that God's bell was ringing to some new opportunity of service. Sometimes you must just bear His will, at others you must fulfil it. Say to Him each day: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." The rule of duty is changed into the service of love, that counts no sacrifice too great, no alabaster box too costly.

Peace for the troubled heart! Jesus is not unmindful of your human affections and anxieties. Does He expect you to be absorbed with His interests, and will He not look after yours? He knows where your loved ones are, their names, their needs, their sorrows. He will do exceeding abundantly for them. Did not David have the lame Mephibosheth to his table, because he was Jonathan's son; did not the Lord heal Peter's wife's mother out of love for Peter? Hand over to Christ all that makes you anxious, both for yourself and others. Transmit and commit! Hand over, and then hands off! Let the peace of Christ keep heart and mind as a sentry, and rule within as the sole judge and arbiter of thought and action. If any thought would intrude, which would break in upon our peace, let it be arrested on the threshold; if any passion would arise that threatens the harmony of our inner household, let the solution be the Peace of Christ. "My peace," He said, i.e., the peace that kept and ruled Him. He calls us to share it, not hereafter only, but here and now. It is His legacy guaranteed to us, by His blood, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**PRAYER**—*O Lord, may I not be satisfied with refraining from sin; but as I abide in Thee, may I bear the fruit of the Spirit, which are love, joy, and peace, to Thy honour and glory. AMEN.*

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## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT— LONGSUFFERING

*1 Peter 4:13,16 "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. ... Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."*

**T**HE LONG-SUFFERING silence of our Lord was the marvel of His foes. "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb," He opened not His mouth. Before the high priests, He held His peace. To Pilate He gave no answer. Amid the challenge and reproach of the Cross, He answered nothing, save in benediction and prayer. "When He was reviled He did not answer with reviling; when He suffered, He uttered no threats, but left His wrongs in the hands of the righteous Judge."

Surely this has been His habit through the centuries. In every child suffering through drunken parents, in every martyr burnt at the stake, in every innocent sufferer before high-handed oppression, He has been led as a lamb to the slaughter, but how silent He is! Man may murder His servants and blaspheme His name, but He says never a word! This is the purport of one of those strange announcements which make the Book of Revelation so remarkable. "When He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half-an-hour." The songs of heaven are hushed; the multitude which cannot be numbered listens to the groans and appeals of their unhelped brethren; the angels stay their anthems, and seem intent on the tragedies about to be described (Rev 8:1). But there does not appear to be any help.

But remember that silence does not imply indifference. At the very time that our Lord was silent before His judges, He was bearing the sin of the world. When the silence is proclaimed in Heaven, we find that the prayers of the saints are being presented on the throne—prayers of intercession, mingled with much incense of Christ's merit.

It is in this spirit that we are to suffer. We are to conceal our anguish as stoics. No suffering rightly borne is in vain, but in some little way, which you may not understand, you are helping Christ in His redemptive work. Be calm, and quiet, and glad! Pray for those who spitefully use you, and ask that your sufferings, rightly borne, may lead to their conversion, as Stephen's did in the case of Saul.

**PRAYER**—*Heavenly Father, of Thine infinite mercy, give me such assurance of Thy protection amid the troubles and tumults of this mortal life, that I may be preserved in quietness of spirit and in inward peace. AMEN.*

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## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—GENTLENESS

2 Timothy 2:24 *“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,”*

**I**T IS not easy to cultivate this fruit of the Spirit because it has many counterfeits. Some people are naturally easy-going, devoid of energy and ambition, at heart cowardly, or in spirit mean. Many of us are characterized by a moral weakness and decrepitude that make it easy for us to yield rather than contest in the physical or intellectual arena.

But in gentleness there must be the consciousness of a considerable reserve of force. The gentleness of God is combined with omnipotence. The movements of creation, in which there is neither voice nor language, prove the infinite forces which are at work. When a boy is trying to lift or carry a heavy beam, as likely as not there will be a great crash when he reaches the end of his task, and puts it on the ground. His strength is so nearly exhausted that he is only too glad to get rid of his burden, anyhow, and at any cost. But if a strong man shoulders the same burden, and carries it for the same distance, he puts it down *gently*, because he has not taxed his strength and has plenty left.

It is the prerogative of great strength to be gentle. Always remember that you are linked with the Infinite God, and that all things are possible to you. There must also be infinite pity. We must be tolerant and pitiful to those who abuse us, or have been embittered by disappointment, or have been ill-used. It must be our aim to make allowances for such, and always to be sweetly reasonable towards any brusqueness, rudeness and bad manners of their behaviour. Let us be willing to admit that much is due to congenital moroseness. Therefore, we bear gently with the erring, and with those who are out of the way, because we also are encompassed with infirmity.

It is necessary also that there should be a deep humility. Thomas Kempis says: “If thou wilt be borne with, bear also with another. Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, what sort soever they be: for that thyself also hast many failings which must be borne by others.” Our resentment against others should be always tempered by our remembrance of our own sins. So shall we be God’s own gentlefolk.

**PRAYER**—*O God, our behaviour has not manifested all the fruit of the Spirit, or been full of the graciousness and gentleness of Christ. Forgive us, and enable us so to live that His beauty may be on our faces, the tone of His voice in our speech, the gentleness of His tread in our steps, the unselfishness of His deeds in our hands. AMEN.*

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## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—GOODNESS

*Acts 11:24 "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."*

**G**OODNESS IS the radiance or outshining of a pure and happy Christian soul. It is quick to see and magnify whatever is good in others, as Barnabas was: It is incapable of jealousy or envy, else he would never have gone to Tarsus to seek Saul. The goodness of this man was evinced in his generous donation of the proceeds of his patrimony, and in the ministry of consolation which he exercised among the disciples.

Such goodness is not natural to us. It is the fruit of our union with the true Vine, whose sap may be compared to the Holy Spirit. Before we can be the good man, for whom some would even dare to die, we must become grafted into Christ, that His goodness may make its way through our sour dispositions.

The most difficult thing of all is to continue to manifest this goodness when our lives are united, as Abigail's was, to that of a churl (1 Sam 25:3). She was a beautiful woman, of good understanding, and full of tact. Her speech, which arrested David when about to avenge himself on Nabal, is a model of good sense. He heartily thanked her for it, as having saved him from a hasty deed, which would have filled his afterlife with regret. Nabal was a churl, evil in his doings, and as his servants said, "such a son of Belial, that none could speak to him"—a man who did not know what it was to be merry. Nabal was his name and his nature! What a constant pain it must have been to this noble woman to be united to such a churl! That is a test of real goodness; it is a triumph of God's grace.

Guard against stinginess and niggardliness. Give liberally and generously to every good cause. Be very careful of going back on your first intentions, which in the matter of giving are probably more trustworthy than the proverbial afterthoughts. Be always careful to dwell on and extol whatever you find admirable and noble in the character of others.

It was said of Charles Kingsley: "No fatigue was too great to make him forget the courtesy of less wearied moments, no business too engrossing to deprive him of his readiness to show kindness and sympathy. To school himself to this code of unflinching high and noble living was truly one of the great works of his life."

**PRAYER**—*Teach us to exert a wholesome gracious influence on those with whom we come in contact, diffusing in every look and gesture the sweet savour of Christ, and shedding in every act the genial light caught from His face. May the world be really better because we are living in it today. AMEN.*

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—FAITH

*Hebrews 10:23 “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)”*

**F**AITH IS an attribute of the heart, rather than of the head. It is largely intuitive in its first promptings. It is impossible to argue men into faith. Do not think, discuss, or reason too much about Faith, or you will miss it. It is like Love in this, that when you turn the dissecting knife on it for the purpose of analysis, its spirit and life vanish, leaving only the faded relics of what was once a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. If, however, turning from Faith to any object which is worthy of it, you concentrate heart and mind there, almost unconsciously Faith will have arisen and thriven to maturity.

Faith has two kinds of objective—first a person, and secondly a statement. When we are drawn powerfully towards a person, so as to feel able to entrust our soul, our destiny, our most precious possessions to His care, with an inward feeling of tranquillity and certainty that all is safe with Him, and that He will do better for us than we could do for ourselves—*that is faith.*

We may be attracted by a statement, which appeals to our moral sense; it is consistent with the decisions of our conscience; or perhaps, as the utterance of One in whom we repose utter confidence, it commends itself to us for His sake. We accept that statement; we rest on it. We believe that what it attests as fact either did happen or will happen. We are as sure of it as though we have been able to attest it by our senses of sight, hearing, or touch. *That also is faith.* “Faith is a well grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of the unseen” (Heb 11:1. Weymouth).

We must indicate a difference between this faith and “the faith once delivered to the saints.” The former is the heart that accepts, and the hand that reaches out to obtain; the latter is the body of *Truth* to be accepted.

Out of faith comes faithfulness. Faith is your trust in another; faithfulness is your worthiness to be trusted. A faithful soul, one that can be absolutely relied upon, is of great price. Nothing so quickens our faith as to meditate on God’s absolute trustworthiness. “Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.”

**PRAYER**—*Give us faith in Thy love that never wearies or faints. Whatever else we doubt, may we never question the perfectness of Thy lovingkindness. Fulfil in US the good pleasure of Thy will, and the work of faith with power. AMEN.*

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—MEEKNESS

*Ephesians 4:1-2* “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;”

**T**HE MEEK man, according to Luther, is the sweet-tempered man. Meekness and lowliness are the two aspects of the same disposition, the one toward man, the other toward God. “Blessed are the meek,” said our Lord, “for they shall inherit the earth.” It is profoundly true, because to the meek and chastened, the sweet and tender spirit, there is an unfolding of the hidden beauty of the world which is withheld from the arrogant and proud. Here is a millionaire who has just purchased a beautiful and valuable picture, which he exhibits to all his friends, taking great care to tell them the price he has paid. To him it is written all over the canvas, “This picture cost me ten thousand pounds!” Does he really possess or inherit its beauty? In his employ is a girl with culture and keen artistic sense. Whenever she gets the chance she enters the room in order to absorb the inspiration of the picture into her soul. Does not *she* really own it? So it is that the meek inherit all that is good and beautiful. All is theirs, since they are God’s.

One of the most exquisite gems in the Psalter is that beginning “Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty” (Psa 131:1). The writer describes himself as a weaned child, which at first works itself into a passion because of the change in its diet; but afterwards becomes soothed and quieted. This is the symbol of the meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great Price.

To acquire this meekness of spirit, ask the Holy Spirit that He would keep your proud and vainglorious nature nailed to the Cross. Next, we must believe that the meek and lowly Jesus is in our hearts, and we must ask Him to live, think, and speak through us. Lastly, look to the Holy Spirit for His sacred fire to bum out all that is covetous, envious, proud, angry and malicious within our hearts, for these are the five elements of hell. Let us always take the low seat, confessing that we are not worthy to loose the shoe-latchet of our brethren.

**PRAYER**—*Enable us, we beseech Thee, O God, to walk as Thy dear children. May all uncleanness, foolish talking, covetousness, bitterness, wrath and anger be put away from us, with all malice Make us meek, as our Saviour was. Deliver us from the spirit of retaliation. May we make peace, healing the strife and allaying the irritation of men, for Thy Name’s sake. AMEN.*

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT— SELF-CONTROL

*1 Corinthians 9:25 "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."*

**I**N HIS early life Paul must have been keen on sports! He uses the phrases for the gymnast, the boxer, and the racer. He had probably stood, many times, watching the great games, which were held in various parts of the Greek-speaking world. He knew the long and arduous training through which competitors had to pass.

Paul was running a race for an imperishable wreath. He had no doubt as to his goal, and therefore did not run uncertainly. He went straight as an arrow to its mark, and his mark was to win souls for Christ. To gain some, to save some, was his passion (1 Cor 9:22). He needed to discipline himself, putting aside much that was innocent in itself, and which others could enjoy without reproach (Rom 14:13-21). The Apostle was also engaged in a boxing-match, his own body being the antagonist. He knew that spiritual power existed for his appropriation in Christ, but to have it he must be a spiritual man, and to be that necessitated the subdual of his fleshly appetites.

We must exercise "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control." It is best to hand over the whole of our nature to the Master, and ask Him to direct, control, suggest each day whatever we think, or do, or say. It is infinitely happier to be Christ-controlled than self-controlled. Happy are they who from the earliest are able to subordinate the delights of sense, however innocent, to some high quest of the spirit. The soldier has to forfeit many things which are legitimate for the civilian, because he must be able to march rapidly from place to place. He has to forego the use of many comforts, but he is compensated if his name is placed on the honours list. The husbandman has to submit to hardships of weather, and to encounter difficulties and discomforts which do not occur in the lives of others; but there is no other way if he is to procure the fruits of his toil. These deny themselves for lower considerations, but we have an infinitely higher object in view; but by so much the more should we lay aside every weight. Never forget Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, your great Exemplar and Life-giver—the source of all spiritual power.

**PRAYER**—*Heavenly Father, engraft Thy Son, Jesus Christ my Lord, inwardly in my heart, that I may bring forth the fruit of holy living, to the honour and praise of Thy Name. AMEN.*

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## JESUS, THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

*1 Corinthians 15:45 "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."*

**A**RE YOU, my friend, in the first Adam or the second? It is a vital question, and it would well repay you to put aside all else in order to give a considered answer to this question. You ask for the fundamental difference between the first Adam and the second. The Apostle states it clearly in this chapter from which our text is taken. The contrast between the two is the *soul*-life of the first and the *Spirit*-life of the second. This is the distinction which Jesus made at the beginning of His ministry, and it pervades the New Testament. The sphere of Christianity is the realm of the spirit. Its object is to lift man from the soul-level to the spirit-level.

The soul is the centre of our personality. It is *you*, or *I*, or any other *person!* From it we look on two worlds. To the material world we are related by the organs of touch, sight, smell, taste and hearing. To the eternal world we are related by the organs of the spirit, which are probably identical with the lower. We have the option of descending by the spiral staircase *downward* to materialism, or of ascending *upward* to fellowship with God. Alas, that too often we descend to the lure of the savoury pottage, instead of climbing the ladder which reaches to Heaven.

It is clear that we must die to the self-life, to the promptings, suggestions and solicitations of the *ego*, which is entrenched in the soul. Self is the root of our alienation from the Life of God. All the evils of fallen angels and man have their birth in the pride of self. On the other hand, all the blessedness of the heavenly life is within our reach, when the self-life is nailed to the Cross of Jesus.

How is this self-life to be brought to death? Only by our identification with the Cross on which Jesus died. We were nailed there in the purpose of God, and we must accept that position and extract its help by a living faith. It was by the Eternal Spirit that Jesus offered Himself unto God, and it is by that same Spirit that we, too, may say: "I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There must be an exchange of lives, from the self-life to the life of the Crucified and Ascended Saviour, communicated by the Holy Spirit.

**PRAYER**—*Behold, O Lord, I am Thy servant, prepared for all things; for I desire not to live unto myself, but unto Thee; and Oh, that I could do it worthily and perfectly! AMEN.*

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## DAILY RENEWAL

*Romans 7:19-25 "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."*

**T**HIS SEVENTH chapter of Romans reflects, as in a mirror, the inward conflict of the Christian soul, who has not yet learned to appropriate the full power of the Holy Spirit. It will be noticed that the personal pronoun "I" occurs frequently, while there is no word of the Holy Spirit who lusts or strives against the flesh. It is the endeavour of a man to keep pure and holy in the energy of his own resolutions, and by the putting forth of his own power and will. But as Satan cannot cast out Satan, so the will of man is unable to exercise its own evil.

We turn, thankfully, therefore to the eighth chapter, which is as full of the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome evil, as the seventh is full of human endeavour. It is only when we learn to hand over our inner self to the Spirit of God that we can become more than conquerors through Him that loved us. As long as the conflict is in our own strength, there is nothing for it but to experience the up and down, fickle and faulty rife, which the Apostle describes so graphically.

How is it that the soul of man is so full of evil, and that it is unable to deliver itself by its resolutions which lack the necessary dynamic force, we cannot tell. But we find this "law of sin and death warring in our members and bringing us into captivity." It is a wretched experience, indeed, when we find the current running so swiftly against us, and carrying us down in spite of our strenuous desire to stem and conquer it. Who has not, again and again, experienced failure after the most earnest desire to do right? The bitterness of our origin overcomes the better choice, of which in our noblest moments we are conscious.

It is a great comfort to know that the Spirit of God is prepared to renew our inward man day by day (2 Cor 4:16), and to make us free from the law of sin and death. It is the daily renewal that we need. Day by day, and hour by hour, it is necessary to seek by faith a fresh infusion of the power of the Holy Spirit, that we may be overcomers.

**PRAYER**—*O God, may we live very near to Thee today, not in the energy of our own resolution, but by the anointing and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who shall teach us to abide in Christ. If our wayward hearts tend to stray, recall us before we have gone too far. AMEN.*

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## THE SECRET OF THE INNER WAY

*Proverbs 2:20 "That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous."*

**T**HIS CHAPTER abounds in references to the *Way* and *Path*. *Walk* occurs three times, *paths* seven, and *ways* five. Here we read of the way or path by which good and righteous men have preceded us. The old Christian mystics were fond of talking of the inward way and its various stages. They said that God alone was the centre and satisfaction of the human soul, that we must advance along the pathway traversed by holy souls before us until we have realised the motto of Monica: "Life in God and union there."

True knowledge of God and union with Him are only to be attained by those who will not shrink before the perils and steepness of the strait gate and narrow way. It is not necessary to leave the body to reach the inner secret of God. The path may be trodden on this side of the grave. Stony and steep it may be, but when it climbs the crest, and the whole glory of the heavens is in view, the soul is satisfied. In the attainment of true wisdom God is willing, yea, eager to give, but we must be sincere and earnest in our desire to obtain (Pro 2:1-9). Notice the many words that are employed to stir up our search. Receive! Hide! Incline the ear and apply the heart! The treasures of God, like those of the mine, do not lie on the surface, but no labour is more profitable. Our Heavenly Father not only gives good things to them that ask Him, but He becomes our Shield and Buckler, our Protector and Guide (Prov 2:7-8).

These are the stages of the inner Way, which the saints have trodden before us: *Detachment* from the ambitions, passions and sins of nature; *Attachment*, i.e., the attitude of fellowship with Christ; *Illumination*, which reveals to the soul its unworthiness; *Union with God*. This is the experience of few, but they who have described it remind us that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, what God's Spirit reveals to those who love and wait for Him. But you must be prepared to sacrifice all. He who seeks diamonds, or gold, will face hardships and relinquish much that other men hold dear, that he may prosecute his quest. Not otherwise must it be with those who would understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

**PRAYER**—*Make us more conscious, O Lord, we beseech Thee, of the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit: may He witness within us that in spite of our sin we are still Thy children: may He enable us to mortify the deeds of the body, and to reckon ourselves dead to the solicitations of the flesh. AMEN.*

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## ABOUNDING IN THIS GRACE ALSO

2 Corinthians 8:12 *“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”*

**I**F ST. PAUL were living today he would surely be in great request to preach the special sermons for the gathering of funds to maintain religious and charitable work. Judging by this chapter, he must have been inimitable in extracting gifts for all purposes from God’s people. He stirs the Corinthians up by reminding them of the liberality of the churches in Macedonia, notwithstanding their deep poverty. He reminds them that as they abound in so many gifts and graces, they must see to it that they are not lacking “in this grace also” (2 Cor 8:7). He quotes the example of our blessed Lord, and reminds them that they owe everything to His condescension. He suggests that the one thing God wants is willingness to give, and that He accepts the desire of the poor man to give all with as much delight as the vast possessions of the millionaire (Mark 12:41-44).

What a wonderful text is the ninth verse! George Herbert, in one of his poems, depicts our Lord stripping Himself as He descended from the Throne to the manger-bed of Bethlehem. He put off His tiara, and its jewels became the milky way; He laid aside His sceptre, and it became the lightning flash; He put off His girdle, and it became the rainbow; He doffed the robes of His royalty, and they became the sunset clouds! But how wonderful it is to think that the Lord of Glory became so poor that He had no where to lay His head, that He was often without food and always dependent upon charity.

But because He was poor, we are made rich; because He was homeless He has opened to us the “many mansions”; because He was stripped of all we may wear the white robes, and sit with Him in heavenly places. He calls to each one of us to minister to Himself in caring for the least of His brethren. We can only really help people when we impoverish ourselves, but in the end we are not losers. God will be in no man’s debt. What we keep we lose; what we give is like scattered seed that comes back in bountiful harvests. Lay your heart against the heart of Christ, until you become filled with His love and spirit, and are content to call nothing your own. Be the steward of everything you possess for His glory and the help of others.

**PRAYER**—*O God, we have nothing worth our giving, or Thy receiving; our best was given to us by Thee. Graciously accept us and all that we have. Whatever Thou hast given, enable us to count it a stewardship for others. AMEN.*

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## BEARING THE CROSS

*Matthew 10:38 "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."*

**H**OW WONDERFUL it is that in the thirty-seventh verse of this chapter, our Lord faces the whole race of men, and claims their supreme love, asking that they should love Him more than their dearest from whom they have derived, or to whom they have given life. He does not attempt to justify His demand, and the only consideration that makes His claim reasonable is that He is the Son of God, who died for us on the Cross, and that each one of us has a separate place in His Divine-human love. What a rebuke lies in the word: "is not worthy of Me." Surely in this sense there is no one of us worthy of our Divine Lord.

Christ asks for the surrender not of the heart only, but of the life. Self-denial for His sake is the badge of the disciple. It is a strange procession of cross-hearers, following the Crucified. Each man has his own special form of self-denial, which is required of him, and it must be undertaken willingly.

Of course, it must be understood that the confession to which Christ summons us does not consist in a single utterance of the lips; it is the constant acknowledgment of Him by voice and life, maintained to the end, and the context makes it clear that this will have to be maintained in the face of opposition, and that often in its bitterest form—the opposition of the home. Many of us would find it easier to face outward persecution and the tyrant's frown, than to stand against the light banter, the sneers and suspicions, the cruel words of those who live within the home. In every age there have been those who have had to stand absolutely alone for Christ, not hating their dear ones, but being hated by them because of their allegiance to Christ, and destined to find the most dutiful love and care repaid by stony indifference or active persecution. Nothing is harder to bear, and there is no other course for us but to silence the enemy and the avenger by patient continuance in well-doing, always believing that God is faithful, and that He will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able to bear.

**PRAYER**—*Be the corrective, the complement, of every trouble and need through which we may be called to pass; if we suffer for Christ, may we not threaten; if we are spoken against, may we answer with blessing; if we are tried by the fiery trial, may we rejoice; if we are lonely and desolate, may the Holy Spirit make Jesus real to us. AMEN.*

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## STILLING LIFE'S STORMS

*Psalm 107:29-30 "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."*

**T**HIS PSALM contains five wonderful pictures of life. First, we see the travellers who have lost their way (Psa 107:4-9); next, prisoners and captives who sit in darkness (Psa 107:10-16); then we see a sickroom (Psa 107:17-22); next, a terrific storm at sea (Psa 107:23-32); and finally, the lovely picture of a desert land being turned into a fertile landscape (Psa 107:33-38). The refrain, calling upon men to praise the Lord for His goodness, is repeated four times, and the Psalm closes with the fervent thought that all who are wise will give heed to the various dealings of God, as shown in these Acts of His loving-kindness.

In all lives there are periods of tumult and storm. We are whirled about by angry billows, and it seems as though we shall never reach the harbour of peace and rest. Some give themselves up to such experiences as a fate which they cannot avoid, or attempt to drown their fears and dull their senses to suffering and danger. But faith cleaves its way through the murky mists and driving cloud-wrack, and establishes a sure connection with the throne of the Eternal Father. This is what the New Testament calls the anchorage of the soul, and however severe the storm that sweeps over the earth, the soul that shelters there is safe. "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses."

At this moment you may be passing through a storm of outward trouble. Wave after wave beats upon you, as one calamity is followed by another, until it seems as though the tittle barque of your life must be overwhelmed. Look up to God and cry to Him. He sees you, and will not allow you to be engulfed.

Or you may be experiencing inward sorrow. Your affections have been misplaced; the one you love has deceived and failed you, and the sky is now dark and stormy. The one resort of the soul when it is hard driven, is to look up to Him who holds the winds in His fist, the waters in the hollow of His hand, and who cannot forget or forsake those who cry to Him.

**PRAYER**—*O God, we will praise Thy Name for Thy goodness to us, and for Thy wonderful works to the children of men. May Thy gentle voice hush our fears, and still life's storms into a great calm. AMEN.*

## RABBONI—MY MASTER

*John 20:11,16 "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, ... Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."*

**W**HEN THE disciples had returned to their home, Mary stood at the door of the sepulchre, weeping. Then she took one more look at the place where He had lain. Thus still we look down into the grave of ordinances, of past emotions, of old and sacred memories, seeking for the Redeemer. The angel-guards sought in vain to comfort her; but what could they do for her, who longed to hear His Voice only?

The sense of a Presence behind—or perhaps, as St. Chrysostom finely suggests, because of an expression of love and awe that passed over the angels' faces—led her to turn herself, and she saw One standing there whom she supposed to be the gardener. Then He called her by the old familiar name, with the same intonation of voice, and she knew that it was her Lord. The knowledge that He was there, to Whom she owed all, thrilled her and she answered in the country tongue they both knew so well, "Rabboni!"

Does not this suggest that in that new life, which lies beyond, we shall hear again the voices speak with which we have been familiar? "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, and shall have fellowship again with those whom we have lost awhile."

"Rabboni" is "my Master." *We must take the Risen Lord not only as our Saviour, but our Master.* Too many look to Him only for what He shall do for them in the way of salvation and deliverance from sin, but we shall never realise the fullness of either until we fall at His feet and own Him Master and Lord.

*It must be a personal act—"My Master."* It is not enough that He should be Lord of others, or of His Church. He must be *thine*. Give *your all* for *His all*. Begin to live as if there were none but He and you in this world. He is ever appealing to us: "Son! Daughter! Give Me thine heart, thy love."

*When He is Master, we obey His bidding.* It is useless to call Him "Lord, Lord," and not do the things which He says. Ours must be the alert ear, the swift foot. "Go, tell!" So He speaks still.

**PRAYER**—*Open our eyes to see the Face of Christ looking down upon us amid household duty or daily business. Give us a quick ear for Thy Voice, and may we go on doing good, as Thou shalt give us opportunity. AMEN.*

## THE GOD OF PATIENCE AND COMFORT

*Romans 15:5 "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:"*

**WE** ALL need Patience and Comfort, especially in times of stress and difficulty. Patience under long-drawn-out trial; Comfort, when the heart is at breaking-point; and God is the source of each! The God of Patience! "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry." The God of Comfort! "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Let us hush all other voices of consolation, that we may listen to the still small voice of the Comforter, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

But notice that He speaks through the patience and comfort of Holy Scripture. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope." What the Bible has been to the martyrs, to the sufferers on the rack, and to the harried Covenanters of the Scottish moors; to the myriads of unknown souls who have been persecuted, to lonely exiles and bereaved hearts, can never be told.

If we were condemned to banishment, and could take only one Book of the Bible with us to Patmos, or to prison, we should find it extremely difficult which to choose. Some would select the Psalter, some the Fourth Gospel, some would probably decide on that wonderful anonymous writing, the Epistle to the Hebrews. And in each they would have matter enough to explore for a lifetime. Always His Spirit will be teaching and enabling us. Always His Shepherd rod and staff will lead us to living fountains of water. He is always realising more deeply in us the Divine ideal, and increasing our capacity for God.

Is not this comforting! The minister, to whom you owe your conversion, or who has helped your Christian growth, may die or be removed; the friend on whom you depended for help and guidance may have to leave you, but our Saviour will continue His care of us, His nurture of our growth. His un failing intercession, when the sun has ceased to shine, and the universe is wrapped up as a worn-out garment. His ministry is unchangeable. The God of Patience and Comfort will never fail us!

**PRAYER**—*Comforter of the comfortless, bind my soul with Thine in intercession! Wherever there are broken hearts, bind them: captives, release them. Bless especially my loved ones. Visit us with Thy salvation, and suit Thy gifts to our several needs. AMEN.*

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## THE GOD OF HOPE

*Romans 15:13 "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."*

**WE** ALL need to abound in Hope. Hope is the artist of the soul. Faith fills us with joy and peace, which brim over in Hope. When Faith brings from God's Word the materials of anticipation and expectation, Hope transfers the fair colours to her palette, and with a few deft dashes of her brush delineates the soul's immortal and unfading hope. Faith thus excites Hope to do her fairest work, until presently the wails of our soul become radiant with frescoes. Our faith rests on God's Word, and hope rests on faith, and such hope cannot be ashamed. It is the anchor of the soul, which enters that which is within the veil, and links us to the shores of eternity (Heb 6:18-19).

Faith rests on the promises of God. She does not calculate on feeling, is indifferent to emotion, but with both hands clings to some word of promise, and looking into God's face, says; "Thou canst not be unfaithful." When God has promised aught to thee, it is as certain as if thou hadst it in hand. Faith not only takes the Word of God, and rests her weight on it, but often when hard-pressed goes beyond the Bible back to God Himself, and argues that God is faithful and cannot deny Himself. Because God is God, He must ever act worthily of Himself.

It was thus that Moses argued, when he was with Him in the Holy Mount—to do thus, would not be worthy of Thyself! (Num 14:13-20). We may be assailed with a hundred questions of doubt in the day, but must no more notice them than a barking cur. A business man once said that when he is convinced of the rightness of a certain course, he is sometimes assailed by doubts which arise like the cloud-mist of the valley, or the marsh gas from the swamp; but when thus tempted, he turns to the promises of God, often reading three or four chapters of the Old Testament. This brings him in touch with the eternal world, filling him with joy and peace and abounding hope in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost. They shall not be ashamed that hope in Him!

**PRAYER**—*Make me, O Lord, to know the Hope of Thy calling, the riches of the glory of Thine inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of Thy power towards them that believe. Above all, grant me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Thyself AMEN.*

## THE GOD OF PEACE

*Romans 15:33 "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."*

*Colossians 1:20 "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."*

**WE** ALL need Peace! There are sources of Peace which are common to all men. The peace of a happy home; of an increasing business and enlarging influence; of the respect and love of our fellows. As a man is conscious of these, he is inclined to say with Job, "I shall die in my nest." We can all understand a peace like that; but there is a "peace that passeth understanding." It is too deep for words. It is like the pillowed depths of the ocean, which are undisturbed by the passing storm. Here is a sufferer, almost always in acute pain, and needing constant attention, and yet so happy. Joy and Peace, like guardian angels, sit by that bedside; and Hope, not blindfolded, touches all the strings of the lyre, and sheds sunshine,—how do you account for it? Let the sceptic and the scoffer answer! Here is a peace that passes understanding which comes from the God of Peace.

For the Christian soul there is a silver lining in every cloud; a blue patch in the darkest sky; a turn in the longest lane; a mountain view which shall compensate the steepest ascent. Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land. The thing impossible shall be; because all things are possible to God.

The peace of God is the peace of the Divine Nature—the very tranquillity which prevails in the heart of the God of Peace. It was of this that Jesus spoke when He said, "My peace I give unto you"; for His own being was filled and blessed with it during His earthly career. "The Lord of Peace Himself gives you peace always."

There are three things against which we must ever be on our guard lest they rob us of our peace. First, unconfessed sin; second, worry; third, the permission of an unrebuked selfish principle. The Apostle says, "Let the Peace of God rule in your hearts." The Greek word means arbitrate. Let God's Peace act as umpire.

We shall not escape life's discipline. We may expect to abound here, and to be abased there. But amid all, God's Peace, like a white-winged sentinel angel, shall come down to garrison our heart with its affections, and our mind with its thoughts.

**PRAYER**—*I humbly ask, O God, that Thy Peace may be the garrison of my heart and mind; that it may ever rule within me, asserting itself over the tumultuous passions that arise within. And out of this Peace may I arise to serve Thee. AMEN.*

## HOW THE SONG OF THE LORD BEGAN

*2 Chronicles 29:27* “And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel.”

*Revelation 14:3* “And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

**H**EZEKIAH, AT the age of twenty-five, came to the throne, and set himself to reverse his father’s evil policy. The doors of the Temple were reopened, and under his direction the Levites were commissioned to cleanse the desecrated courts of the rubbish and filth that had been allowed to accumulate. After eight days of strenuous labour, they were able to report that their work was successfully accomplished; that the altar of burnt-offering and the table of shewbread were ready for the renewal of their wonted service. It was good news, and in the early morning of a memorable day, the king, accompanied by his princes and officers of state, took part in a solemn service of re-dedication. Amid the tense expectancy of the vast congregation which had assembled, Hezekiah commanded that the burnt sacrifice should be offered; and “when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also.”

These ancient sacrifices have passed for ever. “Sacrifice and offering Thou dost not desire; mine ears hast Thou pierced (nailing me to Thy Cross); burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come, I delight to do Thy will, O my God!” To yield up one’s life to the Saviour, to surrender our lives for others for His sake, to maintain the steadfast resolve of self-sacrifice—*this* surely fulfils the conception of the burnt-offering, which the king ordered that morning as the symbol of national devotion to the Will of God. Can we wonder that the Song of the Lord began also? Does not that same Song arise in every heart when the sacrifice of love and obedience begins?

It is the self-contained life that has made itself snug within its four walls, soundproof, sorrow-proof, as it thinks, and love-proof, which is song-less and pitiable.

Our Lord said: “Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it.” That finding is the correlative and source of the “Song of the Lord.” Unite thyself with Jesus on the Cross, and one day thou wilt find thyself sharing with Him the New Song of accomplished Redemption!

**PRAYER**—*Give us loving and thankful hearts. May Thy mercies bind us like cords to the horns of the Altar. Let our whole nature be consecrated for Thine indwelling, and as the burnt-offering begins, may the Song of the Lord begin also in our hearts. AMEN.*

## THE GRACE OF GRATITUDE

*Psalm 116:12 "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?"*

**G**OD'S BENEFITS are here compared to a cup or chalice brimming with salvation. It seems natural to speak of man's lot, either of sorrow or joy, as the cup of which he drinks. The cup or lot of our life brims with instances of God's saving help—"my cup runneth over," and we ask, how may we thank Him enough? What shall we render unto Him, for all His gracious help?

There are many answers, and the first is, that we will *Take*. In other words, as one has truly said, *Taking* from God is the best giving to God, for God loves to *give*. St. James says: "He is the giving God, who gives not only liberally, but with no thought of personal advantage, and for the mere joy of giving?" What, then, will gratify Him more than to be trusted, to find recipients for His gifts, to know that we are prepared to be His poor debtors, owing Him ten thousand talents, with nothing to pay, but still receiving and receiving from His great heart of Love. Nothing hurts God more than that we should not take what He offers—"God so loved that He *gave*," and when we refuse to appropriate His greatest gift, we inflict the deepest indignity and dishonour of which we are capable.

Then, *we must call upon His Name* (Psa 116:13-17). Take the Name of the Lord as a test. Friendships, plans, profits, amusements, studies—all these cups should be tested by this one mighty Talisman.

*We must be sure to pay our vows* (Psa 116:14-18; Eccl 5:4-5). We make vows in our trouble, which we sometimes forget when it is past. Surely, it is the height of ingratitude not to redeem our promissory notes. All devoted things, which are laid on God's altar, are absolutely His, and the giver forfeits all rights to their disposal.

*Our gratitude demands the gift of ourselves* (Psa 116:16). When Robinson Crusoe freed the poor captive, the man knelt before his deliverer, and put his foot upon his neck, in token of his desire to be his slave, and the love of Christ, who loosed us from our bonds (Rev 1:5), constrains us to live not to ourselves but unto Him. Loosed from the cords of sin, we become bound to the service of love.

**PRAYER**—*Father, we would thank Thee for all the benefits that we have received from Thy goodness. The best thanksgiving we can offer to Thee is to live according to Thy holy will; grant us every day to offer it more perfectly, and to grow in the knowledge of Thy will and the love thereof AMEN.*

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## THE GARDEN OF OUR SOUL

*Isaiah 27:2-3 "In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."*

**T**HE VINEYARD and its Divine Keeper. God's redeemed children are here compared to a Vineyard. We remember also our Lord's references to the Vineyard in Mat 21:33-41 and John 15. God our Father is the Husbandman or Keeper, watching, watering, and guarding always. There is no anger in His heart against *us*, but against our *sins*, and He is ever battling with these, as the gardener digs up the weeds and burns them in the bonfire.

God's moment-by-moment care of us is our one hope. The dry winds of this world are always parching the tender verdure of our inner life making the soil hard and impenetrable. We shrivel and wither beneath the sun of prosperity, but God is ever seeking to water us with His grace.

*Sometimes it is by the mist*—"There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground" (Gen 2:6). Thus it was in Eden, and so it is in our experience. The mystery of life, its uncertainty, our sense of impotence and ignorance, the withdrawal of our beloved ones within the envelopment of the unseen, the strange sense of incomprehensible enigma--these are some of the mists that help to soften our character.

*Sometimes by the dew*—"I will be as the dew unto Israel." On clear nights the air deposits its moisture in dewdrops. How beautiful it is in the spring morning! In the tropics it is profuse, so that Gideon was able to wring a bowlful of water from the fleece which he had spread out! Yet how gently it distils, not a flower stalk, however fragile, is broken. So the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit gather on our souls and refresh us. We know not whence or how, but we are sweeter, gentler, tenderer for His beneficent care. The sun does not scorch us, the heat does not exhaust.

Let us enter into a holy fellowship with God in His antagonism to whatever is unworthy and evil in our lives, taking hold of His strength, and being at peace with Him, Then shall we be blossom and bud, and become His pleasant vineyard; and fill the world with refreshing fruit. "Thou shalt be like a watered garden." "By their fruits ye shall know them."

**PRAYER**—*Forbid, O Heavenly Father, that we should lose the freshness, fertility and beauty which Thou canst maintain in hearts which are open to Thee. May we be like a watered garden. AMEN.*

## SPIRITUAL FOOD

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

*John 6:51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

**I**T IS the artifice of many advertisers of the present day to secure customers for patent foods by associating the figure of some person in perfect health and strength with the article of diet they desire to recommend. It is certain that spiritual health and power can only be produced when the spirit is dieted on the Word of God.

From his earliest boyhood, the young Timothy had been instructed in the Holy Scriptures. When the Apostle first met him there was a rich subsoil of knowledge of the Old Testament, in which the seed of the Gospel message readily germinated. Perhaps the reason for the instability of some of our young people is that Eunice and Lois in our Christian homes fail to do for the children what mothers and grandmothers did for previous generations.

It is not necessary to discuss all that is involved in Inspiration, as the Apostle uses that term; nor is it necessary to be profoundly familiar with books of theology before we are able to pronounce on it. Inspiration is a quality which is apprehended by the spiritual taste, just as the tongue can detect sweetness or briny saltiness of flavour. The Bible is the Word of God, and the whole of it is profitable for one of the four uses mentioned in 2 Tim 3:16.

We should read the Bible daily, and it is helpful to use the references and discover the parallel passages. It is good sometimes to kneel down and turn what we read into prayer. We must get beyond the outside husk to the inner kernel, as we "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest." Ask the Spirit of God to give you some message directly for yourself.

There are some kinds of food which are destitute of the properties that sustain life. But Christ is all we want, and every faculty of our nature can be satisfied in Him. He is the Living Bread, on Whom we must feed if we would have eternal life. It is not the Bible only, but the Christ of whom it speaks who is the true spiritual food of the soul. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

**PRAYER**—*O Lord, open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. AMEN.*

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## THE MESSAGE OF THE SERAPHIM

*Isaiah 6:6-7 "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."*

**E**ACH SERAPH had six wings. "With twain he covered his face." Here was *Reverence*, which is one of the noblest traits in character, whether angelic or human. The statesman who beneath human movements set himself to understand the Divine purpose. The artist, whether in music, poetry or painting, who discovers a Presence which fills him with elevated and pure ideals. The scientist who compares himself to a child gathering pebbles on the shores of a boundless ocean. These resemble the Seraphim with their veiled faces.

"With twain they covered their feet"—*Self-effacement and Humility*. If we begin to think and talk of ourselves, we prove that we are second-rate. We may be attractive and useful, but we have not attained the first and best. The angels forgot themselves in their absorbing love for God. When shall we forget ourselves in His constraining love, so as not to live to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again!

"With twain they did fly"—*Obedient Service*. The third part of our energy should be spent thus. Two-thirds of communion and worship must work themselves out in service, else we become dreamy mystics. Such life becomes contagious—"One cried to another." There is always a cry going forth from the eager soul which is right with God, and this awakens response in others and stirs them to service. One bird in the woodlands singing at dawn will wake the whole forest-glade to music. The Seraphim declared that the whole earth was full of God's glory!

The prophet saw his need of cleansing: "Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips." We do not need to agonize with God for cleansing, but to open our hearts in confession. Immediately one of the Seraphim will fly to meet our need. Nay, the Lord Himself—Lo, this live coal, saturated with blood and steeped in flame, which combines Calvary and Pentecost, hath cleansed our iniquity and purged our sin! Then we shall cry: "Here am I; send me." Redeemed, forgiven, and cleansed sinners make the best evangelists!

**PRAYER**—*Give us, O Lord, more than an angel's love, for Thou hast redeemed us. Give us the swiftness of an angel's obedience; may we do Thy commandments, and hearken to the voice of Thy word. Cleanse us from all iniquity and purge us from sin, and use us in Thy service. AMEN.*

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## OUR HERITAGE AND OUR GOAL

*Hebrews 12:22-24 "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."*

**WE** ARE far from being perfect. When in our deepest moments, we ascend into the Holiest, on the wings of faith and prayer, we pass through a vast host of sympathetic spirits, all of whom are devoted to the same Lord and Master, and are joining in the same act of worship. Many of them have known and helped us in our earthly life, and they have been sent forth to minister to us, and to help us on our way. "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect."

We are also come unto God, the Judge of all. When Moses stood before God on the Mount, he said: "I exceedingly fear and quake." But we may come with boldness to the footstool of the Eternal Throne, though our God is a consuming fire, for in Christ Jesus we stand accepted. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, and His Blood speaks better things than that of Abel. That blood cried against Cain. But the Blood of Jesus cries on our behalf; it has opened the way into the Holiest; has cleansed us from our sins; has ratified the New Covenant, and is the Pledge of our redemption.

Therefore, although we realise our sinfulness and imperfection, let us arise into the unseen, and join with the One Church of the Redeemed in heaven and on earth. We are come to it in the purpose of God, and by the all-sufficing work of Christ our Lord, but let us see to it that we come also in our spiritual realization, communion, and fellowship.

We are members of the Church Universal, citizens of the Heavenly City. Heirs of that precious Redemption, which has severed us from things that are seen, and made us part of that blessed throng that no man can number—"the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven." Neither life, nor death, nor rife, nor church-order, can divide those who are for ever one with each other because they are one with Christ. Nothing but sin and obtuseness of soul can exclude us from living fellowship with saints of all communions and sects, denominations and ages.

**PRAYER**—*Accept our thanks, O God, for this foretaste of the bliss of Paradise. To Thee we would pour forth our tribute of adoring love, and join with angels and the spirits of the Redeemed in worship. Unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, be blessing and honour, glory and dominion, for ever. AMEN.*

## WALKING IN THE LIGHT

*Genesis 1:3 "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."*

*Ephesians 5:8 "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:"*

**S**T. PAUL makes use of this passage in Genesis, when He says, that "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He seems to go back in his experience to that remarkable vision on the road to Damascus, when the light shone, and he saw the face of the Lord Jesus. It was as though he had passed through the experience of chaos, while kicking against the goad of conviction, and at that moment, which he could never forget, God said: "Let there be light." Looking up, he saw the light of the glory of God reflected in that dear Face that looked down on him with ineffable love. It was life out of death; light replaced darkness, and peace chased away the last vestige of storm.

This is ever the result and climax of the work in our hearts wrought by the Holy Spirit. He leads us out of darkness; He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. His one aim is to glorify our Saviour, and to make Him the Alpha and Omega of our faith, as we walk in the light.

When I was in Tasmania, I was shown a great mountain range on which was a vast lake, fifty-two miles in circumference. The overflow yielded a perennial waterfall of a thousand feet, the force of which was translated into electricity which made light and power cheap for great factories and for domestic needs. It seemed to me, as I thought about it, that the great sheet of water resembled the Love of God, in its longing to help mankind; that the descending waterfall might be taken to illustrate the Incarnation of our Saviour, who was the Sent-One of the Eternal Trinity; and that the electric current, invisible but mighty, was typical of the Holy Spirit, who brings to our hearts the Light and Power of the Divine Nature. The lesson is obvious, that as the manufacturer or the scientist invents machinery to meet the conditions on which alone the electric current can do its work, so must we learn to adapt ourselves to receive and transmit the power and light of God, which comes to us through our union with Jesus.

**PRAYER**—*May the Holy Spirit keep us ever walking in the light of Thy countenance. May He fill our hearts with the sense of Thy nearness and loving fellowship. Order our steps in Thy way, and then walk with us, for in Thee is no darkness at all. AMEN.*

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## JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

*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.”

**T**HE STAR Sirius is so far away from our little earth, that its light, travelling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, has to travel for eight long years before it can reach our eyes; and yet it is so bright that, when its ray shines down the telescope, the eye of the astronomer is dazzled as though by the sun. But if the light of a single created world is thus in the physical sphere, what shall we say of Him of whom we are told “God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all?” Yet we may live and work in that searchlight, and have fellowship with Him!

*Present-tense cleansing.* Years ago in my congregation there was a sweep who was a friend of mine. On Sundays he sang in our choir, and his face shone with the love of God. But if I happened to call at his home close on his return from work, his face was begrimed as to be almost unrecognizable! Yet even then there was one part as clear and bright as on the Sunday! The pupils of his eyes set in pearly white! It seemed as though these were impervious to the soiling-touch of the smoke-dust. And why! Because Nature, which is the glove on the hand of God, has provided eyelids, eyelashes, and above all, *tear-water*, so that whatever be our environment, the eye is kept washed and clean. Is not this an illustration of what the Apostle meant by the “Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin?” It is the same truth as our Lord taught, when, having washed the disciples’ feet, He said that he who had bathed in the morning needed only to wash his feet.

The ultimate purpose of the soul, therefore, should be to walk in the Light as He is in the Light. God covers Himself with light as with a garment. It is an emblem of purity and love and joy. And our life is meant to be like that, even when we are compelled to spend the hours of the day in the company of those who know not God, and perhaps blaspheme His Name. That Light may shine in heart and face, and fall on those around. That fellowship and communion with Him may be unbroken! The song of the Lord may rise in our hearts without a jarring note! It seems incredible and impossible, especially when one is conscious of so much sin and failure! Nay, it is not impossible, if once we have learnt the secret of this present tense—“the blood of Jesus Christ *cleanseth* from all sin.”

**PRAYER**—*Fill me with Thy light and joy, O Lord, that I may have wherewith to give to my home and friends, and to the dark world around me. Keep me from hiding my light under the bushel of my own anxieties. AMEN.*

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## ILLUMINATED LIVES

*Proverbs 20:27 "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly."*

*Psalms 18:28 "For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness."*

**T**HE TABERNACLE constructed by Moses, and Solomon's Temple were modelled on the divine pattern, and consisted of three parts, outer Court, with its altar and laver, facing the world of human life; the Holy of Holies, facing the unseen and divine; between them, the Holy place, with its candlestick, altar, and table. Transfer that picture to your own nature. The body is the outer court, and through it we touch the world around us; the spirit is our most holy place, and through it we enter into fellowship with God; the soul lies between the two, the seat of our personality, including conscience, will, intellect, and emotion.

Our text tells us that "the spirit of man is the *candle* of the Lord." The candle is for illumination, but there are many unlit candles! Has the Divine Spirit kindled your spirit, and is the flame burning clear? The windows of your spirit command a view of the Delectable Mountains and the City of God, but have the blinds been drawn up all round, so that the sunshine may shed its radiance into the common places of daily living? In other words, Is your religious life in living touch with the Person of Jesus Christ?

In its ultimate essence, Christ is the All and In-All of our holy religion. Not creed, nor ceremonials, nor the life of active philanthropy, but His personal life and presence in the heart are the supreme goal of the New Testament. What the Father was to Him, He desires to be to us. Remember He said: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth (receiveth) Me, he also shall live because of Me," but this indwelling can only be experienced when we have learnt to find all our fresh springs of life, love, and inspiration from Him with whom our life is hid in God.

When we sit before the Lord in meditation, or kneel in our accustomed place, we shall know that the Lord, whom we seek, has suddenly come to His Temple, and the glory of the Lord will illuminate the house of our life, and shed its radiance on the world around. Our life will still retain its characteristic nature, but it will be infilled by the "second man, the Lord from Heaven."

**PRAYER**—*O Holy Spirit, Love of God, infuse Thy grace, and descend plentifully into my heart; enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling, and scatter there Thy cheerful beams; dwell in the soul that longs to be Thy temple. AMEN.*

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## THE SOLAR LOOK

*Psalm 97:11 "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."*

**W**RITING OF Emerson, Margaret Fuller says in her diary: "Emerson has been here this morning with a sunbeam in his face." It is recorded of Daniel Rowlands, the famous Welsh preacher—to hear whom on the Sunday morning people would travel through the entire Saturday night—that when he was preaching there was "*a solar look*" on his face. Like Moses, he wist not that his face shone. Is not this what our Lord meant when He bade His disciples anoint their heads and wash their faces that they might not appear to men to fast! We have no right to go through the world looking dour and dark, as though our religion had a depressing and saddening effect on its professors. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

Of course, there are the darker aspects of human life, and hours when we must endure chastening. Each heart has its own bitterness, every home its skeleton, every year its autumn. What family is without the empty chair, and its memory of a voice that is still? But these moods should be reserved for God alone. In the quiet hours of thought and prayer, we may talk to Him who seeth in secret, of our sins and sorrows, the cares that oppress and the forebodings that molest. But when once we have rolled our burden on God, we must leave it there, and go forth, like Hannah, "whose countenance was no more sad" (1 Sam 1:18).

But Light must be *sown*! No farmer calculates on a harvest for which he has not prepared the soil. Those who refuse the terms of peace, offered us in Jesus Christ, purchased by His Blood, and sealed by His Resurrection, cannot know the uprising of that fountain of joy and gladness which casts a radiance on the face, and a beauty on every act. It is only when we receive the Atonement, that we can rejoice in God. It is only when we are justified by faith, that we can have the peace which passeth understanding. It is only when we walk in the light, as He is in the light, that we have fellowship one with another, and His Light will begin to glimmer on our faces and transfigure our lives. "The redeemed of the Lord shall come with singing unto Zion. They shall obtain gladness and joy; sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

**PRAYER**—*Thou hast given me gladness, Lord; help me to make others glad, and pass on to them the comfort wherewith Thou hast comforted me. At whatever cost, may I have fellowship with Thee in Thy redemptive purpose and ministry. AMEN.*

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## LIGHT IN DARKNESS

*Isaiah 9:2 "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."*

**A**S EVERY one is affected by the first man, Adam, so every one has a direct claim upon Jesus Christ, the second Man, whose Death and Resurrection and Ascension affect us all. He is the Light who has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Because Christ lay upon Mary's breast, and was cradled in her arms, we have been delivered from darkness, and it is possible for us to climb, by the staircase of His Cross, over angels, principalities, and powers, to be seated with Him on His Throne of Glory.

"Unto us a Child is born!" *He is Wonderful*, because in Him the most marvellous extremes meet. He is the Babe just born, but He is the Ancient of Days who fills space. He grows in knowledge, but in Him are stored the riches of eternal wisdom. He hangs in mortal agony upon the Cross, but He gives life to uncounted myriads. He is laid in a borrowed tomb, but He lives for evermore, and death hath no power over Him!

*He is Counsellor*. Tell Him thy heart's problems. Ask His counsel, and He will not mislead thee. *He is the Prince of Peace*, and "of the increase of His government"—over new regions of the inner life, over new departments of the soul, over new openings—out of your existence, the increase deepening, heightening, widening, of the increase of His government as the years pass, there shall be no end, because the soul of man is infinite, and it will take eternity to bring out all the meaning of the Empire of Christ over our nature.

What is your reply to the claim of Christ? I urge you today to humbly put the government of everything that concerns your life upon the shoulders of Christ, and then you will find the joy (Isa 9:3) and peace will increase. Such joy as thou hast never known! Such peace as has never before uttered its benison upon thy heart.

**PRAYER**—*We thank Thee, O God, for the Son of Thy Love; for all that He has done for us, and will do; for all that He has been to us, and will be. We know that He holds us in His strong hand, that He loves us with a love that cannot let us go, that we are one with Him in a union which nothing can break. AMEN.*

## MAN'S WAY! GOD'S DIRECTION

*Proverbs 16:9 "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps."*

**T**HE WAYS of a man—we justify them to ourselves, and think that they are necessarily right, but we are liable to be self-deceived. We must employ our sanctified common-sense, or, to adopt the phrase of our text, our heart must seriously and thoughtfully devise our way. First pray for direction; then weigh the *pros* and *cons*; then view the matter from the standpoint of trusted friends; see that your eye is single to do only the will of God; be sure that no selfish or evil consideration is allowed to bias or divert you: then make your decision, asking God to block you in whatever would be hurtful, foolish, or perilous. You will not make a mistake if you sincerely and prayerfully adopt these rules. If your eye is single (i.e., *straight*), your whole body will be full of light.

There is every reason why we should employ the faculties of judgment and choice. When Samuel sent the young Saul away, he said, "Thou shalt do as occasion shall serve thee"; we are also told of Peter, that when the angel left him, he considered the matter, and came to Mary's house.

*But God's purpose is behind all human decisions.* There must be room for man to devise his steps, else we should become automatons. But all our volitions and choices must be ultimately subjected to the Rule and Will of the Most High. Let us commit our works and ways to God. We must roll our burden and ourselves on our faithful Creator. Of what use is it to worry over past mistakes? We cannot undo them, but we can ask God to bring good out of evil. He will put right the mistakes, and compensate for the failures. Let the Father's hand direct your steps. If with all your devising and planning, you cannot settle the matter, throw the whole responsibility back on Him and ask Him to undertake it.

Let us seek so to live that our ways may please the Lord (Pro 16:7). "We beseech you," said St. Paul, "that as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and please God, even so ye do walk." We need to wait on God that He may show us the right way, and there is a sure sign—*Via Crucis*, *via lucis*. Jesus said, "I am the Way: Follow Me!"

**PRAYER**—*Lead us, O God, by paths we have not known. Make the darkness light before us, the crooked places straight, and the rough places plain. Let Thine Angel lead us forth into the liberty of the sons of God. AMEN.*

## THE QUEST FOR THE ETERNAL

*Psalm 63:1 "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;"*

**T**HIS PSALM has a special fascination for those who can no longer gather with the assemblies of God's people. David was in flight from Absalom, wandering in the wilderness. The land around is waterless and weary, and his enemies are on his track. But all this seems secondary to his longing for God. Weary and thirsty though he is, his most agonizing desire is for God, the living God, as he had seen and known Him in the tent, which he had reared on Zion for His worship. The barren wilderness, seemed to reflect the craving of his soul for God.

In many hearts and lives his mood is reflected today. Our soul thirsts and pines for the vision of the power and glory of God, for the communion of saints. Perhaps David lays greater emphasis on the Sanctuary than we do on our places of worship. We must remember that the Glory of the Shekinah shone between the Cherubim in that hallowed Shrine.

In Psa 63:5-7, the longing soul seems satisfied. As we long for God, we find Him. As we seek, we possess (Isa 41:17-18). As we remember Him, we break into song. The fact is that our yearnings after God are the response of our hearts to the beat of His heart and to the knock of His hand. Prayer is the response of our nature to the circulation of His lifeblood within us. When we seek His face, it is in answer to His own summons. "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." As one has stated it: "Our desires and aspirations are responses to the outflowings of the Holy Spirit in silent or expressed communion."

The climax of the Psalm is reached in Psa 63:8. Notice the threefold steps: my soul thirsts; my soul is satisfied; my soul followeth hard after Thee. Remember Him upon thy bed! Meditate on Him through the night-watches! Hide thyself under the shadow of His wings! Keep step with His purposes! Follow close behind Him! Whosoever follows hard on God's track, trusting in Him, rejoicing in His companionship, reaching out toward Him, will feel his own outstretched hand enclosed in a strong and tender grasp, steadying against weariness and failure, and making His own footsteps a way for our feet.

**PRAYER**—*Bestow upon me also, O Lord my God, understanding to know Thee, diligence to seek Thee, wisdom to find Thee, and a faithfulness that may finally embrace Thee. AMEN.*

## THE MIRROR OF TRUTH

*James 1:23-24 "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."*

**T**HERE IS an old fable of a palace, in which one room was remarkable above all others because it was lined with glass of a special quality. Whenever a person entered whose life was inconsistent with truth, a mist blurred the surface of the mirrors so that he was unable to see himself clearly. It was when the Apostle Paul compared his own self-centred goodness with the love and purity of Christ, he lost all hope of justifying himself, and confessed that the things which he had counted gain were only loss.

Truth and Love are indissolubly connected. Love is of God, and so is Truth. If you have the one, the other must follow. If the soul, looking into the mirror of God's Word, perceiving that there is a blur, and sets itself to remove all that has caused it; and if it continues in this attitude, not being a hearer who forgets, but a doer that works, he shall be "*blessed in his doing.*"

*The blessedness of doing and becoming.* It is only as we do, that we become. Even to behold Christ will not make us Christlike in character, unless we translate into *action* what we have discovered in Him. The impressions made on the hearer through the ear are very vagrant, like the breeze on the water. We look at ourselves in the mirror held up before us, and straightway go off and forget what manner of persons we were. It is only as we cease to be hearers who forget, and become doers that work, that we can make any progress in the Christian life and walk.

Listen attentively to the Word of Truth, written or spoken. Be quick to notice the smallest symptom of inconsistency between your life and the perfect beauty of Jesus, and set yourself immediately to correct it. Be merciful to the failings of everyone else, but be merciless to your own. Let no fault remain uncorrected, and no call to duty unanswered. For you to live, let it be Christ. Your blessedness and happiness will come in choosing the Christ-life, in doing, and continuing to do what He would have you do.

**PRAYER**—*Help us to cast out all those things which are contrary to Thy peace, or that are not according to Thy will, so that ours may be the quiet, life of trust, and faith, and obedience, longing for Thy truth, and walking in the light thereof. AMEN.*

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## CHRIST'S REVELATION OF GOD

*John 14:8-9 "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"*

**P**HILIP'S INQUIRY bore witness to the growth of a human soul. Only three short years before Christ had found him. At that time he was probably much as the young men of his standing and age, not specially remarkable, save for an interest in the earnestness about the advent of the Messiah. His views, however, were limited and narrow; he looked for Christ's advent as the time for the re-establishment of the Kingdom of David, and deliverance from the hated Roman yoke. But three years of fellowship with the Master had made a wonderful difference. He is not now content with beholding the Messiah—he is eager to know the Father: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

But surely this request was based on a mistake. He wanted to see the Father. But how can you make Wisdom, or Love, or Purity visible, save in a human life? Philip was so absorbed in his quest for the transcendent, that he missed the revelation of the Father which for three years had been passing before his eyes. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?"

*Our Lord revealed the Father in His works* (John 14:10-11). The story of His miracles are leaves from God's diary. The right way to read them is not to say: This is what Christ did; but, Thus God is ever doing—always healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, restoring the leper, and raising the dead.

*He reveals the Father in answering our prayers* (John 14:13). He is ever anxious to answer our petitions, that He may reveal the nature and glory of God our Father.

*Christ reveals the Father by communicating the Holy Spirit*, who comes to abide in us. No miracle could tell us so much of God as the Spirit does when He communicates the Divine nature. When our Lord says that He will manifest Himself to the soul that obeys Him, and that the Father will come in to make His abiding-place with us, He not only shows, but He gives to us the Father (John 14:21-23). The life and ministry of our Lord during His earthly life, and throughout the ages, unfolds to us the Father, in the sweetness, tenderness and strength of that glorious Being, whose Love pervades the universe.

**PRAYER**—*We bless Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast revealed us the Father, and hast brought us nigh unto God. Make as pure in heart, not only in our walk, but in our inward temper, that we may never lose sight of God by reason of the obscurity of our own nature. AMEN.*

## THE BROAD AND THE NARROW WAY

*Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*

**A**T THE beginning of life, each soul stands before these two paths. In each of us the love of life is strong, and in each is the desire to get as much as possible out of the years which may be given. Amiel expresses this strong passion for life when he says: "A passionate wish to live, to feel, to express, stirred the depth of my heart. I was overpowered by a host of aspirations. In such a mood one would fain devour the whole world, experience everything, see everything, learn everything, tame everything, and conquer everything."

In our early years each of us wakes up to the throb of strong natural impulses, and we are tempted to argue, if God has given me these strong desires, why should they not be gratified? Why should I not throw the reins on the necks of these fiery steeds, and let them bear me whither they may? To do this, is to go through the wide gate, and to take the broad road. It is the way of society, of the majority—the "many" go in there, It is pre-eminently the way of the world, and no one who goes by this way, allowing his course to be dictated by strong natural impulses, need fear that he will be counted strange or eccentric!

It must be admitted that, in its first stages, the broad way is generally easy and rather delightful. The boat launched on the flowing stream sweeps merrily and pleasantly along the gradient of the road slopes so as to make walking easy, the sun shines, and the path is filled with bright flowers. But to a life given up to self-indulgence, there is only one end, destruction.

There is a more excellent way, but it is too narrow to admit the trailing garments of passionate desire, too narrow for pride, self-indulgence, greed, and avarice—it is the Way of the Cross, but it leads to Life! We all want to see life, and the remarkable thing is that those who expect to get most out of it by self-indulgence miss everything; whilst those who seem to curtail their lives by following Christ, win everything. Few find and enter this path, is the lament of our Lord. Let us put our hand in His, that He may lead us into the path of life, "that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

**PRAYER**—*Dear Lord, as Enoch walked with Thee of old, so would we walk each day, choosing the narrow path; order our steps in Thy way, and graciously walk with us. AMEN.*

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## TAKING SIDES

*Exodus 32:26 "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him."*

*1 Kings 18:21 "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."*

**M**OSEs AND Elijah uttered practically the same call, which is always being spoken to each fresh generation. As soon as we can think for ourselves, we are accosted by the challenge of the Divine Voice- Art thou for Me or against Me? Which side dost thou take? From the lips of our blessed Lord comes the additional challenge, which compels us to face the alternative as one that may not be trifled with or put aside: "He that is not *with Me* is *against Me*."

How long halt ye between two opinions? We must take one side or the other. When the division-bell rings in the House of Commons, the Ayes must go to the right and the Noes to the left. A man must choose which he will take! *If Jehovah ... If Baal ...* We cannot be neutral without being stultified.

Who, then, is prepared to take sides, and to come out to Christ, without the camp, bearing His reproach? (Heb 13:13). To be on the Lord's side is to acknowledge Him as our King as well as Saviour. It is to render to Him our reverence, obedience, love and devotion. It is to abandon all refuges and resorts to our own works and ways, and to strive for heart, mind, and life to be assimilated to His will and character. This is what our Saviour expects and asks of each of us! We are to belong wholly to God, to give Him all that we are capable of giving, to choose His cause, and to find in Him the beginning and ending, the first and last.

Jesus Christ possesses an unimpeachable and absolute right over us—the right of *Creator*, "it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves"; the right of *Benefactor*, not only in the realm of temporal but of spiritual existence; the right of *Redeemer*, and this is the greatest claim of all.

Our decision demands declaration. Christ will not have His followers live in secret. In the days in which we live, when there are so many temptations to compromise between the disciples of Jesus and the votaries of the world, there is overwhelming reason why we should take His side. And in that great day, He will take *our* side and acknowledge *us* before His Father and the Holy Angels!

**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.*

## IN THE BEGINNING GOD

*Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."*

*John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."*

**G**ENESIS MEANS *Beginning*. Here we discover the source of many streams, some crystal, some turbid, which are still flowing through the world. It tells us of the beginning of the heavens and the earth; of the human race; of sin and redemption; of marriage and the institution of the home; of the sciences and arts that have built up the fabric of our civilisation; of the existence of the Hebrew race, and of the division of the human family into the various nationalities of the world. All of these cannot be attributed to the originating of God, for with regard to the sin and pain and sorrow of the world, it must be conceded that "an enemy hath done this."

In Hebrew the word for *GOD* is plural, the verb conjoined to it is singular, indicating that God is One, but the noun is plural, indicating the mystery of the Holy Trinity. In His earthly life, our Lord asked the Father to glorify Him with the glory that they had together before the world was.

Let us make God in Christ our beginning—the beginning of the book of our life—of our heaven, with its prayer, meditation, and devotion; of our earth, with its practical daily business; of our marriage and home; of our interests and pleasures. Here is the chief cornerstone in which alone the whole building of life can be fitly framed together. Here is the chord of harmony, with which the subsequent oratorio must be consistent. Here is the perfect circle of happiness, in which all that is fairest, sweetest, and strongest must be found.

*God is a Faithful Creator.* What He begins He finishes. He fainteth not, neither is weary. You may exhaust the dearest human love, but you can never wear out God. If you have never entered on the Divine life, begin with putting God in His right place, as Alpha, *the First*. If we cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." He will answer, "Behold I make all things new." Listen to the Divine assurance: "I am Alpha and Omega... the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. He that is athirst, let him come: he that *will*, let him take the water of life freely."

**PRAYER**—*O God, my Father supremely Good. Beauty of all things beautiful. To Thee will I intrust whatsoever I have received from Thee, so shall I lose nothing. Thou madest me for Thyself, and my heart is restless until it repose in Thee. AMEN.*

## GOD'S THOUGHT OF ME

*Genesis 16:13 "And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"*

*Psalms 139:17 "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"*

**H**AGAR WAS an Egyptian slave-girl, who had been brought up amid the idolatries of Egypt, and had no sort of idea that the gods had any personal interest in so insignificant a human atom as she was. Probably in Abraham's encampment she had heard of Jehovah, but would doubtless think of Him as being equally outside the limits of her little life. What care should the God of her master and mistress have for her, as she fled from the harsh treatment of Sarah, and was in danger of perishing in the lonely desert! Then, suddenly, in her despair, she heard the voice of the Angel-Jehovah speaking to *her*, and she called Him "The Living One who seeth me".

To her the thought was an inspiration and comfort, enabling her to return and submit herself to Sarah. But to many these words have been a note of fear and judgment. They have thought of God as spying upon their evil ways, and have shrunk from the thought of His eye seeing them. That thought, however, is not the significance of these inspiring words, but that we can never wander into the far country, or take one weary step in loneliness without the tender notice of God our Father, who notices even the sparrow that falls to the ground.

The Psalmist had the same thought when he wrote the 139th Psalm. When he says that God knows his downsitting and uprising, that his thoughts and ways are all open to His Almighty Friend, it is in a tone of rapturous gladness. It is the prerogative of friendship to love the presence and thought of a friend, and the crowning characteristic of Christianity is that we are admitted into personal friendship with our Lord. He knows *our thoughts* afar off. With an instant sympathy He enters into our anxieties and discouragements. Wherever we go He precedes and brings up the rear; we are *beset* by His care behind and before. Let every reader open the door to this great Friend, remembering that His one test is obedience: "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Thus you will find His presence the delight of your life (Rev 3:20).

**PRAYER**—*We thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast been about our path, considering all our ways, and encompassing us with blessing. Thine eye has been upon us to deliver our soul from death, and to be our help and shield. For all Thy gracious care we thank Thee. AMEN.*

## COMMUNION AND TRANSFORMATION

*Exodus 34:29 "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him."*

*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."*

**M**OSESES, AS he returned from the mountain of vision, where he had beheld as much of God's glory as seems possible to man, caught some gleam of the Light which he beheld. There was a strange radiance on his face, unknown to himself, but visible to all. He remained long enough in the presence of God to become saturated with the light and glory of the Lord. What wonder that he sparkled with it and was compelled to cover his face with a veil!

St. Paul refers to this incident, and show that the light which shone upon the face of Moses is the symbol of the lustre of character which shines from those who behold or reflect the glory of the Lord. As we behold the glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ, we are changed into His likeness.

There are two laws for Christian living: keep looking at Jesus until you become like Him, and beholding are changed into the same image; then reflect Him to others, and as you endeavour to reflect Him, the work of transformation goes on. "Tell me the company a man keeps, and I will tell you his character"; so runs the old proverb. We might go further and say, tell us what are the subjects of his habitual consideration—art, literature, theology, law, commerce, philanthropy—and we shall be able to anticipate the expression that will come upon his face.

If we desire to be pure and good, Christ-like and God-like, we must live in fellowship with Christ; beholding and reflecting His glory, even the lowliest and most sinful may become changed into His image. How different to Moses is the unveiled glory of Christ. Let us beware of anything that might bring a veil between Him and us, and nothing will so soon do this as sin, and inconsistency. Moses wist not that his face shone, and Samson wist not that the Lord had departed from him (Jdg 16:20). There is a tragic as well as a blessed unconsciousness. Let us see to it that we watch and pray, that we may not be taken unawares, and deprived of our purity and strength whilst wrapt in unconsciousness.

**PRAYER**—*We long to be holy as Thou art holy; to love as Christ also loved us; to be patient and uncomplaining as He was, and so to resemble Him that men may love Him for what they see of His likeness in us. AMEN.*

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## CONFESSING OUR SINS

*1 John 1:8-9 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

**T**O SIN is to *miss the mark*! Such is the meaning of the original word. When the prodigal returned, his first words were; "Father, I have missed the mark." Are we not always missing the mark, coming short? Sin is negative as well as positive. The Confession of the Church of England and the Shorter Catechism both agree in this: "We have done the things that we *ought not*; we have left *undone* the things that we ought to have done." Sin consists, not only in the positive transgression of the law of God, but in the want of conformity to His Will. It is needful to use this two-pronged fork. If a number of men are on their way to the recruiting-station and the standard is to be exactly six foot. They are all under that height, but the tallest of them glories in the fact that he is a clear two inches above the rest of his fellows. It may be so, but he will be as certainly rejected as the shortest, because even he comes below the standard. You may be better than scores of people in your circle, but you will need Christ's forgiveness and salvation equally with the worst!

In dealing with sin, therefore, there must be *confession*. "Do not hide, nor cloak them before the face of your Heavenly Father, but confess them with a patient, meek, and contrite heart." Do not wait for the hour of evening prayer, nor even for the opportunity of being alone, but in the busy street, in the midst of daily toil, lift up your heart to Christ if you have done wrong, and say: "I have gone astray: seek Thy servant."

It is not enough to confess to Christ, if you have sinned against another, you must first go and be reconciled to him, and then come and offer your gift at the altar. Confess, and make good! It is not enough to be extraordinarily pleasant, or suggest a solarium; you must definitely ask *forgiveness*!

When God forgives He forgets (Isa 43:25). As David puts it, and he had reason to know, "He restoreth my soul." Remember that He delighteth in mercy. He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse. Through the Sacrifice of Calvary God can be absolutely just, and at the same time the Justifier of them who believe in Jesus.

**PRAYER**—*Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for Thy forgiving, pitying love. I gratefully realise that my sin cannot alter Thy love, though it may dim my enjoyment of it. But I pray Thee to set me free from the love and power of sin, that it may not intercept the light of Thy countenance. AMEN.*

## AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

*John 15:16 “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”*

*Matthew 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 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.”*

**I**T IS a wonderful thing to hear these words from the lips of our Lord, when we remember what the Devil said to Him at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 4:6). Evidently the sceptre had been wrested from the hand of the prince of this world. Our Lord is supreme in heaven, and equally so on earth. He has authority over winds and waves; over the natural world with its laws and elements; over gold mines and harvest fields; over the minds and souls of all men who have been purchased by His precious blood. It would greatly facilitate our obedience to His Command if we realize that the whole world is His by creation and redemption, and that wherever we go throughout its vast territory we are within His domains.

Notice the care with which Christ insists that those who were disciples should be taught to observe all His commands (Mat 28:20). He chose the Apostles that they might receive His commands, not for their own obedience alone, but that they might impress them upon others. Obedience is the law of spiritual growth and blessedness. Let us resolve, first to observe whatsoever the Master has appointed; the second, to teach others to do the same. Whenever the task seems too great for our strength, let us remember the precious promise that He is with us always, as the margin puts it—“all the days,” Never a day can come with its demands, its call for dutiful obedience, but He will be at hand to bear our burden, to help us by the right hand of His strength, to inspire us by the light of His face.

Christian life, after all, comes to this—how much will you obey Christ? If you refuse, you shut yourself out of His best, for He can do nothing for you or with you. But if you surrender yourself to obey, there is no limit to the usefulness and blessedness that must ensue (Gen 18:18-19). To live like this, we must abide in Him, and allow His words, by meditation and prayer, to abide in us. Then obedience ceases to be an effort, but it is the fruit of an exuberant life.

**PRAYER**—*Help us to abide in our calling with Thee, to detect Thy presence in every place. May we realise that every place may be a temple, every duty a service, and that we are part of Thy great host, who do Thy bidding, hearkening to the voice of Thy word. AMEN.*

## QUIET RESTING PLACES

*Isaiah 32:18 "And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;"*

**I**SAIAH'S CONCEPTION of these quiet spots in our lives is set forth in Isa 32:2 of this chapter, as also by the Psalmist in the Psa 23:1-6. It is scorching noon. The glare from the limestone rocks is almost unbearable. The sunbeams strike like sword-blades. Every living creature has fled for shelter from the pitiless heat, with the exception of the little green lizards that dart to and fro in play, or searching for food. The shepherd has led his panting flock down into the valley, where great rocks cast dark shadows. Listen to the musical ripple of the brown-hued brook, as it glides lazily between the mossy banks, and breaks against the little pebbles that line its bed! These are the green pastures and the water of rest!

Have they not their counterpart in our lives! The happy days of childhood, when as yet we hardly knew temptation, and had not felt the unceasing strain of life's tasks; perhaps it is the Sunday rest, with its blessed pause from the fever of activity, the calm and restful atmosphere of the House of God, the quiet stillness of worship and meditation; perhaps a period of convalescence after long illness, when we come slowly back to health and strength; or, it may be the annual holiday, when we spend long happy days by the sea, or in the country, amid the Alps or on the Broads. For physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing we need days and weeks when the machinery of life has time to cool, and the water to drop its silt.

But if we would have an entrance to this peaceful habitation, we must fulfil the conditions. We must make Jesus our King, and put the sceptre of our life absolutely into His hands. We must hide under the shadow of the crucified Man of Nazareth, who offers Himself as a hiding-place from the scorching sirocco, and a covert from the tropical tempest (Isa 32:1, Isa 32:2). Isaiah says this quietness and confidence rest on Righteousness and Justice. They are not the gift of caprice or arbitrary choice. "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," because in the Person of His Son all possible claims have been met (Rom 5:1).

**PRAYER**—*O God, may there be a pause in the busy rush of doily life, not only in outward seeming, but in our inward temper. May our anxieties and cares be borne by Thyself on whom we cast them, that there may be nothing to break the repose and serenity of our hearts. Ordain peace for us, because Thou hast also wrought all our works in us. AMEN.*

## A NEW NAME!

*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."*

*Revelation 3:12 "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."*

**T**HROUGHOUT THE Bible, name stands for nature. In those wise old days, names were not given because of their euphonious sound, but as revealing some characteristic trait. Shepherds are said to name their sheep by their defects; in some cases Old Testament names seem to have been given on the same principle. It was so with Jacob. When the Angel said: "What is thy name?" he answered, "Jacob," *supplanter*: Never shrink, in your dealings with God, to call yourself by your own specific title, whether it be the least of all saints, the chief of sinners, or the dissembler and cheat!

The first condition of losing our old nature is to confess to its possession; the next is to yield to God. Be conquered by God, yield to Him, submit to His Will, especially in that one point where His Spirit presses thee hard. Life is full of the approaches of the wrestling Angel, only we rebut instead of allowing ourselves to be vanquished by Him. Each time we allow God to have His way in some new point of our character, we acquire the new name. In other words, a new phase of character is developed, a new touch of the Divine love passes into our being, and we are transformed more perfectly into His likeness, whose Name comprehends all names. Jacob becomes Israel; Simon becomes Peter the Rock-man; Saul becomes Paul the Apostle.

When God calls us by a new name, He communicates to us a new Name for Himself. In other words, He gives us a deeper revelation of Himself. He reveals attributes which before had been concealed. The Apostle in the Apocalypse tells us that every time we overcome, God gives to us a white stone, in which His new name is written, in evident reference to the pure diamond of the Urim and Thummim, by which He spoke to Israel, and on which *Jehovah* was engraved (Exo 28:29-30; Rev 2:17). Each victor over sin has his own stone of Urim, knows God's will at first hand, and has revelations of God's character, which only he knows to whom they are made (Matt 11:25).

**PRAYER**—*Give unto us, O God, the white stone with the new Name written on it, that he only knows who receives it. Manifest Thyself to us as Thou dost not to the world. AMEN.*

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## THE ELDER BROTHER

*Luke 15:28,31 "And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. ... And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."*

**O**F THE two, I think the prodigal attracts more interest and affection than his elder brother. Esau seems a more attractive character than Jacob; the publican than the Pharisee, who rejoices that he is not as others! Probably it is because we are conscious of a closer affinity to the life of sense and passion, than to that of outward decorum and respectability.

The elder son had a goodly heritage. He had his father's companionship in all the changing seasons of the year, and all the following years of his life; he had the comfortable assurance that he had never at any time transgressed the commands and directions which his father gave, so that he was saved from the inward canker of bitter remorse; he was at liberty to help himself, not only to a share of all that his father possessed, but to it all—*all that I have is thine*.

This is *our* heritage also, as the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. We may live always in the presence and with the companionship of God, talking over with Him all that concerns our lives and His work; we, too, are at liberty to draw on His vast resources, for whatever we require, since all that He has is ours in Christ, to be claimed by constant faith.

How loveless and selfish was the spirit of the elder brother! He was jealous of the welcome accorded to the prodigal, and complained that so much should be lavished on one whose conduct had been so great a contrast to his own. His selfish spirit alienated him from his father, who had to go out and intreat him to come in, for selfishness always isolates. The spirit which magnifies itself for its own virtues is not the spirit of true religion, however correct the exterior life may be.

Let us each ask ourselves: Can God our Father address us in such words as these? Can we be regarded with His grace and heavenly benediction, the sons of God without rebuke? If not, we are really as much prodigals as our brethren, for we are throwing away opportunities which angels covet. Let us arise and come back to our Father. Let us enter into His joy; let His joy enter our hearts, that we may make merry and be glad.

**PRAYER**—*Father, I have sinned., bring me back again into the old blessed companionship and fellowship, that I may live with Thee on earth, until Thou callest me to live with Thee in Heaven. AMEN.*

## FIDELITY TO OUR PLEDGES

*Psalm 61:5 "For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name."*

*Psalm 116:18 "I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,"*

**T**HE PSALMIST had been brought very low by the sorrows of death, but God had mercifully intervened to deliver him in answer to his cry, and he now walked before Him in the land of the living. It seemed as though the cup of salvation had been put into his hand, overflowing with blessing. He tells us that God had loosed his bonds, as though he had been some wild creature of the woods, who had been entrapped, but was now set free and able to realise its former glad buoyancy of life.

Under such circumstances, it is natural to ask, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His mercies toward me?" The first and most reasonable thing is to pay the vows which we promised when we were in trouble. Nothing so deadens the heart as to vow and not to pay.

We ought to fulfil our vows for many reasons. First, because it is dishonouring to God to play fast and loose with Him; second, it deteriorates character to resolve and not to do, for such failures render the next resolutions still more brittle; third, it is a great hindrance to those who may have heard us make our vows, when we go back on them; fourth, the vow which is not kept shows that we have failed, both in vowing and performing, to rely on the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. When a deed, from the inception of the first thought to its ultimate performance, is wrought in God, there can be no fear that it will not become permanent (John 3:21).

If you have vowed to be God's servant, see that you are as you have vowed; if you have promised service, money, gifts, amendment, or lifelong devotion, be sure that your promise is kept. What a glorious affirmation is in Psa 116:16 : "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant." The reduplication of the sentence is very significant, especially when joined to Psa 118:27. Do we not need to be tied by the cords of faith and hope and love of the mercies of God, and by the keeping grace of the Holy Spirit. Our own resolutions and pledges are so frail and uncertain, but God's grace is sufficient to make us what we long to be in our best moments (Rom 12:1-2).

**PRAYER**—*Defend us, O Lord, from the treachery of our unfaithful hearts. We are exceedingly frail and indisposed to every virtuous and gallant undertaking, Grant that we may bring our vessel safe to shore, unto our desired haven. AMEN.*

## THE PROMISE OF RESURRECTION

*Hosea 6:2 "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."*

*1 Corinthians 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."*

**D**EATH IS the precursor of life, and we cannot truly reach Easter unless we first descend into the grave. Blessed are they who descend thither in hope; their soul shall not be left in the land of shadow, nor will God permit His holy ones to see corruption. God will revive them, and they shall live. On the third day our Lord Jesus rose from the dead, and this is the foundation-hope for the world.

"Come, let us return unto the Lord." There is always resurrection, hope, and joy for those who repent of their sins. True repentance is a humble return to God; and as we draw nigh to Him, He meets us with healing and salvation. The result of His coming is like the dawn, or as the spring-rains. Light and joy, fertility and beauty are the immediate response of the soul to His advent.

Do you find yourself in the dark grave of circumstances? Be of good cheer. One of God's angels is on his way to roll away the stone. Though our Lord was crucified, yet on the third day God raised Him up, and He lives and reigns at the right hand of God; and we also may live with Him, by the same power, not in the other world only, but in this. God will raise you up, and you shall live in His sight. The best is yet to be!

"Let us follow on to know the Lord." We may always count on Him. If there is any variation in our relations with Him, it is on our side, not on His. Just as surely as we return to Him, we shall find Him coming to meet and greet and receive us with a glad welcome. When the prodigal was a great way off, his father saw him, and ran to meet him! Is there any doubt about our reception? No, there cannot be! God our Father is always waiting for us. In Him there is no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. As certainly as we count on the day-spring may we count on God. Let your soul move towards Him out of the grave of doubt and despair, and on the third day—the Day of Resurrection—He will be revealed.

**PRAYER**—*May our self-life be crucified with Christ, that His life may be manifest in us; and out of the grave may there spring a more complete resemblance to our Risen Saviour, so that all may see in us daily evidence of the Resurrection of our Lord. AMEN.*

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## PRAISING THE LORD

*Psalm 147:1 "Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely."*

**I**T IS a comely and befitting thing for us to blend praise and prayer. There is a difference between praise and thanksgiving. We thank God for what He has done for us; we praise Him for what He is in Himself. In praise we come nearest to the worship of Heaven, where the Angels and the Redeemed find the loftiest exercise of their faculties in ascribing praise, and honour, and glory to God. In my private devotions, I find nothing more helpful than to recite the *Te Deum* before asking for any gift at the hand of God. It seems to put God in His right place, and to bow the soul before Him in the attitude of adoration and praise. "It is good to sing praises, and praise is comely."

*Let us praise His condescending love (Psa 147:1-6).* He counts the number of the stars as a shepherd tells his sheep. The Psalmist likens the constellations to a flock of sheep, which their shepherd is driving through space. What a sublime conception of suns, planets, and asteroids! Yet this wonderful and infinite God can bend over our little lives, and take special notice of the outcasts, the broken-hearted, the sorely wounded, and the meek. None are too small and insignificant for His notice. Just as a mother is most careful and thoughtful for the smallest and most ailing child in her family, so God's tenderest, strongest, and most efficient help is displayed towards the neediest and most helpless of His children. He always seeks the lost sheep and the prodigal child.

*Let us praise God's work in providence.* Notice the present tenses in this Psalm. The Psalmist felt that God was always working in nature, and that everything was due to the direct action of His Providence. And Jesus confirmed this when He said that no sparrow fell to the ground without the Father's notice. The pure in heart, the childlike, and the meek have this prerogative of seeing God's hand in all things. God is; God is everywhere active and energetic; and therefore there is no point of space, and no moment of time, in which He does not operate. "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name" (Heb 13:15).

**PRAYER**—*We beseech Thee, give us that due sense of all Thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth Thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to Thy service, and by walking before Thee in holiness and righteousness all our days: through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.*

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## GLADNESS AND THANKSGIVING

*Isaiah 25:9 "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."*

**T**HIS SONG of praise was composed by Isaiah to be sung when the proud city of Babylon, which for so many years had menaced the liberty of the Hebrew people, should be overthrown. The prophet is so certain that the oppression of evil will ultimately come to desolation, and that the world shall be relieved of the awful incubus of its tyranny, that he prepares the song which was presently to break out in joyful thanksgiving. As certainly as the torrid heat of the meridian sun is reduced by the interposition of the shadow of a cloud, so should the pride and boast of the terrible ones be brought low.

The full significance of this song of praise will be realized only in Heaven, when we sit down at the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb (Isa 25:6-8). All the Babylons which have menaced the well-being of mankind will have been destroyed then. The veil of unbelief and uncertainty, which now lies so heavily over the world, will have been torn from top to bottom. Death will have been swallowed up in life; tears will have been wiped away, and our reproach will be over. What abounding joy will be our portion then. Let the anticipation of it excite our thanks.

Are you poor? Make God your stronghold. Are you needy and in distress? Make Him your hiding-place. Does the storm beat on you? Flee to Him for refuge. Are you scorched by the heat of temptation? Stand beneath His shadow. God your Father will not leave you alone. Your need is your best argument; your helplessness an all-sufficient plea. For you, too, there shall be song and feasting (Isa 25:4,6).

Praise is our highest exercise. In prayer we often approach God for more or less selfish reasons; in praise we adore Him for what He is in Himself. However tired and weary you may be, see to it that the morning hour of devotion begins with the keynote of thanksgiving and adoration. It is marvellous how this quickens the pulse of the soul, and reacts upon every moment that follows. "Awake, psaltery and harp," said the Psalmist; "I myself will awake right early."

**PRAYER**—*O Lord, Thou art my God. I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thy Name; for Thou hast done wonderful things for my soul. Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. AMEN.*

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## CHRISTIAN COURTESY

*1 Peter 3:8 "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:"*

**I**T WOULD be a marvel to find in any community under heaven a complete embodiment of the injunctions contained in this and the following verses. Yet nothing less than this is the Christian ideal, and it would be well if, without waiting for others, each one would adopt these precepts as the binding rule and regulation of daily life. This would be our worthiest contribution to the convincing of the world, and to the coming of the Kingdom of our Lord. Does not the Apostle's use of the word "*finally*" teach us that all Christian doctrines are intended to lead up to and inaugurate that life of love, the bold outlines of which are sketched in these words?

*The general principle.* "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another." This oneness of mind does not demand the monotony of similarity, but unity in variety. We shall never be of one mind in the sense of all holding the same opinions; but we may be all of one mind when, beneath diversities of opinion, expression, and view, we are animated by a common devotion to Christ.

Note the specific applications.

*Love as brethren.* Love is not identical with like. Providence does not ask us whom we would like to be our brethren—that is settled for us; but we are bidden to love them, irrespective of our natural predilections and tastes. Love does not necessarily originate in the emotions, but in the will; it consists not in feeling, but in doing; not in sentiment, but in action; not in soft words, but in unselfish deeds.

*Be pitiful.* Oh, for the compassion of our blessed Lord! How often it breaks out in the Gospel narrative to the weak and erring, to the hungry crowds, and to the afflicted who sought His help!

*Be courteous.* Be ready to take the least comfortable seat, or to let others sit while you stand. Let the manners of your Heavenly Father's Court be always evident in your daily life, so that the world may learn that Christianity produces not simply the heroism of a great occasion, but the minute courtesies of daily living.

**PRAYER**—*Blessed Lord, I beseech Thee to pour down upon me such grace as may not only cleanse this life of mine, but beautify it a little, if it be Thy will .... Grant that I may love Thee with all my heart and soul and mind and strength, and my neighbour as myself. AMEN.*

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## THE GLORY OF CHRIST

*John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*

**T**HE GLORY of Christ is apparent, as we study the titles which are given to Him in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel.

*The Word* (John 1:1). As the words we speak reveal our character, so Jesus is the speech of the invisible God. He has uttered or declared God (John 14:10). The Psalmist said that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork to the ends of the earth, but in the fairest panorama of the starry heavens, or sunset clouds, there was never such a presentation of God in nature as we have in Jesus.

*The Creator* (John 1:2-3). In the strongest language he could command, the apostle inscribes the Name of Jesus on all things that are in heaven above and in the earth beneath. The iron of which the nails were made that transfixed Him to the Cross; the wood of which it was composed, the thorns which composed His crown, all were due to His creative fiat.

*Life and Light* (John 1:4). It pleased the Father that life should reside in His human nature, as its cistern and reservoir, so that from Him we should derive eternal life, communicated through faith. In His life is light.

*The Messiah* (John 1:10-11). "He came unto His own."

*The Shekinah* (John 1:14). Now and again, during our Lord's earthly career, the curtain of His human nature seemed to part and to emit some gleams of the radiant splendour of His Being. It was so on the Transfiguration mount, and again in His Resurrection and Ascension. The glory was full of grace and truth.

*The Only-Begotten Son* (John 1:12-14). We may be sons thank God, but He was *The Son*. Whatever is implied in that phrase "Only-Begotten," He is separated from the noblest of the children of men by a measureless and impassable chasm. Yet how wonderful it is, that He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Let us give glory and homage to Him.

**PRAYER**— *Love infinite, love tender, love unsought;  
Love changeless, love rejoicing, love victorious!  
And this great love for us in boundless store;  
God's everlasting love! What would we more. Amen*

## A COMFORTING LETTER

*Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."*

**WE** HAVE much to learn from the good advice given in this letter. These exiles were unwilling to settle in the land to which they had been transported. They were always fretting and planning; talking of the past and contriving plans for returning to their own land and to the inheritance which they had forfeited. Therefore this letter was sent, not only to them, but to all in similar circumstances.

*Are you in captivity?* Your circumstances are the restraint and fetters that hold you. No prisoner in a cell could be more helpless than you are. You cannot do as you would, but you can be. Be the best you can where you are, and wait the Lord's leisure. It is by fidelity in discharging present obligations that you become fitted for better work.

*Consider the needs of those around you* (Jer 29:7). In this the story of Joseph is a remarkable example. When he was cast into prison, he set to work to minister to the prisoners there. What a light and comfort emanated from him, as he went to and fro among them, taking a personal interest in each—"Wherefore look ye so sadly today?" (Gen 40:6-7). In the peace of those to whom we minister, we shall find our own peace.

*Words of comfort and hope were spoken to the captives.* Hard though their outward lot seemed, God was thinking thoughts of peace, not of evil, with respect to them. So with us; we may be having a bad time; it may appear as though everything were against us, hard, comfortless, uninviting. But in His holy heaven God is thinking about you, and His thoughts are those of peace, and not of evil. Therefore the horizon is flushed with hope. There is a good time coming, and you will forget this present, as waters that pass away. There is an allotted time to your present trouble. God will surely visit you, and perform His good word towards you.

In the meanwhile, *we must live a life of constant prayer.* "Ye shall call upon Me, and I will hearken unto you; ye shall seek Me, and I will be found of you" (Jer 29:12-14). We must live in a spirit of prayer and faith and converse with God. For all these things God will be enquired of, to do them.

**PRAYER**—*For all Thy gracious care of us we reverently thank Thee, and if Thou hast permitted things to happen which have tried us sore and filled us with bitterness, help us to believe in Thine infinite love which chastens us, that through the discipline of our life we may be made partakers of Thy holiness. AMEN.*

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## THE LORD REIGNETH!

*Psalm 97:2,12 "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. ... Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."*

**B**EHIND ALL clouds is the clear pure ether of God's love. We are not dismayed by the storms that sweep the earth's surface, for beneath them are unfathomed depths of stillness. God sees His way through them, and is using them to fulfil His great purpose. Difficulties are nothing to Him. He weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance. He is our Father, and we need not fear. The children who are snugly ensconced in the car which their father is driving are not afraid of the hailstorm that rattles on the window and the wild winds that sweep the earth. It is enough for them that their father is with them, and knows his way, and is making swiftly for home. And if we are following hard after God, then His right hand will uphold us, and we can leave all the rest with Him.

None of them that wait for Him shall be ashamed. Revolution and anarchy may devastate the land. Storms of deluge may sweep the world. The savings of a lifetime may disappear, but we shall be kept in perfect peace. The Lord reigneth, and He will ever be mindful of His covenant. We shall not want for sustaining grace. If we cleave unto God, we shall be upheld by His right hand, and no man is able to pluck us from the Father's hand. God, not selfish ease, nor human confederacies, is our end and aim; and He will not, cannot fail those who have left all for His companionship. Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, and the labour of the olive shall fail, and the flock shall be cut off from the fold, yet we will rejoice in the Lord; for the Lord God shall supply all our need, and will make our feet, like hind's feet, to walk even on the edge of the precipice.

The world is full of tumult. The floods have lifted up their voice, but above the noise of many waters, the Lord on high is mighty; and He must reign till He hath put all enemies beneath His feet. Remember that when He was mocked in Pilate's hall, His enemies placed a reed in His hand. They were nearer the truth than they knew, for He who opens the sealed book of destiny, is the Lamb that was slain. He rules with the reed as the symbol of His government.

**PRAYER**—*Our Father, let us hear Thee say to us, as we step forth into the untried day, that Thou art with us, holding our right hand. Keep us in the midst of the storm, and guide us by the untrodden path. AMEN.*

## JESUS AS KING

*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."*

**O**UR LORD'S Royalty is suggested by the opening paragraphs of St. Matthew's Gospel, which emphasizes His descent from David; the wise men asked for Him who is born King of the Jews, and Herod feared His rivalry. All through the Gospel narrative, stress is constantly laid on the fact that He was King of the Jews and King of Israel, and it ends with the regal claim that all power and authority in heaven and earth had been entrusted to Him.

Jesus never abated His claim to Kingship, but always made it clear that His ideal was very different from that which was current among the Jews. His conception of Royalty was borrowed from Psa 72:4, where the King is said to judge the poor of the people, and save the children of the needy. It was the collision between His idea of Kingship and that of the Pharisees, which brought Him to the Cross.

For us the lesson is clear. We must begin with the recognition of the royal claims of Christ to our homage and obedience. He only becomes Saviour, in the fullest meaning of the word, when He has been enthroned as King in our hearts. With invariable precision He is described, first as Prince, then as Saviour, and that order cannot be altered without injury to our soul-life (Acts 5:31; Rom 10:9; Heb 7:2). The whole content of the New Testament is altered when we view the Royalty of Christ as the chief cornerstone, not only of that structure, but of the edifice of character.

Let us not be afraid of Christ as King. He is meek and lowly, and full of understanding of the problems of our life. He shared our life, and was so poor that He had to trust in the kind offices of a friend to supply His physical needs, and in the palm branches of the peasant crowd for His palfrey and the carpeting of His royal procession; but as we watch it pass, the lowly triumph swells in proportions until it represents the whole race of mankind; and the generations that preceded His advent, and those that follow, sweep down the Ages of human history, proclaiming and acclaiming Christ as King. (Rev 15:3-4).

**PRAYER**—*O God, may our hearts indite good matter, that our mouth may speak of our King. Whilst we adore Him as Wonderful may He become to us the Prince of Peace. Enable us to put the government of our lives upon His shoulder, and of His government and of our peace let there be no end. AMEN.*

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## THE MARCH OF GOD'S PROGRESS

*1 Corinthians 15:24 "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."*

**W**HITHER IS God moving? When we speak of the eternal progress of the Almighty, it must be remembered that we are adopting human speech, because God lives in the eternal present. He is Jehovah—"I AM!"

God is moving to the supreme exaltation of our Saviour. Christ must and will reign, and the Father's power is even now engaged in putting all things under His feet. He has given Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. It is true that we see not yet all things put under Him, but God is even now engaged in hastening the fulfilment of His eternal plan. The rise and fall of rulers and kingdoms within the last few years; the clamour for new methods of government has menaced the ancient order; the vortex of elections; the babel of voices; the rivalry of statesmen and parties! What of these? They are the clouds of His feet, the movement of His pieces on the board, the successive stages in the unfolding of His plan. Watch the Divine strategy! God raises up one, and puts down another; there is not an item in the newspaper, nor a change on the map, nor a revolution among the people, however obscure, that is not contributing to that final scene, when the Son of Man shall come to the Ancient of Days, and there shall be given Him dominion and glory, and a Kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages shall serve Him!

There is need for us all to know God's movements, especially in this momentous era, because only so can we enter into His Rest. We can look out calmly on a world in confusion when once we have learnt to understand the Divine programme of gathering up all things in Christ, who is the Head. To the careless world His way is in the sea, and His paths in the deep waters, and His footsteps are not known; but to those who love and follow Him, the heavens may depart, the hills be removed; but His kindness shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of His peace be removed.

**PRAYER**—*Hasten the coming of Thy Kingdom, O Lord, the fulfilment of Thy purpose. Keep us watchful and alert, that at any moment we may discern the movement of Thy hand, and detect Thy will and guidance in the providence of little things. AMEN.*

## MORTALITY SWALLOWED UP OF LIFE

2 Corinthians 5:1 “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

**T**HIS CHAPTER begins with *We know*. There is no shadow of uncertainty. From first to last it is saturated with unwavering conviction. When it was written Faith and Hope had almost faded out of the world. Men and women were groping in the wilderness of atheism, with no star in their sky, and no oasis in their march. In the midst of a decadent civilization and vanished hope, Paul, and others who stood with him, dared to avow that there were certain facts of which man might be absolutely sure. They were not proved by argument or analogy, but discerned by the Spirit's intuition, and proved by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We must always distinguish between *theories*, which change with the various moods of human thought, and the eternal *facts*, which are established on solid testimony, and are as steadfast as the Throne of the Eternal. “*We know*”—there was an accent of certainty in those words, which changed the outlook of the world!

*God's Objective.* It is an immense help in this human life to know the direction in which God's fiery cloud or pillar is leading us. If only we can get a clue to what God is meaning in our life, it will smooth out many perplexities and disentangle many a ravelled skein. What is God doing for you and me? The Apostle answers—He is endeavouring to bring it about that our mortality may be swallowed up of life. God wants to wipe out in each of us all traces of the Fall. It is His purpose to eliminate everything which brands us as members of an exiled race, so that our mortality, whether of spirit, soul, or body, may be swallowed up by Life—“the life of which our veins are scant, the life for which our spirits pant, more life and fuller!” Think of it! For thee, and me, and all who have been translated from the region of darkness, and brought into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love! Mortality engulfed in Life! We cannot fathom it! We know not what we shall be, we only know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Such is God's objective. He is working for us and in us, for this very thing!

**PRAYER—**        *Carry me over this last long mile,  
                          Man of Nazareth, Christ for me!  
                          Speak to me out of the silent night,  
                          That my spirit may know, as onward I go,  
                          That Thy pierced hands  
                          Are lifting me over the ford. AMEN.*

## LIGHT IN DARKNESS

*Matthew 10:27 "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops."*

**C**HRI<sup>S</sup>T IS often speaking, in the secret of the heart; in the darkness of the night, "when deep sleep falleth upon men; *there* the Master tells us things in the darkness! To listen and obey will save us many a bitter hour.

We may question if it be *His* voice, but we are rarely wrong in detecting that Voice, when it reminds us of duties we have omitted, and calls on us to take up the cross which we have shunned.

There is music, tenderness, love-notes in these dark sayings, like those upon the harp, of which the Psalmist sings (Psa 49:4); the Voice that utters them is not harsh and strident, but tender and gentle. They are intended to teach us how to teach, to enable us to help others who could not understand these hidden things. We have to be taken into the dark, as sensitive paper, to receive impressions that will give pleasure and help to hundreds who could never pass through our experiences.

**PRAYER**— *Lord, speak to me, that I may speak  
In living echoes of Thy tone;  
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek  
Thy erring children lost and lone. 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.

October								
Family					Secret			
1 Kings	3	Ephesians	1	<b>1st</b>	Ezekiel	34	Psalms	83-84
1 Kings	4-5	Ephesians	2	<b>2nd</b>	Ezekiel	35	Psalms	85
1 Kings	6	Ephesians	3	<b>3rd</b>	Ezekiel	36	Psalms	86
1 Kings	7	Ephesians	4	<b>4th</b>	Ezekiel	37	Psalms	87-88
1 Kings	8	Ephesians	5	<b>5th</b>	Ezekiel	38	Psalms	89
1 Kings	9	Ephesians	6	<b>6th</b>	Ezekiel	39	Psalms	90
1 Kings	10	Philippians	1	<b>7th</b>	Ezekiel	40	Psalms	91
1 Kings	11	Philippians	2	<b>8th</b>	Ezekiel	41	Psalms	92-93
1 Kings	12	Philippians	3	<b>9th</b>	Ezekiel	42	Psalms	94
1 Kings	13	Philippians	4	<b>10th</b>	Ezekiel	43	Psalms	95-96
1 Kings	14	Colossians	1	<b>11th</b>	Ezekiel	44	Psalms	97-98
1 Kings	15	Colossians	2	<b>12th</b>	Ezekiel	45	Psalms	99-101
1 Kings	16	Colossians	3	<b>13th</b>	Ezekiel	46	Psalms	102
1 Kings	17	Colossians	4	<b>14th</b>	Ezekiel	47	Psalms	103
1 Kings	18	1 Thess	1	<b>15th</b>	Ezekiel	48	Psalms	104
1 Kings	19	1 Thess	2	<b>16th</b>	Daniel	1	Psalms	105
1 Kings	20	1 Thess	3	<b>17th</b>	Daniel	2	Psalms	106
1 Kings	21	1 Thess	4	<b>18th</b>	Daniel	3	Psalms	107
1 Kings	22	1 Thess	5	<b>19th</b>	Daniel	4	Psalms	108-109
2 Kings	1	2 Thess	1	<b>20th</b>	Daniel	5	Psalms	110-111
2 Kings	2	2 Thess	2	<b>21st</b>	Daniel	6	Psalms	112-113
2 Kings	3	2 Thess	3	<b>22nd</b>	Daniel	7	Psalms	114-115
2 Kings	4	1 Timothy	1	<b>23rd</b>	Daniel	8	Psalms	116
2 Kings	5	1 Timothy	2	<b>24th</b>	Daniel	9	Psalms	117-118
2 Kings	6	1 Timothy	3	<b>25th</b>	Daniel	10	Psalms	119:1-24
2 Kings	7	1 Timothy	4	<b>26th</b>	Daniel	11	Psalms	119:25-48
2 Kings	8	1 Timothy	5	<b>27th</b>	Daniel	12	Psalms	119:49-72
2 Kings	9	1 Timothy	6	<b>28th</b>	Hosea	1	Psalms	119:73-96
2 Kings	10	2 Timothy	1	<b>29th</b>	Hosea	2	Psalms	119:97-120
2 Kings	11-12	2 Timothy	2	<b>30th</b>	Hosea	3-4	Psalms	119:121-144
2 Kings	13	2 Timothy	3	<b>31st</b>	Hosea	5-6	Psalms	119:145-176

November								
Family					Secret			
2 Kings	14	2 Timothy	4	<b>1st</b>	Hosea	7	Psalms	120-122
2 Kings	15	Titus	1	<b>2nd</b>	Hosea	8	Psalms	123-125
2 Kings	16	Titus	2	<b>3rd</b>	Hosea	9	Psalms	126-128
2 Kings	17	Titus	3	<b>4th</b>	Hosea	10	Psalms	129-131
2 Kings	18	Philemon	1	<b>5th</b>	Hosea	11	Psalms	132-134
2 Kings	19	Hebrews	1	<b>6th</b>	Hosea	12	Psalms	135-136
2 Kings	20	Hebrews	2	<b>7th</b>	Hosea	13	Psalms	137-138
2 Kings	21	Hebrews	3	<b>8th</b>	Hosea	14	Psalms	139
2 Kings	22	Hebrews	4	<b>9th</b>	Joel	1	Psalms	140-141
2 Kings	23	Hebrews	5	<b>10th</b>	Joel	2	Psalms	142
2 Kings	24	Hebrews	6	<b>11th</b>	Joel	3	Psalms	143
2 Kings	25	Hebrews	7	<b>12th</b>	Amos	1	Psalms	144
1 Chronicles	1-2	Hebrews	8	<b>13th</b>	Amos	2	Psalms	145
1 Chronicles	3-4	Hebrews	9	<b>14th</b>	Amos	3	Psalms	146-147
1 Chronicles	5-6	Hebrews	10	<b>15th</b>	Amos	4	Psalms	148-150
1 Chronicles	7-8	Hebrews	11	<b>16th</b>	Amos	5	Luke	1:1-38
1 Chronicles	9-10	Hebrews	12	<b>17th</b>	Amos	6	Luke	1:39ff
1 Chronicles	11-12	Hebrews	13	<b>18th</b>	Amos	7	Luke	2
1 Chronicles	13-14	James	1	<b>19th</b>	Amos	8	Luke	3
1 Chronicles	15	James	2	<b>20th</b>	Amos	9	Luke	4
1 Chronicles	16	James	3	<b>21st</b>	Obadiah	1	Luke	5
1 Chronicles	17	James	4	<b>22nd</b>	Jonah	1	Luke	6
1 Chronicles	18	James	5	<b>23rd</b>	Jonah	2	Luke	7
1 Chronicles	19-20	1 Peter	1	<b>24th</b>	Jonah	3	Luke	8
1 Chronicles	21	1 Peter	2	<b>25th</b>	Jonah	4	Luke	9
1 Chronicles	22	1 Peter	3	<b>26th</b>	Micah	1	Luke	10
1 Chronicles	23	1 Peter	4	<b>27th</b>	Micah	2	Luke	11
1 Chronicles	24-25	1 Peter	5	<b>28th</b>	Micah	3	Luke	12
1 Chronicles	26-27	2 Peter	1	<b>29th</b>	Micah	4	Luke	13
1 Chronicles	28	2 Peter	2	<b>30th</b>	Micah	5	Luke	14

December								
Family					Secret			
1 Chronicles	29	2 Peter	3	<b>1st</b>	Micah	6	Luke	15
2 Chronicles	1	1 John	1	<b>2nd</b>	Micah	7	Luke	16
2 Chronicles	2	1 John	2	<b>3rd</b>	Nahum	1	Luke	17
2 Chronicles	3-4	1 John	3	<b>4th</b>	Nahum	2	Luke	18
2 Chronicles	5-6:11	1 John	4	<b>5th</b>	Nahum	3	Luke	19
2 Chronicles	6:12ff	1 John	5	<b>6th</b>	Habakkuk	1	Luke	20
2 Chronicles	7	2 John	1	<b>7th</b>	Habakkuk	2	Luke	21
2 Chronicles	8	3 John	1	<b>8th</b>	Habakkuk	3	Luke	22
2 Chronicles	9	Jude	1	<b>9th</b>	Zephaniah	1	Luke	23
2 Chronicles	10	Revelation	1	<b>10th</b>	Zephaniah	2	Luke	24
2 Chronicles	11-12	Revelation	2	<b>11th</b>	Zephaniah	3	John	1
2 Chronicles	13	Revelation	3	<b>12th</b>	Haggai	1	John	2
2 Chronicles	14-15	Revelation	4	<b>13th</b>	Haggai	2	John	3
2 Chronicles	16	Revelation	5	<b>14th</b>	Zechariah	1	John	4
2 Chronicles	17	Revelation	6	<b>15th</b>	Zechariah	2	John	5
2 Chronicles	18	Revelation	7	<b>16th</b>	Zechariah	3	John	6
2 Chronicles	19-20	Revelation	8	<b>17th</b>	Zechariah	4	John	7
2 Chronicles	21	Revelation	9	<b>18th</b>	Zechariah	5	John	8
2 Chronicles	22-23	Revelation	10	<b>19th</b>	Zechariah	6	John	9
2 Chronicles	24	Revelation	11	<b>20th</b>	Zechariah	7	John	10
2 Chronicles	25	Revelation	12	<b>21st</b>	Zechariah	8	John	11
2 Chronicles	26	Revelation	13	<b>22nd</b>	Zechariah	9	John	12
2 Chronicles	27-28	Revelation	14	<b>23rd</b>	Zechariah	10	John	13
2 Chronicles	29	Revelation	15	<b>24th</b>	Zechariah	11	John	14
2 Chronicles	30	Revelation	16	<b>25th</b>	Zechariah	12-13:1	John	15
2 Chronicles	31	Revelation	17	<b>26th</b>	Zechariah	13:2ff	John	16
2 Chronicles	32	Revelation	18	<b>27th</b>	Zechariah	14	John	17
2 Chronicles	33	Revelation	19	<b>28th</b>	Malachi	1	John	18
2 Chronicles	34	Revelation	20	<b>29th</b>	Malachi	2	John	19
2 Chronicles	35	Revelation	21	<b>30th</b>	Malachi	3	John	20
2 Chronicles	36	Revelation	22	<b>31st</b>	Malachi	4	John	21

**YEAR 2007**  
**O For a Closer Walk with God!**

**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.

## **October 7 & 14 – Help from God**

1 Corinthians 10:13 – There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

## **October 21 & 28 – The Word of God**

Joshua 1:8 – This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

## **November 4 & 11 – The Word of God**

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

## **November 18 & 25 – The Spirit-filled Life**

Ephesians 5:18 – And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

## **December 2 & 9 – Walking in the Spirit**

Galatians 5:16 - This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

## **December 16 & 23 – Living for Christ**

Galatians 2:20 – I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

## **December 30 – Consecrated Living**

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.

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