

# THREE CLASSIC DEVOTIONALS

**F.B. Meyer:**

*Our Daily Walk*

**Oswald Chambers:**

*My Utmost for His Highest*

**A.B. Simpson:**

*Days of Heaven Upon Earth*

**F.B.MEYER**

**OUR DAILY WALK**

**F.B. MEYER: "*LIFE'S MOTTO: "Make the most of me that can be made for Thy glory."*"**

One of the greatly loved preachers of his day, F. B. Meyer was an English Baptist clergyman, author, Bible teacher and evangelist. He was born in London in 1847 and grew up in a Christian home. After attending Brighton College, he graduated from London University in 1869 and completed his theological training at Regents Park Baptist College. Dr. Meyer began pastoring in 1870, and in 1872 he went to Priory Street Baptist Chapel. There he met D. L. Moody, who made a lasting impression upon his life and taught him valuable spiritual lessons. These two godly men formed a lifelong friendship. In 1895 he went to Christ Church in London, with only 100 attending. Within 2 years he was preaching regularly to over 2,000.

He remained there for fifteen years and then began a ministry of conference preaching and evangelism, traveling to South Africa and the Far East on mission endeavors. He returned to England to pastor for several years before he died in 1929. Although, for the most part, his pastorates were in England, Dr. Meyer was a frequent visitor to the United States and Canada. At the age of 80, he conducted his twelfth American preaching campaign, traveling more than 15,000 miles and addressing over 300 meetings. During his long and fruitful life, he preached more than 16,000 sermons. Said one author: "The phrasing of [Meyer's] sermons was simple and direct; he polished his discourses as an artist polishes a perfect stone.

There was always a glowing imagery in his words; his speech was pastoral, lovely as an English valley washed in sunlight....In his day, great wars raged. Those who went to hear him forgot the battles." A distinct feature of F. B. Meyer's ministry was his outcry against the social evils of his day. Not only was he effective in the temperance movement, but he was also responsible for the closing of over 500 houses of prostitution. He also formed a prison aid society. A devoted student of God's Word, he was the author of over 40 books, including Bible biographies (character studies), devotional commentaries, sermon volumes and expository works. He also authored several pamphlets and edited a number of magazines.

He had great influence upon such giants of the Faith as J. Wilbur Chapman and Charles H. Spurgeon. It was Spurgeon who said, "Meyer preaches as a man who has seen God face to face." In 1904-05 he served as president of the National Federation of Free Churches; and thereafter, was evangelist for that organization. He conducted missions for them in South Africa and the far east. For many years he was closely associated with the Keswick Conferences.

F. B. Meyer died in his eighty-second year.

## January 1: MAKING A FRESH START

**"Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."-- (Eph. 4:22-24a)**      **"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."-- (Rom. 13:14)**

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

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

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

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

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

## January 2: CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

**"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."-- Php 2:5.**

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

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

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

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

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

### January 3: CHRIST OUR FRIEND

**"I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known unto you."-- Jn 15:15.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## January 4: OUR CAPTAIN

**"For it became Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many souls unto glory, to make the author (or Captain) of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."-- Heb 2:10-11.**

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

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

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

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

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

## January 5: CHRIST OUR LIGHT

**"I am the Light of the World: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."--  
Jn 8:12.**

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

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

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

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

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



## January 6: CHRIST OUR TEACHER

**"We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."-- Jn 3:2.**

THERE WAS NO doubt that Christ was a Teacher come from God!

Some teachers come evidently enough from man; they speak only of earthly things; their speeches are full of quotations; they imitate, in voice, manner, and method of stating truth, some commanding human teacher at whose feet they have sat. But there was a freshness, a self-witnessing truthfulness, a depth, an authority in the words of the Master, which bore the mint-mark of Deity. Our Lord addressed Nicodemus as "the teacher of Israel" (Jn 3:10 R.V.).

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

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

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

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

## January 7: CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT BLESSEDNESS

**"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful: but his delight is in the law of the Lord."-- Psa 1:1-2.**

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

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

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

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

## January 8: CHRIST, THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

**"Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven." - Mt 5:19.**

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

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

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

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

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

## January 9: CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT TRUST

**"Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?... Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."-- Mt 6:31-32.**

LET US trust God to care for us! This was the life that Jesus lived.

He would not even make stones into bread; nor eat until His Father bade Him and sent the angels to minister to Him. He speaks out of His heart when He bids us trust our Father's care.

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

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

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

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

## January 10: CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT JUDGING OTHERS

**"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."-- Mt 7:1-2.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## January 11: CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT BENEFICENCE

**"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,..., and thy neighbour as thyself.... But he said, And who is my neighbour?"-- Lk 10:27-29.**

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

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

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

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

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

## January 12: CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT RESURRECTION

**"Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord!"-- Jn 11:25-27.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## January 13: THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**"In that same hour He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father; for so it was well pleasing in Thy sight."-- Lk 10:21.**

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

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

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

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

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

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



## January 14: POWER AND PRAYER

**"If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."-- Mk 9:22, 23.**

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

How many there are who seem to be possessed with evil spirits which are wrecking health and peace, and how many make the mistake of this man in bringing their relatives or friends to disciples who as yet have not been baptized with the power of the Holy Spirit (1Co 12:13), and have not entered into the secret place of power. Of course it is not possible for such to afford any real help, and the demon laughs them to scorn! (Acts 19:11-16). We must learn our own inability to deal with the forces of evil that are sweeping through the world, unless we have received power from on high (Lk 10:17, Lk 10:20; Act 1:8).

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

You and I often fail in our faith because of ignorance and besetting sin (Heb 12:KJV). There is the mighty ocean of power all around us, but for some reason we cannot tap it. It is like the electric current, which refuses to help us unless we have instruments precisely adapted to transmit the driving-power. Faith is absolutely necessary for the conveyance of God's power to meet the need and sin and sorrow of the world (He 11:6). But when we find it deficient, when our heart believes not, when we find ourselves face to face with Jerichos that are closely shut, and with mountains that seem to mock the tiny levers with which we propose to move them, then we must turn to Christ and say: "I trust Thee for faith, I trust Thee to keep me trusting: I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." (Mk 9:24)

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

## January 15: THINGS TO BE LEFT BEHIND

**"Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."--Heb 12:1-2.**

**LEAVE BEHIND your past sins (Php 3:13).** They have been many and great, more than you can count. But if you have confessed and forsaken them, they have been put away, "as far as the east is from the west." Nothing could be more explicit than 1Jn 1:9. It is useless to brood over the past. God has buried it in the grave of Christ. Go and sin no more!

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

**Leave behind your accomplished ideals.** They were once far in front and above you. As you climbed they seemed almost inaccessible, and mocking voices rang out their defiance of your attempt. But by the grace of God things that once you dreamt of are now realised, and you are sitting on the peak that once seemed to laugh you to scorn. But you must leave it behind! Look up! look forward! (Col 3:1-2) Are there not fresh ideals calling to you? Leave behind your attainments and strike your tents. One battle is fought, but a yet stronger foe bars the way immediately in front. It is suicidal to rest on your oars; to do so will expose you to the inevitable backward drift.

**The best way to leave behind is to press forward.** (Php 3:14) The Spirit of God bids us "run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus." He is our Forerunner, always before us, always leading us on. His crest, like the plume of Henry of Navarre, is always in the very thick of the fight. Let the soul follow hard after Him, and it will become almost oblivious to what it leaves behind. The boy who is running for the goal, in his eagerness to win the prize, strips himself of one and another article of clothing. He will not count their worth, so long as he may win the prize. So run that ye may attain! Apprehend that for which you were apprehended! Lay hold on the outstretched crown of life! (Php 3:12)

**PRAYER: Most gracious God, quicken me by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may run in the way Thou hast marked out for me. May I ever be kept looking off unto Jesus (Is 45:22 KJV). AMEN.**

## January 16: GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

**"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."-- Mt 1:21.**

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

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

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

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

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

## January 17: WALKING NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT

**"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. That the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."-- Rom 8:1-4 (R.V.).**

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

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

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

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

## January 18: THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

**"For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."-- Rom 8:2.**

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

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

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

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

## January 19: ABIDING IN CHRIST

**"I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing."-- Jn 15:5.**

OUR SAVOUR'S perennial joy was due to His unceasing endeavour to minister help and blessing to others. He saved others; He could not save Himself. He said: "I am the true Vine," i.e., the vine was made by Him in creation to represent a certain phase or characteristic of Himself. It is the reflection in the waters of materialism of eternal principles deep-seated in His own divine nature. The study of the vine is, therefore, specially precious in its teaching. Behind the vine, as we know it, there is an immense pressure of energy. In the spring-tide, it seems as though the love of God were pressing for expression in the corn that supports life, in the oil that makes the face to shine, and in the grape that cheers. The vine cannot bear fruit, of itself; it is only the channel along which the energy of God flows in its endeavour to gladden the heart and life of man. So Jesus is the channel through which the life and love of God reach us, that we may pass them on in loving ministry, and in so doing we are creating and storing up for ourselves infinite joy.

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

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

## January 20: THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

**"I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, He which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty."-- Revelation 1:8**

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

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

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

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

## January 21: REIGNING IN LIFE

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

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

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

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

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

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



## January 22: DISLOCATED LIMBS

**"Now the God of Peace, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ."-- (Heb 13:20-21)**

THE GREEK word here rendered **perfect (katartizo)** really means "to put in joint, to complete." In his original creation man's will was intended to register the Will of God, to say Yes to it, and to pass the divine impulses and commandments to the rest of our being. Sometimes on board ship, before the phone made it possible for the captain to speak to every part of the ocean-liner, I have heard Him quietly utter his orders to a subordinate officer beside him, who in turn repeated them in a loud voice through a speaking-trumpet or tube. That intermediary may represent the will which was intended to receive its directions from the Will of God, and pass them throughout the economy of our being. Such was our Lord's attitude throughout His earthly life. He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me" (Jn 4:34; Jn 17:4); "I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (Jn 6:38, Ps 40:8); "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Mt 26:39, Lk 22:42)

But in the Fall, the dominance of God's will and the loyal response of man's will has become disorganized; and the human will instead of functioning in harmony with the Will of God, began to obey the will of the flesh in its grosser or more refined forms. Not what God wills, but what 'I' will, has become the working principle of the great majority. Thus it has come about that the will, by constant misuse, has become dislocated, warped, "out of joint." Tennyson says: "Our wills are ours to make them Thine!"

Just so, but they are too stubborn for some of us to manage. Hence the suggestion that we should pass the matter over to the "God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus."

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

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

## January 23: THE GARDEN OF THE CROSS

**"In the place where He was crucified, there was a Garden." -- John 19:41.**

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

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

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

### PRAYER

**Your heart's a garden God has sown**

**To give your life the work it needed.**

**Some day He'll come to pluck His flowers,**

**So mind you keep your garden weeded.**

## January 24: **UTTERMOST SALVATION**

**"He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."-- Heb 7:25.**

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

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

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

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

## January 25: GRACE ABOUNDING!

**"God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."-- 2Co 9:8.**

ABUNDANCE IS characteristic of God! Go forth on a spring morning, and look on the flowers with which He has carpeted the woodlands.

Daisies and buttercups, primroses and cowslips in myriads, bear witness to the prodigality of His thought and power-- His thought to fashion, His power to produce. But this profuse carpeting of the earth's nakedness is equalled in the heavens! There, depth opens beyond depth, lighted and inlaid with constellations, and the wonders of the sky answer to those of the earth. How multitudinous is God's creation!

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

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

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

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

## January 26: KNOCKING AT THE DOOR!

**"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: Be zealous therefore and repent. Behold I stand at the door, and knock."--  
Rev 3:19-20.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## January 27: CHRIST PLEADING FOR ADMISSION

**"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."--Rev 3:20.**

DO NOT forget the majesty and glory of Him who asks for admission!

In the following verse, He declares that He is able to give the right of sitting with Himself on His Throne. He stands, that some day we may sit! O child of two worlds, shut your ear to the chatterings and noise of this passing age, and listen to Him who stands at the door of your life and knocks!

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

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

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

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

## January 28: DAY-BREAK ON THE BEACH

**"When the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus."--  
Jn 21:4.**

THE PREVIOUS evening had been full of interest and hope. Those seven fishermen had long been separated from their craft, and thinking probably that they were not to see their Master again, they betook themselves, with considerable zest, to the shore of the Lake. They entered the old familiar boat, and that night they caught nothing! It was the last fishing expedition they were to have. They were to navigate other waters, use other nets, and sail under other skies. The greatness of their disappointment was to block the door in that direction and open it in another. No longer fishermen on the shores of Galilee, but shepherds, pasturing their flocks on the celestial mountains, whence views are to be obtained, in fair weather, of the Eternal City. Has your life been a disappointment? Did you start out, years ago, with good heart and hope? Perhaps the winds were soft, the starlight brilliant, and there was a chance of the moon breaking through. But the sky soon clouded over, and the years have gone wearily! It isn't that you have been idle, but for some reason everything has miscarried; and now there seems nothing for it but to land on the shore of Eternity, as Paul did on the shore at Malta. But do not be too sure of this! When the morning breaks on that coastline, it is more than likely that you will see Jesus standing on the beach. He will know the time of your arrival, and will come down to meet you, as He did for the first martyr, Stephen, and has done for a multitude beside. It is very pleasant, as in the big ship, you emerge from the night, to see familiar faces greeting you, or even one dear face with a smile of welcome awaiting your coming! It may happen to be the landing-stage at New York, Bombay, Melbourne, or Liverpool, but what a difference it makes! And when the Day of days shall break, and the shadows flee away, and the little boat of our life grates on the shore, it will be good indeed to see Christ standing there, with His outstretched hand to welcome, to help us disembark, to lead us to the prepared place on which He has expended thought and care. "I go to prepare a place for you I will come again to receive you unto Myself."

### PRAYER

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

## January 29: LOVE'S REVELATIONS!

**"That disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter: It is the Lord."-- Jn 21:7.**

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

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

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

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

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



## January 30: DESCENDING AND ASCENDING

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **January 31: TURNING THINGS UPSIDE DOWN**

**"Ye turn things upside down! Shall the Potter be counted as clay; that the thing made should say of Him that made it, He made me not, He hath no understanding."-- Isa 29:16 (R.V. marg.).**

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

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

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

## February 1: THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

**"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."--  
Jn 18:37.**

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

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

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

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

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

## February 2: THE MYSTERY OF REGENERATION

**"Jesus said unto him, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus said: How can a man be born when he is old?"-- Jn 3:3-4.**

MARVEL NOT! said Jesus to Nicodemus--but notwithstanding, it is difficult not to marvel at the wonder and mystery of the New Birth.

Birth, as in the case of the little chick, is emergence. It is the emergence of a tiny creature from darkness and confinement into the great world, with its over-arching blue, its mantle of green, and its abundant wealth. So the mineral may be born into the vegetable, the vegetable into the animal, the animal into the human, the human into the divine. But in each case the process is the same. We are born from above. In other words, the kingdom above us must stoop down and take us into union with itself.

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

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

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

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

### February 3: THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

**"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life."-- Jn 4:14.**

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

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

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

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

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

## February 4: SPRING UP, O WELL!

**"He that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely."-- Rev 22:17.**

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

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

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

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

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

## February 5: GOD'S GUIDING HAND IN OUR LIVES

**"The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want."-- Psa 23:1.**

**"When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice."-- Jn 10:4.**

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

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

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

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

## February 6: THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL

**"One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things Which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."-- Phi 3:13-14**

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

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

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

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

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

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



## February 7: VISION AND PURPOSE

**"I said, What shall I do, Lord?"-- Act 22:10.**

**"Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on toward the goal."-- Php 3:12-14.**

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

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

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

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

## February 8: FAITHFULNESS IN DAILY LIFE

**"With goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men."-- Eph 6:7.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## February 9: CHANGING OUR STRENGTH

**"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."-- Isa 40:31.**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRAYER: Thou knowest, Lord, how often I am sorely let and hindered in running the race which is set before me.**

**May Thy bountiful grace and mercy come to my help, that I may finish my course with joy, and receive the crown of life. AMEN.**

## February 10: THE WATER OF LIFE TURNED TO WINE!

**"Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim."-- Jn 2:5-7.**

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

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

In your obedience, always give Christ brimful measure. It may be a very small thing He asks you to do--to teach a class of children, to pay a visit to some sick man or woman, to write a letter, to speak a word of comfort, to hold out the helping hand, to give the glass of cold water, but see to it that your response is hearty and brimful! The jar is your opportunity! A very common and ordinary one! An act that may seem needless or inconvenient; but out of it may come the greatest achievement of your life! When the Lord calls you into co-partnership, be sure not to say: "Please do not ask me!" Nay, serve Him to the brim! He never asks you to do one small act for Him, without being prepared to add His Almighty grace to your weakness, thereby perfecting the act. It is an amazing thing that He should want our help. Let us give Him to the brim, and, as we do so, we shall see a wonderful and beautiful thing, which is "hidden from wise and prudent, but revealed to babes". "The servants who drew the water knew." Many of us realise that this miracle is constantly taking place. We fill our waterpots to the brim with water; but at the end of days of careful preparation we sadly review the result, and say to ourselves: "After all, it is very poor stuff, only water at the best!" But as we pour it out in service to others, we know that the Master has been collaborating with us, and has turned the water into wine! There are secrets between the Lord and those who obey Him! It is blessed when we are workers together with Christ. He knows, and you know. A smile passes between you and Him, and it is enough! The best wine is always kept in reserve!

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

## February 11: THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

**"The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams The Lord is our King; He will save us."--  
Isa 33:21-22.**

THE R.V. translates our text "Jehovah will be with us in Majesty."

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

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

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

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

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

## February 12: EVERY-DAY RELIGION

**"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Having a good conscience."-- 1Pet. 3:15-16**

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

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

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

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

## February 13: GOD'S PARTNERSHIP WITH MAN

**"Come now, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh." And God said, "I AM THAT I AM: Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."-- Exo 3:10-14.**

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

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

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

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

## February 14: GOD'S PARTNERSHIP IN OUR AFFLICTION

**"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them: and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."-- Isa 63:9.**

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

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

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

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

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

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



## February 15: TRANSFIGURED LIVES

**"Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."-- Rom 12:2.**

**"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image."--  
2Co 3:18.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## February 16: THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR US!

**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, Who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."-- Phi 2:5-7.**

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

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

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

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

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

## February 17: SERVING THE LORD

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."-- Rom 12:1.**

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

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

First, we understand what the Will of God is; then we present our bodies that it may fulfil itself through us; then we discover that it means goodwill to men, and we become the happy channels of heavenly ministry to those around us in one of the spheres enumerated in Rom 12:6-8 of this chapter. It is impossible to cherish jealousy, because the Head may use this member or that; it is equally impossible to be proud, because we have nothing that we have not received. Let us always remember that each has a special ministry to fulfil, and that we shall find in our daily lot the opportunity of fulfilling it. How many resemble the landowner of the Eastern story, who sold his property in order to go in search of diamonds, and lo! the man who purchased his property found it full of diamonds. Indeed it was the famous Golconda region. In the dally drudgery of life you will find your heavenly opportunity. How many who are pining for a great mission, will never be permitted to enter it, because they despise the low and narrow door of humble service to those in their immediate neighbourhood.

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

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

## February 18: THE CRY OF THE OPPRESSED

**"O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me."-- Isa 38:14.**

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

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

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

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

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

## February 19: THINGS FOR AND AGAINST

"Jacob said: All these things are against me."-- Gen 42:36.

"What shall we then say to these things: If God be for us, who can be against us? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."-- Rom 8:31-37.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## February 20: JOY IN THE HOUR OF TRIAL

**"Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. Knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience."**

**-- Jam 1:2-3.**

WE ARE bidden to count our trials as pure Joy, since our patient endurance leads ultimately to the finished product of a holy character. All the trials and afflictions that beset us are seen and shared by our Heavenly Father. God did not save Israel from the ordeal of affliction, but passed through it with them (Exo 3:7-9; Isa 63:9). Evidently there was a wise purpose to be served by those bitter Egyptian experiences. So with ourselves. There is a reason for our trials which we do not understand now, but we shall do some day, when we stand in the light with God. Afflictions are not always chastisement, though in some cases that may be so; but more often we are in grief through manifold trials, that the proof of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Let us therefore rejoice, and magnify His lovingkindness. What a theme is here for praise! Sweet psalms and hymns have floated down the ages, bearing comfort for myriads, because those who wrote them passed through searching discipline. And it may be that we who have passed through great tribulation will be able to contribute notes in the Heavenly music that the unfallen sons of light could never sing. The Psalter of Eternity could not be complete without the reminiscences, set to music, of the grace that ministered to us in our earthly trials, and brought us up out of the furnace of pain.

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

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

## February 21: THE REFINER'S FIRE

**"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver."-- Mal 3:3.**

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

NOTHING IS harder to bear than the apparent aimlessness of suffering.

They say that what breaks a convict's heart in gaol is to set him to say carry stones from one side of the prison to the other, and then back again! But we must never look upon the trials of life as punishments, because all penalty was borne by our Lord Himself. They are intended to destroy the weeds and rubbish of our natures, as the bonfires do in the gardens. Christ regards us in the light of our eternal interests, of which He alone can judge. If you and I knew what sphere we were to fulfil in the other world, we should understand the significance of His dealings with us, as now we cannot do. The Refiner has a purpose in view, of which those who stand beside Him are ignorant, and, therefore, they are unable to judge the process which He is employing.

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

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

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

## February 22: THE LADDER TO HEAVEN

**"Behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it."-- Gen 28:12.**

**"Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.  
-- Jn 1:51.**

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

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

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



## February 23: THE LESSON OF THE THORN-BUSH

**"The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush .... And God called unto him, and said, Moses, Moses, and he said, Here am I."-- Exo 3:2-4.**

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

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

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

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

## February 24: SONGS FROM A DUST-HEAP!

**"Thy dead shall live!" "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs."-- Isa 26:19.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## February 25: JESUS CHRIST TRIUMPHANT

**"Who is this that cometh from Edom...glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."-- Isa 63:1.**

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

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

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

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

## February 26: THE EXALTED LORD

**"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up."-- Isa 6:1.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## February 27: PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

**"...the Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."-- Phi 4:5-6.**

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

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

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

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

## February 28: A FAITHFUL CREATOR

**"Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a Faithful Creator."-- 1Pe 4:19.**

THE MORE one ponders these words, the more wonderful they appear! That God is faithful is as clear as noonday. He is faithful in the At. return of the seasons and the orbit-order of the stars; faithful in holding back the flood, that it should not overflow the world and destroy the homes of men; faithful to every living creature that He has made, providing for its exact sustenance. Even the odd sparrow, which Christ must have seen thrown in by the dealer, when His Mother bought four others, does not fall to the ground without His notice. God is the Faithful Creator in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. We are not surprised, therefore, to find His faithfulness the theme of Holy Writ; but why does Peter lay emphasis on His faithfulness as Creator, when ministering to the special circumstances of suffering believers? Is not this the reason? We are apt to concentrate our thoughts on the Birth, the Cross, the Grave, the Intercession of our Lord, and to forget that behind all these, deep in the nature of God-- the Almighty Creator--there are ever-welling fountains of faithfulness, love, and tenderness. We are summoned to go back beyond the story of Redemption to the infinite silence of Eternity, when each of us was a distinct thought in the mind of God. In His book, all our members were written, when as yet there was none of them.

Whether we have realised that eternal purpose is open to serious questioning, but everyone of us has a right to look into the face of God, and say "Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments." We may not question God's dealings with us. They are immutably wise and right. But we may claim that in some way He should make good our deficiencies, so that though sorrowful, we should be always rejoicing; though poor we should make many rich; though having nothing, we should scatter our wealth, as though possessing all things. There is no reason why our life should be a failure, no reason why we should not minister richly to others, no reason why, by His grace, we should not be more than conquerors! We may humbly make this claim on the Almighty Creator, and He will not allow His faithfulness to fail!

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

## February 29: THE BANISHMENT OF PAIN

**"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."-- Rev 21:4.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## March 1: WALKING IN GOD'S WAYS AND PATHS

**"Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; Teach me Thy paths." -- Psa 25:4.**

**"He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths." -- Mic 4:2.**

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

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

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

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

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



## March 2: KNOWING AND FOLLOWING

**"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."-- Hos 6:3.**

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

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

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

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

### March 3: THE VIEWPOINT OF THE SANCTUARY

**"It is good for me to draw near to God."-- Psa 73:28.**

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

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

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

Frances Ridley Havergal writes

I am struck with the possibilities of the Christian life! In my own case, what once were far-off possibilities are now actualities; while a new horizon opens before me of possibilities, which also in God's time shall become actualities. Forget the past! Your failures and sins; the fading laurels of past successes; the bitter memories of abortive efforts. Leave them with God! Let the dead bury their dead! Work out your life-plan knowing that God is able and willing to make the necessary grace abound toward you.

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

## March 4: GOD'S CONDESCENSION TO MAN

**"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"-- Psa 8:3-4.**

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

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

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

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

## March 5: STANDING BEFORE GOD

**"Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"-- 1Sa 6:20.**

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

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

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

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

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

## March 6: THE SECRET PLACE OF PRAYER

**"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to Thy Father which is in secret."-- Mat 6:6.**

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

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

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

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

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

## March 7: THE MODEL PRAYER

**"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name."-- Mat 6:9.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## March 8: TURNING PASSION INTO PRAYER

**"Elijah Was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently."-- Jam 5:17 (R.V.).**

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

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

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

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

## March 9: RESOLVE AND DEFEAT

**"Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake."-- Joh 13:37.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## March 10: BROKEN CISTERNS

**"They have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."-- Jer 2:13.**

**"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."-- John 7:37.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## March 11: FOR ME AND THEE

**"Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee."-- Mat 17:27.**

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

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

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

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

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

## March 12: THE POSSIBILITY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

**"Lord, increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea; and it would have obeyed you."**

**-- Luk 17:5-6 (R.V.).**

YOU ARE asking me to perform the impossible; I am sure that I can never become a great tree, said a tiny mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, as it lay on the soft mould where it had dropped.

Suddenly it was caught up with a spadeful of earth, and buffed, it seemed, fathoms deep; in reality but a few inches! There it lay in darkness and neglect. After some weeks, a tiny green shoot appeared above the ground, and looked up to where the great parent-tree was growing; it whispered softly to itself, "Perhaps I shall be able to do it after all." "Do what?" "Perhaps I shall become a great tree in which the birds may shelter." "But a few weeks ago you said it was impossible then I had no idea that Mother Nature would work in me as she has done; if she goes on pouring herself into me as she has been doing of late, there is nothing that I cannot do; yet not I, but her life which dwelleth and worketh in me."

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

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

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

## March 13: MAIMED: BUT FULLER LIFE

**"If thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off." it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire."-- Mar 9:43 (R.V. marg.).**

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

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

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

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

## March 14: DIVINE DELIVERANCE

**"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust."-- Psa 91:2.**

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

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

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

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

## March 15: RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## March 16: OUR ETERNAL DESTINY

**"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach.., and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. So shall it be in the consummation of the age."-- Mat 13:47-49 (R.V. marg.).**

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

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

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

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

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

## March 17: GOD WRESTLING WITH MAN

**"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."-- Gen 32:28.**

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

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

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

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



## March 18: CONSECRATION

**"Know ye not that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body."**

**-- 1Co 6:19-20 (R.V. marg.).**

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

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

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

## March 19: RISEN WITH CHRIST

**"If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God."-- Col 3:1 (R.V.).**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## March 20: STOOPING TO RISE

**"Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him."-- Phi 2:8-9.**

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

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

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

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

## March 21: A NEW BEATITUDE

**"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."-- Mat 11:6.**

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

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

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

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

## March 22: THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

**"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."-- Phi 2:5.**

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

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

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

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

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

## March 23: THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

**"Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."-- Rom 6:4.**

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

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

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

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

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

## March 24: FOOLISH EXCUSES

**"Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse." -- Luk 14:17-18.**

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

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

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

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

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

## March 25: MUSIC AND DANCING!

**"As he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing And he was angry, and would not go in."**

**--- Luk 15:25-28.**

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

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

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

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

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



## March 26: THE MORNING COMETH

**"And the evening and the morning were the first day."-- Gen 1:5.**

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

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

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

## March 27: THE LORD IS AT HAND

**"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." -- Mat 28:20.**

THERE IS an added beauty and meaning in these words when we translate the Greek into literal English: "I am with you all the days."

How fresh and vital and inspiring they are! Though familiar as household words, they refresh us like the breath of a spring morning laden with the ozone of the sea.

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

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

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

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

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

## March 28: THE SOUL'S AMEN

**"Then answered I, and said, Amen, O Lord."-- Jer 11:5 (R.V.).**

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

The soul's affirmation. Let us guard against mistake. It is not always possible to say "Amen"--Yes--to God, in tones of triumph and ecstasy. Sometimes our response is choked with sobs that cannot be stifled, and soaked with tears that cannot be repressed. It was probably so with Abraham, when he tore himself from Ur of the Chaldees; when he waited weary years for his son; when he climbed the steep of Moriah. These words may be read by some who suffer year after year constant pain, by those whose earthly life is tossed upon the sea of anxiety, over which billows of care and turmoil perpetually roll. It is not improbable that these will protest as to the possibility of saying "Amen" to God's providential dealings, or they will ask: Of what avail is it to utter with the lips a word against which the whole heart stands in revolt? In reply, let all such remember that our blessed Lord, in the garden, was content to put His will upon the side of God. He knew it was enough if, in the lower parts of the earth to which His human nature had descended, He was able, unflinchingly to affirm, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

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

### PRAYER

**For all things beautiful, and good, and true;**

**For all things that seemed not good yet turned to good;**

**For all the sweet compulsions of Thy Will**

**That chased, and tried, and wrought us to Thy shape--**

**We thank Thee, Lord.**

## March 29: THE CHILD IN THE MIDST

**"He called to Him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily! say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."-- Mat 18:2-3 (R.V.).**

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

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

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

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

## March 30: THE PERFECTING OF CHRIST

**"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."-- Heb 5:8-9.**

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

As regards His Nature, it was impossible for Him to be otherwise than perfect. In Him all the fullness of the Divine Nature dwelt without let or hindrance. But since the children partook of flesh and blood, He also Himself partook of the same; it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren. To each of us He says: "I have trodden this path before Thee, and know every inch of the way." Christ is the Great-Heart, the Companion for all pilgrim souls. But if we are to walk with Him, and realize His eternal salvation, we must learn to obey. This is the lesson taught to the scientist by Nature. He must be exact, minute, microscopic in his attention and obedience to details. If he should fail in one tiny point, his best-conceived plans and experiments must fail. Exact obedience is essential to the engineer. The slightest inadvertence will clog and stop the mightiest machine that human ingenuity ever invented. It is, however, in the spiritual sphere that disobedience brings the greatest and most momentous catastrophes. We must learn to obey, even in the dark! Not ours to make reply, or to question God's dealings. He withholds His reasons, but demands our obedience.

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

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

## **March 31: THE LIFE-GIVING STREAM**

**"Every thing shall live whithersoever the river cometh." -- Eze 47:9.**

**"And He shewed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." -- Rev 22:1 (R.V.).**

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

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

## April 1: THE CHOICE OF A LIFE-WORK

**"I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in...Give Thy servant an understanding heart." 1Ki 3:7-9.**

WE SHALL never rightly choose our life-course until we are determined to put first things first. Wealth, honour, fame, the surpassing of our rivals, are not the chief things to be considered, or our judgment will be impaired and our vision distorted. It was because Solomon desired and sought the kingdom and glory of God, that He gave him also the things for which he did not ask (1Ki 3:13; Mat 6:33).

Impressed by the greatness of his responsibilities, the young king had gone to Gibeon to worship God. He wished to fulfil his opportunities to their highest measure, and to serve his fatherland, but he realized his inefficiency. Do you feel like this? You realize the wonderful opportunities and responsibilities of life in this marvellous age, and long to be of service to God and your fellows, but what can you do? You are but as a little child, and "know not how to go out or come in." "Going out" stands for the active life in the world of men; "coming in" for the hours spent in the home, in recreation and society. It is like the systole and diastole of the heart's action, which should be alike consecrated to God and of service to man.

Solomon asked for an understanding heart, that he might discern between good and bad. We all need this faculty, that we may discriminate between things that look very much alike, but are different in nature and direction (Heb 5:14; Phi 1:9-10; marg. R.V.). It is not an endowment of intellectual power, but of moral taste and discernment. It has been said, that the difficulty in life is not to discriminate between white and black, but to choose between the different shades of grey. In our fellowships, recreations, literature, business--we are in urgent need of the understanding heart, which listens for and heeds the voice of God.

Solomon offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon the altar (1Ki 3:4). We are required to present our bodies as living sacrifices unto God, which is our reasonable service. Our career is often determined by our circumstances, or by our special gifts and talents, and, on the whole, we succeed best in doing what we like best. But if we yield ourselves to do God's will, He will direct our paths.

**PRAYER: O God, make us diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. May we prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good. AMEN.**

## April 2: GOD'S REQUIREMENTS

**"What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."**

**-- Mic 6:8.**

MICAH WAS a man of the people, and a true patriot. In his day, the political outlook was dark in the extreme, and the prophet felt that one thing only could save his country, and that was a deep and widespread revival of religion. To the inquiry of the people as to whether Jehovah desired the sacrifice of animals, or little children, who were immolated by the heathen people around in order to rid their consciences from sin, the answer came that God required something more spiritual and searching: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, etc."

Let us make this threefold message our own. To do justly, giving not a fraction less than can be rightly claimed from us. Every one of us must acknowledge the righteous claims of our home-circle, and of our neigh-bouts, and we must adjust these claims, giving each his due.

Let us love mercy. There are some who have perhaps forfeited all claim on our mercy--the prisoner, the fallen, the helpless, our enemies--we must help all these not grudgingly, but cheerfully and willingly. Do not try to love mercy till you begin to show it. Dare to step out into a life of unselfish beneficence, and as you do so, you will come to love it. St. James insists that pure religion as much consists in visiting the widow and fatherless in their affliction as in keeping oneself unspotted from the world.

Let us also walk humbly with God, not lagging behind, nor running before, but walking with Him, hand in hand. All down the ages, from Enoch onward, there have been those who walked with God in unstained robes. It is not in sacrifices, or rites, or church-going, or almsgiving, though these will follow afterwards, but in holy and humble living, that the heart of true religion is realized.

Is that all? No! What is to be done for those who have tried and failed, who are conscious of guilt and sin? In the closing verses of this book is the answer. There we learn that God will not only forgive, but will subdue our iniquities. He will turn again and have compassion upon us, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. He delighteth in mercy! Who is a God like unto Thee?

**PRAYER: O Lord, may Thy all-powerful grace make me as perfect as Thou hast commanded me to be. AMEN.**



### April 3: THE DIVIDED HEART

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."-- Mt 6:21-22.

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."-- Jas 1:8.

THE CLOSING paragraphs of Matthew 6 are full of instances of a divided heart. The Greek word for care means that which divides.

Some are divided by anxiety. The anxious soul cannot take a strong straight course, any more than a man can sleep who is wondering whether he has bolted the front door or wound up his watch. Some are divided by contrariness--a most difficult and complicated disposition of soul. We would like to be pleasant, helpful, agreeable, and amiable, but are conscious of cross-currents that restrain and make us awkward and disagreeable, and we find ourselves rent between two strong influences, the one to be Christlike and gracious, the other to be distant and angular. Others are divided by fitful and passionate impulses. Happy are they who can hold them well in check. Even St. Paul tells us that he was conscious of these two wills--the better self which longed to do the will of God, and the lower, selfish, passionate self, which brought him into subjection. St. Augustine tells us that, though the prayers of Monica, his mother, greatly affected him, he was constantly swept back from his ideal by an outbreak of passion.

Bunyan also illustrates the same condition, saying that two selves were at war within him. The Devil came and said, "Sell Him!" But he resisted, even to blood, saying, "I won't!" But, as the Tempter continued urging, "Sell Him!" Bunyan finally yielded, and suffered an agony of remorse, as, on the one hand, he accepted Christ as his only Hope, and on the other, was prepared to barter Him away.

A divided heart lacks the first element of strength--it is unstable. The men who leave their mark on the world are those who can say: "This one thing I do." But we need more than concentration, we need consecration. We must not only be united in ourselves, we must be united in God. Let us make the prayer of Psa 86:11, our own: "O knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear Thy name." Yield yourself to God that He may disunite you from the world, and weave you into His own life.

**PRAYER: O Faithful Lord, grant to us, we pray Thee, faithful hearts devoted to Thee, and to the service of all men for Thy sake. AMEN.**

## April 4: THE CHILD HEART

**"He called to Him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."**

**-- Mat 18:2-3 (R.V.).**

OUR LORD bids us seek the child-heart! Not to be childish, but childlike! It is recorded of the illustrious soldier, Naaman, that after he had washed in the Jordan waters, his flesh came to him as that of a little child. It is a noble combination--the stature and strength of the full-grown man united with the winsome purity and sweetness of a little child. It is not possible for any one of us to attain these two qualities unless we are prepared to pay the price. The orders of rank in the Kingdom of Heaven are diametrically opposed to those of our earthly kingdoms. Here men are ever striving to rise above their fellows; but in Christ's Kingdom they stoop to serve, and in stooping become crowned!

The King of Glory girded Himself with a towel, and kneeling down washed the feet of His disciples, and the nobles in His Kingdom are those who have become willing to be the servants of all!

Simplicity, humility, and freedom from self-consciousness are the natural traits of early childhood; alas! that they so quickly learn from us to seek for notice, patronage, and the first place! How happy that little one was as he nestled to the Saviour's heart! Three times over in this chapter the Master speaks about "these little ones." How dearly He loved the children, and each time must have pressed the child closer to Himself! It was thus that like came to like!

It is the childlike hearts that agree on earth in the symphony of prayer. One may go East and the other West, but beneath the touch of the Spirit of Love, they will be of one accord, i.e. in attuned fellowship with each other and with Christ (Mat 18:19-20). The child-spirit, also, will be willing to forgive and forget (Mat 18:15, Mat 18:21-22).

**PRAYER: Grant, O Lord, that I may become as a little child in Thy kingdom. May my heart be filled with Thy love, my lips with gentle, helpful words, and my hands with kind, unselfish deeds. AMEN.**

## **April 5: THE CRY OF THE HEART FOR FORGIVENESS**

**"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."-- Psa 51:1.**

**"I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee."-- Isa 44:22.**

THIS STAIRCASE has been trodden by myriads of penitent souls. Few of God's elect saints have passed through life without having painfully climbed its stairs. On the wall opposite the pallet in the cell where St. Augustine died, this first verse was set out where his eyes could constantly see it.

The Psalmist uses three words for the Forgiveness he craves--that his transgressions might be blotted out, like the legends scribbled over the ancient Gospels of the palimpsest; that his iniquity should be washed away, as the soil from linen; and that all traces of his past sin should be forgiven and cleansed away, even as leprosy in the case of Naaman was so obliterated that his flesh became as a little child. How tenderly Jesus responded to the agonized cry of the leper for cleansing: "I will, be thou clean!"

How wonderfully these petitions of the soul burdened with the sense of sin are answered! Do you ask to be purged with hyssop? Listen to the voice of God saying: "I even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember thy sins." He purges us with the Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. Do you ask to be made white as snow? "These are they who have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb." Do you ask to hear joy and gladness? "It is meet to make merry and be glad, for this, my child was lost and is found." Do you desire to offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God? Give Him your broken and contrite heart; think not that He will despise it! The fragrance of a broken box of alabaster fills Heaven and earth to this day!

**PRAYER: Let there be no doubt with any one of us that Thou dost forgive, even to the uttermost, all those who draw nigh in penitence to Thee; that so, those of us who are sad because sinful, may have this day the joy of the Lord. AMEN.**

## **April 6: THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CLEANSED SOUL**

**"Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."-- Psa 51:2.**

**"Blessed are they that wash their robes."-- Rev 22:14 (R.V.)**

IN THE last chapter of the Book of Revelation there is a very interesting change from the Authorized to the Revised Version, which accentuates a line of thought which cannot be too often emphasized. The A.V. reads: "Blessed are they that keep His commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life." The R.V. reads: "Blessed are they that wash their robes." May we not be thankful that this is the condition, rather than the absolute keeping of His commandments, which might induce legalism and Pharisaism into our character and experience. We are very conscious of our sin day by day, but as we wash our robes and make them white through the Blood of the Lamb, we may approach the Tree of Life and eat of its fruit.

There are two other references to the Tree of Life in this wonderful chapter. In Rev 22:2, we are told that it yields each month the food appropriate for the month; in Rev 22:19, we learn that each of us has a distinct and individual part in that tree. Its leaves are for our healing, and its fruit is suited to every phase of human experience. The Tree of Life was originally planted in Paradise together with the Tree of Knowledge (Gen 2:9). As the latter fed the soul-life of our first parents, with knowledge of good and evil, so the former stood for the life of the spirit nurtured and fed by the Spirit of God.

When we learn of its monthly yield, are we not reminded that whatever each passing experience of human life may require, it will be met out of the fullness of the Divine supplies. January days with their new resolves and hopes! February days with storms and frosts! May days with the flowers of Hope! June days with warmth and light. September days of fruition! December days of sickness or old age! But whatever month or day there is always a supply of adequate and suitable grace to be obtained from the fellowship of our dear Lord. He is the completement of every need, and perhaps we are led through these varying experiences in order to give the opportunity of learning phases and utilizing resources in our Saviour, of which, otherwise, we should have known nothing.

**PRAYER: Give us grace, O Lord, to come to Thee for daily cleansing, and for all our needs in the various circumstances through which we are called to pass, that by our holy living we may glorify Thee in our daily life. AMEN.**

## April 7: THE BIBLE AS A SAFEGUARD

**"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee."-- Psa 119:11.**

THE PRAYER: "Teach me Thy statutes" occurs eight times in this wonderful Psalm. It may be said to be its keynote. God's statutes are the path of purity. If a young man will take heed to them, his way will be cleansed. The passage of the Word of God through the heart., like the running of clean water through a pipe, will purify it. Constant study of the Bible is the condition of soul-health.

Consecration is closely associated with Bible study (Psa 119:10). Holiness is wholeness--that is, the whole-hearted devotion of a whole nature to God, the consecration of every power to His service. This leads us to lean hard on God, and to seek His companionship and fellowship. Psa 119:11 tells us of a good thing laid up in a good place, and the result. In the midst of a London season, and amid the stir and turmoil of a political crisis, William Wilberforce wrote in his diary: "Walked from Hyde Park Comer, repeating the 119th Psalm in great comfort"; John Ruskin said: "It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which to my child's mind was most repulsive, the 119th Psalm, has now become, of all, the most precious to me in its glorious passion for the law of God."

The study of the Bible enables us to bear witness for God (Psa 119:13). An inspector on one of our railways once told me that he had a vision of God whilst studying his Bible and kneeling in prayer. From this he went to his duties on the station platform. At one end of the train, a man offered him some whisky, but he was able to answer, "I have had a better drink than that," and pointed him to the Water of Life (Jn 4:14; Rev 22:17). At the other end of the train, another man asked him for a Testament, the slang phrase for a pack of cards, and my friend was able to pass on to him a Pocket Testament! It is when the Word of God fills the heart that it overflows through the lips and actions, and it is what flows over from us that really helps and blesses our fellow-men. "Out of him shall flow rivers of living water." Let us live in fellowship with God through His Word. This will light up our life with gladness, amid many sorrows. Wait not for Heaven, but here and now, day by day, be joyful in heart and life (Psa 119:14-16).

**PRAYER: Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. AMEN.**

## **April 8: THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**

**"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."--Rom 10:9.**

SALVATION IS a great word. It is conjugated in three tenses: The Past Tense. We saved at the moment when we first trusted Christ.

This salvation is a distinct and definite matter, which is ours at the moment we exercise simple faith in Jesus. "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom 5:9).

The Present Tense. "To us who are being saved, Christ is the power of God," such is the accurate rendering of 1Co 1:18. We are being saved perpetually from the love and power of sin. The disinfectant of Christ's Presence is ever warding off the germs of deadly temptation. The mighty arm of the Divine Keeper is always holding the door against the attempts of the adversary. The water is always flowing over the eye to remove the tiny grit or mote that may alight. "We are being saved by His life" (Rom 5:10).

The Future Tense. We are being kept by the power of God unto a salvation which waits to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1.). Salvation is a great word. It includes the forgiveness that remembers our sin no more; deliverance from the curse and penalty of our evil ways; emancipation from the thrall of evil habit; the growing conformity of the soul to the image of Christ, and the final resurrection of the body in spiritual beauty and energy, to be for ever the companion and vehicle of the redeemed spirit.

**PRAYER: Oh blessed Spirit of God, we pray Thee to give us the assurance of being the children of God, the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; and so prepare us for the glory to be revealed to us, and for that great hour when the whole creation, which now groans and travails in pain, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. AMEN.**

## **April 9: OUR GLORIOUS STANDING!**

**"There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."-- Rom 8:1.**

THE CHARACTERISTICS of this glorious standing. It is present: "Now."

If we are in Christ, we need not wait in doubts and fears for the verdict of the great white Throne. Its decisions cannot make our standing more clear, or our acceptance more sure, but we shall learn there the meaning of God's dealings with mankind, and triumph in the successful vindication of His ways. We can never be more free from the condemnation of God's righteous law than we are at this present.

It is certain: "There is no condemnation." You must catch this accent of conviction, and be able to speak with no faltering voice of your assured acceptance with God, if you would enter upon the rich inheritance of this chapter, to which these opening words stand as the door of passage. The shadow of a peradventure cannot live in the light of that certainty of which the Apostle speaks.

It is invariable. There are Some who live on a sliding scale between condemnation and acceptance. If health is buoyant and the heart is full of song, they are sure of their acceptance with God; but if the sun is darkened and the clouds return; when the heart is dull and sad, they imagine that they are under the ban of God's displeasure. They forget that our standing in Christ Jesus is one thing; our appreciation and enjoyment of it quite another. Your own heart may condemn you; memory, the recorder of the soul, may summon from the past evidence against you; the great Accuser of souls may lay against you grievous and well-founded charges; your tides of feeling may ebb far down the beach; your faith may become weak and lose its power and grip; your sense of unworthiness may become increasingly oppressive--none of these things can touch your acceptance with God if you are complying with His one all-inclusive condition--"no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." This mystic union with the Son of God is only possible to faith working by love (1Jo 3:23-24).

**PRAYER: We commit ourselves to Thy care and keeping this day; let Thy grace be mighty in us, and sufficient for us, and let it work in us both to will and to do of Thine own good pleasure, and grant us strength for all the duties of the day. AMEN.**

## **April 10: THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT**

**"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."--Rom 8:9.**

IT IS of the utmost importance to know that we have been born from above of the incorruptible seed of God's implanted nature. How can we be quite sure that we are the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty? The beloved Apostle gives us many assurances in the first Epistle of St. John. If we are the children of God we shall be content to be unknown of the world (1Jo 3:1). The leaders and rulers of society may view us with contempt, as they did our Lord, but we shall refuse to enter into any alliance with the children of the world, and shall lose our taste for the things that used to appeal to us.

We shall be very sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, as Philip was when he tore himself away from the revival in Samaria, to go to a lonely spot in the desert, and there await the arrival of the Ethiopian statesman. There was no hesitation in his obedience to the command: "Arise, and go toward the south.., and he arose and went" (Act 8:26-40). Are we being obedient to the call and command of our Lord to tell the good tidings of the Gospel to those who have never heard? Or do we make all sorts of excuses for our apathy?

We shall certainly love the brethren (1Jo 3:14). We may begin by loving them with our strength, and by sacrificing ourselves on their behalf, but we shall pass through the different phases of self-sacrifice until at last we come to love with the Spirit of Christ. We shall be very sensitive for the honour of our Lord, and when men speak ill of Him we shall hasten to avow our discipleship and devotion.

We shall be very sensitive about sin. Directly we have offended against the law of Love, we shall be restless and unhappy until we have confessed and been forgiven and cleansed. We shall hasten at once to our merciful and faithful High Priest that He may remove the stain. An old Puritan once said that a sow and a sheep might fall into the same miry pit; the one would wallow in it, whilst the other would never rest until it was extricated and cleansed!

**PRAYER: O God, make me increasingly conscious of the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit; may He witness with my spirit that in spite of all my sins and shortcomings, I am still Thy child. AMEN.**



## **April 11: THE SEVENFOLD WORK OF GOD'S SPIRIT**

**"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord."-- Isa 11:2.**

WE HAVE in this chapter a wonderful forecast of our Saviour's person and Work; and probably no other single paragraph in the Old Testament seems to sum up so perfectly the sevenfold work of God's Holy Spirit. The stock of Jesse might seem to be cut down to its roots, but it would yield the Messiah. The Mother of our Lord was so poor that she could only offer the two pigeons of the humblest and poorest, as the expression of her thanksgiving at His birth, but He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, and in His baptism was anointed and empowered for service by the same Spirit.

Notice the beautiful alternative rendering of Isa 11:3 in the Revised Version. "His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord." In the margin the literal meaning of delight is scent! The phrase might be translated: "He shall draw His breath in the fear of the Lord." Our Saviour, though living in this world, was never infected by evil surroundings. Let us seek to live like this--in the world, but not of it! We know instinctively when we inhale the foetid air of certain places and society. What a difference there is in the pure ozone of the ocean or the breath of the hills! If our lot is cast amid the murky atmosphere of the great city, let us be more careful to inbreathe the pure air of Holy Scripture and prayer.

The Holy Spirit of God anoints for service by descending upon us, and then builds up within us His sixfold grace. We all need wisdom in the spirit, and understanding in the intellect; we all need counsel and direction as to our life purpose, and might to execute the divinely-given plan; we all need to become students in the knowledge of God, and in devout reverence. Why should we not make each of these the subject of our special dealing with the Paraclete, who gives freely to all who will yield their wills, minds, and lives to His control (Gal 5:22). Then all creation will respond to us; there will be a new beauty in heaven above and earth beneath, the preface and augury of that new creation which shall emerge when our Saviour returns to bring in the millennium of blessedness and peace.

**PRAYER: Lord Jesus, tenant of our hearts; fill us with Thy Holy Spirit, and fit us for that new life when all evil passions shall be subdued, and the knowledge of Thy Redeeming Love shall flow over the worm as the waters cover the ocean-bed! AMEN.**

## April 12: GOD'S CHALLENGE TO MAN

**"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding."-- Job 38:4.**

IN This mighty chapter, God seems to draw near to the perplexed and stricken soul, who sits brooding over the problems of human life, and points out that mysteries equally insoluble are above his head and under his feet; that he lives and moves amongst them. Man frets and despairs over a mystery forced upon him by sorrow and loss. He cannot interpret it, and is shaken to the heart; but the whole universe teems with mystery. Man cannot explain the creation of the world, the separation of sky and earth, the reflex influences of the one on the other. Light and darkness, wind and rain, snow and ice, storm and sunshine; the instincts of the animal creation these defy man's absolute understanding.

But who frets at the inscrutable mystery which enshrouds these natural phenomena! We use all of them, and make them serve our purpose.

We cannot be surprised, therefore, if we discover similar mysteries in God's dealings with ourselves. He does not answer our questions by always telling us His secret reasonings. His thoughts and ways are as much higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth, and we could not more understand His reasons than tiny children can the mysteries of human life. But behind all mystery the Father's heart is beating, and a Father's voice is pleading, that we should trust Him. Little children, you cannot understand, but you are infinitely dear to Me; I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now; "what I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Trust me, and "let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

**PRAYER: O God, there are so many mysteries in the world, and in human life, and our eyes grow tired with straining into the darkness. Help us to believe in Thy unchanging love, and to trust where we cannot see or understand. AMEN.**

## April 13: GOD'S HERITAGE IN HUMANITY

**"The Lord's portion is His people."-- Deu 32:9.**

**"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."-- Eph 1:4.**

WE DO not become God's property when we consecrate ourselves to Him, but only awake to see that we are already His, and assume that manner of life which they should live who are not their own, but have been bought with a price (1Co 6:19-20). The three symbols of God's care of His own, as enumerated by Moses in his Song, are exquisitely beautiful.

"He kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deu 32:10). Almost instinctively we raise our hand to protect the eyes if anything threatens us, and it is thus with God's care to us. How carefully the eye is preserved from impurity and evil by the strong bony socket in which it is set, by the eyebrows and lashes which catch the dust and grit, by the eyelid closing over, and the tear-water washing it. Thus the soul which God loves may pass through the evil of the world without taint or soil, because of His gracious keeping power.

"As an eagle" (Deu 32:11). When the young eaglets are able to fly, but hover about their nest, unwilling to venture from the cliff, the mother-bird breaks up their eerie home, drives the fledglings forth on to the air, compels them to use their wings, flutters beneath to catch them if they are inclined to fall, and bears them up on her strong wings until they can fly alone. So it is in life that sometimes God has to break up the happy conditions to which we have been accustomed from our birth, and drive us forth. But it is for our good since only so can we acquire the glorious powers of sustained flight on the wings of the wind.

Divine leading (Deu 32:12). God teaches us to go as a mother her little child; His hand leads and guides our tottering steps (Hos 11:3-4).

The Epistle to the Ephesians gives us a list of the blessings, like a string of pearls, which God our Father, the Owner and Lover of our souls, heaps upon us, and is waiting for us to appropriate and use (Deu 1:3). His love to us is no passing fancy, but the carrying out of an eternal purpose. He redeems us from the love and power of sin; He abounds towards us with the riches of His grace; we are kept and sealed by the Holy Spirit; and ultimately shall be presented before Him, without blemish, to the praise of His glory.

**PRAYER: What can I lack if I have Thee, Who art all Good? Verily, the heart is restless, until it rest in Thee alone.  
AMEN.**

## April 14: WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES

**"O Jerusalem...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"-- Mat 23:37.**

OUR LORD'S ministry began with an octave of Blessedness, but it ended with a sevenfold woe, which He pronounced on the religious leaders of His time. He did not threaten, but pronounced the inevitable outworking of their evil ways.

Men often quote the punishment that follows sin as indicating some harsh or vindictive sentiment on the part of the Divine Being. They do not understand that, whereas human sentences are often arbitrary, God's judgments are natural, i.e. they are the inevitable result of wrong-doing. The penalty is part of the constitution of the universe. The final judgment of the great White Throne will only announce the penalty which man's sin has produced.

God is merciful as well as just, but if a man will tamper with explosives, He does not save his face or limbs. Our Lord was not animated by personal invective when He pronounced the terrible judgments of this chapter. There were tears of sorrow in His voice as He said, this temple is no longer My Father's House, but "your house which is left unto you desolate."

We read of the "Wrath of the Lamb," but it is the counterpart of Love; not vindictive wrath, but the bitterness of disappointed Love! Notice the gleam of light at the end of this chapter. Jesus seemed to hear the welcome which would be accorded to Him in that day when He shall finally appear to vindicate and save His brethren according to the flesh (Mat 23:39).

**PRAYER: O Lord, make us, we implore Thee, so to love Thee that Thou mayest be to us a Fire of Love, purifying and not destroying. AMEN.**

## April 15: MY GUEST-CHAMBER

**"The Master saith, Where is my guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?"**

**-- Mark 14:14 (R.V.).**

THERE HAD evidently been a previous understanding between our Lord and the good man of the house, who was probably a devoted friend and follower. Jesus knew that His death was being plotted by the chief priests, and that Judas desired to betray Him that very night. He wanted to take part in the Passover Supper, and therefore did not tell the two disciples, whom He sent to prepare the supper where it was to be held, lest any should overhear, and His arrest should take place. The locality of that last gathering with His disciples was revealed to the two by the sign of the man bearing the pitcher of water when they reached Jerusalem, and only to the remainder of the party when they actually arrived.

Our Lord knew what treachery meant in the home-circle. You may be experiencing this. Your familiar friend, in whom you trust, may be absolutely unreliable---a sieve through which your secret confidences filter, or an adder waiting to sting! But Christ experienced this also, and suffered as we all do, from the feeling of restraint in the presence of one who is unsympathetic and critical (Joh 13:31).

Jesus knew what devoted friendship means. What He could not confide to the band of apostles He was able to make known to the good man of this house. They had evidently conferred together and arranged that this room should be at the Master's disposal, furnished and prepared for His reception.

Our Lord asks us for the use of our guest-chamber. He still stands at the door and knocks, saying: "If any will open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me." There is a room in each heart, which He covets for Himself. The Revised Version inserts the word "My". We are His by right of creation and redemption; let us be His by choice. Having given the guest-chamber of our heart to Him, may we not go on to give our spare room to His disciples, and our loving hospitality to those who go forth for the sake of His Name (3Jo 1:5-8).

### **PRAYER**

**Is there a thing beneath the sun**

**That strives with Thee my heart to share?**

**He, tear it thence, and reign alone,**

**The Lord of every motion there. AMEN.**

## April 16: KEEPING STEP!

**"Come unto Me; Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."**

**-- Mat 11:28-30.**

A YOKE--for two! All through His earthly life Jesus was saying: take My yoke. What was His yoke. It was surely His It desire to do the Father's will. This was the watchword of His life (Joh 5:30; Joh 6:38). So persuasive was His appeal, that the sons of Zebedee left their father and boat; Andrew and Simon their fishing-nets; and Matthew his toll-booth to become His disciples. Women forsook their sins, and men their ambitions, in order to become His humble friends, and followers. Saul, the proud young Pharisee, heard His appeal, and abandoning everything that might lead to high honour and worldly success, counted it his highest glory to be associated with Christ in redeeming a lost world. But this association or fellowship requires agreement, identity of purpose. "Can two talk together except they be agreed?" (Amo 3:3). Hence there can be no fellowship between light and darkness; between the Christian soul and the unbeliever (2Co 6:14-18; 1Jo 1:6-7). The Yoke means subsoil ploughing. The salvation of a lost world, or of one human soul is no child's-play. Christ saw before Him the hard surface of mankind, the spirit of man caked over by long years of neglect and resistance. Before salvation can be effected the subsoil has to be turned up, and the thoughts of many hearts revealed (Jer 17:9-10). The Yoke means fellowship. The Divine and the human united in feeding the five thousand; in turning the water into wine; in the raising of Lazarus! There has never been an island redeemed from cannibalism to service for Christ, or a paralytic cleansed and healed apart from the co-operation of the Divine and Human. Yoke-bearing anticipates the Harvest. So we plough the furrow in Hope, knowing that one day the Harvest will be ripe, and One like unto the Son of Man will thrust in His sharp sickle and reap. What joy to share in that Harvest-Home!

**PRAYER: The fetters Thou imposest, O Lord, are wings of freedom. Put round about my heart the cord of Thy captivating love. Bind me to Thyself as Thou bindest the planets to the sun, that it may become the law of my nature to be led by Thee. AMEN.**

## April 17: OUR RESOURCES

**"Be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."-- Heb 13:5.**

SUCH THINGS as ye have, plus! The Greek literally means that there is within us an undeveloped power only awaiting the call, and there will be enough. I may be speaking to people who wish that they had more money, or more brains, or more influence. They dream of the lives they would live, of the deeds they would do, if only they were better circumstanced. But God says No! You have present within the narrow confines of your own reach the qualities that the world is wanting. Use them, and be content with the things that you have. You have never explored the resources of your own soul.

"Such things as ye have"--Moses had only a rod, but a rod with God can open the Red Sea. David had only five pebbles, but these with God brought down Goliath. The woman had only a little pot of oil, but that pot of oil with God paid all her debts. The poor widow was scraping the bottom of the barrel, but with God the handful of meal kept her child, herself, and the prophet until the rain came. The boy had only five tiny loaves and two small fish, but with Jesus they were enough for five thousand men, beside women and children. Estimate what you have got, and then count God into the bargain! He never lets go your hand. He will never leave nor forsake those that trust in Him!

Therefore be content! The most glorious deeds that have blessed and enriched the world have not been done by wealthy men. Our Lord had none of this world's goods; the apostles had neither silver nor gold; Carey was only a poor cobbler; Bunyan a travelling tinker; Wesley left two silver spoons. It is not money, but human love and God that is needed. Therefore do not be covetous; do not hoard, but give! Be strong and content. With good courage say: "The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear"--for life or death, for sorrow or joy!

### PRAYER

**The soul that to Jesus has fled for repose,**

**He cannot, He will not, desert to its foes.**

**That soul, though all hell should endeavour to take,**

**He'll never, no never, no never forsake! AMEN.**

## **April 18: PRAISE AND PRAYER**

**"Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Sion; and unto Thee shall the vow be performed. O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."-- Psa 65:1-2.**

WHAT RAPTURES there are here! It reminds one of a lark at dawn filling regions of air with music which threatens to rend its tiny throat. The Psalmist is in fellowship with God. He is enjoying his prayer and praise so much that it seemed to him as though all flesh must wake up to enjoy it also. His iniquities and transgressions are purged away. He feels that God is causing him to approach into His secret place, and all nature takes on a new radiance and beauty.

The personal pronouns for God--Thou, Thee, Thy, occur at least twenty times in thirteen verses! We remember that Wordsworth speaks of a Presence that rolls through all things: "A sense sublime of something deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the round ocean, and the living air, and the blue sky--a motion and a spirit." The poet was a lover of the meadows, and the woods, and mountains!

To many of us, also, Nature seems but the slight covering or garment, which only partially, conceals the glory and beauty of God's Presence. The bush still burns with fire. The mountain-heights are filled with the horses and chariots of angelic guardians. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." There is no voice or language that the ordinary sense of man can detect, but when our hearts are clean, and our ears open, we realize that we are in touch with Him whom some day we shall see face to face, but who even now reveals Himself to the pure in heart (Mat 5:8).

**PRAYER: O God our Heavenly Father, renew in us the sense of Thy gracious Presence, and let it be a constant impulse within us to peace, trustfulness, and courage on our pilgrimage. AMEN.**



## April 19: LOVE'S CONFIDENCE!

**"His sisters sent unto Him saying, Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick."-- Jn11:3.**

THE LAPSE of years made it possible for the Apostle to draw aside the veil which curtained the happy friendship and fellowship of Christ in the home at Bethany. It was the one green oasis in the rugged wilderness through which He passed to the Cross!

There were diversities in that home, Martha, practical, energetic, and thoughtful for all that could affect the comfort of those she loved and served; Mary, gifted with spiritual insight and tender sympathy; Lazarus, probably a man of few words, quiet and unobtrusive, but Jesus loved each one (Jn11:5).

The sisters never doubted that Christ would speed at all hazards to save Lazarus after the breathless messenger had brought the tidings of his sickness. Anything less than infinite Love would have rushed instantly to the relief of those troubled hearts; Divine Love alone could hold back the impetuosity of the Saviour's tender heart until the Angel of Pain had finished her work. He wanted to teach His disciples never-to-be-forgotten lessons, and also He was eager for the spiritual growth of the faith of the sisters.

This chapter might be more truly known as "The Raising of Martha," for our Lord enabled her, matter-of-fact and practical as she was, to realize that He was the Resurrection and the Life. He insisted that her faith was an essential condition in the raising of her brother to life. The emphasis is on the word "thou" (Jn11:40). Our Lord always needs the co-operating faith of some true heart to be with Him when He works a miracle, and He chose the least likely of the two sisters to supply the pivot on which He could rest the lever of His Divine help. As she withdrew her objection to the removal of the stone, her faith suddenly became capable of claiming the greatest of Christ's miracles.

He calls to us also to help our brethren. In many cases those who have received life from Christ are still bound about with grave-clothes, old habits and evil associations cling to them and impede their progress, and He bids us "Loose him and let him go." He asks for our co-operation in the emancipation of those who have been held fast in the power of the Evil One.

**PRAYER: O God, we rejoice that we can turn to Thee in the midst of great anxiety, and commit all our troubles to Thy sure help. As Thou art with us in the sunlight, be Thou with us in the cloud. Sustain us by Thy near presence and let the comforts which are in Jesus Christ fill our hearts with peace. AMEN.**

## **April 20: LIFE ABUNDANT: GRACE ABOUNDING**

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

NOTICE THAT word Receive! We first receive forgiveness, or reconciliation, then abundance of grace (Rom 5:11-17). We cannot merit or earn either one or the other; all that we have to do is to take what God offers, by an act of the will which accepts and appropriates. If men are lost, it is because they refuse to receive the grace and love of God, secured to us, in spite of our failure and sin, through the second Adam. We must believe that we have received, even when we are not conscious of any new experience (Jn 1:12). It is a blessed thing, when our emotional life is at a low ebb, and we feel out of sorts, to receive, to inbreathe, to drink in the "abundance of grace," and to know that He is working in us in power.

There is no limit to the abundance of God's supply--it abounds! The Apostle keeps using that word, which really means "running over " (Rom 5:15, Rom 5:17, Rom 5:20). And the result of receiving more and more out of God's fullness, is that we reign, not in the future life, but in this. Ours becomes a royal, a regnant, a triumphant life.

This glorious life in which we are daily victorious over sin, daily using and scattering the unsearchable riches of Christ, daily helping others up to the throne-life, is within the reach of every reader of these words. God wants you to enter upon it; He has made every provision for it, and is at this moment urging you to enter upon it. The only thing for you to do is to receive the abundance of His grace and of the gift of righteousness. Open your heart and life and He will fill it; dare to believe that He has filled it, even though you don't feel it; and go forth to live a royal life, distributing the largess of His royal bounty!

But we must pour out as God pours in! Only so will He be able to trust us with His fullness. Our love to others, our willingness to help them, our forgivingness and patience must go to the point of self-exhaustion, if we would know the abundant life and the grace that flows over.

**PRAYER: For souls redeemed, for sins forgiven; For means of grace, and hopes of heaven, Father, what can to Thee be given, Who givest all? AMEN.**

## April 21: OUR PRAYER LIFE

**"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he knelt upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before His God, as he did aforetime."-- Dan 6:10**

THE CHOSEN hour. It was at the time when Daniel's enemies appeared to have accomplished his downfall and death-- "when the writing was signed"--that this heroic statesman knelt down and prayed, and gave thanks to God. These are times when prayer is the only way out of our perplexities. George Muller said: "Our very weakness gives opportunity for the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to be manifested. That blessed One never leaves and never forsakes us. The greater the weakness, the nearer He is to manifest His strength; the greater our necessities, the more have we ground to rely on it that He will prove Himself our Friend. This has been my experience for more than seventy years; the greater the trial, the greater the difficulty, the nearer the Lord's help. Often the appearance was as if I must be overwhelmed, but it never came to it, and it never will. More prayer, more faith, more exercise of patience, will bring the blessing. Therefore our business is just to pour out our hearts before Him; and help in His own time and way is sure to come."

The chosen direction. "His windows open towards Jerusalem." There the Holy Temple had stood, and the Altar of Incense; there God had promised to put His Name and meet His people. When we pray, our windows must be open towards our blessed Lord, who ministers for us in Heaven, mingling the much incense of His intercession with the prayers of all saints (Heb 7:25; Rev 8:3).

The chosen attitude. "He knelt upon his knees." It is most appropriate to kneel before God in homage and worship. St. Paul bowed his knees, even though his hands were chained, to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 3:14). But we can pray also as we walk, or sit, or ride. Nehemiah flashed a prayer to the God of Heaven before he answered the king's question, but he also prayed before God day and night. Let us contract the habit of praying and giving thanks three times a day. At even, morning, and noon, let God hear your voice.

### PRAYER

**Thee we would be always blessing,  
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above;  
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing  
Glory in Thy perfect love. AMEN.**

## April 22: THE MIDNIGHT WRESTLE

**"Jacob went on his way, and the Angels of God met him....And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."--Gen 32:1, Gen 32:24.**

SUCH IS our mortal life! We meet angels before we encounter our Esaus! Their unseen squadrons must be counted on as one of our permanent assets.

"Oh purblind souls! We may not see our helpers in their downward flight, nor hear the sound of silver wings, slow beating through the hush of night?' But they are surely present (Psa 34:7; Heb 1:14). If we accustom ourselves to their presence and help, we may presently come, like Jacob, to an experience of the Eternal, before which all else will dwindle into insignificance. When our Rachels and Leah, the babble of the children, the lowing of the herds are away; when the only sound is the low murmur of the brook, or the sigh of the night wind; when the sense of loneliness steals over the spirit, and the starry hosts expand overhead, it is then that we may come into personal contact with One, whose delights from of old were with the sons of men. He is the Word of God, but He is also the Saviour, the Lover and Friend of man.

In our first meeting, He will wrestle with us to break down our stubbornness; He will touch the sinew of our strength till we can hold out no more; He will withdraw from us till we insist that we cannot let Him go; He will awaken a mysterious longing and urgency within us, which He alone can satisfy. And as the memorable interview ends, He will have taught us that we prevail best when we are at our weakest, and will have whispered in our ear, in response to our entreaty, His own sublime Name, Shiloh, the Giver of Eternal Peace!

Why should you not meet that Angel, and let Him make you a prince?

**PRAYER: Be not weary of me, Good Lord. I am all weakness, but Thou art Almighty, and canst put forth Thy strength perfectly in my weakness. Make me truly to hate all which Thou hatest, fervently to love all which Thou lovest--through Jesus Christ. AMEN.**

## **April 23: THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**"They assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There was a man of Macedonia, standing beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."-- Act 16:7-10.**

THE SPIRIT of Jesus often shuts doors in the long corridors of life. We pass along, trying one after another, but find that they are all locked, in order that we may enter the one that He has opened for us (Rev 3:7-8). Sometimes in following the Spirit's guidance we seem to come to a blank wall. The little missionary band found themselves facing the sea. They had not contemplated crossing to Europe, but there seemed no other course open. They walked to and fro on the sea-wall or landing-stage, looking over the restless waves, and noticing the strange costumes of sailors and travellers who had gathered in the thriving sea-port, which bore the name famous to all the world for the Siege of Troy.

It was with such thoughts in his heart that St. Paul slept that night in his humble lodging, and in his dreams, a man from Macedonia, like one he had seen on the quay, stood and beckoned to him (Act 16:10, R.V.).

Where it is possible for the judgment to arrive at a right conclusion, on the suggestions that may be supplied by the Divine Spirit, we are left to think out the problems of our career. Within your reach are the materials needed for formulating a correct judgment; use them, balance the pros and cons, and looking up to God to prevent you from making a mistake, act. When once you have come to a decision, in faith and prayer, go forward, not doubting or looking back.

A small door may lead to a vast opportunity. St. Paul might have been discouraged by his reception in Europe. He looked for the man whom he had seen in the vision, but the only trace they could find of the worship of God was the gathering together of a few women. How startled they must have been by the sudden appearance of these missionaries, but a mighty work for God began in the life of at least one of them "whose heart the Lord opened." Let us not despise the smallest opening, for we can never tell into what a wide place it may conduct us.

**PRAYER: O God, since we know not what a day may bring forth, but only that the hour for serving Thee is always present, may we wake to the instant claims of Thy holy Will; not waiting for to-morrow, but yielding today. Consecrate with Thy presence the way our feet may go; and the humblest work will shine, and the roughest places be made plain. AMEN.**

## April 24: SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS

**"And the city lieth foursquare, the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal."-- Rev 21:16.**

THE CUBE was evidently a favourite unit of Hebrew measurement. The Holy of Holies was a cube, and so was the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, which St. John saw in a vision, "coming down from God out of heaven." We are reminded of the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge (Eph 3:18). Ought not this to be the measurement of every well-ordered life?

There must be Length i.e. the issuing forth of the soul as it leaves the things that are behind and reaches forth to those that are before. We must never be satisfied with that whereunto we have already attained, or think that we are perfect.

But with length there must be Breadth. Our life must reach out on the right and left to help others. The Cross stands for unselfishness, and those who claim to have been crucified with Christ must live, not to themselves, but to Him who died for them and through Him for all that He cares and loves. The world is full of lonely, weary, and desolate lives, to whom Christ would send us if we were ready for His use.

There must also be Depth. We must dwell deep! The Apostle says rooted--i.e, we must strike our roots into the subsoil; grounded--we must have our foundations in the very depths of a life hidden with Christ. From His life we must arise as fountains spring from the depths of the hills. Tree roots need to spread as far underground as the branches above.

There must be Height. Our ideals should always be rising. We must fix our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Let us by thought and prayer thither ascend and dwell where Christ sits on the right hand of God (Col 3:1-4).

**PRAYER: O Eternal God, sanctify my body and soul, my thoughts and my intentions, my words and actions; let my body be a servant of my spirit, and both body and spirit servants of Jesus; that doing all things for Thy glory here, I may be partaker of Thy glory hereafter, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.**

## **April 25: CULTIVATING CHEERFULNESS**

**"A merry heart is a good medicine (causeth good healing); but a broken spirit drieth up the bones."-- Pro 17:22.**

**"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks."-- 1Th 5:16-17 (R.V.).**

A HAPPY AND cheerful heart is a matter of cultivation. We cannot afford to abandon ourselves entirely to our moods. There are times when we feel depressed and sad, for no special reason, except that a mood is on us! It is at such times that we need to anoint our heads, and wash our faces, that we may not be consumed by our fretfulness, or impose our depression upon others, for nothing is worse than to be a wet blanket! (Mat 6:16-18.)

On the other hand, there is nothing more objectionable than to be always in the presence of a comic person who thinks that every occasion must serve for frolic. After a time one gets as tired of funny stories and perpetual punning as of gloom, but while avoiding this extreme, we must not fall into the other of wearing a lugubrious expression and giving way to a moodiness of spirit, which cannot be accounted for.

We may alter our dispositions and moods by a resolute action of the will. We can refuse to look miserable, to speak mournfully, to be pessimistic, to pass on depression. In a spirit of unselfishness we can put on a cheerful courage, array ourselves in the garments of joy, anoint ourselves with the spirit of praise and thankfulness, and go forth into the world to shed sunbeams rather than shadows on the path of life. Do not nurse your sorrow of heart, lest your spirit and the spirits of others be broken.

We can promote a cheerful heart by dwelling on the bright things of our lot; by counting up the mercies which are left, rather than dwelling on what we have lost. When the heart is full of the light and love of God, can it be other than cheerful? How can this be obtained except by a living union with Jesus Christ. In Him there is an infinitude of supply of peace and joy, sunshine and light. Let us open our hearts to him, and put on these things as we array ourselves each morning in our garments (Isa 61:3-10).

### **PRAYER**

**Through all the changing scenes of life,**

**In trouble and in joy,**

**The praises of my God shall still**

**My heart and tongue employ. AMEN.**

## **April 26: THE DAYS OF NOAH**

**"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."-- Heb 11:7.**

WE DO well to give heed to the description given of the "days of Noah, for our Lord said, that as it was in those days, so shall it be in the days that close the present age (Mat 24:37-39). The world of that time had made great progress in the arts and civilization of life. But, as it has happened repeatedly all through human history, great luxury produced infamous immorality, cruelty, and widespread indifference to the claims of God. Things took place in those olden times which have their counterpart in the great cities of our time. In its feverish atmosphere sin of every kind abounded, and in mercy to the race, there was no alternative than to bring that wicked generation to an end. "They ate, they drank; they married, and were given in marriage, and knew not, till the flood came and carried them all away."

Amidst all this, Noah lived an unblemished and righteous life. He walked in daily converse with God (Gen 6:8-9). His Almighty Friend was able to reveal to him His intentions. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."

Keep near to God, that you may hear the accents of His still small voice. Our happiest experience is when we walk with Him in unbroken fellowship, and He takes us into covenant with Himself. Through any one individual, whose heart is perfect toward Him, God will save others. We too shall cross the Flood of Death and enter the new life of Resurrection, but we must be quick to detect His voice, and our hands deft to fulfil the revelations of our Divine Teacher and Friend.

**PRAYER: Lead me, O Lord, in a straight way unto Thyself, and keep me in Thy grace unto the end. AMEN.**



## April 27: LOVE OF HOSPITALITY

**"Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Heb 13:1-2.**

OUR TEXT refers to that memorable scene when Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent, probably inclined to slumber in the heat of noon. Suddenly he saw three men apparently waiting for alms and help. Plenty of travellers had come to his door before, seeking help and hospitality which he had given freely. But though the heat was great, though he may have been disappointed again and again in the recipients of his bounty, he felt it better to be disappointed a hundred times than to miss the chance of showing hospitality and welcome. Therefore he sprang to his feet, called to Sarah for help, and the two of them quickly ministered to the three unknown men. How thankful he must have been that he had not refused to entertain them, for two of them were angels, and the third was the Son of God!

In our crowded lives, where room is scarce, it is less easy for us to care for the people who may be cast as strangers amongst us, but there is a hospitality of the mind that we can all exercise, when we open our hearts to some story of sorrow. None of us are quite aware, except we have suffered in that way, how much it helps some people to be able to pour out their burdens and sorrows. It is much to have a hospitable mind, to have a sympathetic ear, and to make room in our heart for the story of human pain, sorrow, and loneliness, which some, who are comparative strangers, may want to confide in us. We may rebuke ourselves that our hearts do not more nearly represent the hostel or inn into which sad or weary souls may creep for shelter. Although you cannot say much, there may always be the open door of your heart where the lonely and desolate may enter and find in you a fire of sympathy, kindness, and good-will.

**PRAYER: O God, wherever Thou leadest we would go, for Thy ways are perfect wisdom and love. Blend our wills with Thine, and then we need fear no evil nor death itself, for all things must work together for our good. AMEN. Thus cold hands may find warmth, and souls that are frozen for want of love and sympathy may be sheltered and refreshed, and we shall find that in showing love to a stranger we have been ministering to our dear Lord Himself, who said: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me."**

## **April 28: A CHANGED OCCUPATION**

**"He went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed Him."-- Luke 5:27-28.**

THE TRADE between the Orient and the vast populations on the Mediterranean, passed through the Lake of Galilee, making a highly profitable trade for Capernaum, and the smaller cities and towns. The custom-house in which this man, Levi, held a lucrative position was probably quite near the lake, which was much frequented by our Lord, and thus he may have had opportunities of listening to His teaching. On the other hand, it is possible that the Saviour's summons to him was absolutely unexpected, though it elicited an instant response, for he rose up, left all, and followed Jesus. No doubt he returned later to make up his books, and hand in the balance that may have been in his charge.

Our Lord called him Matthew--which means "a gift." He was a great addition to the band of disciples, and the gift of his Gospel to the Church has made the whole world his debtor. Matthew conceals, with beautiful modesty, the fact that he prepared a great feast for the Master, which was perhaps partly to signalize his adherence to his new calling, and partly as an opportunity to introduce his new-found Friend to the publicans and sinners--i.e, the excommunicated persons of the city (Luk 5:29-30). That feast may have been the first step to the foundation of the Christian Church. Our Lord gladly availed himself of the opportunity to declare His purpose to seek and save the lost, to create a new society on that principle, and to make possible the enclosure of these lost sheep with the flock. If Zacchaeus happened to be in the party that day, it is likely that for him it was the inauguration of a new life, and as he sat there under the fascination of Christ, he resolved to make reparation to any whom he had cheated and over-charged!

Let us see to it that there is more joy in our religions life. Let us seek the people who think themselves for ever excommunicated from the Church. It may be that we shall find Matthew, or Augustine, or John Bunyan among them!

**PRAYER: Help me, Blessed Lord, to bear the infirmities of the weak, to succour those that are over-borne in the fight of life, and to bear the burdens of others. AMEN.**

## **April 29: THE WITNESS OF CONSCIENCE**

**"They shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them."-- Rom 2:15 (R.V.).**

CONSCIENCE HOLDS the mirror to the inner life, and shows us just what we are in the light of God's infinite purity and righteousness. The word is derived from the Latin con, with; scio, I know. Conscience is what a man knows with or against himself.

Sometimes we can meet ourselves with a smile; this is what we term a good conscience; at other times we do not like to meet ourselves, but feel ashamed--we cannot deceive ourselves, or hoodwink conscience. We know, and we know that we know, that this is right and that wrong; this is good, and that evil. Conscience is an ill bed-fellow, says the old proverb, and when we are troubled with evil dreams, turning, tossing, starting up in fear, rest becomes impossible. It is very necessary to keep on good terms with your conscience, and we do not wonder that the Apostle made it his aim to preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and man (Act 24:16).

All men have a conscience, else God could not judge them; there would be no standard by which to try or convict, but in most cases conscience is uninstructed. It judges rightly, so far as it knows, but its knowledge is scant, and its power of making accurate distinctions is limited. The Christian conscience is illumined and instructed by the light that falls on it from the face of Christ. See to it that your conscience is constantly corrected by Christ's standard. Never tamper with conscience, nor gag her protestations, nor drown her voice. Never say it does not matter for once in a way. Never dare to let her voice wear itself out. To behave thus is to tamper with the most delicate moral machinery in the universe. Let us see that our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience in the blood of Jesus, so that we may draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith (Heb 10:19-23).

**PRAYERO Lord, give me Thy Holy Spirit in greater measure, that His saving presence may cleanse my conscience, and His holy inspiration enlighten my heart. AMEN.**

## **April 30: CO-OPERATION IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE**

**"They beckoned unto their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats."-- Luke 5:7 (R.V.).**

WE ALL want to fill our nets and boats with the fish that we have caught for Christ. How shall we do it? There are certain conditions for successful Christian service which must be observed. Our nets must be clean. They were "washing their nets." It was a good thing that this necessary work had been performed; otherwise they would have been unable to sail at a moment's notice, and to let down their nets at the Master's command (Luke 5:4). "If a man shall cleanse himself., he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use." Let us see to it that we are always ready to respond at Christ's call.

We must be prepared to obey Christ in little things. Our Lord first asked Peter to put out his boat a little from the land. He knew what He was going to do afterwards in making great demands on Peter's obedience and faith; but first, He made this slight request. With alacrity the Master's wishes were complied with, and the floating pulpit, rising and falling with the ripple of the water, was at the Lord's service as He sat down and taught the people. Remember that whenever you lend your empty boat to Jesus, He will pay for it by giving it back to you filled with fish.

Christ's will must be obeyed even against our own judgment. Peter had spent the whole of his life apprenticed to the lake, and knew everything of the art of fishing. When our Lord bade him: "launch out into the deep, and let down your nets," it was against all his knowledge and practical experience to let down his nets in the daytime, especially as he had toiled all night in vain! Happily for him, he said: "At Thy word I will let down the nets!"

We must be willing to share with others. He might have kept the haul for himself, but he longed that the others should share in the Master's bounty, "and they came and filled both the boats."

**PRAYER: O God, Thou hast committed our work to us, and we would commit our cares to Thee. May we feel that we are not our own, and that Thou wilt heed our wants while we are intent upon Thy will. AMEN.**

## May 1: THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

**"Lord, teach us to pray."-- Lk 11:1.**

WHERE IS no other such Teacher as Christ. He was the Master in the art of prayer, and has taught all the greatest intercessors among the sons of men. His own example has been their incentive. It was because they saw Him praying that one of the disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray--an example of the power of unconscious influence. If a boy kneels in prayer in the school bedroom, he will be almost sure to start others praying.

Be natural in prayer. Do not repeat prayers the face of which has become worn away by constant usage. Find out approximately what your needs will be; and ask for the needed grace, as a child of a father.

Intercede for others. Do not use exclusively "I," "me," and "my," but "we," "our," and "us." Remember how Christ interwove intercession with every petition of the prayer He taught His disciples.

Be sure to receive as well as ask. No beggar is content with asking. He plies his errand until he receives. Alas, that we are so often content to ask with no thought of receiving. Before we rise from our knees, having pleaded for something that is contained in the Divine promises, we should dare to believe that we do receive the petitions that we have desired. "Have Faith in God" really means reckon on God's faithfulness to you. Do not look at your faith. He who is ever considering his health will become an invalid; he who always looks down at his faith will cut the very roots from which faith grows, will shut out the beam by which faith lives. Look away to the character of God--the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy for ever.

Leave the ultimate answers to your prayer to His infinite wisdom. Not infrequently, to reverse our Lord's words, children ask for stones and not bread; entreat for scorpions and not fish. Under such circumstances it is wise and good of God to say No to our requests, and to give us what we would ask if we knew all as He does. When we get to heaven we shall have to thank Him as much for the unanswered as for the answered prayers.

Be sure to give the Master time to teach you how to pray. It is necessary to wait for Him, when we feel less earnest, as when the fire burns most vehemently. He likes the regular hours for His pupils, and that they should not hurry impetuously away from His gracious words.

**PRAYER: Teach me to pray, O Lord, as Thou didst teach Thy disciples of old, and winnow my prayers that I may desire and ask only those things that are according to Thy will. AMEN.**

## May 2: THE FIRST LESSON

**"When ye pray, say 'Father'."-- Luke 11:2.**

HEAVEN IS "the Father's House." It is our Home. We are strangers and sojourners here, and on our way home. What fascination is in the word! Home will draw the sailor, soldier, explorer, prodigal from the ends of the earth. God has given to most of us the dear memory of what Home is, that we may guess at what awaits us and be smitten with home-sickness. "Blessed are the home-sick, for they shall reach home!"

But the charm of Heaven will be the manifested presence of our Father. All doubts and misunderstandings will be dissipated. We shall know and see, as we are seen and known. In the closing verses of Jude we are told that we shall be set before the presence of His glory, without blemish and in exceeding joy. It is as though our Saviour will introduce us to the manifested presence of the Father.

But we need not wait till then. If we know our Lord, we know the Father. It troubled Christ that His disciples had been so long with Him in familiar intercourse and yet had not realised that the beauty and holiness which shone from His nature were beams of the Father's character. To have Jesus is to have the Father. To know Jesus is to know the Father. To pray to Him is to pray to God, for He is God manifest in the flesh. He is not simply an incarnation of God, in the sense of the old Greek mythology, adopting a cloak or disguise which was afterwards cast off. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

There must be reverence in our prayer. God is in heaven and we upon the earth. We must not rush unceremoniously into His presence, as though it were a common and too-familiar room, where ceremony and respect are laid aside. There should be the constant remembrance that in prayer we stand in the presence-chamber of the great Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the Universe. We wipe our shoes and remove our hats when we enter the home of our friend; let us not forget our manners in the opening sentences of prayer. Angels veil their faces and cry "Holy!"

But there may be a blessed faith and trust when we pray. The Father of Jesus awaits us. He ascended to His Father and our Father. We pray to One who loves us in His Beloved Son with an everlasting love, and holds out the golden sceptre towards us.

**PRAYER: I adore Thee, Heavenly Father! There is no limit to Thy power, or to Thy love. Thou art greatly to be praised! Thou art greatly to be loved! Accept the homage of my soul and life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.**

## May 3: HONORING GOD

**"Hallowed be Thy Name."-- Luke 11:2.**

GOD'S NAME is His Nature---His attributes, the various qualities that go to make Him what He is. When we ask for it to be hallowed, we ask that all which obscures it should be swept away as mists before the dawn. We thank God for all that is known of His wonderful Being, for the message of Nature, for revelation given to seers and prophets, for the Word who came from Him, and for the Holy Spirit who reveals Him. But there are still vast unexplored tracks in God's Being of which we know nothing, and there are myriads that know still less than we do. By their sinful ignorance and superstition, men have misunderstood and misrepresented the character of God; therefore we need to pray that in this world, and in all other worlds, His glorious personality should be understood, appreciated, and loved.

When we pray "Hallowed be thy Name" it is to remind ourselves of the greatness and glory of God our Father. Before you utter petitions for yourself, be still! Compel the intruding crowd of daily needs and desires to remain outside the fence which surrounds the mountain foot. Go up to meet with God, desiring to look at the needs of the world and of your own little life, as subordinate to your own great desire that God should be loved, honoured, and obeyed. Put God's interests above your own. Enthroned Him in thought and petition.

In a world that neither knew nor hallowed God's Name, Jesus set Himself to reveal and unfold all its wonderful depths. Let us try every day to know more of that Name, and to make it known. It is through ignorance of God that men turn from Him. They have distorted views, obtained from the lives and words of professedly religious people which are often a sad travesty and misrepresentation of God. If only men really knew God, surely the love with which He has loved them would enter and fill their hearts.

It is said that the passion of the French soldiers for Napoleon was so great, that even when mortally wounded they would raise themselves as he came riding past on his charger, and cry: "Long live the Emperor!" It is when we have become wholly absorbed in bringing glory to God in the highest, that we shall know peace in our hearts, and become the channels of goodwill to men, as men of good-will, i.e., the doers of God's Will.

**PRAYER: Heavenly Father, unveil to me, I humbly ask, the sweet mystery and beauty of Thy Name--Abba Father. AMEN.**

## May 4: GOD'S GOVERNMENT

**"Thy Kingdom come."-- Luke 11:2.**

IN ONE of those sublime flights with which the Epistles of St. Paul abound, he tells us that the time is coming when the Son shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall abolish all rule, and authority, and power. From this we are at liberty to infer that the Kingdom was originally the Father's; that by man's sin and fall it has been alienated from His control.

The Lord Jesus became incarnate for the purpose of regaining the Kingdom by His agony, blood, and tears; though it is not as yet His, it is being acquired. When, therefore, we pray: "Father, Thy Kingdom come," we are asking that the complete victory of Jesus Christ may be hastened; that He may speedily triumph over all obstacles and enemies; that truth may reign in government, art, and science; that trade may be free from chicanery and fraud; that tyranny may be extinguished, corruption exposed; that He may send forth His Angels to gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, destroying that last enemy, death, and bringing in the golden age when all men shall know and love the Father, and become His obedient children.

There are many explanations of the Kingdom of Heaven. Perhaps as a rough and ready way of interpreting the phrase, we may say Divine Kingship. When we grasp that idea, it becomes the dominant note of life. It is the master-key which opens every lock. Just to believe, deep down in your soul, that the Father of Jesus---our Father--is King. That the God who is moved by the fall of a little bird from its nest, who is described in the parables of the lost sheep and the lost son, is King of the world and all its forces, and of everything in human life. To know and believe this is to get something which is worth everything else.

Will you not, here and now, place yourself under the government of the King? Let Him govern your heart, that you may love only within the limits which His pure and holy Spirit can permit. Let Him govern your mind, that no unholy thought be allowed to lodge and strike root within you. Let Him govern the books you read, the companionships and friendships you form, the methods of your business, the investment of your money, the way in which you spend your leisure--all must be under the government of His Kingdom, for He will not be King at all unless He is King in all.

**PRAYER: Hasten, O God the coming of Thy Kingdom, and the consummation of Thy redeeming work. May the Kingdom of Christ come in us and through us; His voice speaking through our lips; His power working through our touch; His love beating in our heart. AMEN.**



## May 5: GOD'S WILL

**"Thy Will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."-- Mat 6:10.**

MANY PEOPLE shrink from God's will. They think that it always means pain, or sorrow, or bereavement. They always feel melancholy when you speak of doing the Will of God. Alas! how the devil has libeled God. The will of God is the will of a Father. It is the Fatherhood of God going out in action. "It is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish." "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

If only the will of God were done on earth, as it is done in heaven, there would be peace between the nations, and love and happiness in all our homes. Love would cement the union of all men in a city of blessedness. The fact of the world's present condition is no argument against the beneficence and blessedness of the will of God. It is because men will not do the will of God that things are as they are!

In our own life we shall never be really fight or happy until we have got to the point of saying: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." We may not begin there. The first step is to choose it, then we shall come to accept it lovingly and thankfully; but, finally, we shall rejoice and delight in it. If you cannot say "Thy Will be done," say: "I am willing to be made willing that Thy Will should be done." If your will is like a bit of rough and rugged iron, tell God that you are willing for it to be plunged into the furnace of His love, so that all which is unyielding and obdurate may pass away before the ardent heat of the Divine Fire. Depend on it that He will not fail, nor be discouraged with the long process that may be required; and that He will not be rough or violent. He will stay His east wind. He will keep His hand on the pulse, that He may be aware of the least symptom that the ordeal is too strong.

At first there may be a twinge of pain, as when a dislocated limb is pressed back into its proper position, but afterwards there is the blessed restoration of healthy vigour. You will only lose what you would gladly give up if you know as much as God does of what promotes soul-health. "Whosoever," said our Lord, "will do the Will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." "In His Will is our peace."

**PRAYER: Most Gracious God, to know and love whose will is righteousness, enlighten our souls with the brightness of Thy presence, that we may both know Thy Will and be enabled to perform it. AMEN.**

## May 6: GOD'S PROVISION

**"Give us this day our daily bread."-- Mat 6:11.**

IF YOU want daily bread, and would pray for it aright, you must ask as a child; and you must put first, before your own satisfaction, the Hallowing of God's Name, and the doing of His Will. Implicitly you suggest that if He gives you bread, you will use the strength it gives for His service.

Let us ever think of God as the bountiful and generous Giver. Too often He has been described as hard and austere, and as a result, men dread God, and only think of Him when they have done wrong. But we should describe Him as the All-Giver, who gives all things to all with the most royal generosity. He gives sunbeams and dewdrops, showers and rainbows, grace and glory, His beloved Son and His Spirit, human love and friendship, the daily spreading of our table, the provision of all that we need for life and godliness. Whether we wake or sleep, whether we are evil or good, whether we are pleasing to Him or not; to those who forget and blaspheme Him equally as to the saints and martyrs of the Church, God gives with both hands, pressed down and running over. We cannot buy, we do not merit, we cannot claim, but we may rely on Him to give. God is Love; and Love cannot refrain from giving, or it ceases to be Love.

Yet how low God stoops! He is so great, that His greatness is unsearchable. He dwells in the high and lofty place. His sun is ninety-seven millions of miles away from our earth; He has filled the heavens with countless constellations, for each of which He has a name. He puts the Himalaya into a scale, and the islands are as dust in His balances; but Jesus has taught us to say, "Our Father, give us bread!" When we get troubled about the immensity of heaven and the distances of the universe, let us come back to the discourse, of which this prayer is part, and which tells us that the great God thinks about the clothing of the lilies, the down on a butterfly's wings, the food of the young lions in the forest, the store of acorns that squirrels accumulate for their provision. It is wonderful to remember that from the first days of man's sojourn on earth, our Father has been laying up stores for us. Though we may be among the youngest children of Time, we come to a table as richly plenished and provided as those who first tasted of His bounty. "Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give."

**PRAYER: Heavenly Father, let me not be anxious about to-morrow's provision or path, but trust Thee to provide and lead for to-day. Open Thine hand, and satisfy the desire of every living thing. AMEN.**

## May 7: GOD'S FORGIVENESS

**"Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who fails in his duty to us."-- Luk 11:4. WEYMOUTH**

FORGIVENESS is the exclusive prerogative of Christianity. The schools of ancient morality had four cardinal virtues-- justice in human relations; prudence in the direction of affairs; fortitude in bearing trouble or sorrow; temperance or self-restraint. But they knew nothing of mercy or forgiveness, which is not natural to the human heart. Forgiveness is an exotic, which Christ brought with Him from Heaven. As long as He abode on earth, He forgave, and He left it as an injunction and example that His people were to forgive even as they had been forgiven.

Our Lord does not mean that God's forgiveness is measured by our own, or that our forgiveness is the cause of God's. Neither of these is the true rendering of this clause; but that God cannot forgive an unforgiving spirit. The only sure index that our contrition and penitence are genuine is that we forgive those who have wronged us. If we do not forgive, it proves that we have never attained that true position of soul before God in which He is able to forgive.

How is it with you? Do you forgive? Or are there men and women that you obstinately refuse to forgive? If there are, it shows that your own soul is not right before God; your love to God is gauged by your love to men; your relationship to God is indicated by your relationship to your fellows. The man who does not love the brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. Discover where you are to-day. If there is anyone in your life that you refuse to pray for and forgive, know that your heart is wrong with God.

Do the first thing, begin to pray for them, and say: "Forgive us--that one who has hurt me, that man who has wronged me; he needs forgiveness, but I need it equally. We are both in the wrong. I might have made it easier for him to do right than I have done." Second, ask for the opportunity to meet him. Third, claim that when you meet, there may be in you the royalty of God's grace, that you may bear yourself with that rare, gracious love which covers the multitude of sins. Be willing that through your lips God's pitying mercy may pass forth in words of human kindness and tenderness.

**PRAYER: Forgive us, we pray Thee; put away our sin, as far as the east is from the west. Remember it no more, east it behind Thee as into the depths of the sea. May we be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven us. AMEN.**

## May 8: GOD'S DELIVERANCE

**"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."-- Mat 6:13.**

OUR LORD couples His own prayer with ours when He says, pray: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." We remember that He was led into the wilderness by the Spirit, that He might be tempted, and that "in all points" He was tempted like as we are, though in His case there was no sin. It is wonderful to know that by some marvelous oneness of nature the Son of God Himself pursued the dreaded track of temptation.

And while we have this moral nature which links us, upon the one hand, to the eternal Christ, our Captain, who has gone through the same ordeal, we are also linked to every other man, woman, and child the world over. For, though we might suppose that there were such diversities of life that some might be secure of an immunity from temptation, yet a closer inspection of our common lot reveals the fact that it is inevitable to us all.

Temptation creeps into the sick-chamber equally as into the heyday of our health. It finds its way into the seclusion of the student even as it dogs the steps of the man of the world doing his business. It comes to the minister, with its tendency to elation or despondency, as well as to the criminal; to the poor as well as to the rich. There is no life, however guarded, that is not exposed to the blast and sirocco of temptation. Therefore we utter this prayer as one---  
"as."

But let us take heart! Remember it is the Father to whom this prayer is addressed. He made us, and knows just what we can stand; He loves us, and His tender succour is always by our side. He draws near, saying, "I am with you in this dark valley, and am able to make you stand; I would not have brought you here had I not counted the cost. I am able to be a very present help in this time of trouble. I have carried others through this ordeal, and I can carry you; only keep near my side; look away from the tempter to my face; cease to trust yourself and depend absolutely upon Me, and I, who brought you to this testing-place, will lead you out. Be of good cheer! See, there awaits you the crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to each soldier who has stood true to Him in the hour of trial, and you could not get that if you did not bear this. It is because I want you to win that I am giving you the chance of this hard fight."

**PRAYER: Father, be it so; my heart and my flesh fail, but Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Forbid that we should be overcome with evil, help us to overcome evil with good. AMEN.**

## May 9: GOD'S TRIUMPH

**"The Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."-- Rev 11:15.**

IN THE midst of this babel of varying voices there has never been wanting the cry of the Church: "Thine is the Kingdom!" The rule of men is Christ's by right, but as Absalom made himself king in opposition to David, so has Satan made himself the prince of this world in opposition to Christ. Our earth is the scene of a great revolt under the leadership of Satan, but Christ is the rightful King of men for all that. His Kingdom is spreading from heart to heart, and ere long the prince of this world shall be cast out, and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord. Everyone will then say: "Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory!" But it is our privilege to say it now--when appearances seem all against it; now, when the usurper's power is so strong!

It is not enough, however, to say it in general, we must say it in particular. We must say to Christ our Lord, as the men of Israel said to Gideon: "Rule Thou over us, for Thou hast delivered us."

"Thine is the power." The millionaire says: "Mine is the power of money"; the orator, mine is the power of moving crowds by speech; the author, mine is the power of written words and songs; the scientist claims, mine is the power of extracting the secrets of nature. But after a time wealth vanishes, the tongue is paralysed, the mind decays, and so we learn that we have no inherent power. Visions of what is good, and the desire to do it, come to us, but how to perform, that is the difficulty, and we cry: "Give me power for service, over myself, power to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world." And in answer there comes this word of the ascended Lord: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth"; and as we catch the words, we answer thus: "Thine is the power." It is Thine that it may be mine!

"Thine is the glory." Let us live out the spirit of this prayer. When anyone praises us for some excellence or achievement in life or character, let us never forget to look up to Him and say: "Thine is the glory." Let us so live that men may be arrested by the radiance of our characters, that they may say: "How glorious must the Christ be who has made these so fair," and be constrained to follow Him.

**PRAYER: Help us, O God, to enthrone Christ in our hearts, that having glorified Him, we may receive His Spirit as rivers of living water. AMEN.**

## May 10: OUR ASSENT

### "Saying, Amen!"-- Rev 7:12.

AMEN MEANS, "So be it--certainly." It is the word constantly translated in the Gospels by "verily." It contains the consent of the heart and the response of the life. Amen means that you appropriate each word that is spoken, that your heart says Yes to it and stamps it with the seal of its consent. Let your life say "Amen" to God, "Amen" to Providence, "Amen" to Redemption, "Amen" to the Song of Heaven.

When tried and perplexed with the troubles and problems of life, turn from these---which make the brain dizzy and the heart sick--and consider the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ--"Our Father"--from whom every ray of love in the universe has emanated; and remember that nothing can be permitted or devised by Him which is not consistent with the gentlest and truest dealings that an earthly father could mete out to his child. So shall you be able to say: "Amen, Lord."

We must not dwell upon the dark and perplexing questions that seethe and boil around us. We must look up to the blue sky of undimmed sunshine, our Father's heart. He must be Love, beyond our deepest, tenderest, highest conceptions of what love is. In His dealings with us, and with all men, love is the essence and law of His nature. In proportion as you humbly believe in the Father, you will be able to say "Yes," which is a true rendering of the Greek word in our version, translated "Even so" (Mat 11:26).

Our Lord was able to say, not only "Even so, Father"; but, "I thank Thee," and there shall come a day when the four-and-twenty elders, representing the redeemed Church, shall see the judgment of her great opponent, and say, "Amen, Hallelujah!" (Rev 19:4). Here we can say "Amen," and not often "Hallelujah"; there the two--the assent and the consent; the acquiescence and the acclaim; the submission to the Will of God, and the triumphant outburst of praise and adoration. Let us anticipate that age when we shall know as we are known; when we shall be perfectly satisfied, perfectly jubilant, perfectly blessed; when every shadow of misunderstanding and misapprehension shall be dispelled, and we shall join in the Hymn of the Redeemed Church: "Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the Ages."

**PRAYER: O God, there are many things we dread, but we are enclosed in Thee; they cannot touch us except by Thy permission, and if Thou dost permit things that seem evil to enter our life, it must be well. Make us believe that all things are working together for good. AMEN**

## May 11: A PSALM OF BLESSEDNESS

**"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked. But his delight is in the law of the Lord."- Psa 1:1-2.**

THE BLESSED, or Happy, man is described negatively (Psa 1:1). There is a gradation in the attitude, the sphere of influence, and the condition of his companions. In attitude, we may begin by walking, advance to standing, and end by sitting. If we would avoid the sitting, let us guard against walking or standing. In the sphere of influence, the beginning of backsliding is when a man listens to counsel; he then drifts into the path trodden by sinners, and finally is hardened enough to sit where scornful talk surrounds him on every hand. The condition of evil companions. We should be repelled if we were to be plunged suddenly into contact with the scornful, but our moral interests may not be specially outraged by the counsel of the wicked. Indeed, the advice which wicked men give sometimes resembles closely what our heart suggests and our taste prefers. It is so specious, so apparently sensible and natural, that we are captivated by it. Only gradually do we slide from those who forget God to those who set His law at defiance or openly blaspheme Him.

Our motive in going amongst ungodly men must be carefully considered. If it is to help and save them, as our Lord did, no harm will come to us. But if we go into the way of sinners for our own amusement, need we be surprised if the bloom pass off the fruit, and the fine edge from the tool? Let us examine ourselves. Are we startled and shocked now, as we used to be, by an indecent illusion or a blasphemous word? Is there a coarsening process at work? Even where we are not injured by worldliness, we may suffer by contact with the low ideals of our fellow-Christians. Let us watch and pray; let us consider one another and exhort one another day by day, lest any be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13).

The Blessed, or Happy, man is also described positively (Psa 1:2). This delight comes as naturally as appetite for food, when the soul is in a healthy condition. Under the inspiration of that delight, we shall meditate on God's Word continually, storing it in the heart, and reciting it when travelling, or in darkness.

Remember that the Lord knows the way you take. He is sensitive to every jolt and lurch, to the stony hills and the easy valley, to the foes that lie in wait. In His keeping you will never become as the light chaff, or the perishing way of the wicked written in the dust.

**PRAYER: We commend ourselves, and those we love, to Thee, dear Lord. We put our hand in Thine, that Thou shalt lead us by the untrodden" way. AMEN.**

## May 12: A PSALM OF LIFE

**"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."--  
Psa 23:1-6.**

THIS IS "the Nightingale" among the Psalmist choristers! The first that we learn in infancy, the last we whisper with dying lips. It implies consecration, for God is this only to the soul which is wholly surrendered to Him. You cannot have all of God, or God in all, until you are willing to surrender your all. Do you want to put "My," the pronoun of possession, before the Name of God? He, then, you must be willing to answer His voice, and follow where He leads. "My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me, but a stranger will they not follow."

Morning! The Shepherd's leading. When He puts forth His sheep from the fold, in the dewy morning, He goes before them over the grass or up the mountain-track towards the pastures. It would never do for the flock to precede him. Whatever roughness you find on your path, remember that the Shepherd has gone before. "He leadeth me." Remember also that His name and character are involved in bringing you through "for His Name's sake."

Noon: The alleviations of rest. In all lives there are times when He makes us to lie down, or leads us by the waters of rest. Sometimes it is a period of convalescence after an illness. Sometimes a holiday, an interval between the pressure of engagements, a respite when the stress and strain of toil is over--these are our quiet pasture-lands. At other times, in the midst of life's rush and turmoil, our soul is kept at rest in God's peace. The heart rests for part of a second between its beats. "He maketh me to lie down!"

Night: the oil and the cup. The flock has reached the fold where it is to shelter. At the doorway stands the Shepherd, watching each one as it passes. This one has grazed and torn its head in getting through a hedge, and for it there is the anointing oil. Near His hand is the food and water, from which He fills the bowl, to wash the face, or give refreshment; and as it overflows, there is evidently enough and to spare!

Goodness and Mercy follow the flock, as the Shepherd precedes. "The House of the Lord" is the Fold from which we shall go out no more, and the Lamb shall be our Shepherd and abiding joy for ever.

**PRAYER: O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, the busy worm is hushed and the fever of life over and our work is done; then, Lord, in Thy mercy grant us safe lodging, a holy rest and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.**



## May 13: A PSALM OF COMMUNION

**"I will take the cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."-- Psa 116:13.**

**"And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins."-- Mt26:27-28.**

EVERY CHRISTIAN disciple should partake of the Lord's Supper regularly. It is a Sacrament. In the days of the Roman republic, the youths were brought to the altar and sworn to serve their country to the death. So our first Communion is our oath of allegiance to our King, It is a proclamation, or confession, of our faith. We bear witness to the death of Christ as our hope of forgiveness and salvation. We testify our desire to put His cross and grave between us and the world. It is also a bond of Christian union.

It is a Pledge of the Covenant. The Death of the Cross was God's sign and seal to the new covenant, the provisions of which are recited in Heb 8:1-13. When we drink the wine it is as though we said: "Remember thy Covenant." Let me appeal to all, and especially to the young disciple, to draw near and take the bread and wine, and to meditate deeply and reverently on that supreme Gift which demands our self-giving. "What shall I render unto the Lord? I will take the cup, I will pay my vows" (Ps116:13-14).

The expression in this Psalm is remarkable: "I will take the cup of salvation." When we enquire what salvation, we read: "Thou hast loosed my bonds" (Ps116:16), and we are reminded of Rev1:5, "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood." We are tied and bound by our sins; our sinful habits bind us fast in our thongs. But our Lord looses us by His cross.

Notice how triumphantly the Psalmist avows his loyalty to his Heavenly Master. Again, and yet again he avows: "O Lord, truly I am thy servant. I am thy servant." And we are the servants or bond-slaves of Jesus. If it be asked what "the sacrifices of thanksgiving" are, we may reply: First, the sacrifice of ourselves (Ro12:1). Next, the sacrifice of our praise and gifts (Heb13:15-16). Not grudgingly or thoughtlessly, but with cheerful eagerness, let us come to the altar of God. Because of all we owe to Him, let us never cease to live and serve, to praise and give.

**PRAYER: We pray that we may eat and drink, and do whatsoever we are called to do, in remembrance of Christ, and to show forth His life. May the spirit of worship pervade every act of daily life. AMEN.**

## May 14: A SONG OF THE SANCTUARY

**"Lord, I love the habitation of Thy House, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth."-- Ps26:8.**

PROBABLY WE never value the House of God so much as when we are severed from it. The author of this Psalm was evidently in exile.

He envied the very birds that nested in the holy places where he had been wont to worship. The pilgrims who were on their way thither, and the door-keepers who stood on the threshold, seemed to his ardent longing in better case than himself. Robinson Crusoe missed the sound of the church bell when no longer able to obey its call. There is a strange fascination in the sound of worship for those who for years have been deprived of its privilege. Let us be thankful for "the means of grace" and reverently make good use of them whilst they are at our disposal.

In order to find God's Tabernacles "lovely," we must love the Lord of Hosts as our King and God. Put God in His right place in your heart and life, and you will love His Palaces. When God is worshipped as King, we shall be reverent, we shall be punctual, we shall come with prepared and expectant heart. Any detraction in the manner of the minister, the singing of the choir, the atmosphere of the place, will not affect the soul which is occupied with God.

It is blessed when the high ways to Zion have a place in a man's heart--when he is set on them, dreams of them, and loves them because of the goal to which they lead. On our earthly pilgrimage we have our valleys of depression and weeping, as well as our transfiguration heights. Thank God that life is not one long dull monotony. Let us not find fault with the road, but make the best of it. Every phase of our experience has its compensations. Look out for them. If you take the valley you will find the water-spring; if you take the hill, you will get the horizon. But be it valley or hill, either brings you to your desired goal.

This Psalm makes it clear that God is the Shield of His people. In the night He is our Sun; in the day, when the sunbeams strike us like swords, He is our Shield (Ps121:5-6). Whatever your lot God will be its make-weight and equivalent. When the soul has incurred disaster and pursuit, what a comfort it is to hide in God as our Shield. what an iron-plated door is in the rush of fire along the corridor, that God is to the soul that escapes to Him. He besets us behind, as well as before.

**PRAYER: Give us grace, we beseech Thee, not to miss, by our apathy or unbelief, aught which Thou waitest to bestow. Teach us how to appropriate what Thou dost offer, and to receive what Thou wouldst impart. AMEN.**

## May 15: A PSALM OF GRATITUDE

**"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all His benefits."-- Psa 103:2.**

THE PSALMIST is fond of addressing the soul, as though to arouse it from lethargy. Within is a whole choir of minstrels, let them all awake! All that is within should be attuned to God and His praise. Let us not repine for the past, or strain after the future. We often forget the rare benefits of the present moment, because we suppose that there is something more absolutely satisfying ahead. Here and now God is forgiving, healing, redeeming, crowning, satisfying, and executing righteous acts. Live in the present! Live in God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! It is enough. The past records of God's dealings with His people are an incentive to faith. What He was, He is. He is a fountain brimming to the full with pitying love, which flows over in mercy and forgiveness.

There are four comparisons and contrasts in Psa 103:10-18. "As the heaven....As the east....As a Father....As for man." The ancients thought that the sky was solid, a kind of blue ceiling. What an immensity of new meaning we can read in the words: "As the heaven is high above the earth." There is an infinity of distance above us, but not more infinite than God's mercy. To the Eastern mind, east and west were the points at which the sun appeared to rise on earth's surface, "pillowing his chin on the orient wave," and drawing the curtains of the night. For us the telescope reveals the almost inconceivable distance of the earth from the sun, but this is the distance to which God has removed our transgressions. A father's pity for his weak and tiny offspring is very touching. The strongest plea with God is that of helpless weakness! The Son of God was made in the likeness of man, and "He knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust."

The last contrast was in our Lord's mind when He pointed to the flowers at His feet (Mat 6:30). Generations of flowers bloom and die in the broad expanse of nature--so frail, so beautiful, so transient. The generations of mankind are not more permanent. But the mercy of the Lord dates from everlasting and endures for ever.

The Psalmist's voice is heard, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" We are reminded of the conductor of a vast orchestra and choir, whose trained ear missed the note of the piccolo. So God will miss your voice if you refrain from His praise.

**PRAYER: O Blessed God, ever engaged in giving Thy choicest gifts to us Thine unworthy children, accept the gratitude for which we have no words. May we rejoice in all the good Thou sendest us. AMEN.**

## May 16: THE PSALM OF PENITENCE

**"I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight."-- Ps51:3-4.**

**"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."-- Ro3:23.**

THIS PSALM is a temple-staircase, worn by the feet of myriads of penitents. The page is wet with the tears alike of the most saintly and the most sinful. Augustine had them written on the walls of his tiny cell at Hippo, that he might appropriate them constantly. Perhaps they are more precious to us at the end of life than the beginning.

Note the definitions of sin. It is an erasure or blot on the fair page of life; hence the cry, "Blot out my transgressions." Oh that God would blot out the scribblings and smudges of our later years, and bring back the fresh beauty of our youth! It is a stain on the white robe of the soul; hence the petition: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity." There is but one way into the Holy City: "Blessed are they that wash their robes, and make them white in the Blood of the Lamb." It is leprosy; hence the cry, "Cleanse me from my sin; purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." There was special significance, then, for thee and me when Jesus reached forth His hand and touched the leper, saying: "Be thou clean."

Note the condition of forgiveness. It is confession. Transgression must be acknowledged. We must realise that sin is not only against man, but God, to whom man belongs, and who is affronted by all sin as committed directly against Himself. And our confession must not be superficial, but deep and heart-searching. We must go back to our earliest origins, to our connection with a sinful race, to our inward and hidden parts.

Note the cry for purity and righteousness of life. The clean heart has to be created, for there are no materials within us out of which it can be shaped or moulded. Eph 4:24 tells us that full provision has been made for this. We desire a "right," or steadfast spirit, which shall not deviate to the right or left, but bear straight onward to the goal. The Greek word for sin is "missing the mark." We long for a spirit that shall not be deflected. We desire a "free" or willing spirit (R.V. marg.). He, what a transformation is here! But it has been effected in myriads (1Co 6:11).

**PRAYER: Heavenly Father! Forgive us our many sins, ignorances, and failures, and cleanse us from all iniquity for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. May we hate sin as Thou dost, and may Thy grace sink deeper into our hearts, purifying the springs of thought and action. AMEN.**

## May 17: THE SOUL'S THIRST FOR GOD

**"My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and weary land, where no water is."-- Psa 63:1.**

THE LONGING of the soul for God only makes itself felt when all lesser delights and earthly joys are relegated to their right place. If you are not conscious of this soul-thirst it is because your heart is trying to satisfy itself from the world, and is engaged in digging wells that can hold no water. The woman rightly said to Jesus that she came all the way to draw water, because there was no alternative; but as soon as He satisfied her soul-thirst by opening the spring within her, she "left her waterpot." Most of us are so occupied with business, pleasure-seeking, moneymaking, and trifles, that we have no time or care for God.

"My soul shall be satisfied" (Psa 63:5). It takes very little and very much to satisfy the soul. Very little of this world. As our Lord said to Martha, only one thing is really needful. Yet very much, because anything less than God will not suffice; more, we cannot ask. To desire God is to have Him. To thirst for the water of life is to drink of it. Therefore our Lord says: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Let us not long for things and people which are not here with us. We may be in poverty and deprivation and loneliness, yet all things and all people are ours at this moment, because we have God. Why not, here and now, say: "I have God, and therefore I have all that is good in every one and every thing!" Why should the fish lament, which has the ocean to swim in?

"My soul followeth hard after Thee" (Psa 63:8). God sometimes seems to withdraw from the soul, as the mother will release her hold of the baby who is learning to walk, so that it may be encouraged, without knowing it, to follow her as she retreats with outstretched hands. Did not Christ withdraw from the woman, inclining her to follow hard after Him (Mat 15:21-28). So let us "follow on to know the Lord."

As we close this portion, let us ask if we can truly repeat the first verse. Can we say of God: "Thou art my God"? He is ours, but we must seek Him. We must, so to speak, build the fences of our faith in an ever-enlarging enclosure of God, our Father and Portion. It is not enough for the emigrant to have what he calls "a claim." He must open up the resources that lie buried in his piece of land. The diamonds of the Cape were first discovered through a child playing with a white stone, but they have been sought ever since.

**PRAYER: O God, some of us are full of infinite desire. Wilt Thou open Thine hand and satisfy our longings. Be nigh unto us as we call upon Thee. Hear our prayer and save us. AMEN.**

## May 18: THE PSALM OF INHERITANCE

**"I am thy portion and thine inheritance among the children of Israel."-- Nu18:20.**

**"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him."-- Lam 3:24.**

IT IS a wonderful thing when we can look upon God as being our portion, when we can lay our hand upon all His nature and say there is nothing in God which will not in some way contribute to my strength and joy. It makes one think of the early days of the settlement of emigrants in the Far West of Canada or Australia. The settler and his family would slowly travel forward, with their implements and seeds, till they reached the plot of ground allocated to them by the Government. At first the family would encamp on the edge of it, then they would prospect it, and go to and fro over its acres with a sense that it all belonged to them, though it needed to be brought under cultivation. In the first year, within the fence hastily constructed, the farmer and his sons would begin to cultivate some small portion of their newly-acquired territory. This would yield the first crops; next year they would press the fences farther out, until at the end of a term of years the whole would have been brought under cultivation.

So it is with the mighty Nature of God. when first we are converted and led to know Him for ourselves, we can claim to apprehend but a small portion of the length and depth and breadth and height of His Love; but as the years go slowly on, amid the circumstances of trouble and temptation and the loss of earthly things, we are led to make more and more of God, until the immensity of our inheritance, which can never be fully explored or utilised, breaks upon our understanding. No wonder that the Psalmist breaks forth into thanksgiving in Psa 16:6-7, and Psalm 91.

The devout soul rejoices in God as his great Inheritance. When He is always present to our mind, when we are constantly making use of Him, when we find ourselves naturally turning to Him through the hours of the day, then such quiet peace and rest settle down upon us that we cannot be moved by any anxiety of the present or future. Death itself will make no difference, except that the body which has obscured our vision will be left behind, and the emancipated soul will be able more fully to expatiate in its inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading (1Pe 1:4-5).

**PRAYER: We thank Thee, O Lord, that all things are ours in Christ, working for us, co-operating with us, and bearing us onward to that glorious destiny for which Thou art preparing us. AMEN.**

## May 19: THE SILVER LINING IN THE DARK CLOUD

**"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, Who is the health of my countenance, and my God."-- Ps42:5, Ps42:11; Ps43:5.**

THESE TWO Psalms are evidently one. See how the same refrain rings through them both! They are generally allocated to that sad time in David's history, when the rebellion of his favourite son, Absalom, drove him as an exile beyond the Jordan (2Sa 15:14). But amid the great sorrows that rolled over his soul, there was one glad ingredient. Thrice over the Psalmist encourages himself to Hope! For many a sorrowful soul, this is a true emblem. Amid all the disappointment and despair of life, there is always one chord of Hope--God! We may stand amid the wreck of our earthly hopes. Through misconduct or mistake, as the result of folly or sin, we may have reduced ourselves and those dear to us to the last degree of misery; but the soul may always turn from its low estate to God, sure that He will have mercy, will abundantly pardon, and will turn again the adverse pressure of the tide.

See how the broken-hearted may still speak of God! This man had grievously sinned. He seemed to have forfeited all claim on God's recognition and care. He had brought shame and disgrace on the cause of religion. All down the years the story of his wrong-doing would give the enemies of truth abundant reason to blaspheme. And yet see how he dares to speak of God! He describes Him as the God of his life, as his Rock, as the Health of his countenance, the God of his strength, and the Gladness of his joy. This is a great lesson! We may change, but God changes never. We may turn our face from Him, or allow some evil thing to loom between ourselves and the clear shining of His face. But he shines on, and when we confess our sins, and put them away, we find ourselves afresh in the clear shaft of His illuminating rays. You may have lost all hope in yourself, your friends, your circumstances, but you must never lose your hope in God.

The past, which can only be viewed with repentance, is forgiven; the present, in which God is willing to be All-in-all; the future, when again the soul shall praise Him with joyful lips. Hope looks into the future. "I shall yet praise Him."

**PRAYER: Our Father, forgive, we pray Thee, our murmuring and discontent, our perverseness and waywardness. Teach us to discern the silver edge of the lowering clouds, and to trust Thy love, which is leading us safely and by a right way to our home. AMEN.**

## May 20: THE PSALM OF THE DOORKEEPER

**"For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."--Psa 84:10.**

THIS PSALM has been a favourite with God's people in all ages when Carlyle was leaving, in doubt and despondency, his quiet mountain name at Craigen-puttock for the untried tumult of London, he quoted this Psalm for comfort to his brother and himself, saying: "I turn my thoughts heavenwards, for it is in heaven only that I find any basis for our poor pilgrimage on earth. As surely as the blue dome of heaven encircles us all, so does the providence of the Lord of Heaven. 'He will withhold no good thing from those that love Him.' This, as it was the ancient Psalmist's faith, let it likewise be ours. It is the Alpha and Omega, I reckon, of all the possessions that can belong to man."

In absence and distance, the heart of the true believer turns to God. He believes that he has direct access to Him, and that his prayer will be accepted (Psa 84:8). David, as the anointed King, had the right to ask that God, who was his Shield, should look upon his face; but we have even a better plea, for we may ask that God would look upon the face of His own glorious and beloved Son, and accept us in Him (Psa 84:9).

Let us imitate the humility of this man, and be willing to take the lowest place (Luk 14:10-11); but we must be on our guard against being proud of our humility. Some people take the back seats that they may be asked to come to the front. They mistake the Lord's words. It is said that there is always room at the top; it is equally true that there is plenty of room at the bottom; and if men and women will really gird themselves with a towel and wash the feet of the disciples, if they are prepared in the literal sense to be doorkeepers and to give themselves in service, they will be allowed to do their work with little praise save that of the King Himself.

To all such lowly souls God gives grace and glory (Psa 84:11). With both hands He will give and give again. Only we must practise the habit of taking. Grace is the bud of which Glory is the flower. If God has given the one, He will not withhold the other from. Psa 84:12). If anything is withheld from us, we may be sure that it is not absolutely for our good. No good thing will the Father withhold; but He will not give us scorpions, however beautiful their appearance; nor stones, though painted to resemble bread.

**PRAYER: Teach us to abide with Thee in our daily calling, and to realise that each sphere may be a temple for priestly service. AMEN.**



## May 21: THE VOICE OF GOD IN NATURE AND REVELATION

**"The Heavens declare the Glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Psa 19:1.**

VERSES (Psa 19:1-6): Those whose hearts are in tune with God can hear voices in Nature which are inaudible to the ordinary man. The poet Blake says: "When the morning sun ascends the eastern sky, you may behold only a light yellow disc, whereas I shall see and hear the infinite multitude of the heavenly host, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy!" Yet, though there is no speech nor language, is it not true that "their words are gone forth to the end of the world"? There is no nation of men that has not heard the voice of Nature speaking of God (Act 14:16-17; Rom 1:20-21).

In Psa 19:7-11 the Psalmist describes the effect of the Word of God when the Spirit of Truth works through it and by it on the soul. There are many ways of reading the Bible--as a history, as a revelation of man's gropings after God, as a piece of great literature; but the best way is to ask the Divine Spirit to make it a medium through which He may approach our innermost nature. Listen to God's voice speaking within you. Be still, that you may hear. The Spirit searches into the deep things of God, and reveals them to our spirit (1Co 2:10). All that God has ever said or been to others, He will say and be to you, if only your heart is lowly and contrite. "Speak to me, Lord, by Prophet and Psalmist, by lyric and prose, by narrative and appeal. Speak through Thy Word to restore my soul, to rejoice my heart, and to enlighten mine eyes!" When to the quiet and waiting soul God uses His own Word thus, it is more to be desired than fine gold, and is sweeter than the taste of honey from the comb.

The effect of God's Word, when used by the Holy Spirit, is very remarkable (Psa 19:11-14). It convinces of sin. Just as linen is shown to be discoloured against freshly-fallen snow, so we re, arise our errors and cry to be cleansed from hidden and secret sins.

David knew little of the glory and wonder of the Cross, where God spared not His own Son, but in Him stooped to reconcile man to Himself. The starry heavens, telling of the glory of God, and even the Law itself, are not able to tell us what the Cross of Jesus does, of Love that matched itself against hate, and of Grace that would not be turned away by human sin.

**PRAYER: I pray Thee, gracious Lord, that I may not miss any of those lessons which Thou art desirous of teaching me by Thy Spirit, Thy Word, and Thy Providence. AMEN.**

## May 22: THE PSALM OF ASCENSION

**"But God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."-- Eph 2:4-6.**

THIS 24th Psalm is apparently in two parts, and yet there is one theme, the ascent of the holy soul and the triumphant Saviour into the presence of God. For us, the ascension of our Lord precedes our own; but in the days of the Psalmist that order was reversed.

Our Lord's Ascension. In an outburst of poetry, kindled by the Divine Spirit, the Psalmist anticipates the coming of the King of Glory to the doors of the Eternal City--that ideal City which through the ages has beckoned forward the hearts of saints and patriots, and which in Rev. 21. is seen descending to our earth. It was as though the doors of the Unseen barred His entrance. They had opened to God, but never before to "God manifest in the flesh." It was a new thing that He should take our nature with Him into the unseen and eternal world.

The soul's ascension (Psa 24:3-6). In Christ we have ascended and are seated at God's right hand. No change in your emotions, not even the being overtaken by a fault can alter that. But we have to make our calling sure. What is ours in the divine purpose must be claimed and appropriated as a living daily experience. There are certain qualities of character which are requisite to those who should be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man, not hereafter only, but now and here and always (Luk 21:36).

We must have clean hands. The money that we earn must be clean money. If we are writers, artists, mechanics, professional or commercial men or women, we must never produce anything which would defile the imagination or heart. We must have a pure heart. In Is 33:14-17, which is a parallel passage, the Holy Spirit is compared to a devouring fire, in the presence of which no evil thing can live. Let us ask Him so to possess us, and to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by His inspiration. We must not lift up our soul to vanity, i.e., we must not allow ourselves to be inflated with the applause or rewards of the world. Many sell their souls for these, and only at the end of life awaken to discover how worthless they are. We must not swear deceitfully, i.e., we must be absolutely transparent and sincere, for only the true can stand in the presence of the King of Truth.

**PRAYER: May we live as those who have been raised with Christ, and who are seated with Him. AMEN.**

## May 23: THE SLEEPLESS WATCHER

**"He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper."-- Psa 121:3-5.**

THIS PSALM has been called the Traveller's Psalm. When the pilgrims started forth from their distant homes to go up to the Temple, not one of them could forecast his experiences before he reached home again. There were perils of rivers, perils of robbers, perils in the wilderness, perils in travel from wild beasts. It was well, therefore, that they should commit themselves and their dear ones to the care of One who neither slumbered nor slept. It is not enough for the body to be kept; we need the soul to be kept from all evil, as we go out into the world with its microbes of temptation, or come back to the luxury and comfort of our dwelling. There is temptation everywhere; not for one moment are we absolutely immune.

There is a difference between slumbering and sleeping. The mother or nurse watching the child may sometimes get a few moments of slumber; it is not very restful, yet there is a brief pause of unconsciousness. But this never comes to God. Not for one moment does He slumber, or ceases His watchful care of us. God keeps us by besetting us behind and before, and lays His hand upon us (Psa 139:5). As a sentry goes to and fro before the palace given to his charge, so God's peace, like a sentinel, keeps watch and ward around the soul. We speak of the castle-keeper, the inner circle of defence; so God's Presence is our Keep. We think also of the safe, around which the fire may play, but cannot touch its contents; so the child of God may walk in the midst of peril and temptation, but God is round about him; he is inside the secret place of the Most High, and no weapons formed against him can reach that inner sanctuary. Let us hand over the keeping of our souls to Him as to a faithful Creator (1Pe 4:19).

The dosing words of this Psalm remind us of Joh 14:1-6. There will be one last going out and coming in, when the house of our life shall be left vacant, and we shall go forth to the Father, to the House of many mansions, to the great company which awaits us on the other side. Then in the transition between this world and the next, and amid all the mysteries that shall crowd upon us, we need fear no evil, for whatever Eternity may bring to us, we shall always be sheltered and kept by Almighty care.

**PRAYER: Almighty God! Thou knowest that I have no power of myself to keep myself. Keep me outwardly in my body and inwardly in my soul, that I may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul. AMEN.**

## May 24: THE SECRET OF THE QUIET HEART

**"Be still, and know that I am God."-- Psa 46:10.**

**"Sit still, my daughter, for the man will not rest, until he have finished the thing this day."-- Ruth 3:18.**

PARADISE HAS vanished from our world, as the picture of a landscape vanishes when swept by storm. And our race stands in much the same plight as did Naomi and Ruth in this old-world story. We have lost our inheritance, and the one barrier which stands between us and despair is the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, thank God, we need have no doubt as to the sequel. For as Boaz claimed back the estate for Ruth, so may we be confident that Jesus Christ will never be at rest till this sin-stained and distracted world is restored to her primitive order and beauty, as when the morning-stars sang for joy.

Jesus is our near Kinsman by His assumption of our nature. He is the nearest and dearest Friend of our race, who stooped to die for our redemption. And the fact that He carried our nature in Himself to heaven, and wears it there, is an indissoluble bond between us. Sit still! do not fret! He will never fail, as He will certainly never forsake!

Let us seek the quiet heart in our prayers. Prayer must arise within us as a fountain from unknown depths. But we must leave it to God to answer in His own wisest way. We are so impatient, and think that God does not answer. A child asked God for fine weather on her birthday, and it rained! Some one said, "God didn't answer your prayer." "Oh yes," she replied, "He did, God always answers, but He said No!" God always answers! He never fails! Be still! If we abide in Him, and He abides in us, we ask what we will, and it is done. As a sound may dislodge an avalanche, so the prayer of faith sets in motion the power of God.

In times of difficulty--be still! Thine enemies are plotting thine overthrow! They laugh at thy strong confidence! But hast thou not heard His voice saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it"? Then leave Him to deal with thy foes from whatever quarter they come. He is thy Rock, and rocks do not shake. He is thy High Tower, and a high tower cannot be flooded. Thou needest mercy, and to Him belongeth mercy. Do not run hither and thither in panic! Just quietly wait, hushing thy soul, as He did the fears of His friends on the eve of Gethsemane and Calvary. "Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him." "Be still, for He will not rest, until He hath finished the thing this day."

**PRAYER: If this day I should get lost amid the perplexities of life and the rush of many duties, do Thou search me out, gracious Lord, and bring me back into the quiet of Thy presence. AMEN.**

## May 25: DAYS OF GLADNESS

**"All the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them. And there was very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days."-- Neh 8:12, Neh 8:17, Neh 8:18.**

GLADNESS IS health. If you can get a patient to look on the bright side of things, you have done a great deal to bring back the tides of life.

Whenever we are optimistic and glad we are looking at things from the divine side, and imbibing some of God's eternal gladness. And cherishing this temperament, we shall know what Nehemiah and Ezra meant when they said: "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh 8:10).

If you have some secret sorrow, tell it to God, but do not impose it needlessly upon men. Anoint your head and wash your face, that you appear not to men to fast, and He who sees the secret tears will comfort you openly (Mat 6:17-18). The pain and sorrow of the world is undeniable, even worse than many of us realise, but this is largely due to the intrusion of sin and selfishness which can only be expelled by Love. But even this gives opportunity for that unselfish ministry and devotion which are the keys of the blessed life. In so far as we dedicate our lives to help Christ in His redeeming work of delivering souls out of the power of darkness and translating them into the Kingdom of Life and Light, we share in His perennial blessedness.

It must have been a time of unusual joy when the returned exiles reviewed the finished wall which now engirded the city. There was the consciousness of a finished work. It is always delightful when we have done to the very best of our ability a piece of work that needed doing. One of the elements of a thoroughly enjoyable holiday is to be able to look back on a bit of good construction, a piece of brick or stone work which will endure in the edifice of our own lives or of other people's.

In addition, there was the Book of the Law of God, in which they read from day to day. Let us take the Bible with us on our holidays! We shall find that it will yield new meaning as we study it by lake or mountain; as we ponder it in country lanes, or by the seashore, One like the Son of Man will walk beside us, and apply its teaching till our hearts burn within us, and we are no more sad.

**PRAYER: We thank Thee for eyes that see, and hearts that love, and natures that can enjoy Thy good and perfect gifts. O Father, in Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. AMEN.**

## May 26: GOD'S WORKMANSHIP

**"We are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we are all the work of Thy hand."-- Is 64:8.**

THE POTTER'S craft is almost the oldest in the world, and its method has hardly differed through the ages. Jeremiah as well as Isaiah refers to it (Jer 18:1-4). While the prophet was standing watching the potter, he saw him take a piece of moistened clay from the lump that lay beside him, and placing it on the wheel, he began to shape it after a design which was in his thought. As it approached completion, the clay collapsed under his hands, some part falling on the ground, and some on the wheel itself. To Jeremiah's surprise, the potter did not sweep the recalcitrant fragments away, but gathered them up, and made them again into another vessel. This is what God does still.

The Master-workman is our Father. "But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father." Some who read these words have themselves been parents. They have tasted the ecstasy of parentage, as the child has been laid for the first time in their arms. At that moment a new passion has arisen in the heart, and new resolves have compelled the soul. To shield, defend, educate, help, love, and teach to love--all this is included in that first embrace. The compulsion of the child's helplessness is a supreme motive to father or mother. Prayers are offered that find an echo in the heart of God, from whom they sprang.

Has God put these sentiments in human hearts, and has He not their original and pattern in Himself? For a moment do not think of yourself as a child, but of God as your Father. Your spirit has come forth from the Father of Spirits. You were called into existence by His word. You carry in your nature some thought or conception to which He desired to give expression. Is He not conscious therefore, of responsibility to perfect that which concerns you? Of course you may thwart Him, as the clay was marred in the hand of the potter. You may take your journey into a far country and waste the precious formative years in selfish indulgence. But if you will let the Great Father work out His full purpose in your training, your unfolding, and your prayer-life specially, you will find with Isaiah, that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard such an One as our God, who worketh for him that waiteth for Him.

**PRAYER: O God, our Father, may we never doubt Thy enduring mercy. May we not be frightened by the noise of the wheels in Thy great workshop. Enable us to believe that Thou art weaving the fair fabric of our life on the loom of daily circumstance. We beseech Thee to perfect that which concerneth us. AMEN.**

## May 27: GOD'S PREPARATIONS

**"Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him."-- Is 64:4.**

THIS CHAPTER is a casket of precious jewels. Let us look at some of them! What wonder that St. Paul loved that fourth verse, which he quotes in 1Co 2:9! Here we read that God works for those who wait for Him; to the Apostle these words conveyed the thought that those who wait for Him must be those who love Him, and that God has thought out His prepared plan, so that they have only to believe in Him and go forward, to find that the path has been levelled for them to walk in. Those that love God are not afraid of the mountains that block their way; they know that God will make them flow down, and will reveal a pathway for their steps. The men of this world, from of old, have never heard with the ear, nor perceived with the eye, what our God will do for His own!

Often, as we tread the pathway of service, rejoicing that He loves us, and working such righteousness as we can, we meet God coming toward us, as the father meets his children, who have gone out to welcome him on his return from work. Or, in the hour which we dread, the hour of that operation, of that dreaded meeting, the hour of bereavement, as we walk along the path--we shall see a light approaching us, growing ever brighter. It is the herald-ray of God's approach. "Thou meetest them that remember Thee in Thy ways!"

It is in the midst of such loving-kindness that we become most conscious of sin. All our righteousnesses, which passed muster in the sunlight, in His searching sight seem as filthy rags, and we realise how evanescent are our resolutions. "We all do fade as a leaf."

Perhaps we are most ashamed at our failure in the life of prayer. We do not stir up ourselves to take hold of God.

Here we must use special caution in speaking to others of those hidden passages of the soul, in which God our Father is pleased to meet with us and refresh us, lest we lead to take the higher path those who have not trod the lower. Each soul knows its own secret from the Lord, and we must live only as we have received. St. Bernard's motto was: "My secret to myself."

### PRAYER

**There is a secret place of rest,            God's saints alone may know;**

**Thou shalt not find it east or west,    Though seeking to and fro;**

**A cell where Jesus is the door,        His love the only key;**

**Who enter will go out no more,        But there with Jesus be.**

## May 28: NIGHT AND MORNING!

**"Weeping may tarry for the night, But joy cometh in the morning."-- Psa 30:5 (R.V.).**

The Night of Doubt--the Morning of Faith. It is indeed a memorable moment in the history of the human spirit, when we suddenly wake up to see that the Almighty is the All-Loving Father, that the righteousness of God is no longer a ground of anxiety and fear, but of assured hope; that He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. What a glad hour it was to Thomas when, after a week of the blackness of darkness, he stood again face to face with Jesus, and learnt that His heart was beating in sympathy, and that His pierced hands were held out to him. Dare to believe that the Love which died for thee is dealing with all the mysteries, misfits, and dark problems of thy life. Weeping may tarry for the night in which you shut yourself in with yourself, but she is only a lodger! Joy will come in the morning, when you open your heart to Christ.

The Night of Perplexity--the Morning of Vision. We cannot explain all the dealings of God with man, still less the mysteries of the Divine Nature. Clouds and darkness are round about Him, though judgment and righteousness are the habitation of His Throne. But from time to time we obtain some broken vision of His Purpose and Achievement and Objective. Then the voice of Joy rings through our heart; then our mouths are filled with laughter and our tongues with singing! Men call us dreamers, but we count them blind. Sooner or later Christ will come! The power of Satan will be broken and his reign ended. The things that prophets and kings foretold, and died without seeing, shall be realised. The children of Light will lift up their heads, because the time of Redemption will have come. Sorrow and sighing will flee away, and in that glad Morning there will be the shout of Joy!

The Night of Bereavement--the Morning of Reunion. Their stay with us was all too short! We had only begun to fathom their sweetness and beauty. We little dreamed that we would only be allowed to sip the cup of bliss that they had brought into our lives. And then they heard a Voice that called, and saw a beckoning Hand, and they arose and went! He, that height of Weeping! But the Morning of Joy cometh, when we shall see again their radiant faces welcoming us on the other side. In that fair Morning, Joy will be at the full tide, never to recede.

**PRAYER: Blessed Christ! The storm is high, the night is dark. Come to me, I beseech Thee. In Thy presence is fulness of Joy. AMEN.**



## May 29: THE FORTRESS OF THE HEART

**"Keep thy heart with all diligence."-- Pro 4:23. "The peace of God shall keep your hearts."-- Phi 4:7.**

IN MOST of the old castles there is an inner keep, which is protected, not only by mighty walls and bastions, but by the portcullis at the gate, and sentries at every approach, who challenged every one that passed in and out. So the heart is continually approached by good and evil, by the frivolities and vanities of the world and the insidious suggestions of the flesh. It is like an inn or hostelry, with constant arrivals and departures. Passengers throng in and out, some of them with evil intent, hoping to find conspirators, or to light fires that will spread until the whole being is swept with passion, consuming in an hour the fabric of years to ashes.

We need, therefore, to be constantly on the watch; we must keep our heart above all else that we guard, for out of it are the issues of life (R.V. marg.). Our Lord says that "out of the heart of man come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts," etc. The devil and the world without would be less to be feared, if there were not such strong tendencies to evil within--many of them inherited from long lines of ancestors, who, alas! pass down to us the worst features of their characters equally with the best.

Keep it Clean. Just as the eye of the body is perpetually washed with tear-water, so let us ask that the precious blood of Christ may cleanse away any speck of impurity. Remember how delicate a thing the heart is, and how susceptible to the dust of an evil thought, which would instantly prevent it becoming the organ of spiritual vision. Sursum Corda! Lift up your hearts! We lift them up unto the Lord!

The Sentinel of Peace. Then the Peace of God will become the warden or sentry of the heart, and it passeth understanding! We can understand the apparent peace of some men. They have made money, and their gold-bags are piled around them as a fortress; they have rich and influential friends, within whose protection they imagine they will be sheltered and defended; they enjoy good health, and are held in high esteem. We can understand such peace, though it often proves ephemeral! But there is a peace that passeth understanding! It is to this that our Lord refers when He says, "My Peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

**PRAYER: Keep me, Heavenly Father, as the apple of Thine eye; defend me by Thine Almighty power; hide me from this strife of tongues and the fiery darts of the wicked one. May my heart be as the palace which the Stronger than the strong man keeps in perfect peace. AMEN.**

## May 30: THE PERSISTENCE OF LIFE

**"The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him."-- Luk e20:37-38.**

WHAT IS Death? It is not a condition but a transition; not an abiding-place, but a passage; not a house, but a doorway. The Scripture refers to it as a birth--"the first-born from the dead"; as an exodus --"after my exodus," says Peter; as a striking of the tent--"I must shortly put off this tabernacle;" as the weighing of an anchor--"the time for me to loose-off from the shore is come." Each of these metaphors accentuates the fact that Death is but a momentary act. We are absent from the body one moment, present with the Lord the next.

Persistent Personality. In that other field we shall surely recognise each other, and shall be as close akin, yea, closer than we were in long-past happy days, when heart to heart had sweet converse, or co-operated in useful ministry. Abraham will still be Abraham; Isaac, Isaac; and Jacob, Jacob. Not bodiless ghosts, but living personalities etherealised and transfigured. Moses and Elijah were recognised as such by the startled disciples on the Transfiguration mount; and Mary knew the Master in the Garden. What gain would it have been that Jesus promised the dying thief that he should be with Him in Paradise, if, when he reached there, he could not recognise the Lord?

Persistent Love. Love will never fail! But how can it exist without an object; and how can it forget! Why did Jesus promise the "many mansions," unless He meant that there should be homes! He knows that the heart clings, even in the light of Resurrection, to the dear objects of human affection, else He would never have mentioned Peter's name, nor have sent a message to His disciples, nor come a second time for Thomas! And will He ignore those natural cravings for us, whom He has loved better than Himself? How deep and sweet His assurance: "If it were not so, I would have told you!" Charles Kingsley asked that on the grave stone, which stood above his wife and himself, should be inscribed the words: "Amavimus, Amamus, Amabimus"--We loved, we love, we shall continue to love. And who shall challenge the truth or appositeness of these words?

Persistent Activity. "His servants shall serve Him!" The tasks we bungled here with our apprentice-hands will become possible; and unravelling our tangled skeins, we shall weave such fabrics as our wildest dreams never imagined.

**PRAYER: I pray Thee, O Lord, to deliver me from the fear of death; and when mine eyes open in the dawn of heaven, may I see Thee standing to welcome me, and may I receive Thy Well-done! AMEN.**

## **May 31: GOD'S UNFAILING LOVE**

**"Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you" I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.-- Is 46:4.**

WHAT A marvellous promise is this! In days of foreboding, when we fear what may lie behind the veil of the impenetrable future!

Disease? Poverty? Suffering? Bereavement? We cannot tell, but we may turn in confidence to our God. He knows just how much we can bear, for He has made us: "I have made, and I will bear, and will deliver you."

Even to old age! The hoar-frost may silver the head, the sound of the grinding may be low, the silver cord may be frayed even to the breaking, lovers and friends may have passed on to the other world; like the last apple on the bough, we may be left alone; but in the second childhood as in the first--"Even to your old age-- I will carry you"; "For Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear" (Heb 13:5).

**PRAYER: O God, our Father, we are Thine, May we never doubt Thy enduring mercy. We thank Thee!  
AMEN.**

## June 1: MARCHING ORDERS

**"Have not I commanded Thee! Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."-- Jos 1:9.**

IT WAS a host of young men and women that stood on the verge of Jordan, waiting the signal to enter the Promised Land. God had said that He would give them every place upon which the sole of their foot should tread (Josh 1:3). What an incentive this was for pressing on! Every time an Israelite put his foot forward on the territory of Canaan, he realized that piece of land would come into the possession of his people.

There is a counterpart of this in our own experience. We must learn to put down our foot upon the Promises of God's Word, and say: "These are mine by right, and shall be mine in actual enjoyment." In General Gordon's journal, he tells us that often before he reached some strange or hostile tribe, it seemed as though they had been given to his faith and subdued before he reached them. In combating your spiritual foes, dare to believe that God has given them into your hand, and go forward assured that not one of them shall stand before you. This is a blessed promise: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Josh 1:5). It does not matter how fierce the tempter, how often you have failed, how inveterate the bad habits, if you will dare to believe that God is with you, not one of all the band of besetting sins shall be able to stand before you. God cannot fail, and will not forsake; be strong, and go forward!

The one thing that God asks of all of us is that we should obey up to the hilt.

Here are our marching orders, and we must keep them well before us:

- (1) We must meditate upon the Scripture day and night; it must not depart from our heart or mouth.
- (2) We must be strong even when obedience seems impossible, and when all influences are brought to bear to weaken our resolution, we must still dare to obey the voice of God. And as we advance we shall find that the dreaded forms of opposition are but shadows; when they are touched with the spear-point of faith, they will divide and we shall pursue our way.

**PRAYER: Before we enter upon our work and warfare, wilt Thou graciously equip us with the armour of light, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. May we hear Thee saying: Fear not, I am with thee, I will help thee. AMEN.**

## June 2: CHRISTIAN LIVING

**"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal 2:20.**

THE HEART of true religion is to believe that Christ is literally within us. We must not simply look to Him as our Mediator, Advocate, and Example, but as being possessed by Him. He is our Life, the living Fountain rising up in the well of our personality. The Apostle Paul was never weary of re-affirming this great fact of his experience, and it would be well if each of us could say every day, before starting forth on our daily duty: "Christ is in me; let me make room for Him to dwell."

We must say No to self, that the life of Christ may become manifest in and through us, and our standing become a reality in daily experience and conduct. When evil suggestions come to us, we must remember that we have entered a world where such things have no place. We are no longer in the realm of the god of this world, but have passed into the realm of the Risen Christ. Let those who are tempted believe this, and assert it in the face of the tempter, counting upon the Holy Spirit to make their reckoning a living experience.

In Eph 6:13-17 is described the armour of the Christian soul; in Col 3:12-14 the habit or dress which he wears beneath his coat of mail. We must be careful to be properly dressed each day. If we lose our temper over trifles, or yield to uncharitable speech, it shows that we have omitted to put on the girdle of love; if we yield to pride, avarice, envy and jealousy, we must not simply endeavour to put off these evils, but take from the wardrobe the opposite graces. It is not enough to avoid doing wrong. Our Master demands that we should always do and be what is right. When we fail in some sudden demand, it is because we have omitted to put on some trait of Christ, which was intended to be the complement of our need. Let us therefore day by day say: "Lord Jesus, wrap Thyself around me, that I may go forth, adequately attired to meet life's demands." In Christ for standing; Christ in us, for life; we with him, for safety.

**PRAYER: Set my heart on fire with the love of Thee, and then to do Thy will, and to obey Thy commandments, will not be grievous to me. For to him that loveth, nothing is difficult, nothing is impossible; because love is stronger than death. AMEN.**

### June 3: ORDERED STEPS

**"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."-- Psa 37:23-24.**

IT IS a mistake to think of our Lord's sufferings as a fact of history come and gone, an incident of the great past. It is this, but much more. He does not leave us to bear all the burden of life, unaided and alone. He shares everything with us now--our pain, our griefs, our weariness. "In all our affliction He is afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saves us." As another has put it: "Not standing over against me, holding back a hand that might help, but side by side; nay, even, 'closer than breathing.' Within the inmost hiding-place of my sufferings, He suffers also, bears my griefs and carries my sorrows, as though they were His own. If only we will avail ourselves of His sympathy and help, they who watch us shall see One like unto the Son of Man walking in the fiery furnace, by our side."

God is ordering all things in our life to secure the best results here and hereafter. In the darkest sky there are a few inches of blue. Happy is the soul which watches these, and dwells on them, and believes that they will widen until the darkness is passed, and all the sky is clear! We often forget that what seems to be a disaster is really the seed of a joyous harvesting. If we had visited this earth of ours in one of the great eras of the past, we should have found it covered by a dense mass of vegetation. But that era was not destined to last. Volcanic action of the fiercest character overwhelmed those mighty trees, and hurled them into the dark caverns and cellars of the yawning gulfs which seamed the planet. You and I, had we been there, might have cried: "Wherefore this waste?" To our poor and limited vision, it would have seemed a contradiction to the ordered progress of the Creator's plan. Why hurl into the bowels of the earth all this fair growth! But out of that cataclysm, the profuse vegetation, pressed together in the heart of the earth, became coal to give us light and heat.

Once, when staying in the country with a friend, he took me into his garden and showed me the weather-vane over his coach-house, and asked if I could distinguish the sentence woven into its texture. I discovered it to be: "God is Love!...Yes," he said, "for I have found that whatever comes to me is from the quarter of the Love of God!"

**PRAYER: Help me to believe, O Lord, that all things are of Thee; and that Thou hast a plan for my life, of which each passing incident is a part. AMEN.**

## June 4: CO-OPERATING WITH GOD

**"For we are labourers together with God."-- 1Co 3:9.**

IN THIS chapter the Apostle describes the Church as a garden or vineyard, in which the Divine Spirit is ever at work, superintending, directing, inspiring, and calling to co-operate with Him all His servants, whether they be Paul, Apollos, or Cephas; or as a vast temple, rising through the ages, requiring labourers to lay the foundations, others to build the walls, and others to put the final touches in the light of an accomplished purpose. In each case, the design, the successive stages of advancing progress, the engagement of the workers, the direction of their labours and their reward is entirely with the Husband-man and the Master-Builder. It is not our work, but His; we are not responsible for the results, but only to do His Will; He repays us by generous rewards, but there our responsibility ends. When the Garden stands in the mature beauty, and yields the prolific fruitage of autumn; when the Building is completed and stands in symmetrical glory amidst the wrecks of time, then those who have co-operated will stand aside, and "God will be All in all."

All through human industry there is this co-operation between God and man. He stores the cellars of the earth with gold or coal, and it is for man to excavate it; He fills the hedgerows and woodlands with wild fruits and flowers, it is for man to cultivate them; He fills the earth with iron, copper, and other priceless treasures, it is for man to work them into all manner of useful implements. In every harvest-field, garden, orchard, industry, and employment of natural law for the purpose of civilization, there is this combined effort of God and man. God's energy works according to laws, which man must study as the key to the unlocking of the forces which he uses to flash his messages, guide the aero plane or motor, or speed him across the ocean.

In the Church the same law prevails. God has given the Word, but the company of preachers has been needed to proclaim it. The Words of inspiration burn with the fire of God, but man is called in to translate them into every language under heaven. The saving power of Christ waits to heal and bless, but He needs the co-operation of the human hand and life as the medium through which His virtue passes. Those whom God calls into fellowship in serving others may count on Him for the supply of all their needs (1Co 3:21-23).

**PRAYER: Heavenly Father, show me how I may work with Thee, and in what direction are Thy energies going forth that I may walk and work in fellowship with Thyself. AMEN.**

## June 5: GLORYING IN INFIRMITIES!

**"My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."-- 2Co 12:9.**

THE APOSTLE seems to have enjoyed wonderful revelations of God. Not once or twice, but often he beheld things that eye hath not seen, and heard words that ear cannot receive, and God felt it was necessary for him to have a make-weight lest he should be exalted beyond measure (2Co 12:7).

What the thorn or stake in the flesh was it is impossible to say with certainty. He may have suffered from some distressing form of ophthalmia. We infer this from the eagerness of the Galatian converts to give him their eyes (Gal 4:13-17), and from his dependence on an amanuensis. His pain made him very conscious of weakness, and very sensitive of infirmity, and kept him near to the majority of those to whom he ministered, who did not live on the mountain heights, but in the valleys, where demons possess and worry the afflicted. Be willing that your visions of Paradise should be transient, and turn your back on the mountain summit, where the glory shines, as our Lord did, in order to minister to souls in anguish (2Co 12:4; Mt 17:14-18).

On three separate occasions the Apostle besought the Lord for deliverance from his infirmity, and finally received the assurance that though the thorn could not be removed, yet sufficient grace would be given to enable him to do his life-work, and he was more than content. On the one hand, there was the buffeting of this messenger of Satan; but on the other, there were the gains of meekness, humility, and of greater grace than would have been possible if he had not needed it so sorely--and he gladly accepted an infirmity for which there were such abundant compensations.

Do not sit down baffled by your difficulties and infirmities, but run from them to claim Christ's abundant grace and strength, that at the end of life you may have done all that was set you to do, and more, because the greatness of your need made you lean more heavily on His infinite resources. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

**PRAYER: Help us, O Lord, to look on the bright side of things; not on the dark cloud, but on Thy rainbow of covenant mercy; not on the stormy waters, but on the face of Jesus; not on what Thou hast taken, or withheld, but on what Thou hast left. Enable us to realise Thine all-sufficiency. AMEN.**



## June 6: HOW TO MEET DISCOURAGEMENTS

**"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."-- 2Co 4:17-18.**

NOTICE THE marvellous antithesis of this chapter: light and darkness; life and death; pressure, perplexity, pursuit, and persecution; but side by side, victory, elastic hope, and the brightness of Christian faith. The decay of the outward man and the renewal of the inward; the light affliction and the weight of glory; the brief moment of earth's pilgrimage contrasted with the eternity of reality and bliss.

It is very important that we should not miss the mighty blessing which is within the reach of every troubled soul. Of course it is quite possible to sit down before troubles and afflictions, hopeless and despairing, confessing that we are over-powered and defeated; it is also possible to be hard and stoical, bearing adversity because we cannot help or avoid it, but the highest Christian way is to be thankful that the earthen vessel is breaking if only the torch will shine out; to be content that the dying of Jesus should be borne about in our mortal body, if only His life will thereby become manifest.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of grief shall not thee overflow;  
For I will be with thee in trouble to bless;  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

**PRAYER: Fix my heart, O Lord, on Thyself, that amid the changes and chances of this mortal life I may be kept steadfast and unmoveable and ever abounding in Thy work. AMEN.**

## **June 7: THE HOME OF GOD IN THE HEART OF MAN**

**"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite spirit."-- Isaiah 57:15.**

THIS VERSE has reference to God's two Homes--the macrocosm of .the great universe and the microcosm of the human heart. Our God is so great that the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, but He is so lowly and humble that He will stoop to fill the heart of a child. He bids us learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly in heart.

The humble and contrite heart. It seems almost too wonderful to believe that the Eternal One will care to come and live with the child of Time; that the Infinite and Holy God will descend to the narrow limits of a human heart! (see John 14:23).

### **PRAYER**

**Spirit of purity and grace,**

**Our weakness, pitying, see;**

**O make our hearts Thy dwelling-place,**

**And worthier of Thee. AMEN.**

## June 8: A CURE FOR ANXIETY

**"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass."-- Psa 37:5.**

THIS PSALM from which our text is taken breathes the spirit of optimism. The Psalmist says: "Do not fret. Evil is transient, evil-doers shall be cut off, in a little while the wicked shall not be." You will not remove the evils of the world by all your anxiety, or by wrath. It is not worth while to lose your peace of mind. Be quiet in your heart, full of prayer, looking up to God that He would interpose to deliver.

In this Psalm there are excellent preservatives of the inward tranquillity of the soul when face to face with anxiety, or with high-handed wrong.

Trust in the Lord (Psa 37:3). Reckon on Him. Expect great things from your Almighty Guide and Friend. He cannot fail you.

Delight in the Lord (Psa 37:4). If your life twines about earthly things, of course you will be at the mercy of externals. Familiarise yourself with God's way of thinking and looking at things. If this is the bent of your life, you will lose your taste for things of the earth, while you will have great desires for the things of eternity, and God will give you perfect satisfaction in these, because He will give you Himself! The petitions of the heart (R.V. margin) are very sacred to God, and He never, never forgets them. "He shall give thee the petitions of thine heart."

Commit thy way unto the Lord (Psa 37:5). The margin suggests "Roll thy way upon the Lord." It is not enough to roll the responsibility of selecting our way on God in the great crises of our life. We must do so in the small decisions of every hour. Our lives are made up of trifles. To neglect these is to leave it to drift at haphazard. We need perpetually to look up to our Heavenly Friend, saying, "I cannot see over the hedge, I must leave with Thee the decision whether I should go this way or that."

Rest in the Lord (Psa 37:7). "Be silent to the Lord" (R.V. margin). There is so much clamour in the world, and often our heart becomes filled with its noise, so much so that we cannot hear His still small voice. But when every sound has died down into silence, we shall hear the voice of God telling us of things which will answer our questionings and still our doubts. Let your requests be made known unto God, and His peace shall sentinel your heart against all intruders.

**PRAYER: My God and Father, enable me to roll my way upon Thee, to trust Thee, and to believe that when I stand with Thee in the perfect daylight I shall understand what now I take on trust. AMEN.**

## June 9: CHEERING PROMISES

**"Whereby are given unto us great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature."-- 2Pe 1:4.**

PRECIOUS FAITH and precious promise are necessarily linked together (2Pe 1:1-4). The promises excite the faith, and faith reckons upon the fulfilment of promise. One is sometimes asked why it is that God's Word seems to fail, and that the righteous do appear to be forsaken! But surely the reason is, not that there is any failure on God's side to fulfil His promises, but that the promise is not claimed. It is possible to carry around a pocket-full of bank notes and cheques, and to die of starvation because they have not been cashed. When you have found a promise that just fits your need, do not rest content until you have laid it before God, and claimed its fulfilment.

Note that everything which is needed for life and godliness is already granted to us in Jesus our Lord (2Pe 1:3). We have not to pray to our Father for things which He has not anticipated, but to claim those which He has already given. The one purpose of God's preparation is that we should not only escape the corruption which is in the world, but become "partakers of His Divine Nature." What a marvellous promise is this, which almost passes human thought and comprehension, that we should become animated and filled by the very nature of God!

Note the recurrence of the phrase "these things" in the following verses. When they abound in us we cannot be idle or unfruitful. The octave of qualities enumerated reminds us of those Chinese boxes, each of which contains a smaller one, until we finally arrive at some precious article enclosed in the innermost. Faith apprehends everything else--manly courage, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, kindness, and above all, love. To be deficient in "these things" is to be short-sighted (R.V.).

The Apostle says that the soul which has incorporated into itself these qualities of character will be welcomed into the Eternal Kingdom. It will enter the Harbour royally, with every sail set and pennant flying, and receive a choral entrance from the eager crowds that await its approach (2Pe 1:11). Let us be diligent in our appropriation of God's great and precious promises, so that we shall never fail.

**PRAYER: Grant us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, always to seek Thy kingdom and righteousness; and of whatsoever Thou seest us to stand in need, mercifully grant us an abundant portion; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.**

## June 10: GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE

**"Seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."-- Luk 12:29-31.**

AT THE time when our Lord spoke these words, the fields of Palestine were carpeted with wild flowers, and the air was redolent with their fragrance, bespangling the pastures, clustering in the hedge-rows, and hiding in the woodland glades. Theirs was as careless a life as that of the birds which were flying overhead. "They toil not, neither do they spin." For some plants, like the exotics of the greenhouse and nurseries, there must be extreme care and expense in their cultivation, in the provision of heat and the experienced skill of the horticulturist. But our Lord was not alluding to these, but to the flowers of the grass, which grow amid the wilds of nature, or in the gardens of the poor, and to Him these were very beautiful.

This prodigious growth teaches us that God loves beautiful things, and expends thought and skill in their production. He might have made the world without a daisy, and human life without the beauty of childhood. But since He clothed with beauty the short-lived flowers of the wilds; the ephemeral insects of a summer day; the shells of the minute creatures that build up the solid fabric of the rocks--surely this prodigality, this lavishness, this prolific superabundance of creativeness, must mean that He can and will withhold no good thing from them that trust Him. Of course we must fulfil our part! We are not to be careless and improvident; we must certainly sow and reap, and toil and spin; but when we have done all, we must rely upon our Heavenly Father whose good pleasure it is to give, believing that it is vain for us to rise up early, and sit up late, and to eat the bread of sorrows, for our God will give us all that we need, even whilst we sleep. He will not allow His trusting children to starve, or to go unsheltered, unclothed, and unshod. "Fear not, little flock," says the comforting voice of the Good Shepherd, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

**PRAYER: Gracious Lord, grant to me, Thy poor needy creature, sometimes at least to feel, if it be but a small portion of Thy hearty affectionate love; that my faith may become more strong, my hope in Thy goodness may be increased, and that love, once kindled within me, may never fail. AMEN.**

## June 11: LIFE AND DEATH

**"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."-- Phi 1:21.**

HOW CLOSE life and death are! In this verse there is only a comma between them, and every one of us stands where that comma stands, between life and death. Life is the vestibule of death, and death is close on the heels of life. The systole and diastole; the throb and beat of the pulse; the swing of the pendulum this way or that!

St. Paul is enamoured with the joys of life. He was a toiler and a traveller, and lived amid the busy throng that jostled him in the streets. The philosopher, as he passed, carrying his scrolls of learning, said: "To me to live is knowledge"; the soldier, passing, looked with contempt on the man of letters, and said: "To me to live is fame"; the merchant in passing, said, with pride: "To me to live is riches"; the toiling masses passed by, saying: "To us to live is toil and trouble." Amid all these, the Apostle strikes in with no bated breath, saying joyously: "To me to live is neither wealth, nor labour, nor fame, nor glory, but Christ." If you had asked him just what he meant, he would probably have replied, as Tyndale brings out in his translation, that "'Christ was the origin of his life."

If we would become partakers of the Divine Nature, we also must have such a definite experience. We can trace our natural life back to our parents, and our spiritual life must begin in the hour when, in early childhood, or later, we are made partakers of the Nature of the Risen Saviour (John 1:12-13; 2Pe 1:4).

Christ must be the model of our life. Every man works to a model. Consciously or not, we are always imitating somebody, and every true follower of Christ seeks to approximate to the measuring of the stature of our Lord-- "Beholding, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory."

Christ must be the aim of life. That His will may be done on earth as in heaven; that others may know and love and serve Him as we do; that He may be the crowned King of men--that must be our purpose and aim. External things have no power over the one who can say: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"; then we can triumph over Death itself, and say: "To die is gain."

**PRAYER: The mountain peaks of the Christ-life that we would live call to us, but they often seem too steep and high for us to reach, but Thou knowest and hast an infinite compassion for Thy children. Fulfil in us the good pleasure of Thy will, and realise in us the ideals Thou hast taught us to cherish. AMEN.**

## June 12: DECISION FOR CHRIST

**"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."-- Lk 14:27.**

NOTICE THE threefold repetition of these solemn words: he cannot be My disciple (Lk 14:26, Lk 14:27, Lk 14:33). There is a sense in which the Way of Salvation is easy. One look of faith in Christ, and we receive eternal life and are assured by Him that we can never perish; but that faith must carry in its heart the germ of discipleship, the tenacity, determination, indomitable resolve to learn everything that the Master has to teach. We are not only saved from sin, but we are saved to learn, redeemed to be taught. The education is free, but there are certain things which we must be prepared to forego if we would be entered in His School. The disciple must bring the unbiased and disengaged mind to the grace of God, which comes disciplining us, teaching us to deny ungodly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world.

What are the things which we must cultivate for discipleship?

A supreme love (Lk 14:26). Our Lord does not ask us really to hate those related to us by natural ties, but to give to Himself so much love that compared with all else, it should be as sunlight to starlight; that for love of Him we should be willing to act as one who hates all other loves when they conflict with obedience. We are first converted from the natural to the spiritual, and then from the spiritual to the natural again.

The denial of self (Lk 14:27). We are not simply to cut off this or the other indulgence, but to put the Cross of Christ between ourselves and the gratification of our own will. We must be willing to follow the Lamb, though the old Abraham cries out in grievous pain.

Renunciation (Lk 14:33). We must be prepared to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. As a matter of fact, Jesus gives us back all that is right and beautiful to use for Him, but there must be a definite loosing hold on things, and the placing of all in His pierced hands. Abjuring our ownership, we must be willing to act as His almoners and trustees. It is this that gives savour to life, making it sparkle and resist decay.

**PRAYER: Accept us as we now yield to Thee our entire being with all that we possess. It is our one desire to be utterly, only, and always for Thee. AMEN.**

## June 13: PROFIT AND LOSS

**"Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee! Jesus answered, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the Gospel's but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time and in the world to come eternal life."-- Mark 10:28-30.**

THE PRINCIPLES of this world, and those of our Lord are widely different. The world is set on grasping all it can accumulate, on self aggrandizement, on the piling up of fortunes, on the gradual or speedy climb up the ladder of fame and on the gathering of hosts of friends. Looking after "number one" is the readiest way of expressing this principle of life! But it is unsatisfactory and disappointing. The soul which is the centre of its own circumference is doomed to realize that there are more forfeits than prizes, more bitterness than success, more dark hours than bright ones.

On the other side, Christ's principle of life is to give, to trust, to bless! His measure must be always pressed down and running over. The cloak must follow the coat; the second mile must be gladly thrown in with the first. To be willing to surrender all for the sake of others, is the ordinary claim of the King on those who own Him as their Lord.

In every age there have been thousands who have gladly accepted this as their rule of life. Peter and the rest of the Apostles were the leaders of a host which no man can number, who have left all to follow Jesus. He had nowhere to lay His head, and they have been homeless, wandering in the world, with no settled abiding-place; He was poor and they have gone amongst their fellows, saying: "Silver and gold have we none, but such as we have we give." But how great has been their reward. Before we can understand what Christ is willing to do for us, there must be not only a taking-hold, but a letting-go. We must step out from the boat, and withdraw our hand from it. It is even good, like St. Paul, to need all things, since by faith we come to possess all. Read the wonderful series of paradoxes to which he gives utterance in 2 Cor. 4:1

The Lord promises eternal life as the crown of all. When we kneel at the Cross, and see Jesus as our own Saviour, we have eternal life, but we cannot realise all it implies until this mortality is swallowed up of life.

**PRAYER: Thou hast called us to minister and witness, to go amongst men as our Saviour went, bearing in our hands the balm of Gilead. May we not be disobedient to this heavenly vision. AMEN.**



## June 14: THE ONE-TALENTED MAN

**"He also that had received the one talent came." Mt 25:24.**

THE FIVE TALENTED men, are the geniuses of the world, successful in everything they touch. The two-talented men, on the one hand, are not exposed to the temptations of genius, but are not quite at the minimum. But why did the man with the one talent make such ill use of his gift? Surely, this is a true touch of life! One-talented people can do so little, that they do nothing. They are crushed and enfeebled by a sense of their own insignificance and inferiority. Many start life with high and pure aims, but presently they find their opportunities so meager, their influence so limited, their power so scanty, that after a few struggles they give up in despair.

But the world will never be saved and helped unless the one-talented people, who are the great majority, can be aroused to a sense of their responsibility. Five men can put the whole energy of their manhood behind their single talents, whilst the one man with five talents has only the driving power of one. It is probably a greater thing in God's sight to use one talent faithfully than many. No one notices the man with his humble one talent. There is no outburst of praise or cheering. It is a greater test of the quality of the soul to go on doing one small thing well, than to be able to turn with brilliant versatility from one talent to another. The monotony of life presses hard on those who have only one string to their bow, one tune to play, one act to perform in the great factory where labour is carefully subdivided.

But the one thing that our Lord demands of each of us is to be faithful--faithful in a very little. He is watching each of us with great eagerness as we live our daily life, because He knows, as we cannot realise, how much our position in the other world depends on our fidelity in this. It is for our sake that He is so anxious that we should make good use of our one talent.

Have you only one talent? Are you doing anything with it? Remember it is the ounce-weight that may turn the scales where hundred-weights are balanced; it is the tiny tug that can move the great liner. Be thou faithful in thy very little, and thou shalt receive the "Well done" of thy Lord.

**PRAYER: O Lord, at the end of every day, may we stand before Thee to hear Thy verdict, and when all the toil and labour of our life is ended, may we hear Thee say: "Well done, good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful in a few things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" AMEN.**

## June 15: JESUS, THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT

**"He is the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. He is faithful that promised."-- Heb 8:6; Heb 10:23.**

THIS IS called the Better Covenant. There are no ifs; no injunctions of "observe to do"; no conditions of obedience to be fulfilled. From first to last it consists of the I Wills of the Most High.

I will put my laws into their minds, refers to the intellectual faculty, which thinks, remembers, and reasons.

I will write them upon their hearts, the seat of the emotional life and affections. What a man loves, he is pretty certain to follow and obey. "A little lower," said the dying veteran, as they probed for the bullet, "and you will find the Emperor." So with the Christian who has been taken into the Covenant with God, the law is inscribed on the deepest affections of his being. He obeys because he loves.

I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. This last clause is even better than the first, because it implies the keeping power of God. If we are to be a people for His peculiar possession, it can only result from the operation of His gracious Spirit, who keeps us, as the sun restrains the planets from becoming wandering stars.

All shall know Me. Oh, wonder of wonders. Can it be? To know God! To know Him as Abraham did, to whom He told His secrets; as Moses did, who conversed with Him face to face; or as the Apostle John did when he beheld Him in the visions of the Apocalypse. And that this privilege should be within the reach of the least!

I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more. As a score is forgotten when blotted from a slate, so shall sin be obliterated from the memory of God. It will be forgotten as a debt paid years ago.

Do you ask how God can call this a covenant, in which there is no second covenanting party? The answer is easy: Jesus Christ has stood in our stead, and has not only negotiated this covenant, but has fulfilled in our name, and on our behalf, all the conditions which were necessary and fight. He has become our Sponsor and Surety, so God is able to enter into these liberal terms with us, if we will identify ourselves with Him by a living faith. This is the new and better covenant.

**PRAYER: Holy Father! I claim from Thee the fulfilment of Thy Covenant Promise, that Thou shouldst write Thy law upon my heart, and remember my sins and iniquities no more. May I hear Thee say: "Thy faith hath saved thee; Go, and sin no more!" AMEN.**

## June 16: CAST DOWN? WHY?

**"O my God, my soul is cast down within me."-- Psa 42:6.**

THE LAMENT of the soul, its cause! Many have been brought to this condition--Jacob said "all these things are against me"; Job complained that God had refused to listen to his prayer, and had fenced up his way; Elijah prayed that he might die; John the Baptist had his doubts; even our Lord Himself cried: "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

It may arise from physical weakness. Our nature is like a finely-attuned harp, and may easily become tangled and discordant. When we are in good health, and the zest of living is strong within us, the soul sings songs without words, and the heart suns itself in the consciously-realized love of God; but when the lamp of life burns low--the joy of the Lord, the sense of His Love are apt to decline.

It may arise from temperament. Some seem born in the dark, and carry through life a predisposition to melancholy. Their nature is set to a minor key. They gaze on the lowering clouds, rather than on the patches of blue. Thomas had such a temperament, yet our Lord called him to be an apostle! Rightness of heart generally shows itself in gladness of heart; but there are those who mourn in Zion, and are more prone to tears than smiles! The valley of shadow is part of the highway to the Holy City; and the souls that are called to tread it may yet find the valley of Baca to be a place of springs.

Now as to the cure. Make much of your standing in Christ! Our feelings are as fickle as April sunshine. But our standing in Jesus is unalterable. John Bunyan used to say that he had two sorts of money. That which was deposited in the bank, and that which he had in his pocket. The former was, on the whole, permanent, while the other was always changing. Thus he said it was between him and the Saviour. His feelings, like the loose coins in his pocket, were always changing, but his capital was lodged safely in the strong keeping of Christ.

Cease introspection and live in the progress of Christ through the world. He is ever going forth to new conquests, and we must not stand as loiterers, feeling our pulse. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Canst thou not take thy place in His ever victorious army! Miss Feeblemind, and Mr. Ready-to-halt, in the care of Great-heart, will go over the River singing!

**PRAYER: Gracious God, give me to behold the rainbow of Hope on the dark storm-clouds that brood over my life: may I rest confidently on that Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, which was sealed by the precious Blood of Christ. AMEN.**

## June 17: COURAGE IN LIFE'S STORMS

**"There stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, 'Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee.' Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me."-- Act 27:23-25.**

SAID A boy to his mother, "What is fear like? I have never seen him."

Paul might have said as much, because his life was hid with Christ in God. He had learned to detect the voice of Christ. Some cannot do so, for it needs the practised ear and the obedient will. But all through his Christian career the Apostle seems to have derived comfort and strength from special revelations. Through the murky darkness of the storm, Christ's ministering angel sped to his hammock, and standing beside him, bade him be of good cheer. And there is no storm that beats on our life which does not bring God's angels also to our help, though we may not see their forms or hear their voice. The one condition of Angel-help is that we belong to their Master. We must be able to say: "Whose I am, and Whom I serve."

The Prayer of Faith. In Acts 27:24 the R.V. rendering is "granted." It signifies that Paul had asked and God had granted his prayer, and given him his request. What a promise this is! It is said of Miss Havergal that she went to stay with a family not one of whom was definitely for Christ. On the first night of her stay she wrote her well-known hymn, "Take my life, and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to Thee." And during her short sojourn under that roof she won for her Lord the entire household. So we may claim that all who sail with us in the ship of our life shall become God's children.

The Courage of Faith is consistent with Commonsense. Even though Paul had God's assurance, he felt that he must do what he could, as though all depended on his sagacity. Faith ought not to make us act presumptuously or foolishly. Holy calm and stillness rule in the heart of him whose mind is stayed on God.

We are likely to encounter many storms in our life before we anchor in the Fair Haven of Eternity, but in the heart of every cyclone there is a point of rest; and in the fiercest storm that sweeps our world, we may hide in the secret place of the Most High, and sing Psa 46:1-11.

**PRAYER: By day and by night, in life and in death, may I ever be true to Thee, O Lover of my Soul, my ceaseless Friend, my unchangeable Saviour. Into Thy hands I commit my spirit! AMEN.**

## June 18: GOD'S SALVATION AND COMFORT

**"Behold God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song."--  
Isaiah 12:2.**

THIS EXQUISITE Psalm of Hope seems prepared, for the day when Jew and Gentile, gathered into one Church, shall stand on the shores of Eternity with palms of victory. Here is the Song of Moses and the Lamb!

Salvation was peculiarly associated with the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the type of that consummation of God's purpose, which shall take place when His Tabernacle is with men, and He shall dwell with them (Rev 21:3). Do not fear, God is with us, as Strength, and Song, and Salvation. He shares our wilderness march; we are folded under the shadow of His tent; we are permitted to reckon on Him as our Partner and Companion. Notice the emphasis on the word my. The weakest saint can claim all needed supplies from God; and He admits the plea, saying: "Child, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine" (Luke 15:31).

Unfailing supplies--"wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3). On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles the priests drew water in a golden pitcher from the Pool of Siloam, and poured it forth in the Temple, while the Choir chanted this verse in memory of the rock-water that followed the desert march. Every attribute of God, every means of grace, every helpful and loving ministry, every promise of Scripture is a Well, and faith is our pitcher (John 7:37).

But we must draw. Faith is the bucket, which we let down into the fulness of the Divine supply. It is not simply the general belief that God hears and answers prayer, but the specific and particular belief that God has answered or will answer your prayer for some special needed grace, and that it is yours. Believe that ye have received. Draw water out of the well!

"Thou comfortest me" (Isaiah 12:1). There is no such Comforter as God. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." He is expressly described as "the God of all Comfort." Is it not too much to ask that Thou shouldst stoop out of Thy high heaven to comfort me, whose heart is heavy with grief and whose eyes are red with weeping? He wipes the tears from all eyes, and staunches the very fountains of grief. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." I shall yet praise Thee!

**PRAYER: Make us to know, O God, the riches of the glory of Thine inheritance, and the exceeding greatness of Thy power toward them that believe. We would so live that sweet music may come to Thee. AMEN.**

## June 19: A SHELTER FROM THE TEMPEST

**"And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest...as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."-- Isaiah 32:2.**

WE ARE reminded that this prophecy was uttered in a time of great unrest. The clouds of war were gathering dark on the horizon, and Israel was looking for help from the arm of flesh. In this emergency the voice of the prophet was heard, saying: "Look not to Egypt, but to God" (Isaiah 31:1). The kingdom depends on the king: "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes rule in judgment." When all politics and commerce, social and domestic life are under the sway and guidance of Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God will come, and the Will of God shall be done on earth, as in heaven. The Lord Jesus is many-sided enough to meet all the varied needs of His people. Some need a covert from the tempest, others rivers of water to quench their thirst, others the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. But He is all and equal to all. When a man or woman owns the sway of Christ, eyes and ears are cleansed, there is no longer the hesitation of stammering confession, the judgment becomes rectified and the heart opened to a new generosity. First righteousness, then peace--such is heaven's eternal order.

This is a marvellous chapter! Note the words of warning to the women of Jerusalem. After all, the religious and political life of a nation is very much what the women make it, and there can never be a widespread deepening of religious life unless the women, who have such great capacity for God, turn to Him in repentance and faith.

Are our conditions similar? Surely they are! For if in the days of Solomon it was true that all things were full of labour and stress, how much more true is it in our time! The tides of human life are high and stormy, and there is no sense of security. We may surely plead that we need the quiet resting-places and sure dwellings, in which our souls may shelter! The promise is made to "'My people"--to those who have heard and obeyed the voice of the Good Shepherd. If you are one of the weakest and lowliest of these, you may draw comfort here (Isaiah 32:18).

**PRAYER: Bring us, O Lord, through the troubled waters of life into a haven of repose. Hide us secretly in Thy pavilion from the strife of tongues and the fiery darts of the wicked one. May we be at peace with Thee, with ourselves, and with all. AMEN.**

## June 20: THE ROCK OF AGES

**"Trust ye--the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is an everlasting rock."-- Isaiah 26:4 (R.V.).**

THE LOVE of God, like a cleft rock, is the age-long shelter of His people, and rears itself above the tumultuous waters of time. The lightning the lighting that flashed from the thunder-clouds of Calvary has riven it. A cleft was made in it by the spear that pierced the heart of our Lord, and this was followed, as it was withdrawn from the gaping wound, by blood and water. But there sinful souls may hide! God had said to Moses: "Behold, there is a place by Me, and it shall come to pass that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by, for thou canst not see My face, and live." So he speaks to us all, and promises that the water and the blood shall be the double cure from the wrath and power of sin.

It is free The sinner need not seek to acquire the shelter of that Rock of Ages by the labour of his hands, or the fulfilling of the demands of the law. It is not required that he should burn with a zeal that knows no respite, or flow with tears that refuse to be staunch. To be helpless and forlorn, to be in peril of condemnation, to be contrite and humble---this is all that is required. To have no Mediator, no Refuge, no Helper beside, and to lift the eyes of faith to the Saviour--that is the sole condition of being lifted by unseen hands into the cleft of that Rock.

It holds all that the soul needs. Is the soul naked? There is dress for it. Is it helpless? There is grace for it. Is it blackened by sin? There is cleansing for it. Is it sick? there is healing for it. Toplady, the Calvinist, and Wesley, the Arminian, agree here: "Thou, O Christ, art all I want; more than all in Thee I find."

It is for ever. It is the Rock of Ages! Time may beat upon it, but it cannot alter it or impair it. Whilst this fleeting breath is drawn, when eyes close in death, when unknown worlds are entered, when the judgment throne is set, always and for ever the soul may shelter in the cleft Rock of the unchanging Redeemer, and Peace, like a double window, intercepts alarm from the heart which is stayed on God and trusting in Him.

**PRAYER: Rock of Ages! cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee. Let the water and the blood, From Thy riven side which flowed, Be of sin the double cure, Save me from its guilt and power. AMEN.**

## June 21: PRAYER THAT OBTAINS

**"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."-- Luke 11:9.**

THERE ARE many conditions of true prayer. For instance, it must be earnest. There are times when we know we are on the line of God's purposes, when we may dare to be importunate. Prayer must be offered in the Name of Christ, i.e., it must be in harmony with the nature of Christ, which was devoted to the glory of God and to the blessing of men. That Name will eliminate the ingredient of selfishness which will mar any prayer by whomsoever offered. Prayer must also be based on some promise of God, which is presented to Him as a cheque or note is presented to a bank.

All these are but steps to the faith that obtains, for it is, after all, not prayer but faith that obtains promises. That is why our Lord lays so much stress on receiving. Much of our prayer fails because we forget that He said, "Every one that asketh, receiveth"; and again, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

So far as one can describe the process, it seems something after this fashion. The soul reverently kneels before God, glorifying and praising Him for His greatness and goodness. It is conscious of needing some very special gift which is promised. In the Name of Christ it presents the request with the confidence of a child. With earnestness of desire and speech it unfolds the reasons why the gift sought is so necessary. But it does not leave prayer at this point to go away in uncertainty as to what the issue shall be. By an act of the spirit, the suppliant seems to receive definitely the spiritual or even the temporal gift; and realises that it has received, that the special grace has been imparted, to be discovered and used under stress of need; that the temporal gift has also been received, though it may be kept back until the precise moment when it can be delivered, in much the same way as a present may be purchased long before the time of handing it to its destined possessor (1Sa 1:15, 1Sa 1:18, 1Sa 1:27).

This is what Christ meant by "receiving," and it has a mighty effect upon prayer, because it makes it so much more definite. It leads to praise, because we are able to thank God for His gift. You must take as well as pray.

**PRAYER: We rejoice that our Saviour ever lives to intercede as our High Priest and Mediator. Through the rent veil, let our prayers ascend to Thee mingled with the fragrance of His merit in whom Thou art ever well pleased. AMEN.**



## June 22: ANSWERED PRAYER

**"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you."-- John 15:7.**

OUR LORD expected answers to His prayers, and in all His teaching He leads us to feel that we shall be able to obtain, through prayer, what otherwise would not come to our hand. He knew all that was to be known of natural law; but notwithstanding His perfect acquaintance with the mysteries of His Father's government, He said: "If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in My Name."

When we consider the lives of some who have wrought mightily for God, it is clear that they learned a secret which eludes many of us. This is from the biography of Dr. Burns Thomson: "When much together as students," writes his friend, "we agreed on special petitions, and the Lord encouraged us by giving us answers, so early and so definite, as could only have come from Himself, so that no room was left for the shadow of doubt that God was the Hearer and Answerer of prayer. Once the answer came the same day, and at another time whilst we were yet speaking. My friend often spoke of our agreement, to the glory of Him who fulfilled to us His promise; and I refer to it to encourage others." This is but one leaf out of the great library of prayers, intercessions, and supplications, which stand recorded before God.

Prayer which is to prevail must be: For the glory of the Father. Whatever petition we offer must be tested by this thought: will it be for the glory of God? It is for this that our Saviour lives and pleads (John 14:13).

It must be in Christ's Name, which stands for Nature. In other words, when we pray it must not be as our self-nature but as the Christ-nature indicates. It is not enough to mention His Name at the end of our prayer: His Spirit must pervade every petition.

We must bear fruit (John 15:16). Answers to prayer largely depend on our ministry to others. If we are living for the accomplishment of God's purpose and the coming of His Kingdom, we may ask whatever is necessary for the achievement of our endeavour.

We must abide in Christ; then the sap of the Holy Spirit rising from the hidden root will produce desires and petitions like those which Christ ever presents to His Father (John 15:7).

**PRAYER: All our desire is known unto Thee, therefore perfect what Thou hast begun, and what Thy Spirit has awakened us to ask in prayer. We seek Thy face, show us Thy glory. AMEN.**

## June 23: THE POWER OF SMALL THINGS

**"Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed nothing shall be impossible unto you."**

**-- Mt 17:20.**

THE GRAIN of mustard seed is the smallest of seeds, but Jesus says that it is a fitting emblem of the Kingdom of God, and the unostentatious beginnings of the Christian era. The number and social position of the disciples was insignificant in the extreme. And the first germ of truth sown in the heart of man, woman, or child, is sometimes equally insignificant. It may be just a sentence, a text, a passing remark which results in a mighty harvest (Mark 4:30-32).

What is it that enables this tiny seed to make such a prodigious increase? It lies in its receptive power, as it receives into its nature the mighty forces which slumber in the soil, the effect of sunbeams, moisture, and air. So long as a little aperture is kept open, there is no limit to the fertility and usefulness of the plant. You may be but a child, and your life seem weak and ineffective, but if you will open your heart to God by faith, He will pour in His mighty fullness, and the tiny seed become a great tree of strength and usefulness, grace and beauty.

Let us not despise the day of small things. Faith may be as a grain of mustard seed, but as it is used it will grow. Your effort to do good may seem so insignificant that it would be hardly missed, if it were discontinued, and yet out of it may emanate some mighty work which will bring help and comfort to thousands. How many orphanages, schools, and philanthropic efforts have owed their origin to the most infinitesimal beginnings. One destitute child cared and ministered to for Christ's sake has led to another, until finally thousands of little ones have received a good start in life. What could be more insignificant than the beginnings of the Gospel message in many a heathen country. Do not be discouraged. Like Gideon, you may be only a cake of barley bread, but by faith you may overturn the tents of Midian. Like the little lad, you may only be able to place five tiny loaves and two small fish in the hands of Jesus, but He will bless them and make them sufficient to feed the multitude. A stone may bring Goliath to the dust; an arrow may pierce through the armour of the mailed warrior. Have faith in God; Reckon on God's faithfulness to you!

**PRAYER: Lord, increase our faith. Give us a child-like faith to receive what Thou dost offer, and from this moment may a new sense of the presence and power of God, through the Holy Spirit, come to us. AMEN.**

## June 24: THE BASIS OF PEACE

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."-- Rom 5:1.**

**"Having made peace through the blood of His Cross."-- Col 1:20.**

THE BASIS of redemption and peace was laid on Calvary, when our Lord died for the sins of the world. In Lev 17:11, we learn that "the life, or soul, of the flesh is in the blood" (R.V. marg.); from which we infer that the forth-flowing of the blood of Christ was the forth-pouring of His soul as a sacrifice for sin.

It may be asked: Granted that the blood of Christ represents His soul which was poured out for sinful men, how did this marvellous act of self-sacrifice constitute a basis for peace? The full answer to that question is impossible in our present limited knowledge. It is one of the secret things which belong to the Lord our God, hidden from us now, to be revealed when we are full-grown.

But never suppose that the shedding of Christ's blood was necessary to make God love us, to appease His wrath or wring from His unwilling hand an edict of redemption. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." The Father does not love us because Jesus died, but He went to the Cross because of God's love for us who chose us to be joint-heirs with His Son.

But there is one condition to be fulfilled. The access into Peace is open only to those who believe. We are justified by faith; we have peace through believing. The Apostle says that "through our Lord Jesus Christ we have now received the Atonement" (Col 1:11). The redemption is accomplished; we have but to receive it. The atonement of peace is made, it is only for us to take it. "For as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." As we receive eternal life, and the Holy Spirit with open and thankful hearts, relying on the Divine assurance by faith, we enter into the great inheritance of Peace, and the gifts of God in Grace and Nature become our own.

**PRAYER: O Most Merciful Lord, Grant to me, above all things that can be desired, to rest in Thee, and in Thee to have my heart at peace. Thou art the true peace of the heart, Thou its only rest; out of Thee all things are hard and restless. In this very peace that is in Thee, the one Eternal God, I will sleep and rest. AMEN.**

## June 25: THE RECEPTIVITY OF FAITH

**"Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."-- Heb 10:22.**

**"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."-- Eph 3:17.**

FAITH IS our power of appropriation. The pity is that we are so slow to make use of our Lord's resources! He does not force Himself upon us. Though He brings with Him gold tried in the fire that we may be enriched, and white raiment for our clothing, and eye-salve for our blindness; and though He knows how urgently we need these things, He will not force them on our acceptance. Rather, He stands and knocks, as a travelling merchant knocks at the door, who has wares to dispose of, and we need to open the door and receive the gifts which are offered, without money and without price (Rev 3:18-20; Isaiah 55:1-2).

Faith is our reception of the spiritual to make good the lack of the physical. It is a drawing on the Eternal for the deficiencies of our earthly pilgrimage. Probably when we look back on our present life, we shall find that our deficiencies were permitted, and even assigned, that we might be driven to avail ourselves of the fullness of the Lord Jesus (John 1:16; Eph 3:19). We were allowed to wander in the sultry heat, that we might know Him as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land; we were exposed to wild tempests and storms, that we might make for alcoves and harbours in Him that we should otherwise have missed.

It has been truly observed that Job's rebellious moods arose when he thought that God was afar off, but there was a difference when he realised that God was suffering with him. Remember that you are not divided from God by a deep chasm. He knows your sorrows. In all your afflictions He is afflicted. We have not a High Priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. When Jesus saw the sisters weeping, He not only succoured them, but entered into their distress, and wept with them.

Are you weary with burdens that are crushing you? Is your lot cast with them that hate peace? Is your heart oppressed with loneliness? Take Jesus into account. Don't face your difficulties alone, but meet them in the fellowship of your Saviour. Have faith, i.e., reckon on God. Let the Lord Christ dwell in your heart, and He will be responsible for all, as you reckon on Him for all.

**PRAYER: O Lord, I open my nature, and since my capacity is small, I pray that by love and faith, by patience and suffering, Thou wilt enlarge my heart, that it may be filled with all the fullness of God. AMEN.**

## June 26: PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

**"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."-- James 2:26.**

JAMES IS described as "the Lord's brother" in Gal 1:19. He was surnamed "the Just," and was much respected beyond the limits of the Christian Church for his saintly life. While St. Paul deals specially with doctrine, James is concerned with practice; Paul expounds the wonderful significance of Christ's death and resurrection; James expounds the teaching of our Lord, especially in the Sermon on the Mount. Paul insists on faith as the means of justification before God; James lays stress on the works to which faith must lead.

It seems likely that James had seen Paul's Epistles, for he uses so many of the same phrases and examples, and probably set himself to combat those who abused the teaching of the great Apostle. There were plenty in his time who believed about Christ, and prided themselves in the orthodoxy and accuracy of their creed; and James maintains that this is not sufficient to save the soul.

As far as orthodoxy goes, no creed can be more absolutely orthodox than that held by evil spirits. Repeatedly, during our Lord's life, they acknowledged that He was the Holy One of God, but their belief had no effect on their character; it only filled them with fear and dread (James 2:19).

"Faith without works is dead." It is good to test ourselves. We must see to it that our heart is pure and our way absolutely transparent. In our dealings with those around us, we must always seek to realize our highest conceptions of love and duty. Even when our efforts of goodwill and affection are not reciprocated, we must never lower the high standard of our action, but always keep before us the conception of our Saviour's life in the Home at Nazareth. Be merciless to yourself, but always merciful to others, always bearing the burdens of those around you, always moderating your pace to the weak and weary, as Greatheart did for the pilgrims. Even Rahab was justified by a faith which wrought itself out in beautiful and unselfish action (James 2:25; Heb 11:31). Remember our Lord's words in Mt 7:20-21.

**PRAYER: Help us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to add to our faith, brotherly kindness, and pardon the unkind word or impatient gesture; the hard and selfish deed, the failure to give kindly help where we had the opportunity. Enable us so to live that we may daily do something to lessen the tide of human sorrow and need, and add to the sum of human happiness. AMEN.**

## June 27: THE GREAT SHEPHERD

**"Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will."-- Heb 13:20-21.**

IT IS most comforting that our Heavenly Father is "the God of Peace." He is the God of the gentle zephyr, of the evening glow, of the mother's brooding care; and may be trusted by His gentleness and patience to make us great. Bruised reeds are not trampled beneath His feet, and the smoking flax is fanned into a flame. Do not be afraid of God--He is the God of Peace!

He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep. As our Lord descended into the Valley of Death, He breathed His departing spirit into the Father's hands. He knew that the path of life would unfold before Him. He knew that the Father's welcome awaited Him. And God did not fail Him! However low He went, when He descended into Hades, the Everlasting Arms were always beneath Him; and Him did God raise up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.

And will God do less for the Flock! There are many of the sheep that have been scattered in the cloudy and dark days. Will every sheep and lamb be recovered, and led to the green pastures and beside the quiet waters of Paradise? Yes, every one! The great Shepherd would not be content if one were missing of those whom the Father has given Him (John 10:28-29). Remember His own parable of the Shepherd who left the ninety and nine to recover the one. If you have come to Him by your will and choice, you are included in the Father's gift.

We are secure in the position which His grace has given us. It is secured not only by the promise of God, but sealed by the Blood of the Cross. That is the meaning of the words: "The Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant." Note that word eternal, which carries us back to the timeless past, when this compact was made. We may therefore humbly believe that our names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8; Rev 21:27). But we are saved to save others! It is thus that we make our calling and election sure (2Pe 1:10).

**PRAYER: We thank Thee, O blessed Master, not only that Thou hast cleansed us from our sins, but that Thou hast entered into, and ratified by Thy precious blood, the eternal covenant which has made us Thine for ever. AMEN.**

## June 28: AN AUTOGRAPH LETTER

**"Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God."-- 2Co 3:3.**

THE APOSTLE Paul's life was made weary by the incessant opposition of his enemies and critics, who sowed discord in the churches which he had formed in Europe. Amongst others, they visited Corinth and challenged him to produce letters of commendation from the leaders of the Church. With justifiable indignation he cries: "Why should I carry letters, when my converts, given me by the Lord, are circulating everywhere, with the attesting signature of Christ upon them?" Surely they are a sufficient guarantee and proof that I have been commissioned and sent forth by the Lord Himself.

St. Paul gave utterance to a true and striking description of a Christian disciple. He is an autograph letter, the Author and Writer is the Lord Himself--"an epistle of Christ." The ink is "the Spirit of the Living God." The pen is the teacher or preacher of the Gospel, "ministered by us." The material is the heart and life--"not on tables of stone, but on hearts of flesh."

We ought to be Christians in large type, so that it would not be necessary to be long in our society, or to regard us through spectacles, in order to detect our true discipleship. The message of our lives should resemble the big advertisements which can be read on the street-boards by all who pass by. The merit of good letter-writing is to state what the writer wants to say as clearly and concisely as possible. Sometimes we have to wade through long and weary pages before we can get at the gist of our correspondent's meaning. Let us take care that the message of our lives is clear, concise, and unmistakable.

We are to be pens in the hand of Christ--our sufficiency is of God, who makes us ministers. Milton's pen had only to yield itself relentlessly to the hand of the daughter or amanuensis, to whom the blind master dictated his immortal words. And the messages which we are to inscribe on the hearts and lives of men do not originate in us, but with Christ. If others are used more than we are, it is because they are more meet for His use (2Ti 2:15-21).

**PRAYER: Live in us, blessed Lord, by Thy Holy Spirit, that our lives may be living epistles of helpfulness and blessedness. May the Name of the Lord Jesus be glorified in us. AMEN.**

## June 29: SONGS OF PRAISE

**"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people."-- Luke 1:46-47, Luke 1:68.**

THESE TWO songs have floated down the centuries, stirring human hearts with the ecstasy of their triumph. It is not given to all to be able to express their exultation in words so eloquent and musical, but all may become as saturated with the words of Scripture as Mary was, and all may triumph in Jesus Christ as gladly as did Zacharias, and show forth His praise, as did these two holy souls.

The most wonderful thing for us all is that God looks upon our low estate. The greater His blessing, the more unworthy we feel of it. There is no reason why He has stooped to our lowliness and obscurity except that He would. He does great things for the weakest and merciful things for the unworthiest, for His Name's sake--"Holy is His Name." In other words, there is no accounting for the putting forth of God's power and love, except His own glorious character.

Princes are put down from their thrones, because they have become proud and tyrannical; whilst those of low degree are exalted by God, because in obscurity they have been educated in virtue, which cannot but rise to the level of its specific gravity. The rich are often sent empty away, because they have no taste or desire for true riches which alone can satisfy. Whether the hunger be for love, or for the power to do good, or for the best gifts that the Spirit of God can bestow, whoever fulfils the conditions of humility and faith--these are "filled with good things." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

The little babe, known afterwards as John the Baptist, was probably lying in his father's arms, when he burst forth into this glorious song. Let us see to it that we use every opportunity of making known God's wondrous salvation, of pointing men to the only source of forgiveness. Nothing so encourages faith as the proclamation of what God is prepared to do for those who trust Him, and when it dawns upon men that there are treasures in Christ which shall enrich their poverty and dissipate their hopelessness, they will yield themselves to be led into the ways of peace even by a little child!

**PRAYER: We thank Thee, O God, for life and light and love; for the light of Thy mercy shining across our path, revealing to us Thy infinite love without beginning or end. May the Name of our Lord Jesus be glorified in us. AMEN.**



## June 30: LOVE TRIUMPHANT OVER DEATH

**"Fear not. I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."-- Rev 1:18.**

IT WAS not possible, said St. Peter, that our Lord should be holden of death (Acts 2:24). It behoved Christ to suffer; but all the bitter waters of suffering could not quench his love. He was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, every man, even those who pierced Him, is included in His great love.

Christ died, not only to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, but to rob death of its terrors, and deprive it of its sting. In death our Lord Jesus destroyed both the Devil and his power; the prince of this world has been judged, and cast out of the seat of power (Heb 2:14-15; John 12:31; John 16:11).

Let us not be afraid of the mystery of death. Christ has shown us that it is the gateway into another life. There is the same spirit, but a different environment. It is a condition of existence in which the same voices are heard, the same human fellowship persists. During the forty days in which Jesus tarried on our earth after His Resurrection, He solved many of the problems of life after death, and illuminated its mystery. To die is to be with Him, and to be welcomed into the great company of loving spirits (2Pe 1:11).

Let us not fear the loneliness of death. The soul passing through the dark valley becomes aware of Another by its side---"Thou art with me." Death cannot separate us, even for a moment, from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus died alone; He felt forsaken; but none of us need pass through that terrible experience; for He has said: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself."

We need not fear what comes after death. The curse and penalty of sin have been put away for ever. "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again." That which others call death, we dread no more than sleep. Our bodies lie down exhausted with our long working-day, to awake in the fresh energy of the Eternal Morning, while our spirit is presented before the Presence of His Glory, faultless, and with exceeding joy (Jude 1:24).

**PRAYER: O God, may we so trust Thee this day, that, when the day is done, our trust shall be firmer than ever. Then, when our last day comes, and our work is done, may we trust Thee in death and forever, in the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN**

## July 1: THE CALL TO SERVICE

**"Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they left the nets, and followed Him."-- Mar 1:7-18.**

AS OF old, Christ is still passing through the centres of busy, thronging life, calling men from their nets and boats, from the countinghouse and the market-place, or from the seclusion of the study, and saying, with His own inimitable and irresistible charm: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." It may be that He has already come to you, casting over you the mantle of service, as Elijah over the young ploughman whilst following his team. You may be startled at the suggestion, but probably all the mighty band of men and women who have responded to His Call, were similarly startled when first the summons awoke them to action. Samuel was startled when the Divine voice rang out in the night; Gideon was startled, and replied: "Behold my family is poor, and I am the least in my father's house"; Jeremiah said, when the call came to him: "Ah, Lord God! Behold I cannot speak, for I am a child." Moses drew back, and said that he was unequal for the task to which God summoned him.

Christ's Call comes specially to the young--to Henry Martyn amid his books, to David Livingstone at his loom, to Carey at his cobbler's bench, to Mary Slessor in the Scottish factory, and to many another. Young people have a marvellous power of acquiring languages, and mastering any difficulties of country, race, or condition, and what other men and women are doing for fame, position, and wealth, surely we can do for Jesus. We are His blood-bought slaves, and surely He has the right to say to each of us, Come, Go, Do this, Follow Me!

Listen to the appeal of Christ on behalf of the millions of souls for whom He died, and to some of whom He wants to send you. Yield yourself to Him, and let Him infuse into you His mighty passion for their salvation. Do not look at your circumstances, or count your five loaves and two small fishes, wondering if they will suffice; or at the waves, questioning if they will bear you up. Keep your eyes fixed on Him, and your ears open to His voice, and when once you are sure of His leading, go forward in His Name. Jordan will divide before you, and the walls of Jericho will fall flat.

**PRAYER: Lord, here am I, send me wheresoever thou wilt. Only make me to know Thy will beyond possibility of mistake, and work through me to accomplish all Thy good pleasure. AMEN.**

## July 2: THE JOY OF SERVICE

**"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled."**

**-- Joh 15:11 (R.V.).**

**"My servants shall sing for joy of heart."-- Isa 65:14.**

ON THE eve of Gethsemane and the night before His crucifixion "these things" were said by our Lord: how could He have even a thought of Joy? Note how confidently He speaks of it--abiding, remaining, persistent joy! Like a hot geyser-spring, rising from unknown depths on an ice-bound world. How could He think of joy at such a moment? One answer alone seems possible. He knew that by His supreme sacrifice He was creating a well-spring of joy for all future generations. The spring of His joy was perennial because of the joy He was about to create for myriads.

This joy was characteristic of His whole ministry. It seems to have been an unfailing fountain. How could it be otherwise when He was always ministering to others, when He was for ever fulfilling His Father's loving Will for men? It is in harmony with His oft-repeated "Be of good courage," whether He was about to heal pain and disease, or proclaim the forgiveness of sin. The New Testament rings with this call to rejoice, and to rejoice greatly!

Life of Self-giving. Our joy, like Christ's, consists in self-giving. We pass on to others the joy and love with which He fills our hearts, and in doing so, we are made infinitely happy. Let us today fix these thoughts in our mind. God is Love, and that Love cannot be self-contained.

Day by day let us abide in Him, with our heart-gate open to the incoming of His love, that He may be able to speak a word to those that are weary, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. We are not to create, but to pass on! Not to inaugurate, but to transmit! The love and grace of Christ were always expressed in acts of ministry. He was not content with speaking the word of cheer, but ministered in such a way that joy and gladness were the immediate result. We must not be well-wishers only, but well-doers, If it be only to help to lift a burden, or to guide the perplexed, or to give a caress to some lonely despairing soul. In all such acts of ministry we are giving our Saviour the opportunity of expressing Himself through us, and of fulfilling our joy.

**PRAYER: O Blessed Lord, give me to know the joy that is unspeakable, the love that passeth knowledge, and the peace that passeth understanding. AMEN**

### July 3: SERVICE FOR OTHERS

**"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Be diligent in these things."--1Ti 4:14-15 (R.V.).**

**"Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands."-- 2Ti 1:6 (R.V.).**

MOST YOUNG people are fond of athletics, and the Roman and Greek youth were specially addicted to them. The Divine Spirit does not under-value any of these means for keeping our physical health vigorous. But if we pay such earnest attention to these things we ought, all the more, to give attention to godliness, which disciplines the soul for Eternal Life. We all know what it is to discover and bring into play certain muscles of the body which we had not previously used. Are we equally keen to discover the hidden properties and resources of the soul and spirit?

Timothy was gifted in various ways, but specially for public ministry; and in this Epistle and the next, the Apostle bids him stir it up, i.e. stir into flame (marg.). The fire may be well provided with coal, the heat and light may be present, but the poker needs to be used to let in the air. We may have gifts, but we must carefully practise the duties in which they can be used for the benefit of others. It becomes us all to give ourselves to the duties which lie immediately to our hands, not shirking or scamping them. We must not give part of our thought and care to our appointed tasks, but give our whole selves. What our hands find to do must be done with our might. Just as men build arches of brick over slight structures of wood, and when these are taken away the substantial material remains, so on the passing duties of an hour we are building up habits and character which will live for ever. What we do is comparatively unimportant, but how we do what we do is all-important. We must always be on guard, always on the alert, for we have in our hands the interests of others as well as our own (1Ti 4:16).

The grace of God can so reveal itself in a young man or girl, that he or she will become an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity (1Ti 4:12).

**PRAYER: Prosper us, O God, we pray Thee, in all that we put our hands unto. May our hearts be filled with Thy love, our lips with gentle, helpful words, and our hands with kind, unselfish deeds. May Thy Holy Spirit in all things direct and rule our hearts. AMEN.**

## July 4: SERVING CHRIST AND SERVING MEN

**"He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"-- Joh 6:5.**

NOTICE THAT little pronoun We! As our Lord stood face to face with the vast crowd of hungry people, He might have said to His disciples, "What are you going to do?" He might have bidden them devise some way of meeting their hunger and weariness. Instead of that, He identified Himself with them, saying, How shall we do it? Is not that His way still? He knows the needs of the world of men, but He calls us into fellowship with Himself with respect to them, saying, This is a matter not for Me alone, not for you, but for us together. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches."

Whilst our Lord talked about buying bread, "He knew what He would do." Before His eye was the entire plan of the meal, of which He would be the Host, but He spoke of buying, that He might see what they would suggest, whether they would turn to Him in simple faith, or begin to meet the need according to their own ideas. They took the latter course. It is almost always the case, that when we are face to face with some emergency, we begin to calculate our ways and means. When we are tested, we take out pencils and paper, and begin to count up our resources, as the disciples did when they said: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not enough, that every one may take a little! Then it was that Andrew bethought himself of the little lad, whom he had seen in the course of the day. How proud and pleased the boy would be when they told him that Jesus wanted his little store. He gladly gave it up at the call of that Voice which had thrilled him with its accent.

How can we serve Christ, and what have we to give Him? Five tiny loaves and two small fishes do not look much in themselves, but He will take the poorest and simplest things, and make wonderful use of them for His glory and the blessing of men. It is wonderful how much Jesus will do with our lives, if we will only put them into His dear hands. If you have no great gift to offer Him, you can bring the special power of doing one thing best, which every one possesses, and He will use you to arrange the people in orderly ranks, and to carry round the bread and wine of the Gospel message, offering it without money and without price.

### PRAYER

**Take my life, and let it be**

**Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.**

**AMEN.**

## July 5: GOD'S BOUNTIFUL PROVISION

**"They did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full."**

**-- Mat 14:20.**

WHEN GOD is Host, there is enough for all! Probably the disciples at first doled out the supplies with great care, but as they discovered that group after group were provided for, their faith increased, and they became lavish in their distribution. Every appetite could enjoy bread and fish, and there was plenty of it. God's supplies are as great as the demand; nay, greater, for He is able to make all grace abound toward each soul of man.

But though there was prolific provision, there was wise administration, and prudent husbanding of what was left. "Gather up the fragments," said the Master (Joh 6:12). It is marvellous to notice in the world of nature, how careful the Creator is that what might seem to be refuse should be wrought into new texture. Even the body, when it has fulfilled its functions, returns to mother earth, so that its particles may pass into the harvests of coming years. There is no waste in God's great world. Let there be no waste in our lives!

There are other lessons to be learned from this wonderful story. All things are to be done decently and in order. The multitude was made to sit down in companies of fifty. There was to be no crowding or pushing; the strong must wait for the weak.

Each meal should begin with the giving of thanks. "Looking up to Heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave to the disciples." The holy custom of giving thanks appears to be fading away, from even Christian homes, to our great loss, for "He was made known to them in the breaking of bread" (Luk 24:30-31).

We may expect more than the bare necessities of life at the hands of our gracious God, who "giveth us richly all things to enjoy." He gives not bread only, but fish; luxuries, as well as necessities. How much there is in life which we enjoy, but which is not absolutely necessary--music and art, flowers and fruit, sunrise and sunset, as well as ordinary daylight. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy spirit to them that ask Him."

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

## July 6: TRUE BENEFICENCE

**"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men."-- Gal 6:10.**

WE ALL have a mission in the world, though we may never be called to cross the sea, or to visit distant lands to preach the gospel.

Christ's command to each of us, is begun with the person next to you. Do not wait to be neighbored, but neighbour somebody who is in need. The best way to bring in the Kingdom of God is to bring the person whom you can most easily influence to the Saviour. All great work in the world has commenced, not by committees, but by the consecration, self-sacrifice, and devotion of single individuals.

The Apostle indicates three methods of helping people. The restoration of the fallen (Gal 6:1). How often in daily life a Christian man or woman is suddenly overtaken by some temptation, to which they yield, and which leaves a deep stain on character. Thus was David overtaken and also Peter! What an agony of remorse ensues! The Psalms are full of bitter repentance for such transgression. The sinful soul has to bear a heavy burden indeed; and too often his fellow-Christians pass him by with averted faces and frowns. No one visits him, or cares to be seen in his company, or tries to help him regain his former footing.

"Christ's law," which we are called to fulfil, is to seek out the erring one, to go after that which is lost, to restore the wanderer, to help carry his burden, considering lest we be tempted, and lapse into the same sin.

The care of Pastors and Ministers (Gal 6:6). If all who are being taught in Church and Sunday School would set themselves to minister to those that teach them, how many a weary servant of Christ would pluck up new courage and hope. Communicate helpfulness, sympathy, prayer, the grip of the hand, the expression of thankfulness for blessing received.

The ministry of all men (Gal 6:9-10). These opportunities of doing good are always recurring, and at every turn there are those who need a helping hand. "The poor," said our Lord, "ye have always with you." Let us bear a little of the burden of each, and specially do it for those who belong to the household of faith.

**PRAYER: Give us grace to be encouragers of others, never discouragers; always making life easier, never harder, for those who come within our influence. AMEN.**

## July 7: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

**"Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."-- Jam 1:27 (R.V.).**

IT IS the experiences of life that reveal us to ourselves. They cannot put into us qualities that are not there, but can develop them. The whole of this wonderful chapter is filled with the diverse discipline of life. "Manifold trials" (Jam 1:2), which probably refer to the persecutions and losses of the early Christians., "Temptations" (Jam 1:12) which refer to the solicitation of evil from without and within. The burning heat of the fire of prosperity (Jam 1:11). The "good gifts" which are strewn around our pathway by the Father of lights--home, parents, friendship, love!

The greatest training-ground for us all is the Word of God (Jam 1:21-25). It is here compared to a mirror which reflects us to ourselves, but alas, too often we go our way and forget what manner of men we are. The human soul has a wonderful habit of forgetting any statements that seem to reflect on itself, and to contradict its own notions of its pride and respectability. If, however, we avoid this mistake, and set ourselves to doing, and not hearing only, then we shall grow into strong, brave, and beautiful souls, and shall be blessed in our deed.

Do not stand gazing at the imperfections which the Word of God reveals but having learnt where you come short, dare to believe that Jesus Christ is the true counterpart of your need; that He is strong where you are weak, and full where you are empty.

"Keep himself unspotted from the world." We love the dimpled innocence and purity of a sweet child. But there is something nobler--the face of man or woman who has fought and suffered in the great battle against corruption that is in the world through lust. To keep oneself unspotted from the evil of the world, though perpetually accosted and surrounded by it, is a greater thing than to live in a glass-house, where the blight and dust cannot enter. What a training for character is this daily warfare!

To visit those in affliction. We are related to the world of pain and sorrow by the troubles which are constantly overtaking those with whom we come in contact in dally life. Where the conditions of life are hard, we obtain our best perfecting in Christian character.

**PRAYER: Make our life deeper, stronger, richer, more Christlike, more full of the spirit of heaven, more devoted to Thy service and glory. AMEN.**



## July 8: RICH TOWARD GOD

**"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."-- Luk 12:15.**

**"I have all, and abound."-- Phi 4:18.**

LET US never forget this wonderful assertion, that life consists not in what we possess, but in what we are; not in goods, but in goodness; not in things, but qualities. "How much was he worth?" we ask when a man dies, and we expect an answer in the amount that stood to his credit, and on which his estate must pay death duties. Yet surely a man is worth only the love, humility, generosity, and sweet reasonableness which characterize him. Take away some people's wealth, and, as in the case of the rich man of whom our Lord speaks in His parable, you have nothing left; but take away all things from St. John or St. Paul, from St. Francis or Augustine, or Wesley, and you have an abundance left which makes them the millionaires of all time! "Poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

The rich man in the parable made three foolish mistakes. First, he treated his wealth as though it were absolutely his own. There is no suggestion that he had made it wrongfully. His wealth had evidently accrued as the gift of prolific harvests, and was certainly due to the goodness of the Creator, on whose co-operation the results of husbandry evidently depend. But to lift up grateful eyes in thankful acknowledgment to God seems never to have occurred to him! Are we not all too prone to magnify our own shrewdness and aptitude, and to exclude God when we make up our accounts for the year.

Second, he thought that the best receptacle for his overplus was in barns, and forgot that there were multitudes of poor and needy souls around. When we begin to accumulate more than we need for our use, or the provision for our families, we should consider, not further investments, but the pressing need of others.

Third, he thought that goods could stay the hunger of the soul. How often has the heart of man or woman been surfeited with goods and remained unsatisfied? Let us give, expecting nothing again, with full measure, pressed down, and running over; give, not only money, but love and tenderness and human sympathy; give as one who is always receiving from the boundless resources of God.

**PRAYER: Help us, O God, to set our affections on things above, not on things on earth, for nothing beneath these skies can satisfy the hearts which Thou hast made for Thyself. AMEN.**

## July 9: LIFE'S BALANCE SHEET

**"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"-- Mar 8:36.**

SIMON PETER had been urging our Lord to spare Himself the suffering to which He had referred, but He answered that this could not be for Himself, or for any other who would follow in His footsteps. Proceeding from His own deep experience, He went on to show that in the same measure every one must deny his own choice and will and pleasure, in order that he may reach the highest life for himself and others.

It is not necessary for any man to make a cross; it is our part simply to take up that which God has laid down for us. The cross is no exceptional piece of asceticism, but it is the constant refusal to gratify our self-life; the perpetual dying to pride and self-indulgence, in order to follow Christ in His redemptive mission for the salvation of men. And it is in proportion as men live like this that they realize the deepest and truest and highest meaning of life. When we live only to save ourselves, to build warm nests, to avoid every discomfort and annoyance, to make money entirely for our own use and enjoyment, to invent schemes for our own pleasure, we become the most discontented and miserable of mankind. How many there are who have given themselves up to a life of selfishness and pleasure-seeking, only to find their capacity for joy has shrivelled, and their lives plunged into gloom and despair. They have lost their souls!

If a fire is raging, and a millionaire saves his palace from destruction, but in so doing loses his own life, does it pay? And are there not many who are building for themselves palaces of wealth and pleasure, but are losing the power of enjoyment because they are destroying all the finest sensibilities of their nature. Our Lord asks, what does it profit to gain the whole world, and forfeit one's own soul?

But not to adopt the policy of the world is certain to bring upon us dislike and hatred, before which many have been daunted; and yet to refuse Christ's policy of life, and to be ashamed of acknowledging that we are His followers, will mean ultimately our rejection. For how can our Lord use us in any great schemes of the future, if we have failed Him in the limited sphere of our human life?

**PRAYER: O God, we have been disappointed because the cisterns that we have hewn out for ourselves have not given the water needed to quench our thirst. Fountain of Living Water, of Thee may we drink! Bread of Life, of Thee may we eat! Light of Life, shine upon our hearts, that we may walk in Thy light. AMEN.**

## July 10: LOVE'S CONSTRAINT

**"For the love of Christ constraineth us....We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us."**

**-- 2Co 5:14-20.**

AN AMBASSADOR may live in a foreign country, but he does not belong to it. He is there to represent his own country, and no opportunity of helping forward her interests is allowed to pass. We have to represent Christ to the world. The word "constrain" suggests a constant pressure, an urge, as when water is forced down a certain channel. St. Paul says: "I act as I do because I am under the spell of a mighty constraint; I can do no other; I am not master of myself. Do not wonder at what may seem to be unusual and extravagant. Attribute my eccentricity to Christ--His love actuates me, and bears me along."

What is meant by "the love of Christ?" Is it His to us, or ours to Him? It is impossible to divide them thus, for they are one. As the sunlight strikes the moon, and is reflected from her to the earth, so the love we have to Christ, or to man, is the reflection of His love to us. All love in our cold and loveless hearts is the emanation and reflection of the Love which began in Him, was mediated to us in Calvary, and is reflected from us, as sunlight from a mirror.

The love of Christ does not constrain all Christian people, because they do not understand the profound significance of the Cross; but when the soul once appreciates that, and passes through the gate of death into the life of God, then it begins to feel the constraining love of Christ. The pivot of our life must be the Risen Christ: "We no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him who rose again." We sometimes hear people described as eccentric---out of the centre. A man is ex-centric to the world when he is concentric with Christ. It is thus that we become a new creation. When by faith we are united to Jesus Christ in His Cross and Grave, the transition is made. We pass over into the Easter life. He has reconciled us unto Himself, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation--therefore we are ambassadors. We have to proclaim forgiveness to the sinful, the loosening of their chains to those who sit in prison-houses, and the near approach of salvation to all (Isa 52:7-10).

### PRAYER

**This empty cup for Thee to fill;**

**This trembling heart for Thee to still;**

**This yielded life to do Thy will,**

**O Lord of Love, I bring Thee. AMEN.**

## July 11: SEEKING LOST SOULS

**"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost....Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."-- Luke 15:6-7.**

OUR LORD sought the proximity of sinners, not because there was any affinity between His character and theirs, but because He desired bring them back from the far country into which they had wandered. The straying sheep heedlessly nibbles at the grass which lies immediately in front, and so crops its way until it has wandered a great distance from the shepherd, and the rest of the flock.

Is this a picture of your life? Have you lived only for personal gratification, drifting in thoughtlessness and unconsciousness of the dangers which threaten to destroy you? Then remember, that though you care not for yourself, your condition is stirring the deepest solicitude in the heart of Christ. Probably you will never find your way back to Him, but Christ is on your track, and He will not relinquish his quest until He has come just where you are, and has extricated you from the rocks on which you have fallen, or from the thorns in which you are entangled.

The lost coin bears the image and superscription of the sovereign, once clear-cut by the mint, but it lies unused, tarnished and perhaps defaced, amidst the dust of the corner, or the chink of the floor. Its owner sweeps, ransacks, and explores every possible hiding-place until it is found. How aptly that lost coin represents the soul of man, made in the image of God, lying amid the dust of sin. The one hope for the sinner is the anxiety in the heart of God, who leaves no stone unturned that He may win us back. There is disturbance and removal, and the house of life is upset in every part, for no other reason than that we should be recovered.

### PRAYER

**Halts by me that footfall:**

**Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?**

**Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.**

**Whom will thou find to love ignoble thee**

**Is my gloom, after all,**

**He, fondest, blindest, weakest,**

**Alack, thou knowest not**

**Save Me, save only Me?**

**I am He Whom thou seekest!**

**How little worthy of any love thou art!**

**Rise, clap My hand, and come! AMEN.**

## July 12: OUR BOUNDEN DUTY AND SERVICE

**"When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."-- Luke 17:10.**

IN CHRIST'S service there are no hours when we cease to be His bondservants, or pass from under His eye (R.V. marg.). We are always His, always at His disposal, always bound to ask, what He would have us do. In this there is no hardship, because He knows our frame, and understands the complex machinery of life needs time to cool and rest and recreate itself. We remember that our Lord bade His disciples leave the crowded lake-side, to come with Him apart and rest awhile. He knows that we need rest and change, but He would keep these hours of relaxation under His own command because they are often the most perilous to the soul's health. How often, when we have been engaged in earnest service to others for Christ's sake, we are inclined to say: "Now we may have a good time for ourselves; we may relax the girdle, we may sit down to meat." We are inclined to act at such times as if we were off duty, and as though our Lord had no jurisdiction over us.

But it is when we have done our Master's work that He sometimes says to us; "You have been so taken up with My work that you have neglected Me. You have thought more of the depth and straightness of the furrow; more of the wool and safety of the flock, than of the One for whom you work. Give Me a little of your thought and love! Make ready where-with I sup; gird thyself and serve Me!"

He! our Lord Jesus wants our love, and He will not be satisfied if we give time, energy, and thought to His service, and forget Him.

When we have done all that Christ asks of us, we have nothing to be proud of. Our good works do not earn our salvation, nor merit anything at the hand of our Saviour. Our uttermost service is only our bounden duty and privilege. It is a blessed thing, when we are wholly yielded to obey Him, for His service is perfect freedom from envy, dissatisfaction with our lot, jealousy of others, and pride. The wonder is that He takes us into partnership with Himself (Joh 13:13-16).

**PRAYER: Lord, we go to our daily work; help us to take pleasure therein. Show us clearly what our duty is; help us to be faithful in doing it. Give us strength to do, patience to bear; by our true love to Thee, make unlovely things shine in the light of Thy great love. AMEN.**

## July 13: GOD'S CHALLENGE TO MAN

**"I heard the voice of the Lord. saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I Here am I; send me."-- Isa 6:8.**

FROM THE midst of Heaven there comes to our earth this cry for help, an appeal from the Eternal Trinity: "Who will go for us!" It reminds us of the last commission of our Lord to His disciples, that they should go into all the world, and preach His Gospel to every creature. The Seraphim may minister to those who have become the heirs of salvation, but only those who have been redeemed from among men have the high privilege of being called to the supreme work of redemption.

Notice the preparation for responding to that appeal. The vision of the Eternal: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne." Suddenly the material temple, in which Isaiah was probably worshipping, gave place to the eternal, the altar and the laver to the Throne of God; the cloud of incense, to the skirts of glory that filled the air; the choir of Levites, to the bands of the Seraphim that engirdled the sapphire throne. And above all, he beheld the glory of Christ (Joh 12:41).

This led to The vision of his own heart: "Woe is me, for I am undone." It is when a man reaches the snowline that he realizes the comparative impurity of the whitest white that earth can produce. Probably there was no one in all Jerusalem who lived nearer to God than Isaiah, but when he learned that, in the estimation of the Seraphim, God was thrice holy; when he saw them veil their faces in adoration; when he discovered that the whole universe was filled with God, then he remembered the hidden evil of his own heart, and cried out "I am unclean!" Not a moment intervened between his confession and the cleansing of his iniquity, and he was able to say: "Send me.

Have you heard that cry for help from the heart of Christ? Are you seeking to enter into His yearning love for the souls of men? He says to each one of us: "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Give yourself to Him that you may be used in His service: "Here am I, send me, use me."

**PRAYER: Lord, grant us ears to hear, eyes to see, wills to obey, hearts to love; then declare what Thou wilt, reveal what Thou wilt, command what Thou wilt, demand what Thou wilt. AMEN.**

## July 14: ENTERING THE KING'S SERVICE

**"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: For He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him."-- Psa 45:10-11.**

IT IS difficult to decide the occasion of this Psalm, which was written to celebrate a royal marriage. But there is much which goes far beyond the immediate circumstances out of which it sprang. We recognize its prophetic character, as well as its historic basis, and that it points onward to Christ the King. It is so quoted in Heb 1:8-9, and we may therefore certainly appropriate the Psalm as directly addressed to our Lord, who is our rightful King.

Christ's claim rests on these grounds: The Righteousness of His Rule. His sceptre is not a rod of iron, but of "uprightness." Our King loves righteousness and hates wickedness. Therefore His throne stands firm, and He claims the allegiance of all pure and upright souls. Would that all rulers and leaders realized that right makes might!

The Gladness of His Reign. The righteous heart is the joyful one; and our King teaches us that so far from holiness meaning gloom and depression, it is the root and fountain of true and abiding joy. Jesus was "the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief," but underneath was an abiding and eternal joy, like the spring flowers that nestle under the warm coverlet of snow. There is a blessed attractiveness in Christian joy and gladness, which is characteristic of our King, and should mark all His subjects.

The Love of His Heart. The bride is willing to forsake her own people and her father's house, and if we take the Lord Jesus to be our King and Husband, we shall be willing to count all things but loss for love of Him. Therefore He said, "Whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."

"He is thy Lord." We are reminded that however tender may be the sense of Christ's love to us, we must reverence Him as our King. Reverence is the best foundation for true affection. We shall never fully know His salvation until we recognize and own Him as King. "Thy King cometh unto thee, having salvation." "He is exalted as Prince and Saviour." Lift up your heads, O gates of Mansoul, and the King of Glory shall come in! (Rev 3:20).

**PRAYER: In all things attune our hearts to the holiness and harmony of Thy Kingdom. Hasten the time when Thy Kingdom shall come, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. AMEN.**

## July 15: THREE AMBITIONS

**"We make it our aim (we are ambitious) to be well-pleasing unto Him."-- 2Co 5:9 (R.V., see marg.).**

THERE IS scope for ambition within the sphere of the Christian Faith, and to be without it is to miss an influential incentive to high and holy endeavour. Our Lord does not destroy any natural faculty, but directs it to a worthy object. Instead of living for material good, or the applause of the world, we must stir ourselves to seek those things which are the legitimate objects of holy ambition. In two other passages the Apostle Paul uses this same word. See 1Th 4:11; Rom 15:20 (R.V. marg.).

There is the ambition of daily toil,--"Be ambitious to be quiet, to do your own business, to work with your own hands." In the age in which the Apostles lived there was much unrest, and in the case of the Christian Church this was still further increased by the expectation of the approaching end of the world; many were inclined to surrender their ordinary occupations, and give themselves up to restlessness and excitement, all of which was prejudicial to the regular ordering of their homes and individual lives, But the injunction is that we are not to yield to the ferment of restlessness; we are not to be disturbed by the feverishness around us, whether of social upheavals or for pleasure or gain.

The ambition to be well-pleasing to Christ. At His judgment-seat He will weigh up the worth of our individual mortal life, and He is doing so day by day. Not only when we pass the threshold of death, but on this side, our Lord is judging our character and adjudicating our reward. Let us strive to be as well-pleasing to Him in this life, as we hope to be in the next.

The ambition of Christian work--"Being ambitious to preach the Gospel." The great world lies open to us, many parts of it still unevangelized; and all around us in our own country are thousands, among the rich and poor, who have no knowledge of Christ. Let us make it our ambition to bring them to Him, always remembering that the things we do for Christ must be that which He works through us in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:18-19).

**PRAYER: Give us grace, O Lord, to work while it is day, fulfilling diligently and patiently whatever duty Thou appointest us; doing small things in the day of small things, and great labours if Thou summon us to any; rising and working, sitting still and suffering, according to Thy word. AMEN.**



## July 16: GOD'S APPOINTMENT

**"I formed thee... I knew thee... I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee."-- Jer 1:5 (R.V.).**

GOD HAS a plan for each of his children. From the foot of the Cross, where we are cradled in our second birth, to the brink of the river, where we lay down our armour, there is a path which He has prepared for us to walk in. God also prepares us for the path He has chosen. We are His workmanship, created unto the good works which He has before prepared. There is no emergency in the path for which there has not been provision made in our nature. From the earliest inception of his being, God had a plan for Jeremiah's career, for which He prepared him.

Ask what your work in the world is, that for which you were born, to which you were appointed, and on account of which you were conceived in the creative thought of God. That there is a Divine purpose in thy being is indubitable. Seek that you may be permitted to realize it, and never doubt that you have been endowed with all the special aptitudes which that purpose may demand. God has formed you, and stored your mind with all that He knew to be requisite for your life-work. It is your part to elaborate and improve to the utmost the one or two talents entrusted to your care.

Do not be jealous or covetous; do not envy another his five talents, but answer the Divine intention in your creation, redemption, and call to service. It is enough for thee to be what God made thee to be, and to be always at thy best.

But in cases where the Divine purpose is not clearly disclosed, in which life is rived piecemeal, and the bits of marble for the tessellated floor are heaped together with no apparent plan, we must dare to believe that God has an intention for each of us; and that if we are true to our noblest ideals, we shall certainly work out the Divine pattern, and be permitted some day to see it in its unveiled symmetry and beauty. To go on occupying the position in which we have been placed by the Providence of God, and to hold it for God till He bids us do something else! Such are golden secrets of blessedness and usefulness.

**PRAYER: O Lord, may Thy all-powerful grace make us perfect as Thou hast commanded us to be; through Jesus Christ. AMEN.**

## July 17: THE EAGER HOUSEHOLDER

**"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard."-- Mat 20:1.**

OUR LORD, beneath the veil of this parable, tells us what God is like. The heart of God our Father yearns over the perishing souls of men. For some reason, at present withheld, He must have the co-operation of men to reach the hearts of men, and therefore at every stage of life He approaches us, saying, "Go work! During what remains of life's brief day, go work in My vineyard, and whatsoever is fight I will give you. I need you to help in the salvation of the myriads of souls, whose redemption I am seeking with blood and tears."

He comes to you, dear children, in the dawn of your life. The dew is still in the grass, the birds are only just awaking from their dreams, life is yet the spring, and God's voice comes to you, saying: "I want you to help Me in my great Vineyard. The ground needs weeding, the vines require watering and pruning, there is much to do and few to do it, and I have a tiny plot for you to cultivate. Make haste, and come."

He comes to you, young men and women. Three hours have passed, and is yet you are standing idle, and have not chosen your life-work. Are you going to be a Missionary, or Minister, a Doctor, or School-teacher; does art, Music, or Commerce appeal to you? Whatever sphere you choose, yet it be subordinated to the one great purpose of helping God to save the world.

He comes to you who are in the meridian or late afternoon of life. Perhaps you have been fortunate enough to make a competence, and need not oil as formerly. To you the Master comes, saying, "Go, work in My vineyard. Administer your money, time, influence for Me." Even though it be but an hour before sunset, the same urgent appeal rings out; though you have been unemployed all the days, He seeks your help. Oh, that the urgency of God's compassions may touch and move us! Will you listen to the call of the great Husbandman, and now answer in your heart, "Here am I, send me"?

**PRAYER: O God, we have heard Thy call! Wilt Thou accept our hands to labour for Thee, and our lips to speak for Thee. Send us into Thy Vineyard, and use us in Thy holy service. AMEN.**

## July 18: FROM DISCIPLE TO APOSTLE

**"And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chafe twelve, whom also He named apostles."--- Luk 6:13.**

AT THE basis of all things there is a Divine order. We hear it in the noblest music, we find traces of it in the highest art; we are in contact with it in our purest and simplest meditations. Our souls bear witness to its beauty and truth whenever it confronts us. Our Lord Jesus bears a true witness to this in His beatitudes, and the enunciation of other principles, which appeal to our conscience as right and good. As we travel in His company along the road, we find He explains mysteries and enigmas in a fashion which appeals to our heart; we know that He speaks true. Finally, we come to a point where He passes beyond the road of our knowledge to the upper reaches of the mountains which we have not trodden before. He speaks to us of the nature of God, He assures us of the forgiveness of sin, He draws aside the veil from the unseen and the eternal. He lifts us into a new and blessed vision of the working together of all things according to the eternal purpose. And we who trusted Him where our own conscience substantiated His statements, are able to trust God, and follow Him when He deals with questions which eye hath not seen, nor the heart of man conceived. Thus we become His disciples, or pupils in His School.

Out of the disciples, our Lord chose some to be Apostles. We begin by learning, and after a while, we are sent forth to teach. During the first years we serve our apprenticeship, and afterwards we are permitted to be master hands. The disciple becomes an Apostle, and the Apostle is chosen not for his own comfort and enjoyment, but that he may be the instrument through which Christ achieves His eternal purpose. Election is not primarily to salvation, but to service. We are not elect that we may be sheltered from destruction, but that we may go forth to serve men, to teach them the law and love of God, and to help bring the world into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

**PRAYER: Most Blessed Lord, we thank Thee that we may become Thy disciples. Give us teachable hearts and listening ears; may we sit at Thy feet and be moulded according to Thy mind. Oh, choose us, and send us forth, and trust us with Thy sacred ministry, fulfilling in us the good pleasure of Thy will. AMEN.**

## July 19: CHOSEN AND PLACED

**"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit."**

**-- Joh 15:16.**

WE DID not choose Him--there we have the evil of the human heart, the film of blindness which sin casts on the sight, the deafness with which it dulls the ear. For to have missed Jesus, to pass Him by, is as though the pearl-hunter were unable to recognize the pearl of greatest price; or the mother to recognize her own babe; or the seeker after the holy grail to fail to discover its mystic sheen!

"But I chose you." He chose us probably because we were useless and helpless, and He wanted to show what supreme miracles His grace could achieve. The prophet says that the branches of the vine are more useless than any others (Eze 16:1-5). The principle of God's choice is to take what all others reject--the fire-brand plucked from the burning, the feebly-smoking tow, the bruised reed; the younger sons, the halt and lame, the last and least; the things that are foolish, despised, and weak--these are God's choice, that He may bring to nought things that are, that no flesh may glory in His presence.

There was no error in the foreknowledge which preceded our election. God knew all that we were, all that we should be. He foresaw our down-sittings, our hours of depression, our obstinacy, our wanderings into the far country, but He swerved not. Having chosen us, He is going to justify His choice, unless we definitely refuse to let Him have his way.

"And appointed you." Our Master has placed us just where we are, that He might have a suitable outlet for His abundant life, which He longs to pour forth upon the world. Do not repine or murmur at your lot in life, but remember that He has appointed and placed you there. As the branch is nailed to the wall that it may cover it with foliage and fruit, so Christ has placed you where you are. That inevitable circumstance is the rough piece of cloth, that sorrow is the nail, that pain the restraint such as He suffered on the Cross.

"That ye should go." "Whither, Master? ... Into all the world, as My disciples! I have chosen you out of it and now I send you back as My representatives, through whom I may pour out My life and love. Go and bear fruit!"

**PRAYER: O Heavenly Master, enable us by Thy grace to fill the opportunity, and do the work that Thou hast assigned. May we not murmur or complain because our place is obscure and the time long, but bear much fruit for Thy glory. AMEN.**

## July 20: MINISTERING TO CHRIST

**"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."-- Mat 25:40.**

IS IT not wonderful that our Lord should identify Himself thus with the hungry and thirsty, the weary and homeless, the outcast and suffering? If any who read these words should be in one of these conditions, be greatly comforted, for Jesus suffered thus in His earthly career, and remembers what it is like. His sympathy and understanding are warm and inexhaustible, and He accepts any kindness as though it were done directly to Himself.

We must be on the outlook for those whom we can help, remembering that the outstretched hand or petition is His. But we must beware, on the other hand, and endeavour to help people wisely. In giving to every beggar that asks alms we may inflict injury on the moral nature by encouraging them to be lazy and careless. We are not to distribute money, food, and clothing alone, but to give personal ministry which may cost us more!

Christ speaks of those who give hand-help to others as righteous, because it is only as we are really right with God that we are merciful to men. Righteousness and mercifulness are one.

The sin of omission! Notice that those who were banished and exiled from the presence of the King were judged because of what they did not do. We may be condemned not simply for actual sins committed, but for what we neglect to do. Not to bind up and care for the wounded or ill-treated, but to pass by on the other side; not to have the oil ready for the lamp; not to make use of the talent or gift entrusted, this involves condemnation, and degrades the soul to the level of the devil and his angels.

Let us ask for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may follow in the steps of our Lord Jesus, who went about doing good, and healing all who were sick and in need. He has made over the great debt we owe to Him to the poor and needy, and says that whatever we do to others for His sake, He will accept as payment to Himself.

**PRAYER: O God, we have been too self-centred. We have forgotten that our best and happiest life must be lived in fellowship with the needs, and sorrows, and trials of others. Help us to cheer them with our love, to hearten them with our courage, and to bear their burdens so far as we may. AMEN.**

## July 21: VICTORIOUS OVER LIMITATIONS

**"The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen."-- Col 4:18.**

AT THE close of his dictation, St. Paul took the stylus from the hand of his amanuensis, and appended his signature to the letter, which was awaiting that necessary endorsement. As he did so, he contrasted his irregular and clumsy writing with the flowing current-hand of his scribe, and in excuse, said pathetically, "Remember my bonds!" It was as though he said, "You cannot expect a man who for thrice years has had his wrist fettered by an iron chain to write as well as when he was a student at Gamaliel's feet!" He makes reference to the same subject in Gal 6:11, where he speaks of the "large letters" which he had written with his own hand; but in this case it was caused by his failing eyesight rather than the iron fetter.

There are other bonds than iron chains which impose on us their straits and limitations. Many of us, as we review our work at the close of the day, are overwhelmed with the sense of failure. As we kneel before our Lord, we are constrained to say, "Alas, we have inscribed Thy Name on the hearts which lay open to us, as paper the hand, in very clumsy and unworthy style. Forgive us, and remember our bonds."

Let us accept our limitations as from the Will of God. There is no way to peace or power, save in accepting the Will of God, making no distinction between what He appoints or permits, but believing that in either we are in contact with the Eternal purpose for us. Paul never forgot that he was the prisoner of Jesus Christ. He believed that for every limitation on the earthward side there would be enlargement on the other and spiritual side. Weakness here, added strength there; the being hourly delivered unto the cross, and from the ground the blossoming of endless life.

Let us do all the good we can in spite of fetters. St. Paul could not continue his travels over the world, but there were many avenues of service open to him. He could pray, and he did (Col 1:3; Col 2:1; Col 4:12). He could influence others (Phi 1:11-14). He employed his leisure in writing the epistles that have been the perennial solace of sorrowful hearts. There is a door, nearer to you than you think, opening out of your prison, through which God will enable you to render helpful service for Him.

**PRAYER: Our Father, we thank Thee Thou canst make no mistakes. We believe that all things are working together for our good, and we trust Thy guiding hand. AMEN.**

## July 22: SURRENDER LEADING TO SONG

**"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."--2Ch 29:27.**

THE HEBREW Psalmody became famous throughout the world. Even their fierce conquerors recognized the sublime beauty of the Hebrew temple music. By the waters of Babylon they urged them to sing one of the Songs of Zion, not knowing how impossible it was for the captives to sing the Lord's song in a strange land! For sixteen years no song had poured forth from the sacred shrine. Ahaz had shut the doors, dispersed the Levites, and allowed the holy fabric to remain unkempt, unlit, and unused. There were no sacrifices on the Altar, no sweet incense in the Holy Place, no blood on the Mercy-Seat, no Song of the Lord!

For too many Christians this, alas, is a picture of their life. The soul, intended to be a holy temple for God, shows signs of disorder and neglect. The lights are not lit, the sweet incense of prayer does not ascend, the doors of entrance to fellowship and exit to service are closed. Outwardly the ordinances of the religious life are preserved, but inwardly silence and darkness prevail, into which bat-like thoughts intrude. Thorns have come up in the court of the Holy Place, where the scorpion makes her nest. The Song of the Lord had died out of heart and life.

Why should not this miserable condition be ended to-day? Why should you not be cleansed from the traces of sin and neglect through the Blood of the Cross? Why should you not come back into fellowship with God, who waits to receive and forgive? Surrender yourself to Him now. Do not be general, but specific in your consecration. Weld yourself to some life or lives that sorely need help. Give not words only, but deeds and blood. Merge your little life in the life of Christ, as the streamlet in the wide ocean. And as you yield yourself to Christ first, and next to all who need you for His sake, you will find the Song of the Lord breaking forth again in your heart like a spring, which was formerly choked with debris.

**PRAYER: We pray Thee, Heavenly Father, to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.**

## July 23: CONFESSING CHRIST BEFORE MEN

**"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven."**

**-- Mat 10:32.**

CHRIST'S ULTIMATE aim is to secure peace for our sin-stricken race, and the proclamation of the tidings of peace is spreading throughout the world. We must not falter in our testimony, or hide in our heart the truth which has been committed to us, because it may bring us to contumely and suffering. Nothing is so like to promote our own earnestness and devotion as our constant testimony for Christ. The advance of the Kingdom of God is determined much less by remarkable missions and sermons, as by each one saying to his neighbour: "Know the Lord!"

We should begin with our next of kin. Andrew's testimony and confession brought Peter to Jesus (Joh 1:40-42). And whatever blessing came to the Church, and to the world through the testimony and confession of Peter must be partly credited to his brother Andrew.

We must confess Christ to our nearest friends. Philip found Nathanael. Our friends expect that we should let them share our inner thoughts and experience. Sometimes we can only give our simple testimony: "We have found Christ," but as we bring those whom we love to Christ, we shall ever find Him sympathetic and willing to meet our endeavours with His mighty help and fellowship. How He welcomed Peter, and read the character of Nathanael.

Our personal testimony is invaluable. The woman of Samaria brought the entire city to the feet of Jesus by her confession. Many of the Samaritans believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, "He told me all that ever I did." That was the beginning of a great revival.

It was Mr. Moody's custom to speak each day, personally, to some one about the Lord Jesus. If any shall say that this habit is apt to become mechanical and formal, I can only answer that the days when I have lived like that have been the most radiant of my life. It is not necessary that one should be always interlarding phraseology with references to religion, but there must be no coveting of the light within us (Mat 5:14-16). How great an honour it will be to be confessed by Christ before all worlds, and to be presented by Him with exceeding joy before the Father (Jud 1:24). "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us."

**PRAYER: May we so represent Christ our Lord in this world that men may love Him for what they see of His likeness in us. AMEN.**



## July 24: GLORIFYING GOD IN OUR RECREATIONS

**"All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."-- 1Co 10:23-31.**

THE WORD Recreation is preferable to Pastime, for as one realizes the priceless moments, with all their opportunities, getting fewer, one is averse to hear people talk of "killing time." But "recreation" is a good word, and we all need to find some way of re-creating the exhausted grey-matter of the brain which is being used up in long application to study or work.

We must not be the "dull boys" of the old adage, but as Christians our faces should shine like the morning sun; we should be quick, bright, intelligent, and in no danger of being reckoned among the "back-numbers," of which the piles are generally shabby and dusty!

"All things edify not" is one of the first conditions of healthy recreation. There is really no limit but this to the recreations in which a Christian person can indulge. He may play at manly games, row, skate, swim, drive a motor, sail the ocean, or scale the mountain snows! The more the better, so long as they are recreative; and are not the end, but the means to the end of a healthy manhood and womanhood. That is, they must edify, build up physique, muscle, brain, to be used afterwards in the main business of life. Nothing is a greater curse than when people neglect their real business in order to get to their sports and games. Then, so far from edifying, these in turn begin to pull down and destroy.

Probably the words "edify not" put in a plea on the behalf of others. We are not to do things which in themselves may be lawful and innocent enough, but which might have a prejudicial effect on those who are watching every movement of our life.

"Do all to the glory of God." So many seem afraid of joy! They fear if they are too happy, God will send some trouble as make weight. How different is the command in Deu 26:11 and Phi 4:4. Even when things do not appear to be good, let us dare to be thankful in all things, and give praise for all. All our Father's gifts are good, whatever be the wrappings or packing-cases in which they come to hand.

**PRAYER: May the Holy Spirit so fill us with Christ our Lord, that there may be no room in our life for anything inconsistent with His perfect purity and love. AMEN.**

## July 25: TIMELINESS

**"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."-- Ecc 3:1.**

DO NOT be in too great a hurry. There is time for everything that has to be done. He who gave you your life-work has given you just enough time to do it in. The length of life's candle is measured out according to the length of your required task. You must take necessary time for meditation, for sleep, for food, for the enjoyment of human love and friendship; and even then there will be time enough left for your necessary duties. More haste, less speed! The feverish hand often gives itself additional toil. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

Do not be impatient. He who made you has prepared the successive steps along which you must travel to realize your full human development. God knows what you need and will bring you to its fulfilment, only you must wait His leisure with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. He can mature events with marvellous rapidity, and you will find that He will perfect that which concerneth you, so that no good thing will fail. He who feeds the wild things of the prairie and woodland, giving to each its appropriate portion, will not fail any one of us. He will supply us with food convenient for us. The Creator is faithful to the creature.

Do not be cast down. Sorrow and trial are only for a time. They have their seasons, and pass. It is not always winter, and God puts bright and beautiful things into our lives which we need not be afraid of enjoying, it being understood that we do not snatch at them, or use them for our personal pleasure alone. Everything is beautiful after its sort and in its season, and every day has some element of goodwill in it, but we sometimes so strain our eyes towards a distant spot on the horizon that we miss the flowers on which we are treading.

God is in all; find Him there! "Every good gift is from the Father of lights." They were created that they might be received with thanksgiving, and the altar sanctifies the gift. It is only when the gifts of God are severed from the Giver that they do us harm (Ecc 3:13).

God has set Eternity in our heart, and man's infinite capacity cannot be filled or satisfied with the things of time and sense (see Ecc 3:11, R.V. marg.).

**PRAYER: Cause Thy grace to abound toward us, that we may have all sufficiency in all things, and abound to every good work. Help us to fulfil all the duties and responsibilities that this day may bring. AMEN.**

## July 26: SPIRITUAL GYMNASTICS

**"Exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come."-- 1Ti 4:7-8 (R.V.).**

THE RELATION of the body to religion has always engaged the attention of thoughtful religious men. Human opinion has oscillated between two extremes. On the one hand, some have considered that the body was the seat of sin, and have set themselves to degrade and debase it with every indignity and torture. This conception has influenced devoutly-intentioned people in the East, and also in Western monasticism. But sin must be dealt with in the heart and soul, where it has its inception and spring. It is easy to macerate the body, whilst the pride of self-mortification is undetected. If we deal with bad thought and evil suggestion, we shall not have so much trouble with the body, which is only the dial-plate, registering the workings within. The other extreme was represented in the Greek religion. The temples that stand in ruins: the superb works of art which have survived the wreck of centuries; its poetry and literature, sustain and illustrate the supreme devotion of the Greek mind to beauty. The Christian position differs from both. To us the body is the temple, the instrument, the weapon of the soul. The Holy Spirit quickens our mortal body by His indwelling, and in the faces and lives of holy men and women we may trace the growing results of the inward power and beauty of pure and undefiled religion. It is good to care for the body, but only as we should care for a complex and fine piece of machinery which is to serve us. There are gifts in us, which we must not neglect, or it will go hard with us when we meet our Master, who entrusted them to our stewardship. Probably the trials and temptations of life are intended to give us that inward training which shall bring our spiritual muscles into play. In each of us there is much unused force; many moral and spiritual faculties, which would never be used, if it were not for the wrestling which we are compelled to take up with principalities and powers, with difficulty and sorrow. The Apostle bids us take heed to ourselves, and to live in the atmosphere of uplifting thought and of self-denying ministry (1Ti 4:13-15).

**PRAYER: Mould us, O God, into forms of beauty and usefulness by the wheel of Thy providence, and by the touch of Thy hand. Fulfil Thine ideal, and conform us to the image of Thy Son. AMEN.**

## July 27: FIRST, RECONCILIATION

**"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift, go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."-- Mat 5:23-24.**

THERE IS a marked difference between memory and recollection.

Memory resembles a great box or chest into which a man casts his letters, accounts, and MSS.; recollection is the readiness, be it less or more, with which he can lay his hand on what he requires. We know that it is somewhere in our possession, we remember to have seen and turned it over, but search as we may we cannot find or recall it.

But there is a moment of quickened recollection when we stand before God: "When thou bringest thy gift to the altar and rememberest." As the Divine searchlight plays upon our past life it reveals many things which had passed from our mind. Conscience is a keen quickener of our powers of recollection.

What has your brother against you? This--that you flamed out against him in passion, with bitter, angry words, in hatred and contempt; or this--that you have been sullen and sulky, scarcely answering his advances, meeting his salutations with grudging courtesy. Perhaps you have done him a positive wrong, and have taken from him his only covering, or have forborne to help him when he stood in sore need (Exo 22:26-27; Exo 23:4-9).

We are bidden to get right with man, as the first step to acceptance with God--" first be reconciled to thy brother." Humility is necessary in every approach to God, and nothing so humbles our pride as to confess our faults to our brethren. Truth is necessary to all right dealings with God, and nothing will so promote truth in our inward parts as to be transparent and simple in our dealings with our fellows. Sincerity in confession of sin is an essential beginning of peace with God, but how can we be sure that our confession is sincere unless it costs us something more than words. "First, be reconciled with thy brother"--not only with the brother of human flesh--but with our great Brother in the Glory (Gen 1:17-21; Heb 2:11). Then cometh Offer thyself, as thy gift; He will accept thee, and thy gifts.

**PRAYER: Give unto us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, broken and contrite hearts. Help us to do all that ought to be done to make amends, and grant unto our brother the willingness to meet us with forgiveness and peace. So shall we have peace with Thee, our Elder Brother, against whom we have grievously sinned. AMEN.**

## July 28: LOST OPPORTUNITIES

**"He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."-- Heb 12:17.**

**"O Jerusalem .... how often would I have gathered thy children together .... and ye would not!"-- Mat 23:37.**

THE GREEKS represented Opportunity as bald, with no lock of hair by which she could be laid hold of as she turned away and fled. Every one has opportunity, but there is often no symptom of its approach, no sign of its departure; when once it is missed, it rarely comes again! It is said that Queen Victoria once gave a comparatively unknown painter the opportunity of a private sitting. She came at the exact time that was arranged, but he was five minutes late, and he lost his opportunity!

Esau bartered his birthright! What cared he for the spiritual prerogative of the first-born to act as the priest of the clan, and to stand in the possible lineal descent of the Messiah. He craved what would satisfy and please his senses. But when he had sold his birthright, he was held to the transaction. "He found no place of repentance" does not mean that he wished to and could not, but that the die was cast, the decision was deemed final. It is within the range of every one to do an act, to make a choice, to barter away the spiritual for the material so absolutely, that the decision is held irrevocable. Let us take care lest we be betrayed by passion into an act which may affect our entire destiny.

The outstretched wing of God's love would have sheltered Jerusalem from its impending fate, but she refused Him in His servants and His Son, and her day of opportunity passed!

Even so, salvation waits for us all, and there is hope and opportunity for us to repent as long as the day of grace is not closed, but let us not forget, as McCheyne said, that Christ gives last knocks. The present is your time of hope, of a fresh beginning, of a new opportunity. Open the door of your life to Christ and make Him King. He offers you your chance, rise to it; do your very best, find your niche of service in His Kingdom, and set yourself to follow Him with all your heart, and mind, and strength.

**PRAYER: O Lord, let us not serve Thee with the spirit of bondage as slaves, but with the cheerfulness and gladness of children, delighting ourselves in Thee and rejoicing in Thy work. AMEN.**

## July 29: THE CHRISTIAN EXTRA

**"Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."-- Mat 5:41.**

OUR LORD refers here to the usage of the East in the transmission of royal messages, which were carried forward by relays of messengers, much in the fashion of the fiery cross in the Highlands, as described in "The Lady of the Lake." The messengers were "press-men"; each town or village was compelled to forward the message to the next, and the first man happened upon was bound to forward the courier with his horses or mules.

In some such way emergencies are continually happening to us all. We arise in the morning not expecting any special demand for help, or any other circumstance to interfere with the regular routine of the day's work, and then suddenly and unexpectedly a demand bursts upon us, and we are obliged to go in a direction which we never contemplated. We are compelled to go one mile! Then the question arises. Now you have done your duty, performed what you were bound to perform, given what any other person would have given, what are you going to do about the next mile? You had no option about the first; about the second you have an opportunity of choice. Your action in the matter which is optional determines whether or not you have entered into the spirit and ministry of Christ.

Let us not be stingy and niggardly in our dealings with men. There are certain things that must be done, but let us go beyond the must, and do our duty with a smile, and with generous kindness. It is not enough to pay our servants or employees, let us be thankful for their service; it is not enough to pay our debts, let us give the word also of appreciation; it is not enough to simply do the work for which our employer remunerates us, let us do it with alacrity and eagerness, willing to finish a piece of necessary service even at cost to ourselves. As the followers of Christ, we are to be stars bearing our light on the vault of night; flowers shedding fragrance on the world; fountains rising in the arid wastes; always giving love and helpful ministry to this thankless and needy world, and as we break and distribute our barley loaves and fishes, our hands will become filled again, and with the measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again (Luk 6:38).

**PRAYER: O God, may we be more gracious to those around us. May we fill up the measure of our possibilities, and so be perfect, as Thou, our Father, art perfect in love. AMEN.**

## July 30: FRET NOT

**"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him: Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."-- Psa 37:7.**

IT IS a mistake to be always turning back to recover the past. The law for christian living is not backward, but forward; not for experiences that lie behind, but for doing the will of God, which is always ahead and beckoning us to follow. Leave the things that are behind, and reach forward to those that are before, for on each new height to which we attain, there are the appropriate joys that befit the new experience. Don't fret because life's joys are fled. There are more in front. Look up, press forward, the best is yet to be!

Fret not because your ideals appear to mock you. Every ideal which we cherish is the herald and precursor of a reality which, in a better form than ever we dreamed, shall one day come to our possession. The ancient alchemists spent their lives in the pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone, which they thought would turn every substance it touched to gold. They never discovered it, but they laid the foundations of modern chemistry, which has been more fruitful in its blessing to our race than the famous magic-stone would have been. Who shall say that those old explorers were deceived? Was not God leading them on, by a way that they knew not, to better things than they dreamed?

Fret not because the future seems dark. After all, the troubles we anticipate may never really befall. It is a long lane without a turning, and the dreariest day has some glint of light. In any case, worrying will not help matters; it can alter neither the future nor the past, though it will materially affect our power in dealing with troubles. It will not rob to-morrow of its difficulties, but it will rob your brain of its clear-sightedness, and your heart of its courage. Let us turn to God with faith and prayer, looking out for the one or two patches of blue which are in every sky. And if you cannot discover any where you are, dare to anticipate the time when God shall make all things work together for good to them that love Him.

**PRAYER: Heavenly Father, we have been careful and troubled about many things. Forgive us, and breathe into our hearts a great faith in Thee, that doubts and fears may not be able to break in on our peace. Fence us around today as with a wall of fire; let us hear Thy voice saying: Fear not, I am with thee. AMEN.**

## **July 31: BELIEVING AND RECEIVING!**

**"All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them."--  
Mar 11:24 (R.V.).**

IT IS not enough to pray and ask; we must believe that we have received. We can only do this when we know that we have asked according to God's Will (1Jo 5:14-15). This can be determined by referring to His Word, which teems with great and precious promises, like so many banknotes or cheques waiting to be cashed.

In prayer, it is well to be deliberate, to consider what we are about to ask, to discover some promise under which we can make our request; and then, having asked, to wait while the soul, so to speak, takes or appropriates what it needs. It may be that the time is not ripe for it to be actually bestowed, but the request is granted, and the coveted gift is already set aside in God's storehouse, labelled with the name of the petitioner, just as we sometimes get our Christmas presents ready and put them aside, and at the right moment they shall be dispatched.

**PRAYER: We thank Thee, O God, for the daily gifts of Thy Providence, but above all for the gift of Thyself in Jesus our Lord, in whom all good and perfect gifts are contained. AMEN.**



## August 1: THE WISE USE OF TIME

**"Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise redeeming the time, because the days are evil."-- Eph 5:15-16 (R.V.).**

GOD DESIRES to give each life its full development. Of course, there are exceptions; for instance, in some cases the lessons and discipline of life are crowded into a very brief space of time, and the soul is summoned to the Presence-chamber of eternity. But, on the whole, each human life is intended to touch all the notes of life's organ. There is an appointed time when it shall be born or die, shall weep or laugh, shall get or lose, shall have halcyon peace or storm cast skies. These times have been fixed for you in God's plan; do not try and anticipate them, or force the pace, but wait thou the Lord's leisure. In due time all will work out for thy good and for His glory. Say to Him "All my times are in Thy hand."

Times and seasons succeed one another very quickly. Milton, in his glorious sonnet on the Flight of Time, bids her call on the leaden-stepping hours, referring to the swing of the pendulum; and, indeed, as we look back on our past life it will seem as though each experience was only for a moment, and then had vanished, never to return. We are reminded of the cobbler, who, as he sat in his kitchen, thought that the pendulum of his clock, when it swing to the left, said For ever; and to the right, Where? For ever--where? For ever--where? He got up and stopped it, but found that, although he had stopped the questioner, he had not answered the question. Nor could he find rest until, on his knees, he had been able to face the question of the Eternal, and reply to it.

We must be on the alert to meet the demand of every hour. "Mine hour is not yet come," said our Lord. He waited patiently until He heard the hours strike in heaven, and then drawing the strength appropriate to its demand, He went forth to meet it. Each time and season is kept by the Father in His own hand. He opens and none shuts; He shuts and none opens. But in that same hand are the needed supplies of wisdom, grace, and power. As the time, so is the strength. No time of sighing, trial, temptation, or bereavement is without its special and adapted supplies. Take what is needed from His hand, and go forth to play the part for which the hour calls.

**PRAYER: Oh, that Thou wouldst bless us indeed and enlarge our coasts of useful service. Let Thine hand be with us, and keep us from all evil that would grieve Thee. AMEN.**

## August 2: THE WISE USE OF INFLUENCE

**"Ye are the light of the world.... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."--Mat 5:14-16.**

INFLUENCE MAY be defined as the flowing in of our soul to enthuse and help, or to debase others. The law of action and recreation, of attraction and repulsion is always at work, in virtue of which it may be truly said that no one liveth or dieth to himself. The position of each atom of sand upon the seashore affects the position of all others, and the quality of our personal character is more pervasive than a good or ill odour. What we are affects others much more deeply than what we say. Probably waves of spiritual influence are continually going forth from our inmost nature, and it is the impact of these upon those around us which makes it easier or harder for them to realize their highest ideals.

The first circle which we can touch and influence is that of our friends. Our counsel may be sweetness or bitterness, but whatever we do or say, we must see that we are absolutely true and faithful (Pro 27:6-9). Sincerity means to be without the wax which the cabinet-maker may put into the cracks of the wood to make it appear sound. It is the true and pure soul that most readily and forcibly helps another. Do not be selfish in your friendship, but always give out as much and more than you expect to receive. Love is a tender plant, and needs culture. We must not suppose that it is able to thrive without light and truth.

The second circle of influence is that of our associates. The great world of men may not appreciate our reproduction of the Beatitudes of the Kingdom, but still reproach, persecute, and say all manner of evil falsely; nevertheless, we must continue to bless the world by the silent and gracious influence of holy living. Reviled, we must bless; persecuted, we must endure; defamed, we must entreat. We must be as salt to our persecutors and as light to our defamers. It is wonderful how love, and consistent, patient, prayerful influence finally prevail.

We are to be as salt; i.e. our consistent holy living will act as antiseptic to arrest evil. We are to be the light of the world. Inconsistency and cowardice are like bushels which are put over the lamp. Let us put all these hindrances away, that the light which is within us may shine out on the dark world.

**PRAYER: Grant, we beseech Thee, O God, that our behaviour may be as becometh the Gospel of Christ. May the savour of Christ be in our influence, His light in our face, His love in our hearts. AMEN.**

### August 3: THE WISE USE OF MONEY

**"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."-- 2Co 9:7-8.**

WE MUST not look on money as our own, for on every coin you may discern the letters: DG., By the Grace of God. Therefore money is God's gift to us. "Both riches and honour come of Thee. David was right when he said, after his people and he had made a noble gift to God's work: "Of Thine own have we given Thee."

But you say: "I earn my money by the sweat of my brow." Granted; but "thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." It is God who enables us to keep our situations; who delivers us from paralysing disease, maintains the balance of reason, and renews our daily strength. Is it not our constant profession that we have devoted to Christ all that we are and have, and surely this consecration, if it means anything, means that concerning all that belongs to us we would say to our Lord: "What wouldst Thou have me to do?"

It is our duty to provide for our own (1Ti 5:8). It is also right to hold a certain amount as capital, for the increase of business and the employment of labour. When a man uses his capital rightly, taking no more than a legitimate profit for his time, experience, and responsibility, and allowing his employees to share with him in the overplus, he is doing more real good in the world than if he gave away his property by distributing a pound each to a vast number of beggars. We are to be stewards of the Lord Jesus. This is His own comparison (Mat 25:14).

In order to guard against the love of money, we should be careful to give a stated proportion to the cause of Christ. It may seem needless to insert this caution for those who should use all for Christ. But our hearts are so fickle that we sometimes imagine that we are giving away a larger share of our income than is the case, unless we are accurate in adjusting the balance between Christ and ourselves. It is not possible for one to assign for another the proper proportion, but whatever we fax, it should be rigorously deducted when we receive our income or wages. In the first place, give your own selves to Christ, and then all else will fall into line (2Co 8:5).

**PRAYER: Help me, dear Lord, to walk in the footsteps of Thy holy life. Teach me how to gain by giving, and to find by losing, according to Thy word. AMEN**

## August 4: UNDERSTANDING GOD'S LOVINGKINDNESS

**"Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."**

**-- Psa 107:43.**

THERE ARE many ways of understanding the lovingkindness or mercy of the Lord. We may know it as a matter of doctrine. The best way of increasing our knowledge of God's infinite nature, is by the reverent study of His Word. It is a flimsy religion which discounts doctrine. What the bones are to the body, doctrine is to our moral and spiritual life. What law is to the material universe, doctrine is to the spiritual. The doctrines of grace are the jewelled foundations of a holy life. Seek the ministry that builds on them; read the books that acknowledge them! We may know it by meditation. Would that we yielded more silent hearts to the Holy Spirit, that He might fix our vagrant thoughts on the love of Christ that passeth knowledge! The love that loved us in Eternity, that has never let us go in Time, and that has shown its uttermost intensity by the wounds of Calvary! We may also know it sympathetically. Kepler, the great astronomer, exclaimed one day: "I have been thinking over again the earliest thoughts of God"; and surely every time we sacrifice ourselves for others, or carry another's cross, in the glow of a warm heart, we are feeling a tiny pulsation of His love.

Do we sufficiently praise God for His lovingkindness and truth? We are keen to pray, to cry out for help, but do we stop to enumerate the mercies and to render praise for them? "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psa 107:8, Psa 107:15, Psa 107:21, Psa 107:31). How often I have awoke tired and out-of-heart, the harp on the willows, the soul like a lark beaten down by an east wind; and when the usual Bible-study has failed to grip, or prayer has seemed cold and mechanical, the disconsolate heart has started to praise, to give thanks for mercies received, and to adore the majesty and glory of God. As one has thus continued, the soul has thawed, the spirit has found wings, the horizon has cleared, and the angel-song has broken in with its Hallelujah! We are thus transported into the Divine Presence-Chamber; we have obtained joy and gladness, our night is gone, and "sorrow and sighing have fled away."

**PRAYER: Father, Thou hast loved us; Thou dost love us; Thou wilt love us for evermore. Thy love passes knowledge. It is like a warm, sunlit ocean enwrapping the tiny islet of my life. I bathe in it, but can never reach its limits. I thank Thee for its depths and lengths. AMEN.**

## August 5: NUMBERING OUR DAYS

**"Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." Psa 90:12-14.**

THIS PSALM was evidently composed towards the end of the wilderness wanderings, and records some of the sadness which must have oppressed the heart of Moses, as he saw the companions of his earlier life being buried amid the sand-dunes.

He compares the centuries to the memory of yesterday, which fades so quickly from our mind; to a watch spent by the camp fires; to the short rush of the mountain flood; to the dream which flashes for a moment before the mental eye; to the short-lived grass, which flourishes in the morning and is cut down at night. Each emblem full of significant beauty, and evidently culled from the incidents of the long march through these vast solitudes. It was as though the heart of this mighty servant of God turned from the fleeting ages and the decay of human life, to God, whose Being is timeless, unchangeable, and eternal. Here is transition and change; there is the Rock of Ages, with its everlasting stability and glory.

Let us number our days against the eternal ages of God's Being; against the age of the mountain and the universe; against the rise and fall of great nations. It is when we realize how short life is that we set ourselves in good earnest to redeem the time, to buy up each golden opportunity.

The heart of wisdom will show itself in giving God a just proportion of our time. Every day it is wise to set apart time for the reading of His Word, for prayer and holy fellowship; in every week it is wise to reserve a seventh part for His holy service. We may learn deep lessons from the amount of time that the Hebrews gave to their religious institutions. "Prayer and provender hinder no man," says the old proverb. It is specially wise to make God to be our Guide, that He may show us how to use this precious thing called life. Apart from Him all our desire to use our time aright will be in vain, but when the soul walks in fellowship with God every action tells, every day adds something to the growing power and influence of existence. Nothing is little, nothing trivial, nothing unworthy, if your soul holds fellowship with God. Then will come satisfaction and gladness, and the work of our life will be established by the Divine Hand.

**PRAYER: O Faithful Lord, teach us to trust Thee for life and death, and to take Thee for our All in All. AMEN.**

## August 6: THE COMING KINGDOM

**"Yet I have set My King upon my holy hill of Zion. Happy are all they that take refuge in Him."**

**-- Psa 2:6-12 (R.V. marg.).**

THE BASIS of this magnificent Psalm is the Reign of Christ. No king of David's line realized its sublime ideal, but the mind of the singer is borne forward to the reign of the Messiah, to whom it is applied in the New Testament (Act 13:33; Heb 1:5).

There are four strophes of three verses each. In Psa 2:1-3, the nations are depicted as assembling and planning revolt. A widespread conspiracy has arisen against the authority of Jehovah, exercised through the Messiah.

In Psa 2:4-6, by a bold metaphor, the absurdity of man's rebellion is made clear; but the laughter of the Most High is not inconsistent with the tears and sorrow of Jesus, as He beheld Jerusalem, and wept over it. The strenuous resistance by man can never alter the Divine purpose. The hammer cannot break the anvil!

In Psa 2:7-9, the Anointed King discloses His relationship to the Almighty, and claims universal dominion. The Divine Sonship was an eternal fact, but it was openly certified by the Resurrection (Rom 1:3-4). As He left our earth to ascend to His Throne, our Saviour claimed that all power was given to Him in heaven and on earth. His rule is founded, not only on the glory of His essential Deity, but on His suffering and sacrifice. "He became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross... therefore God also hath highly exalted Him."

In Psa 2:10-12, the Psalmist urges the rebellious to accept the findings of common sense. It is madness to dream of thwarting God's purpose. Kiss the hand of Jesus outstretched to you in love and forgiveness, and take shelter in Him from the wrath to come on the disobedient (Rev 6:16-17).

**PRAYER: Behold, Thou commandest that I should love Thee with all my heart and soul, with all my mind and strength: Grant Thou me what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt. AMEN.**

## August 7: THE BIBLE AS A DICTAPHONE

**"When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek."-- Psa 27:8.**

THE BIBLE reminds us of a dictaphone. God has spoken into it, and as we read its pages, they transfer His living words to us. There are many things in the Bible, which, at first, we may not be able to understand, because, as the heaven is higher than the earth, so are God's thoughts higher than ours. Mr. Spurgeon used to say that when he ate fish, he did not attempt to swallow the bones, but put them aside on his plate! So when there is something beyond your understanding, put it aside, and go on to enjoy that which is easy of spiritual mastication and digestion.

The Bible contains ten thousand promises. It is God's book of signed cheques. When you have found a promise which meets your need, do not ask God to keep His promise, as though He were unwilling to do so, and needed to be pressed and importuned. Present it humbly in the name of the Lord Jesus! Be sure that, so far as you know, you are fulfilling any conditions that may be attached; then look up into the face of your Heavenly Father, and tell Him that you are reckoning on Him to do as He has said. It is for Him to choose the time and manner of His answer; but wait quietly, be patient, and you will find that not a moment too soon, and not a moment too late, God's response will be given. "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him" (Psa 62:5); "Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things that were told her from the Lord" (Luk 1:45).

Whether for the body, the soul, or spirit, there is no guide like Holy Scripture, but never read it without first looking up to its Author and Inspirer, asking that He will illuminate the page and make you wise unto salvation. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

**PRAYER: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I Thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies. AMEN.**

## August 8: LIFE IS WORTH WHILE

**"Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."--- Col 3:17.**

NOTHING IS more disastrous than aimless drift! God endows each soul for a distinct purpose. Probably in every life there is a lucid moment, when we take our bearings, and there flashes before us a glimpse of the life-work for which we were sent forth. We stand on the mount of vision, like Moses, and see the pattern of the tabernacle, which we are presently to erect. God has a purpose for the soul, as well as for the body, all the members of which were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them (Psa 139:16). Is it conceivable that He should spend thought and care on the body, and have no purpose for the soul? But if that be so, He will reveal His will; He will gradually unfold our life-purpose step by step. Let us go steadily forward reckoning on our Almighty Friend to supply the needed grace, wisdom, and strength.

When the captain of a cricket team leaves the pavilion for the wicket, the crowds watching his every movement, he is probably saying to himself: "I am going to score my hundred, to say the least!" As he faces the man yonder, who may be one of the swiftest and cleverest bowlers in the county, it is as though he says: "You may do your best, but I am going to win out!" It is in such a spirit that each of us should step out to face life: "I am going to win through, by God's grace."

Never forget that God is working with you. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." He will not desert the work of His own hands! In my long life of eighty-one years, I have experienced more fluctuations and difficulties than fall to many, but I unhesitatingly assert that where God gives the plan He stands Surety for the result! Dare to trust Him and keep in step with Him as He leads you onward.

**PRAYER: O God, the God of all Goodness and all Grace, Who art worthy of a greater love than we can either give or understand; fill my heart with such love towards Thee as may cast out all sloth and fear, that nothing may seem too hard for me to do or to suffer in obedience to Thee. AMEN.**



## **August 9: THE PILGRIM OF THE UNSEEN**

**"The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee .... And I will bless thee, and make thy name great." Gen 12:1-2.**

THE CLUE to the beginning of this chapter is given in various parts of the Bible. From Act 7:2-5, we learn that the Call to Abram to go forth, which originally came in Ur of the Chaldees, was repeated in Haran, after his father's death. Probably Terah delayed his son's obedience. Let us help our children to realize God's call, even though we be left lonely on the other side of the river.

In Heb 11:8, we realize that this Pilgrim of the Eternal stepped out on the wide expanse of the desert, only learning his course day by day; he was like a Columbus, sailing month after month through unknown seas, never knowing at what moment the dim outline of the shore might appear.

In Rom. 4. we are told that these promises were vouchsafed to him while still a Gentile. Thirty years passed before he became the founder of the Hebrew nation. The Apostle therefore argues that these promises are guaranteed to all his children, not only to those under the Law, but also to us who have his faith (Gen 12:16). Turn back, my reader, to that ancient page, and realize that it includes thee in its amplitude of blessing! Gal 3:8, Gal 3:9, Gal 3:14, assures us that all these blessings are included in the one gift of the Holy Spirit. The blessing of Abraham is for all of us who are in Christ Jesus, as we walk in the steps of this great Pilgrimage. A vast gulf of Time lies between us and the far-away days of Abraham's life; but recent discoveries have shown that Ur of the Chaldees enjoyed a high State of civilisation a thousand years before his exodus. His experiences and ours meet across the gulf of ages!

**PRAYER: O God, may the great cloud of witnesses, who have trodden the Pilgrim Way before us, be to us an example of a godly life, so that we may run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus. AMEN.**

## August 10: THE SUPREME CHOICE

**"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere.., as the garden of the Lord. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan... and they separated themselves the one from the other."-- Gen 13:10-11.**

THE SOUL that has taken God as its portion can afford to be generous!

As the older man, Abraham might well have claimed the priority of choice, leaving the rest to Lot; but he was quite content to waive his rights, since his Almighty Friend had fixed the place which he was destined to receive for his inheritance. Let Lot choose as he might, he could not obtain an inch of the land which God had included in His Divine purpose for His faithful and obedient servant. "Wait on tee Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land."

It was, therefore, in quiet confidence that the Patriarch stood beside his kinsman and watched him, as he lifted up his eyes to take and claim the fullest advantage of his uncle's unexpected offer. When Lot chose for himself the Plain of Sodom, which was well watered everywhere and lovely as Paradise itself, Abraham acquiesced in the choice with unperturbed equanimity. Looking into the face of God, he said in effect: "Thou art the portion of mine inheritance; Thou maintainest my lot; the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

Then--the separation having taken place--God called His servant back to the hill-top, and gave him all the land in a covenant for ever, and bade him pass whither he wished over the soil, for it was all his own (Gen 13:14-17).

Let God choose for you! Especially, at the beginning of life, as you stand on its threshold and view the land, dare to follow the promptings of " His inner Voice. His Call still comes ringing down the ages: "Follow Me."  
"Lo, I am with you all the days!"

**PRAYER: O God, I believe that Thou knowest just what is best for me. I can ask nothing better than this, to be Thy care, not my own. Through Thy grace, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. AMEN.**

## August 11: GOD'S IN HIS HEAVEN

**"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork."-- Psa 19:1.**

GOD IN the Heavens (Psa 19:1-6). The Psalmist knew little or nothing of modern astronomical discovery, but his words can still be applied to the glorious march of suns and mighty planets toward their distant goal. Voices still speak to us from the vault of heaven, though no sound breaks on our listening ears.

The sun was not a god, but a creation. He can only pursue his destined path and retire at night to the tent of darkness. This is evidently metaphor, but is not the orb of natural day a true emblem of the Sun of Righteousness, the Bridegroom of human souls, who once tabernacled amongst men? Let us warm our cold hearts in the heat of His life-giving rays.

God in the Scriptures (Psa 19:7-11). In the first division of the Psalm He is known as EL; here as Jehovah. Nature may reveal His strength, but the Bible tells of His redeeming love. Notice that each sentence contains a name for Scripture, an attribute, and one of its effects. Perfect--no flaw; sure, reliable; right, a straight road; pure, as sunlight; clean, making impurity loathsome; true, as a reflection of God; righteous, revealing His demands, and the way in which we may become righteous. Ponder its effects! The Old Testament, as David knew it, was only a fragment of Divine revelation. What would he have said of our Bible! Alas, for those who instead of enjoying its fragrance are content with merely dissecting it.

God in the heart (Psa 19:12-14). He reads its innermost secrets, and His Blessed Spirit longs to cleanse us from secret faults, and to hold us back from presumptuous sin.

**PRAYER: Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. AMEN.**

## August 12: GOD'S EVEN-HANDED GOODNESS

**"Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" -- Mat 20:7-15.**

YES, GOD is good! Our eye may be evil; the thick atmosphere of this earth-sphere makes our vision oblique, but our warped judgment avails nothing against the verdict of the Universe. So good is God that He will give full wages to those who would have been glad to fill their lives with helpful service, if only they had had the opportunity. All day long they may have waited for their chance, but the sun slowly crept from horizon to horizon, and no opportunity was offered to them. Or, if finally their chance came, it lasted but for one brief hour! Nevertheless, their reward will be counted not only for the service of the hour, but for what they would have done if they had been called in the early dawn.

This is not after the manner of men, but it is God's way of dealing with men. He gives of "His own" to those labourers who have been faithful to their opportunity, whether the hours were longer or shorter. "His own!" His own Love! His own Joy! His completed Satisfaction!

But all who are admitted to that inner circle must be prepared to drink of His cup, and to be baptized with His baptism (Mat 20:23). Those who shall sit on the right and left of His throne in glory are the ones who have stooped lowest in bond-slave service. The followers of Jesus are not to be ministered to, but must be willing to follow their Lord even to the giving up of their lives. They must resemble their Master who, when He was on His way to redeem mankind, was willing to stand still and relieve the misery of two blind beggars (Mat 20:34).

**PRAYER: Oh, Son of God, pour Thy gentleness into our hearts, Thy compassionate touch into our fingers, Thy tender sensitiveness to human need and sorrow into our cold and callous human senses. AMEN.**

## August 13: THE DAY OF RECKONING

**"After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them."-- Mat 25:19.**

THE THREE parables recorded in this chapter are of vast importance.

Each contains a striking contrast, and in each there is the possibility of supreme joy or the inevitable sentence of deprivation and rejection. In each there is instruction and encouragement on the one side, and on the other we are solemnly warned.

In the parable of the Virgins, we learn the necessity of having adequate reserves; of possessing more than the lamp of profession, however chaste and rare; and of procuring without money or price the oil of the gracious indwelling and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That religion is entirely valueless which is not due to His kindling and maintenance.

In the parable of the Talents, we learn that the gravest peril in Christian experience attaches not to the highly, or even the moderately-gifted people, but to the poorest and humblest one-talented folk! Because they can do so little they often do nothing. The one talent, which it is death to hide, is lodged with them as utterly useless. But with God the smallest things count! He does not crush the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. He chooses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

In the Judgment of the Nations, we learn that the ultimate test of Christianity is not in profession or doctrine, but our care for those with whom our Lord has always identified Himself--the outcast and helpless, the sick and sorrowful, the stranger and prisoner. Love to God has for its reverse Love to man. Even now the nations are standing before His judgment-bar, and some are being cast on the rubbish heap before our eyes.

**PRAYER: Let me not be put to shame, O my Lord, but make me to love and fear Thee with all my heart. Help me to be faithful in the very little things, and to hear Thy well-done at the last. AMEN.**

## **August 14: THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM**

**"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." -- Mat 16:19.**

ALTHOUGH THESE words were spoken to the Apostle Peter, there is a profound sense in which every true disciple of Christ can exercise the power of locking and unlocking the door of Faith, Hope, or Love to another soul. You may be aware of some one who is carrying a heavy burden, is oppressed with some over-mastering dread, or is fighting some besetting sin. You try to gain that person's confidence, endeavour to find some way of escape, promise some much-needed assistance, speak words of cheer and encouragement, and in this way unlock the door of the dark cell in which he has been incarcerated. The manifestation of your ready sympathy and help have emancipated him. Is not this a true use of the power of the keys of the Kingdom?

Or it may be some one who is suspected of evil things which are untrue. You listen carefully to the story, and endeavour to put the matter right; you take steps to bring out the purity and sincerity of motives before those who have misunderstood and misjudged.

Perhaps it is a boy or girl whose life is clouded by some entanglement from which it seems impossible to get free. By your friendly counsel and experience you are enabled to unlock the prison door and emancipate this young soul.

Look out for these opportunities of Christian service, for the life which is hidden with Christ in constant fellowship has an extraordinary power in setting free lives which are bound in fetters of iron. Above all, we can point the fettered soul to Christ our Lord.

### **PRAYER**

**He breaks the power of cancelled sin,**

**He sets the prisoner free;**

**His Blood can make the foulest clean,**

**His Blood avails for me. AMEN.**

## August 15: WHAT IS RELIGION?

**"And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?" -- Mat 15:16.**

IN THIS chapter our Lord teaches that true Religion is certainly not a matter of eating and drinking or outward ceremonial. It is the intention of the soul, the continual drawing from Christ the life-power needed for our work and ministry to others. It may be illustrated by the experience of the diver, who explores the ocean-bed, but draws upon the breeze that sweeps the ocean-surface.

Our Lord did not under-estimate the outward observance of the forms of religion; He set us a definite example by His attendance at the Synagogue and the Temple services, by nights spent in prayer, by constant reference to Holy Scripture--but these were only the outward and natural expression of His unbroken fellowship with His Father. Human love does not consist merely in outward expression, but in the hidden purpose of the heart, and yet, if there be no outward expression the spring will dry up!

Perhaps the two greatest definitions of pure religion are these--the first from the Old Testament: "Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God." And the second from the New Testament: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." But to fulfil each of these we need the aid of the Holy Spirit.

To be truly religious is within the reach and scope of us all; but we must avail ourselves of what Jesus Christ has done to bring us to God. In Him there is absolute forgiveness for all the past, and infinite help and grace for the future. He is willing to be our Surety, Friend, and Helper. Through Him we may become partakers of the Divine Nature, and escape the corruption which is in the world through lust.

**PRAYER: Give unto me, gracious Lord, the pilgrim spirit that I may be in the world and not of it. Give me Thy grace to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. May I ever walk worthy of the heavenly calling. AMEN.**

## August 16: THE SOUL'S VENTURE

**"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark."**

**-- Gen 8:1.**

IT IS very helpful to ponder these words, for it gives the assurance that not only will God take care of cattle, and birds, and every living thing, as we learn from Deu 25:4; Psa 104:11-22; Jon 4:11; Mat 6:26; but that He will much more think of and care for us, His children! Like Noah and his family, you may be shut away from all human help. It may be as impossible for you, as it was for him, to extricate yourself. You may have the responsibility of providing for those in need. Your supplies may be continually decreasing before your eyes, but God remembers you amid the waste of waters, and beneath those dark cloud-covered skies. As a mother cannot forget her sucking child, so God cannot forget you.

The ark grounded on the lower slopes of Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, and the waters decreased so rapidly, that, as Noah had reaped the harvest before the Flood came, he left the ark in time to sow for the succeeding year. Dare to trust the times and seasons of your life to your Heavenly Father's care. He only waits to be trusted, and then life becomes woven into a beautiful mosaic of His loving forethought and care.

Be sure to guard against raven-like thoughts, which are restless and evil-feeding; seek to cultivate meek, gentle, pure, and dove-like thoughts that cull the olive-leaves of promise from the Word of God. Presently He who said "Come in," will say "Go forth!" Then build your altar of self-sacrifice and self-giving.

**PRAYER: Heavenly Father, strengthen me that I may look, not on the dark cloud, but for Thy rainbow; not on what Thou hast taken or withheld, but on what Thou hast left; not on the stormy waters, but on the face of Jesus. AMEN.**



## August 17: THE PROVIDENCE OF THE TRIFLE

**"O Lord, the God of my Master Abraham, send me, I pray Thee, good speed this day., thereby shall I know that Thou hast shewed kindness to my master."--- Gen 24:12-14.**

FROM THIS beautiful incident we can learn much of God's guidance of the soul. Evidently Eliezer, the faithful servant, had absorbed something of his master's faith and method; so that, as we read this artless narrative, we can realize some of the principles on which the entire camp was conducted. Four times he speaks of "the God of my master Abraham." When he had been taken into Abraham's confidence, he entered into the plan with as much zeal and interest as if it were his own private concern. Would that we were equally intent on our Heavenly Master's business, and that those who are our dependants and associates were equally impressed by the reverence and prayerfulness of our lives!

Each step was taken in fellowship with God; but that did not prevent him from exercising his own careful management of the successive steps for ascertaining the disposition of this young girl who was so suddenly summoned from the obscurity of Haran to become a link in the Messianic chain. Eliezer's faith in the Providence of a trifle is most interesting and instructive. He held his peace as the girl drew the water; then, in the assurance of faith that his prayer for guidance had been answered, without further hesitation he placed the bracelets on her arms. Be on the outlook to see God's hand in everything!

Count up the number of times in which this worthy man contrives to bring in the two words, "My master!" We may learn from him how to speak of our Saviour, whenever we get the opportunity--"Rabboni, which being interpreted, is, My Master!"

When asking for good speed to be sent to himself, he alleged as his plea that it would be showing kindness to his master Abraham. So when we ask great things from God, we can plead in the Name of Jesus and be sure that He will show kindness to us for His sake (Joh 15:16). This old-world story is a beautiful lesson for those who call Jesus Master and Lord.

**PRAYER: Send me, O Lord, I humbly ask, good speed this day. May I know when to speak and when to be silent; when to act or refrain from action. In all details of daily life may I faithfully serve Thee, my Master and Friend. AMEN.**

## August 18: RELIGION AND RIDICULE

**"When Sanballat . . . and Tobiah . . . and Geshem . . . heard it, they laughed us to scorn and despised us, and said what is this thing that ye do? Then answered I them, The God of Heaven, He will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build. So built we the wall; for the people had a mind to work." -- Neh 2:19-20; Neh 4:6.**

THE BUILDING of the ruined walls of Jerusalem, as the record shows, was undertaken in troublous times. Some of the petty rulers in the neighbourhood, exulted in the low estate of the city, because it left room for the exercise of their authority, and they viewed these renewed activities with chagrin. They plotted for the overthrow of the work, and had to be met by incessant watchfulness.

If you are endeavouring to do God's work in the world, to clear away the rubbish of sin, to rebuild the walls that are broken down, and to seek the welfare of God's people, do not be surprised if your steps are beset with scorn and ridicule, by the secret or open malice of Sanballat and Tobiah. For some it is easier to face bitter opposition than to bear mockery and ridicule. If only these scornful and carping tongues were silenced, we could make more headway, but such persecution drives us back on God, makes Him a living fact in life, and opens the door to the manifestation of the saving health of His right hand (Neh 4:4, Neh 4:9, Neh 4:20). How good it is, at such times, to cease from man, and to remember the Lord who is the great and terrible One (Neh 1:5; Isa 51:12-13). Be quite sure that you are on His plan, doing His work in His way; then go forward in His Name, and he will make all the mountains a way.

The lesson for us all is the threefold aspect of the Christian life. There is our up-look into God's face--"I prayed to the God of Heaven." We must never forget to pray, for more things are wrought by prayer than we realize. Second, there is our up-look against our foes and the foes of God--"we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night." We must watch as well as pray. Lastly, there is our dawn-look towards the work entrusted to us, at which we must labour with unslacking devotion, in fellowship with our Lord (1Co 3:9). Let each inquire: "Am I inside the city amongst its builders, or outside amongst its detractors and foes?"

**PRAYER: O God, teach us day by day what Thou wouldst have us to do, and give us grace and power to fulfil the same. May we never from love of ease, decline the path which Thou pointest out, nor, for fear of shame, turn way from it. AMEN.**

## August 19: THE VALUE OF FRIENDSHIP

**"Two are better than one., for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow."-- Ecc 4:9-10.**

WE CANNOT have many inner friends, but sad is the life that has not its other self. The friendship of David and Jonathan, of Damon and Pythias, has passed into the current talk of the world. It is especially good for the Christian disciple to travel to heaven with a comrade, Hopeful with Christian, and Mercy with Christiana.

A friend is invaluable if we stumble or fall on the path of life. "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth."

"Brethren," says the Apostle, "if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." Let us watch for each other's souls; if any is falling away from the truth, or into some insidious trap, let us lift him up. Let us exercise the brotherly solicitude that Barnabas did for Paul.

Friendship ought to make our spirits glow. "How can one be warm alone?" Of course, in a spiritual sense there are divine sources of caloric. The love of Christ kindleth to vehement heat. But it is certainly easier to keep up the temperature when we have a kindred heart beside us. Perhaps this was one reason why our Lord sent forth His disciples by two and two (Mk 6:7).

Without companionship material things cannot satisfy. The ties of nature, friendship, and religious communion give a zest to a poor man's life, which the miser with all his wealth forfeits. It is all-important, not only in ordinary life, but pre-eminently in the pilgrimage of the spirit, to have fellowship with some kindred soul.

In temptation a true friend makes us more able to withstand the devil. It is a real help in the hour of trial to have a friend who will appropriate the words of our Lord, saying: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." There is no fellowship like that of Jesus, our Faithful Friend, who lifts us when we fall, chafes us when chilled with cold, and succours us against the Tempter. Does He not make the third in the threefold cord--"Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mat 18:20).

**PRAYER: We pray for our companions in life's pilgrimage. Help us to hearten them with our courage, cheer them with our love, and bear their burdens so far as we may. For ourselves may we find in Jesus the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. AMEN.**

## August 20: DIGGING WELLS

**"He removed from thence, and digged another well... and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." -- Gen 26:22.**

ISAAC SEEMS to be rather a disappointing character, and we sometimes wonder that he should be classed with Abraham, the father of all who believe; and Jacob, who prevailed with the Angel and became a Prince! He was passive, quiet, given to thoughtful meditation (Gen 24:63). God's purpose includes all sorts and types of men, and Isaac dug wells of which men have drunk for thousands of years.

He was constantly pursued by enmity, jealousy, and strife, as the names of his wells attest. But each time he consistently retired from the conflict, and yielded his well to dig another. Finally, his enemies had to confess that he was mightier than they (Gen 26:16). Best of all, God appeared to him "the same night," and promised that He would be with Him and bless him.

Let us learn to sublimate our resistance to evil, and lift it from the physical to the moral and spiritual level. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty" (Pro 16:32). Go on digging wells--the wells of Family Prayer, of love for the Bible, of holy exercises and habits! You will find spring water (Gen 26:19). That is God's side of your life. You are called to dig wells, but God's Holy Spirit will rise up in your soul, and in the souls of others, like the geyser-springs in Arctic regions (Joh 4:14). Let us present to Him ourselves---our souls and bodies, to be the wells and channels, along and through which His eternal God-Head and Power, arising from the fathomless depths of His own nature, may reach this thirsty and parched world!

God is Love: Love is Self-Giving: but God depends on the co-operation of us, the well-diggers, to make outlets for the outflow of His Love and Goodness.

**PRAYER: Most Merciful Father, give us grace that we may never be drawn to do anything that may dishonour Thy Name; but may persevere in all good purposes, and in Thy holy service, unto the end of our life. AMEN.**

## August 21: THE CLUE TO LIFE'S MAZE

**"There was a man whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil....Satan said, Doth Job fear God for nought?"-- Joh 1:1-9.**

THIS MARVELLOUS poem, one of the profoundest studies in the Bible, deals with the great problem of evil. At some time or other in our lives, we come back to study it, as a clue to life's maze, the expression of our heart's out-cry, and the solution of life's mystery in the Will and Love of God.

From first to last, the supreme questions in this wonderful piece of literature are: "Can God make man love Him for Himself alone and apart from His gifts?" and "Why is Evil permitted, and what part does it play in the nurture of the soul of man?" These questions are always with us. In fact, the Book of Job may be said to be a compendium of the existence and history of our race.

The first chapter teems with helpful lessons. The anxiety of parents for their children should expend itself in ceaseless intercession on their behalf. The great Adversary of souls is always on the watch, considering our conduct so as to accuse us before God, not only for overt sins, but for unworthy motives. We cannot forget our Lord's words to Peter: "Satan asked to have you, but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luk 22:31, R.V.). Christ never underestimated the power of Satan, the "prince of this world," but He is our great Intercessor (Heb 4:14-16; Heb 7:25).

In circumstances of prosperity and happiness, we must never forget that it is God who plants a hedge about us, blesses our work and increases our substance. It is good to realize that whatever be the malignity of our foes, there is always the Divine restraint, and we are not tempted beyond what we are able to bear. It is not enough to endure our griefs sullenly or stoically. It should be our aim not only to hold fast to our integrity, but to trust God. There is a clue to the mystery of human life, which comes to the man who differentiates between the Real and the Unreal; the Seen and the Unseen.

**PRAYER: My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.  
AMEN.**

## August 22: GOD'S DELAYS ARE NOT DENIALS

**"Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for Him."**

**-- Isa 30:18.**

THERE ARE many illustrations of this Divine method in the Word of God. The Angel at the Jabbok-ford waited till Jacob could wrestle no more, being completely exhausted by his struggles; and then, as his helpless antagonist clung to Him for support, He whispered in his ear His mystic name and blessed him there.

Our Lord waited till the Syrophenician woman fell helpless at His feet, with the cry: "Lord, help me!" that He might grant to her the boon she craved for her child. From His throne in Heaven He pursued the same method, waiting to be gracious till the apostles and others in the upper room had reached such a condition of helplessness that He could give them their Pentecost; waiting till the little group of disciples had exhausted every other expedient, that He might release to them Peter from his prison; waiting till Paul had renounced all creative energy, that He might take him strong in His almighty power, while He whispered: "My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Too often we have misinterpreted God's dealings with us. When He has tarried beyond the Jordan, in spite of our entreaties that He should hasten to save Lazarus, we have concluded that He was strangely neglectful. But, in fact, He was waiting, at no small cost to His heart, till we had come to the end of ourselves, and the way was clear for Him to work a more astounding miracle than we had dared to hope.

God's delays are not denials; they are not neglectful nor unkind. He is waiting with watchful eye and intent for the precise moment to strike, when He can give a blessing which will be without alloy, and will flood all after life with blessings so royal, so plenteous, so divine, that eternity will be too short to utter all our praise.

**PRAYER: We ask from the treasures of Thy grace for a more childlike trust, a more faithful spirit, a more loyal will. May our obedience open to us all spiritual knowledge. AMEN.**

## August 23: THE EQUILIBRIUM OF LIFE

**"And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."**

**-- Act 2:46-47 (R.V.).**

IN EVERY life there should be the worship of the Temple and the service of the Home. Do we realize that God is directing and locating our life-plan? The Home is His arrangement for us equally with the Temple, and the daily meal may be an ordinance as the Lord's Supper. Do you take your food "with gladness and singleness of heart," or do you grumble over your meals? Do you perform common tasks gladly and gratefully? This is only possible when we come to understand that the greatness of life consists, not so much in doing so-called great things, but in doing small things greatly! "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

We have been compared to the weavers of the Gobelin tapestry, who may have to work a number of apparently drab and sombre, uninteresting and common things into the pattern on the wrong side of the woof. It is only when the texture is completed that they can see and admire the design that is worthy of the palace of the king! So it is with your life and mine: "We work, we suffer, and see neither the end nor the fruit. But God sees it, and when He releases us from our task, He will disclose to our wondering gaze what He, the great Artist, has woven out of those toils that now seem so sterile."

There was great joy in the lives of these early Christians. They parted with their worldly possessions, but they were filled with gladness, and probably this gave them favour with the people. There was true helpfulness among them. Each went shares with the rest. The give and take of life is so important. We are all glad enough to take what we can get, but how about to give! We like to be waited on, but how about the serving? Yet true gladness and happiness depends, not on being ministered to, but in ministry. When we have learnt the secret of praising God in and for everything; when we refuse to shut ourselves up in our own griefs, but compel our dull spirits to enter into the joys of those around, then we shall have no difficulty in living joyfully and gladly.

**PRAYER: O Lord, renew our spirits and draw our hearts unto Thyself that our work may not be to us a burden, but a delight; and give us such a mighty love to Thee as may sweeten all our obedience. AMEN.**

## August 24: GOD'S RESPONSE TO OUR CRY

**"He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer thee."**

**-- Isa 30:19.**

THIS IS one of the most exquisite chapters in Isaiah's prophecy. Notice its profound teaching. God permitted the Assyrian to come because of the deep lessons it would teach the king and people that certain abuses must be checked. The siege would surely come, and they would know something of the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, but the Almighty would be near, speaking to His people not only by their sorrows, but by His servants, and by the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. Thus we have an example of the persuasive providence of God. His grace surrounds and keeps His people, but if we wilfully sin, we break the cordon of His protection. When we repent and turn back again to cry to Him, the gentle hand of the Lord will bind up our wounds and soothe our spirits; songs break forth in the night, and our heart is filled with gladness.

The latter part of this chapter (Isa 30:27-33) describes the coming of Sennacherib's troops. They are terrible, and yet there was a sense in which they were called into existence with God: "Behold the Name of the Lord cometh from afar." The advance is compared to a terrific thunderstorm, and then to the rush of a mountain torrent. In Isa 30:28 the final check is given, as when a wild animal is lassoed and brought to its knees. Presently the enemy would vanish silently, and once more the stricken land would be ploughed up for sowing the seed, streams would flow as before, and joyful harvests reaped.

How tender and gracious are these words to those in pain and distress. Be of good cheer, God has not forgotten to be gracious to you! Take to heart these sweet promises, and ask that the counterpart of these blessings may be granted in your experience.

**PRAYER: Our Father, we realize that Thou dost need to discipline us when we cease from walking in Thy faith and fear! Make us more sensitive and responsive to the voice of the Holy Spirit, saying: this is the way, walk ye in it; that with gladness of heart we may once more return to Thee. AMEN**



## August 25: GOD OUR DEFENCE AND DELIVERER

**"As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it, and passing over He will preserve it."-- Isa 31:5.**

WE HAVE in this chapter three beautiful synonyms for God. He is Wise (Isa 31:1-3). The politicians of that time were boasting of their wisdom-in having secured the Egyptian alliance, but their cleverness and strategy were not destined to be of any help to them. Why did they not consult the Holy One of Israel, and seek the help of the Almighty? Was His wisdom only in heavenly and religious matters? Had He not the power to infuse men like Isaiah with a wisdom for earthly and human politics? Surely the boast of wisdom was mockery in the leaders of the people, at that dread hour of Jerusalem's history, when they turned away from the Light and Glory of the Shekinah to seek human counsellors and worldly stratagems. Not only in religious matters, but in the daily ordering of our human life, "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting!" (Jam 1:5.)

He is as a Lion (Isa 31:4). The lion is more than a match for the groups of shepherds who endeavour to stand against him with their crooks. He is not afraid of their shouting and views them with contempt. Does not this mean that the mighty presence and power of God would shelter the soul that trusts Him? All the nations might assail the city in vain whilst the Lion of the Tribe of Judah stood as sentry! If you are fearful of heart, and dread the attack of man, flee to God for refuge and defence (Psa 46:1).

He is as a mother-bird and her nest (Isa 31:5). How wonderful these words are! How near God comes to each one of us! We are reminded of our Saviour who longed to gather Jerusalem under His wings! Amid all the fret and worry and anxiety of your life, dare to believe in a Love that will not let you go!

**PRAYER: O God our Father, how can we thank Thee for Thy Holy Word, and the many methods by which Thou wouldst gain our confidence and love! Give us grace to return unto our rest beneath the shadow of Thy wings! AMEN.**

## August 26: WALKING WITH JESUS

**"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."-- Col 2:6.**

THE DAILY walk of the Christian soul is so absolutely important because it is our witness to the world. Our character, as exemplified in our behaviour, is the world's only Bible and sermon (2Co 3:2-3). Let us learn to walk so as to please God, and to bless mankind. To walk is at first a matter of considering every little step, but afterwards it becomes the habit of the soul (Col 1:10).

We received Jesus into our hearts by faith. He entered through the open door and became our Lord and Master. In the same manner we must live always and everywhere, receiving from Him, by faith, grace upon grace, and allowing what He works in to work out in all manner of godliness, tenderness, and Christlikeness. This practice of looking to Jesus for grace in every circumstance of life tends to become more and more habitual--and this is what the Apostle means when he says, "Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith."

But such a walk is only possible when we have learned to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal 5:24). The flesh is the assertion of our self-life, whether in lesser or grosser forms, but whenever self intrudes it exercises a baleful influence on our behaviour and Conversation. Just as the iron of the steamer will deflect the needle of the compass, so the intrusion of our self-life will act as a drag upon our character and walk.

How can we crucify the flesh? Only by allowing the Holy Spirit to have supreme control. He makes the Cross every day dearer and more effective. He will conquer evil habits in us and for us, while we stand by as more than conquerors through His grace. If we will be led by Him, there will not only be deliverance from the self-life, but He will produce in us the fruit of holy living which will please God and refresh men.

**PRAYER: Let Thy Holy Spirit be continually with us, and may we feel the powerful effects of Thy Divine Grace constantly directing and supporting our steps. AMEN.**

## August 27: THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

"Serve the Lord with gladness: Come before His presence with singing."-- Ps 100:2.

"Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, the fruit of lips which make confession to His Name."-- Heb 13:15

THE HUNDREDTH Psalm is rightly entitled "A Psalm of Thanksgiving" (R.V.). The Psalmist calls for a "joyful noise," i.e. an audible expression of worship. Do not be content with a thankful heart, but express it! It is good to let God have "the fruit of our lips." As a bird will awaken the whole choir of a woodland glade, so the soul really aglow with loving adoration will spread its own contagion of song. How often Christian people hinder the progress of Christianity by their dullness, gloominess, and depression. His service is perfect freedom, and if we delight ourselves in the Lord, we should serve Him with gladness!

It is very important to maintain the habit of regular church-going because of its opportunity for worship (He 10:24-25). Let us "enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise!" By **meditation** and prayer let us ask that we may be accounted worthy to stand in His Presence, and offer praise and adoration to the Most High God (El Elyon, Sovereign Over All), mingled with the fragrance of our Saviour's Name (Rev 8:3-4).

"**The Lord is good!**" There are many mysteries, and much pain and sorrow in the world. We must dare to believe and affirm the **goodness** of God beneath all the distressing elements of modern life. With His goodness are combined His **mercy** and His **Truth**. Let men do their worst, "His truth endureth to all generations." It is an impregnable Rock, on which the waves of sin can make no sensible impression. What comfort there is in knowing that equally His mercy is everlasting. We need so much patience, forbearance, and longsuffering, that if God's mercy were anything less we should despair, but it is extended to every generation till Time shall be no more!

**PRAYER: Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits. AMEN. (Ps 103:4)**

## August 28: PROPOSALS AND DISPOSALS

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

MEN ARE often more eager to get God's help in temporalities than in spiritualities. The man in the crowd, who appealed to Christ, was more anxious that He should interpose on his behalf in a family dispute than to give him the life of the ages. But our Lord refused to be Judge and Arbitrator. His ministry went deeper to the springs of action, and He knew that in each brother there was the root of covetousness, which led the one to wrong the other. He struck at the sin which lay at the root of all such disputes about property.

Our Lord insisted that life does not consist in the abundance of things of which we may happen to be possessed. We say: "So and so is worth a million pounds!" Heaven estimates a man's worth by the courage, faith, purity, self-control, and love to God and man, which have grown up in the soul by the careful discipline of the years! Acceptance and rank in the Kingdom of God depends on character not on possessions.

How often man proposes and God disposes! We say, "We shall yet live for many years, and enjoy the fruit of our labours"; but God says: "To-night!" Listen to the Apostle James, speaking to those who said, "To-day or to-morrow we will go to this city or that, and spend a year there, and carry on a successful business! All the while you do not even know what will happen to-morrow. For your life is but a mist, which appears on the hill-side, but vanishes at the touch of dawn. Surely, we ought to say: If it is the Lord's will, we shall live, and do this or that" (Jam 4:13-17).

Many talk of seeing life who see only its most sordid and ugly side. If a man really wishes to see life, and know happy days, the secret is given in 1Pe 3:10-19. This is the message of the Gospel, "That God has given us the Life of the ages, and that this life is in Christ Jesus. He who has the Son has the Life" (Joh 3:36; 1Jo 5:12).

**PRAYER: Lord, I know not what is before me, but Thou knowest. Choose Thou my portion for me. Lead me by Thine own hand; and keep me close to Thee, day by day, and night by night. AMEN.**

## August 29: OUR DUTY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR

**"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." -- Mat 22:39; Lev 19:9-18.**

OUR NEIGHBOUR is the next person who needs our help, man, woman, or child. It is enough that your help is needed, and that you are near! As we read this paragraph from the old Jewish law we see who are our neighbours, and what we are to do for them.

We must give them a chance to live (Mat 22:9-10). We have no right to waste anything that may be of service to others, or to use for ourselves all our possessions. There must always be a margin left which we can give to those who are in need. Well would it be if each reader of these fines would set apart a certain proportion of produce and increase, as well as money, for the cause of Christ and His poor.

We must not withhold payments which are due (Mat 22:13). How many tradesmen and others have been ruined by the long delays of customers in settling their accounts. If only all Christian people would insist on paying cash, especially to small shopkeepers, what a blessed revolution would ensue. It is neither honest nor just to withhold payment from those to whom it is due.

We must be very gentle and considerate to those who suffer from any infirmity (Mat 22:14). God's Love is always endeavouring to make up in some way to those who are handicapped. The blind Milton sings of Paradise, and Helen Keller has been enabled to triumph over insuperable obstacles. We are to become ears to the deaf and eyes to the blind.

We must not hesitate to rebuke sin (Mat 22:17). This needs deep humility, tact, the removal of the beam from one's own eye, the love of Christ for souls; but how much might be done if we would stay the little rift within the lute!

We must not bear a grudge (Mat 22:18). All, this is hard! To feel hurt, to take offence, to be cold and stiff, to stand at a distance, how many of us fail here! But we must act and speak to others in the power of God's Love, as we would do if there were no grudge within.

The lawyer asked Christ: "Who is my neighbour?" suggesting that some one should neighbour him. Our Lord reversed his inquiry, saying in effect: "Whom will you neighbour?" If you go through life seeking people to neighbour you, life will be full of disappointment; but blessed is he who seeks to neighbour others; he shall not lack those who, in the hour of trial, will neighbour him.

**PRAYER: O Lord, soften our hard and steely hearts, warm our icy and frozen hearts, that we may wish well to one another, and may be the true disciples of Jesus Christ. AMEN.**

## August 30: VICTORY OVER DEATH

**"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."-- Isa 25:8.**

**"O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"-- 1Co 15:55.**

**"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."-- Rev 7:17.**

IN THIS marvellous chapter, Isaiah sings a Song of Hope, as he sees the return of the Hebrew people from captivity, and the overthrow of their foes. The Apostle Paul takes up this thought in 1 Cor. 15. He shows that death is the penalty of sin, and it is by the demands of the law that sin is stirred to activity. But Christ has satisfied and met the claims of the law, and gives power by which we are enabled to obey it; therefore the strength of sin is broken, and the sting of death is gone.

The Christian need not dread to die. For him there is no uncertainty about the future. There is no fear of what may come after death, for the condemnation of the law has been met and borne. We may apostrophise death in these exultant words. The viper has been deprived of its fangs! the prison-house cannot hold its inmates! Bunyan describes Satan as exhorting Captain Sepulchre to be sure to hold Christ, but the injunction was useless. No bars or bolts, no seal or sentry would suffice.

Notice that we are to "Put on" incorruption and immortality (1Co 15:53-54). It is as though the new body will be put on over the old, and as this takes place, all the elements of the old body will be swallowed up and absorbed. when the Holy Spirit completes his work in our souls, there will be no trace of the old rags left in the shining robes in which we shall be arrayed as we go forth to meet the welcome of our Lord. Death to those who believe in Christ is now only a Home-going; the falling asleep to open the eyes in the City of God; the loosening of the anchor, to float down stream in the full tide. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

**PRAYER: O God, whensoever Thy ways in nature or in the soul are hard to be understood, then may our quiet confidence, our patient trust, our loving faith in Thee be great, and as children knowing that they are loved, cared for, guarded, kept, may we with a quiet mind at all times put our trust in the unseen God. So may we face life without fear, and death without fainting. AMEN.**

## **August 31: THE GROWTH OF THE SOUL**

**"My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me."-- Psa 63:8.**

THERE ARE three notes in this Psalm which betoken the stages of the soul's growth: "My soul thirsteth for Thee"; "my soul shall be satisfied"; "my soul followeth hard after Thee." We may be passing through a wilderness of spiritual drought, the dark night of the soul, the seasons of dryness and depression which are apt to befall. In some cases, as when Elijah asked to die, or when John sent his despairing question to Christ from his prison, it is the result of physical or mental overstrain. But at such times, let us never hesitate still to speak of God as "my God." Nothing can sever you from His everlasting Love. You may not have the glad consciousness of it, but you must never surrender your belief in it. Go on blessing Him, as long as you live, and lift up your hands in prayer.

But we can never be satisfied with what we have attained. God is ever moving forward! Let us follow hard after Him.

**PRAYER: Living or dying, Lord, I would be Thine. Draw me day by day nearer to Thyself, until I be wholly filled with Thy love, and fitted to behold Thee face to face. AMEN.**

## September 1: SELF-WATCH!

**"Keep (guard) thy heart above all that thou guardest: For out of it are the issues of life."-- Pr 4:23**

SAID PETER to our Lord, "Spare Thyself this death of which Thou speakest--this bitter suffering and anguish shall never be Thine!"

These words are continually spoken still, and many are the voices that bid us spare ourselves--the voices of our friends who love us; the voices of prudence and worldly wisdom; the voices of our own wayward hearts.

Do not spare your judgment of yourself. Never permit yourself to do things which you would be the first to condemn in others. Never suppose that there are reasons for you to do a wrong, which, under no circumstances would you tolerate in your neighbor.

Do not spare yourself in confessing your sins and mistakes. Confession is one of the tests of nobility. Not a few are willing to confess to God, who never attempt to confess to men. It is a serious question whether that sorrow for sin is genuine and deep enough which does not lead the offender to ask his fellow-man for pardon, even as he asks his God. Nothing could be clearer than Christ's words, that whenever we remember that our brother has aught against us, we are to leave our gift at the altar, and go first to seek reconciliation with him, before we offer our sacrifice to God.

The supreme test of goodness is not in the greater but in the smaller incidents of our character and practice; not what we are when standing in the searchlight of public scrutiny, but when we reach the firelight flicker of our homes; not what we are when some clarion-call rings through the air, summoning us to fight for life and liberty, but our attitude when we are called to sentry-duty in the grey morning, when the watch-fire is burning low. It is impossible to be our best at the supreme moment if character is corroded and eaten into by dally inconsistency, unfaithfulness, and besetting sin.

You cannot really help people without expending yourself. The only work that tells must cost you something. Gold, silver, and precious stones can never be built into the new Jerusalem unless you are willing to part with them from the stores of your own life.

**PRAYER: Most loving Father, may love fill and rule my heart. For then there will spring up and be cherished between Thee and me a likeness of character, and union of will, so that I may choose and refuse what Thou dost. AMEN.**



## September 2: WATCHING FOR SOULS

**"Christ in you, the hope of glory; Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom."**

**-- Col 1:27-28.**

**"Watch, and remember, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."-- Acts 20:31**

THE MINISTRY of warning should be a recognized part of the work of the Church and of each individual member. The foghorn warns the ship from the deadly rocks; the red light warns the train of imminent danger; in the days of the plague people were warned from infected areas: how much more should we, who know the wrath of God which abides on those who refuse Christ, raise our voice in warning. We should do it deliberately, earnestly, patiently, and in reliance upon the Spirit of God to make our words, however much they may be resented, the means of arresting the wicked from the error of his ways, & those who are taking their first steps in forbidden paths from pursuing them (Eze 33:7-9).

How wonderful it is that God does not commission angels to carry His warnings and appeals; instead of this, the work that angels might love to do is entrusted to men. It is at our peril that we neglect our opportunities in this direction. If the signalman is placed at a point where many lines of rail cross or diverge, and he sleeps at his post, or neglects his duty, he may be tried for manslaughter; and if we know of people in the immediate circle of our influence who are in danger of ruining their physical, moral, and spiritual well-being, we are bound to raise a warning voice. If we saw, upon the upper reaches of a river, a boat full of people hastening towards the rapids unheeding the danger, surely we might be guilty of being an accessory in their destruction, if we failed to do something to warn them of their peril.

Accompanying our words of warning, there should be the clear reiteration of the Love of God. He does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. It is not enough to try and prevent men from taking the wrong path, we must urge and allure them to take the pleasant ways of righteousness and peace. All are included in the love of God. Even sin cannot turn away His love, which is like that described in the parable of the Prodigal Son, or 1Co 13:1-13.

**PRAYER: O God, we have left undone many things that we ought to have done. Hands have been reached out for help which we have not given; hearts have turned to us for sympathy which we have not blessed. Forgive us, we pray Thee, and at whatever cost may we follow Christ in His redemptive purpose. AMEN.**

### September 3: THE FOLLY OF BEING UNPREPARED

**"While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." -- Mt 25:10.**

THE FOOLISH virgins made five great mistakes.

(1) They made no provision for the continuance of their light. It is not enough merely to have the lamp; it must be lit and maintained, because there is something for the fire to feed on. How many there are who are on fire and in earnest during the first stage of their religious life, but they have made no provision for maintaining the flame which has been kindled by the grace of God. They have lamps, but have neglected to take oil. The oil stands for fellowship with the Lord Jesus, for the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the daily study of the Bible, for the kindling communion of worship with fellow-Christians.

(2) They slept. There was a difference between the sleep of the foolish and that of the wise. There are two kinds of sleep. The one arises from a sense of security and trust. Every preparation has been made; all has been done that could be done, and we resign ourselves deliberately to the care of God. So Peter slept in the prison, before the angel came to deliver him. But there is another kind of sleep. The sleep of the sentry, when the foe is stealing up the pass; of the pilot, when the ship is making for the serried teeth of the rocks; of the nurse, when the patient's life is quivering in the balance. These foolish ones had no right to sleep, when they were so utterly unready to meet the Bridegroom. We must not take things for granted, or say "Peace, peace, when there is no peace!"

(3) They thought they could procure oil from the wise. But the appeal was in vain. Each must bear his own burden of responsibility in the sight of God. We may "buy without money and without price," but each must appropriate the living grace and power of Jesus for himself.

(4) They thought they could get in; "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But the door was irrevocably closed! "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

(5) They thought that the Bridegroom would recognize them. But He said: "I know you not." Let each ask himself: "Does Jesus know me? Will he recognize me at last?" The only way to be sure, is to kneel at the foot of His Cross until He seals us with the Holy Spirit, and says: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine."

**PRAYER: O Lord, we pray that our lives may be lamps to which Thou shalt supply oil. Help us to be burning and shining lights for this dark world. AMEN.**

## September 4: WHEAT AND TARES

**"But while he slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."-- Mt 13:25.**

HOW CLEARLY our Lord taught the personality of Satan! In His explanation of this parable, He said distinctly, "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." He knew that in every heart--in the Church as well as in the world--the great enemy of God's Kingdom, and of human happiness, is always at work, sowing tares. The seed may be very small, but in a single night irreparable injury may be wrought.

Notice that we become as the seed we receive--those who receive the wheat-seed become wheat; those who receive the tare-seed become tares. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." How careful we should be over the books we read, the companionship and friendship that we form, the recreations that we take part in. Such are some of the processes by which our characters are being made. If we are thoughtless and careless, we expose ourselves to the reception of tare-seed, which germinates into weeds and rubbish. Of course, if our necessary duties take us into scenes where evil is rife, we may claim the keeping power of Christ, and hide ourselves in Him. As the doctor or nurse will saturate themselves with disinfectant when called to a house where plague or fever is incurred, so the Holy Spirit, in whom we may bathe our souls, will be as the antiseptic, and deliver us from the microbes of temptation (Gal 5:16-17).

There is not much difference, it is said, between wheat and tares, in the earlier stages of growth; it is only when the harvest comes that the distinction is dearly defined. So in the Church and the world, there are many counterfeits, people who seem to be good and true, but they are not what they seem, and in the day of reckoning they will be rooted up and cast forth as rubbish. The two classes that will be rejected at last are "All that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity" (Mt 13:41, R.V.). It may be that you are not amongst those that do iniquity, in any of its glaring forms, but are you causing others to stumble by your inconsistent behaviour or worldliness? Let each of us carefully examine ourselves, and open our hearts to receive from the hand of the Lord Jesus the incorruptible seed which He waits to implant by His Word.

**PRAYER: Give us a pure judgment and a true understanding of Thy Word, O Lord, that we may not be deceived and carried away by any error; but grant that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. AMEN.**

## September 5: SHINING LIGHTS

**"That ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."-- Php 2:15-16 (R.V.).**

THE SPIRIT of man, says the wise man, is the candle of the Lord (Pr 20:27). By nature we are like so many unlit lamps and candles. As the wick is adapted for the flame, but stands dark and cold until it is ignited, so we are unable to shed forth any light until our nature is kindled from the Eternal Nature of Him who "is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all." Has the candle of your life been lit by contact with Christ, the Sun of Righteousness?

Our Lord says: "Let your light shine before men." He shows how absurd it is to light a lamp, and then obscure its rays by placing it under a bushel. The purpose of ignition is frustrated if the light is covered. Ah! how many of us place bushels on the light of our testimony for God--the bushel of uncharitable speech! Of ill-temper! Of a discontented and querulous spirit! These as well as more conspicuous failings will prevent us from shining forth as light in a dark world. It is not for us to ignite the flame or supply the oil. All we have to do is to keep our lamps clean and bright, to guard against anything that may obstruct the out-shining of the Love and Life of God through the soul. If we are careful to see that anything which might hinder the effect of our testimony and mar our influence is put away, Christ will see to it that our light shall effect the full measure of His purpose.

In contrast to the bushel is the stand or candlestick. The Master of the House may place you in a very small dark corner, and on a very humble stand, but some day, as He passes by, you shall light His footsteps as He goes forth to seek and save that which is lost. What is your stand?--your place in society, your position in the home, your situation in some business house, factory, or school--wherever it be, it doesn't matter, so long as your light is shining forth, steady and clear, warning and directing men and women in the path of life.

**PRAYER: O Christ, may the fire of Thy Divine Love burn up our bushels; help us to shine forth as lights in this dark world. AMEN.**

## September 6: THE CURE FOR SHORT SIGHT

**"If these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle or unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near."-- 2Pe 1:8-9 (R.V.).**

THE CHRISTIAN graces which we have to supply present themselves to the Apostle's mind as the golden links of a chain or necklace, which begins with Faith, and ends with Love, so that Faith and Love clasp in the centre (2Pe 1:5-7).

The idea of lavish expenditure is here associated with the word translated "Supply" (2Pe 1:5-11). Among the ancient customs of Greece, was the expression of goodwill to society on the part of leading citizens by the provision of public entertainments, in honour of benefactors, or generals returning victorious from war. Rich men craved permission to bear the cost, as in modern days men will endow hospitals and libraries.

So the Apostle says, See to it that you spare no cost in the glorious provision of "these things"; spare neither thought nor pains, if only these Christian graces are in you and abound. Then, for you also, there will be a profuse expenditure of Heavenly welcome. You will not enter the Heavenly City unnoticed and alone. A choral and processional greeting will be yours. You will not enter the port like some water-logged vessel, but with colours flying and all sails set! (2Pe 1:11.)

Notice the order of these graces. Each is in the other like those Chinese boxes, each of which contains a number of smaller ones which fit inside. Opening the one marked Faith, manly courage should be discovered; opening courage, knowledge should present itself; from knowledge, we should come on self-control; within self-control should be patience; inside patience we have towards men should be godliness towards God; then we find brotherly love; and finally we come on Love!

The Apostle says that those who lack "these things" are short-sighted--they see only the things of this world, not the real things of eternity. The tenth verse warns us that the careful culture of these things in the heart will prevent stumbling in the outward life (Jude 1:20-24). So many people wait to feel good before they act goodness. The Divine method is to step out on the path of obedience to Christ, believing that He will supply the needed grace.

**PRAYER: Accept, O Most Merciful Father, of this renewed dedication which we make of ourselves, our bodies, souls, and spirits unto Thee. Grant that we may be like Jesus, pure and undefiled, meek and gentle, peaceable, patient, contented and thankful. AMEN.**

## September 7: STAND AT THE BOW!

**"Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal."-- Php 3:13-14**

ALWAYS STAND at the bow! Leave the stern with its backward look and make for the bow. To spend time in sad review of past sins and failures is not to put them to the best account. Confess them, and believe that for Christ's dear sake they are absolutely forgiven! Failure often provides the material for success, and our dead selves may become the stepping-stones to better things. Did not our Lord say to His disciples: "Sleep on now and take your rest"--the past is irreparable, but immediately added: "Arise, let us be going!"--the future is available. Therefore, leave the stern with its backward look, and make for the bow.

True, the sky before us may be dark with storm-clouds. The weather-prophets say that the world is shedding its old sanctions without replacing them with better ones; that seven civilizations have already passed, and we are to see the death of the eighth. Be it so, but they forget that God holds the stormy waters in the hollow of His hand; that Jesus walked the threatening billows to succour His friends. They forget that when the earth was without form and void, the Spirit of God brooded in the chaos and darkness, creating the heavens and earth. They cannot detect the voice of the Creator saying, "Behold, I make all things new!" Out of chaos is born the cosmos. Each age ends in travail, out of which a new age is born.

Look out to the vast circle of the horizon, and prepare for the new lands to be explored, the wonderful discoveries that await us, the great missions hidden in the future which are waiting to be fulfilled. Never doubt that the clouds will break. Never dream that wrong will triumph. Never count yourself God-forsaken or forgotten. The Master may seem to be asleep on His pillow, oblivious and uncaring, but His hand is on the helm. He guides your course. He rules the waves and they obey Him.

**PRAYER: 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 in the haven of their desire. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness! AMEN.**

## September 8: THE DEVOTIONAL USE OF SCRIPTURE

**"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." -- Psa 119:105.**

IN EACH verse of Ps. 119, the Psalmist mentions the Scriptures, with one exception, and the constant quotation of the Old Testament by our Lord and His Apostles yields abundant evidence of loving and reverent fellowship with the holy men of past ages, who wrote and spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit. It is specially remarkable that the Lord Jesus in His Temptation, in all His teaching, and in the agony of the Cross bore constant witness to the unique authority of the Word of God spoken through the Old Testament saints.

We may know God, says the Psalmist, through a threefold revelation. Though they have no audible voice or language, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament of space, studded with myriads of stars, shows His handiwork. Though speechless, their words witness for Him to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The closing stanza of this great Psalm unfolds God's handiwork in the construction and direction of our moral nature. Between these golden clasps the Psalmist extols the Scriptures under ten striking similitudes, and that disposition must be indeed extraordinary that does not come within the scope of one of them. The soul that needs restoring; the simple who would become wise; the sad heart who would rejoice; the eyes that would be enlightened; the soul that longs for the gold of truth; the desire for sincerity and reality; the search for understanding and righteousness--all such needs and many more are met from a devout reading of Holy Scripture.

All great ministries which have remained fresh and fragrant through long courses of years have proved the wealth of inexhaustible teaching and inspiration which lies hidden in the Bible. Let us each one resolve to soak ourselves in the Scripture before turning to prayer, as water poured in to moisten the sucker will help to draw water up.

**PRAYER: Teach us, O Blessed Spirit of Inspiration, so to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest Thy words, that we may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, and be enabled to lead others into a true understanding of and love for its hidden treasures. AMEN.**

## September 9: BENEDICITE!

**"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly .... But his delight is in the law of the Lord."-- Ps 1:1-2.**

THE THEME of this first Psalm is the Blessedness of keeping "the Law," which is the transcript, of the mind and will of God. David was never weary in its praise-- How I love Thy law; it is my meditation all the day!"

What we all need to-day is a passionate love for the will and commands of God. Docility to learn, and faith to fulfil are the two qualities by which our heart may be kept pure and childlike, and through which we shall come to understand the Bible, nature, and human life. Well may the Psalter, which enshrines obedience to God's Law, begin with Blessed and end with Hallelujah!

Here are, first, the negations of the loyal and true soul. If we refuse to walk in the counsel of the wicked, we shall never sit in the seat of the scornful. But these negatives are chiefly valuable as contributing to the positive, as the wall protects the plant that grows behind it. Our religious life must be fed from hidden springs, as the rootlets of the tree creep under the soil to drink of the stream (Psa 1:3). Such a life becomes fruitful and beautiful. It is also prosperous, because it abides in the will of God. It cannot be really injured by evil, and in the deepest sense it realizes the purpose for which God commissioned it.

Any life which refuses reverence and obedience to God's will must resemble the rootless, fruitless, and lifeless chaff, which is scattered by the winnowing wind.

Which type does your life resemble? Are you the deeply-rooted tree, yielding beauty and fruit and shelter to many, or is your life being frittered away like the worthless chaff?

**PRAYER: Open to me, I pray Thee, O Spirit of Truth, the treasures of Thy Word, that my soul may be continually enriched, and that I may abound in every good word and work, to Thy honour and glory. AMEN.**



## September 10: THE ATTRACTION OF CHRIST'S HUMANITY

**"Great multitudes followed Him."-- Mt 19:2.**

**"All men seek for Thee!"-- Mk 1:37.**

A SENTENCE which was once uttered in a Roman theatre, and welcomed with thunderous plaudits was abundantly true of the Son of Man--"I am a Man, and nothing that touches humanity is foreign to Me." This was true during His earthly life, and it is true always, and of this we have ample illustration in the Gospel story.

Our Lord blesses man and wife as they live in holy wedlock; He takes their children in His arms; inspires young men and women with the loftiest ideals; warns men against the evil use of wealth and power; promises to those who are willing to pass through this life, denying themselves the joys of home-life, parents, and children for His sake, that they shall be infinitely compensated.

There is no phase of human life which Jesus is not willing to share, and through all relationships and circumstances He waits to breathe the fragrance of perfect love. Is not that a boon which we all need, but which so many miss? Why do so many marriages turn out ill? Is it not often because each seeks rather to get than to give, to be ministered to rather than to minister? If each were inspired by a love that made the other the centre of thought and care and tenderness, the wedding-bells would ring on through all the passing years.

Christ's love is so attractive that when He is rightly presented boys and girls will turn to Him as flowers turn to the sun. Alas! that by our evil example and failure we so often forbid them. How poor is our appreciation and response to His love! We are willing to keep the commandments of a moral and respectable life because it suits and pleases us, but when it comes to following Him and renouncing wealth, position, and self-pleasing for His dear sake, we turn back! We admire His ideals and teaching, but so often go sorrowfully away because we really love ourselves more than we love Him!

**PRAYER:**

**Higher than the highest heavens,**

**Deeper than the deepest sea.**

**Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered;**

**Grant me now my soul's petition,**

**None of self, and all of Thee. AMEN.**

## September 11: THE DIVIDING LINE

**"Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?"-- Mt 25:44.**

WE CAN no longer serve our Lord as they did in the days of His flesh, when they ministered to Him of their substance. But He has left behind His representatives, and whatever we do for them He takes as to Himself. Therefore we are debtors to all men; to every unit of the human family we must pay back a proportion of our infinite debt to the Son of Man from. Mt 1:14).

The dividing line hereafter will not be a Credal one--not "How much do you believe?" Nor even a Devotional one--"How much did you pray?" But a Practical one--"What did you do?" The Apostle James shows that our faith is evidenced by our works (Jam 2:14-20). It is not enough to say "Lord, Lord!" We must show the same spirit as our Master in love for our fellows, or we shall be rejected at the last.

The Lord's brethren are spread widely through the world. Whenever we meet the hungry and thirsty, the stranger and the homeless, the sick or imprisoned soul, we encounter one whom He calls "Brother" or "Sister," and to help any such is to send a thrill of joy through the soul of our Redeemer. We must have the quick eyes of love to penetrate the many disguises that our Lord assumes. It is said that when St. Francis was riding across a plain, he saw a leper standing by the roadside, asking for alms. Dismounting, he not only gave to him, but kissed him on the cheek. As he was riding away, he looked back, and saw Christ Himself standing where the beggar had been, and he knew that he had been permitted to kiss his Lord.

Notice that the saints do not generally realize that they have done anything directly for Christ: "Lord, when saw we Thee?" The beauty of goodness is its modesty and unobtrusiveness, as the charm of childhood is its unconsciousness. Notice, also, that in Christ's eyes, it is a crime not to do. Moses says that it is wrong to do wrong; Jesus that it is wrong not to do fight. Some were cast away, as men reject weeds, not because they had violated the Ten Commandments, but because they failed to fulfil the Law of Love.

Let us consecrate ourselves to the service of men, women, and children for the sake of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

**PRAYER: Help us, dear Lord, to minister to the needs of others, to care for the poor and needy, the destitute and outcast, to show our love to Thee by our sympathy and help to the least of Thy brethren. AMEN.**

## September 12: SECRET IDOLS

**"Jesus beholding him loved him, and said: One thing thou lackest .. sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor .... Come, take up thy cross, and follow Me. And he was sad, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."-- Mk 10:21-22.**

HOW MANY there are who know in their hearts what their duty is, but fail to do it because they are hiding some forbidden thing; they refuse to launch on the current sweeping past them, because they are secretly anchored to a sandbank; they go from one teacher to another, with an appearance of earnest inquiry after eternal life, which never comes to anything, because they are unwilling to renounce their secret idol.

In the case of this young man, it was the love of money. "He had great possessions." There is no harm in money. It is one of God's gifts to men, but it is hard to own it without coming to look upon it as one's own, instead of realizing that we are stewards only. It was for this reason that our Lord proposed this supreme test. St. Francis of Assisi thought that these words applied universally, and founded the Order of the Franciscans, pledged to poverty. But it seems more in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel to believe that it was a special test put to this seeker after truth, to reveal him to himself.

The law of love is not negative only but positive. The most essential condition for each of us is to be willing, like another young man who was living at that time, "to count all things but loss, in order to win Christ and to be found in Him" (Php 3:8). If you would follow Christ and are prepared for Love's sake to surrender all, you will probably be entrusted with manifold more, because Christ knows that He can make you His almoner with no fear of gold dust adhering to your palm in its transmission.

Let us guard against the idol of money or possessions. Riches which open most doors, will not furnish a pass-key to Heaven. Let us see to it that we always act as stewards of God's property, but this is not possible unless we are living perpetually in fellowship with our Master, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich, and who says to us also, "Come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

**PRAYER: The dearest idol I have known, Whate'er that idol be, Help me to tear it from Thy throne, And worship only Thee. AMEN**

## September 13: FISHERS OF MEN

**"Jesus saw two brethren, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."-- Mt 4:18-19.**

IT IS thus that Christ adapts Himself to the understanding and the heart. He caught these fishermen with bait suited to them. Notice the undoubting certainty of His promise to make these two brothers fishers of men, casting their drag-net not into the waters of the sea of Galilee, but into the great ocean of humanity. How impossible it would have been to convince Peter then that within four years he would make the great haul of three thousand souls (Acts 2:41). He, we never know what awaits us when we leave all to follow in obedience to the Master's Call!

"Follow Me!" Our Lord is always making this challenge (Jn 21:19-22). It means bearing the cross, but we must be willing to follow Christ until, like Him, we fall into the ground and die--die to our own ambitions, our love of power and influence, our own strength and gifts, that we may make way for God to work through us. We must learn not to obtrude ourselves, but to lie hidden. The first, the second, and the third condition of successful fishing is to be hidden from sight. The best line and bait for catching men are those where the human element is out of sight, and our one aim is to serve Christ's purpose, and to glorify Him.

There must be a leaving of our nets and boats, and even those who are nearest and dearest (Mt 4:20-21. 23). It must have been something of a wrench for these brothers to leave their nets and fishing to follow Christ. But the attraction of His Personality prevailed. There is no difficulty in persuading men to surrender the lower and inferior article, if you can unfold to them the immense value of the Pearl of great price. Then they will gladly sell all that they have to buy it.

### **PRAYER:**

**Jesus calls us: by Thy mercies,**

**Saviour, make us hear Thy call.**

**Give our hearts to Thine obedience,**

**Serve and love Thee best of all. AMEN.**

## September 14: LOVE'S COMPULSION

**"Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."-- Lk 14:23.**

WE CAN never estimate the yearning love of God for the souls of men. He sees us absorbed with farming and industry; business and pleasure; with our homes and family-life, and knows that these will all pass away, as a dream before the first touch of eternity. With intense passion He desires that we shall be really satisfied with abiding joys.

The Feast that He spreads is abundant and ready (Isa 25:6; Isa 55:1-2). A banquet is a happy-making time. As the guests sit together, there is the brilliant flow of conversation, the sparkle of laughter, the enjoyment of the good things provided, the interchange of friendship and fellowship. Everything that a feast stands for God is waiting to give us. "He gives us richly all things to enjoy." How strange it is that men, mocked by the Evil One, are cajoled into forfeiting their places at the banqueting table, which God has spread for them!

The Jewish people were first bidden, but they were too much occupied with material things to respond to the gracious invitation. The excuses offered were shallow and stupid; the real reason lies much deeper, in the disinclination of the soul to arouse itself to lay hold of the life which is life indeed! But God's purpose of Love cannot be defeated (Luk 13:28-30; Acts 13:45-48).

"Go out into the highways and hedges." Here is our work as His servants! The high-roads, along which the streams of commerce and pleasure, weddings and funerals, statesmen and business men, young men and women, housewives and children--are constantly passing! The hedgerows are the quiet sequestered lanes of the countryside, now covered with spring flowers, and again with autumn tints. The up-to-date motor car, or the slow-jogging country wagon are symbols of different modes of life, but the souls that use them alike need the message of Good News. Let us go forth and constrain them to come in that our Master's House may be filled!

**PRAYER: Blessed Lord, have mercy upon those who reject the invitation of Thy Love! Take from us all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word; and so fetch us home, dear Lord, to Thy flock, that we may be saved, and become one flock under the Great Shepherd of souls. AMEN.**

## September 15: WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY!

**"And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling, with his couch, into the midst before Jesus."-- Lk 5:19.**

WHAT A lovely human story this is! The crowds that gathered around our Lord, as He taught them, were so great that they filled not only the house where He was staying, with the Pharisees and learned men sitting by, but overflowed into a vast multitude in the fore-court. The Master may have stood on the balcony of a double-storied house, so as to be able to reach the crowds within and without.

As He was teaching, presently four men approached, carrying on a hammock slung between them a paralysed man. We are not told in so many words that they were young men, but their earnestness and ingenuity incline one to this idea. Perhaps they had been school-chums together, and as they grew up they may have entered upon evil ways-- "sown their wild oats" together, and one of their number may have been suffering from the consequences, for our Lord very distinctly set the pardon of his sins before the healing of his body. His four companions had probably heard Christ preach and had become His followers, for it was "seeing their faith" that He performed this miracle of salvation and healing. They agreed that by hook or by crook they would bring their friend into Christ's gracious presence. Unable to make their way through the throng, they were not daunted, but climbed up on to the roof, and the record says, "let him down through the tiling." Lowered by strong hands, with its four ropes, the hammock swung to the feet of the Master, and the expectant imploring eyes of this poor fellow could not make a more eloquent appeal for help than did the evident faith of his bearers.

The words with which our Lord saluted him were very tender and gracious: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee!" One of the sure means of physical health is to be assured of spiritual cleansing and forgiveness (Jas 5:14-16). Would that we were all equally anxious to bring our friends to Christ. If four would agree about a fifth, and never rest until he or she was brought to Jesus, what a revival would break out (Jn 4:28-30).

**PRAYER: Enlarge our souls with a Divine Love, that we may hope all things, endure all things, and become messengers of Thy healing mercy to the grievances and infirmities of men. AMEN.**

## September 16: LOOKING BACKWARD

**"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years."-- Dt 8:2.**

THE KEYNOTE of this chapter is "Remember!" Faith begins without certain evidence of an external and positive kind, but as life advances, one day after another adds the weight of its indisputable testimony. If we step out on the supposition that there is an eternal and spiritual world enwrapping us on all sides, we shall come to so clear and distinct an assurance of it, that it would be easier to doubt our existence. It is a good thing to look back and see the way; it is as certain as possible that the thread of Divine purpose is stringing together the many-coloured links of our life.

Notice the alliteration of Dt 8:15-16. "Who led thee"; "Who fed thee." Where God leads, He feeds! Look back on the past, and see that just as sure as the guidance of God, has been His care. There is no lack to those who allow Him to lead them in His own paths.

Look back on the past!--Its sins and backslidings--leave them behind for ever, and rise to newness of life. Its discipline--intended to chasten and strengthen us. Its trials--meant to reveal God's power to deliver in the hour of trouble that we may glorify Him. The terrible wilderness of loneliness, the fiery serpents of temptation, the manna which has never failed to fail, the water which the Rock has ever yielded. [Dt 8:17-18](#) teach us the lesson of humility. If, for some reason, you have been put into a position of wealth, honour, or influence, do not be proud, or think that your talents or abilities are to receive the praise. Thank God, and remember that it is He who gives the power to get wealth or honour, and He does it with a very definite purpose! Will you not pledge yourself to serve and worship Him? As you climb the crest of the hill, and begin to descend into the plain, not knowing what lies before, veiled in the mist, fear not, tighten your girdle, put your hand in His, and walk with Him to be His instrument to bless the world of men.

### **PRAYER:**

**Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet;**

**Lest we forget--lest we forget! AMEN.**

## September 17: THE ROYAL TRIUMPH

**"Behold Thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass. And the multitudes cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!"**

**-- Mt 21:5-9 fulfillment of Messianic prophecy = Zech 9:9.**

THE KING of Glory (Ps 24:7-10) approached the Holy City, seated not on the richly-draped war-horse, or followed by a glittering band of soldiers, but riding on a lowly donkey, and attended by a vast crowd of rustic pilgrims! He was welcomed, not by the Governor Pilate, or Caiaphas the High Priest, but by the children, the poorer folk, the blind and the lame whom He had healed. His lodging-place was the bare ground on the mount of Olives, and on one occasion, at least, He was hungry enough to seek fruit from the fig-leaf.

Yet there was a mystic power about Him before which the rabble, that filled the courts of the Temple with noise and filth, were driven forth, and which the chief priests and scribes had to acknowledge when they challenged Him as to His authority (Mt 21:23, cp Mt 7:28-29). His authority was that of Truth and Purity and God. It was a stray beam of His intrinsic Majesty. One who knew Him intimately said: "We beheld His glory, as of the Only-Begotten of the Father (Jn 1:18,3:16, 18, 1Jn 4:9), full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14, Jn 1:16, 2Co 12:9, 2Ti 2:1, Rev 22:21 the last verse in the Bible!).

Soul of man, to thee, also, thy King cometh! Let the gates of thy heart lift up their portals and admit Him! At first you may dread the revolution which His coming suggests, but be quick to give to Emmanuel, the Prince, all the keys of Mansoul. Enthroned Him in thine heart! He is the King and Heir, and He will make thee a joint-heir with Himself (Ro 8:17). Let the kingdom of your life become the kingdom of God (Jn 3:3) and of His Christ. Let every thought be brought into subjection to Him (2Cor 10:3-5). But if, on the other hand, you are content to build the house of life apart from Him (Mt 7:24-25 contrasted with Mt 7:26-27), be very sure that you are rejecting the one Chief Corner-stone (Ps 118:22, Isa 8:14-15, 28:16, Mt 21:42, Ac 4:11, Ep 2:20, 1Pe 2:6), which can alone give the necessary stability and beauty to its structure. To forfeit that will involve the absolute destruction of the edifice on which your whole life-energy may have been expended (Mt 7:27). (Some Scriptures added)

### **PRAYER:**

*But chiefest in our cleansed breast,*

*And make our secret soul to be*

*Hosanna in the highest! AMEN.*

*Eternal, bid Thy Spirit rest;*

*A temple pure and worthy Thee.*



## September 18: THE PRACTICE OF GOD'S PRESENCE

**"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."-- Ps 139:7, 9-10.**

THE STORY of the monk who constantly used this phrase is well known to most people. It was in the sixteenth century, one winter's day, as Brother Lawrence was walking in the forest, he found himself standing beneath a tree stripped of its foliage. The thought suddenly flashed on him that before very long that same tree would be covered with the leaves and glory of spring. "Then God must be here," said he to himself, and his whole being became awed and filled with the thought of God. That impression remained with him for the rest of his life, and he said that he was more deeply impressed with the actual sense of God's Presence in the kitchen, when he was preparing the food for his brother monks, than when he was kneeling before the Sacrament.

It is a blessed experience when the soul lives in this awareness of God; when we live, and move, and have our being in Him; whether we take the wings of the morning, and go with the sun in its passage to the western sea, or descend into the valley of the shadow of death. Let us read this Psalm (Ps 139:1-23) again, remembering that our Lord said, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age." (Mt 28:20)

The habit of practicing God's Presence is specially acquired when we accustom ourselves to draw on the Divine resources. We can recall two outstanding illustrations -- one given by Abraham's faithful servant, and the other by Nehemiah. In the one case, the traveler lifted up his heart to God for direction as to the choice of a wife for his master's son; and the other tells us that between the king's question as to the reason for his sadness, and his reply, he flashed a cry to God for a suitable answer, and it was given him. Why do not we, in every moment of uncertainty and perplexity, when the tempter draws near, instantly claim the equivalent of God's gracious help?

**PRAYER: Gracious Spirit, wilt Thou so enable us by Thy grace, that we may live in the fear of God all the day long; may the difficulties and temptations of our daily experience have the effect of leading us to take each step in the consciousness of the Presence of God. AMEN.**

## September 19: EARTH CRAMMED WITH HEAVEN

**"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."-- Isa 6:3.**

THE PROSPERITY of King Uzziah's reign seems to have weakened the national character; a deep-seated degeneracy was eating out its vitals. The unbroken summer of fifty years of prosperity and wealth had induced a moral decay which filled the heart of the prophet with dismay. It was in this depressed frame of mind that Isaiah entered the Temple, where the ceremonial of the priests and Levites, the offering of the sacrifice, the antiphonal chanting of the choirs, appear to have further moved his spirit.

The Vision (Is 6:1, 2, 3, 4). The limitation of the earthly fabric faded from his sight, and he became aware of the worship of the Seraphim, their faces veiled before the Divine Majesty, their persons clothed with humility, and their remaining wings prepared for immediate obedience. They sang antiphonally, inciting each other to lowlier reverence and more ecstatic praise.

What a lesson is present to ourselves! What a contrast is here to our lethargic worship and often tardy obedience! This great God is our Father through our Lord Jesus Christ but do we blend sufficient reverence with our childlike trust? Are we not too often glib in our prayers? Do we realize the need of pure hearts and clean hands as we kneel before Him?

The Call (Is 6:5-8). The humble confession of sin must be ours also. The Seraphim knew that there was only one answer. The altar coals had absorbed the blood of the sacrifice and were now glowing with white heat. They would serve for cleansing and inspiration, and when this was completed, there was nothing left to delay the call to service.

The Commission (Is 6:9-13). The prophet was not to be disappointed. He was to persist in his message, even though there were only gleams of light through the darkness.

**PRAYER: Great and Holy God, cleanse us in heart and speech and action, with the Blood shed on Calvary and the Fire of Thy Spirit, that we may be fitted for Thy Holy service. Cleanse, Call, and Commission us! AMEN.**

## September 20: OUR SHEET ANCHOR!

**"That we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things."-- Eph 4:14-15.**

**"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."-- 1Jn 3:3.**

OUR DESTINY is the highest possible--"We shall be like Him." For this we were created, redeemed, and sanctified, that we should be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the First Born among many brethren (Romans 8:29).

The Apostle says that those who have this Hope will purify themselves. A young friend of mine once asked me if I would try to see her lover, as my train stopped at a wayside station in a far-distant western State. It was a dark night when we arrived, and a hurried conversation took place on the steps of the great Pullman car. I found that amid the many temptations of a rancher's life, this young fellow was holding on to purity and truth. He said that he had very infrequent opportunities of attending any religious services, but that the letters which came from the old country had been his sheet anchor. I understood what he meant. He realized the strong drift of circumstances, but to be loved by a sweet pure girl, who made him the object of her incessant prayer, and to receive her inspiring letters, kept him from yielding to the evil which enveloped him as an atmosphere; the thought that before long he might claim her as his bride helped to purify and steady his life. So the expectation of being with, and like Christ, should be to us as a sheet-anchor, who bear His Name.

To see Christ face to face, to be with Him in unbroken fellowship, and to be like Him--this is the threefold destiny of every Christian soul. But how little can we imagine our future life! We strive to penetrate the dense veil of mist in vain--what the resurrection body will be like; what the converse with holy beings will amount to; what ministry may be assigned to us--we know not what we shall be, but "we know that we shall be like Him"--and it is enough! All that we have ever dreamed and hoped for will find its flower and fruitage in that glad summer time.

**PRAYER: O God, it is my earnest desire that I may not only live, but grow: grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May I grow in patience and fortitude of soul, in humility and zeal, in spirituality and a heavenly disposition of mind. AMEN.**

## September 21: GOD'S RESOURCES

**"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" --- Ge 18:14.**

**"He Lord God! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee."--Jer 32:17.**

THERE IS no doubt as to the identification of these three guests that suddenly appeared before the tent-door of Abraham. We are expressly told that "Jehovah appeared unto him." It was thus that our Lord anticipated His Incarnation. He came incognito, and "His delights were with the sons of men" (Pr 8:31). During His earthly life, He loved the homes of men, lodged with Peter and Zacchaeus, and in the dear home where Mary loved and Martha served. After His resurrection, He tarried with two of them in the village inn. So He will come to thy heart and mine. Though He is the High and lofty One, who inhabits Eternity, yet He will plead for admission to sup with us and we with Him (Rev 3:20). But He often comes disguised as a wayfaring man, hungry and athirst. Let us "run to meet Him," remembering Mt 25:40.

God is no man's debtor; He always pays for His lodging, hence His promise to Sarah! She laughed with incredulity, but is anything too hard for the Lord? That is one of God's unanswered questions. It has accosted the human conscience all down the ages. Let us look away from the difficulties imposed by nature, to Him who holds the oceans in the hollow of His Almighty hand. Then we can stand with Him on the mountainside, and plead for Sodom; then God Himself will draw us on to ask for more and yet more, till, when our faith gives out, He will do something far in advance of all that we asked or thought.

**PRAYER: Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, World without end. AMEN.**

## September 22: THE GRACE OF CHRISTIAN SPEECH

**"He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile."  
-- 1Pe 3:10.**

**"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." -- Col 4:6.**

THE IDEAL of Christian speech is given in the Apostle's words to the Colossians. Our speech should be always gracious; and grace stands for mercifulness, charity, the willingness to put the best constructions upon the words and actions of another. It is a great help in dealing with envy, jealousy, or unkind feeling to compel our lips to speak as Christ would have them. If you are jealous of another, the temptation is to say unkind or depreciating things, but if we live in the power of the Holy Spirit, He will enable us to check such words and replace them by those that suggest kindly consideration on the part of ourselves and others. Endeavour to say all the good that can be said, and none of the evil. It is remarkable that when we make the effort to speak kindly on behalf of those against whom we feel exasperated, the whole inward temper changes and takes on the tone of our voice.

There should be salt in our speech--purity, antiseptic, and sparkling like the Book of Proverbs. A playful wit, a bright repartee, are not inconsistent with the Apostle's standard, but whenever we mix in conversation with people, they should be aware of an element in us which makes it impossible for them to indulge in ill-natured gossip or coarse jokes.

We must continue in prayer that God would open to us doors of utterance, so that we may speak of the hidden beauty and glory of our Saviour. Sometimes, also, when we are hard pressed to know how to answer difficult questions, it is given to us in that same hour how we ought to speak, and we find that the Holy Spirit has found an utterance by our lips (Lk 12:12; 1Pe 3:15).

It is recorded of our Lord that during His trial He spoke not a word to Pilate or Herod, but as soon as He reached the Cross, He poured out His heart as their Intercessor, saying: "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do!" Speak more to God than to men who may be reviling and threatening you. It is blessed to realize that He is able to guard the door of our lips, for probably there is no part of our nature that stands more in need of His keeping power.

**PRAYER: Live in us, Blessed Lord, by Thy Holy Spirit, that our lives may be gospels of helpfulness and blessedness. May all foolish talking and covetousness, bitterness, wrath, and anger be put away from us, with all malice. AMEN.**

## September 23: THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

**"Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."-- Mk 6:31.**

THERE IS something in our blood which cries out at certain times for |rest and change. We may love our home, our work, and chance of doing our share in the toil of this work-a-day world, but when the summer comes we long to escape from the crowded city, the arduous toil, and pine for respite and rest. The love of Nature is a sacred heritage from the love of God, and it is His voice that calls to us: "Come, My children, Be glad with Me, breath the scented air which I have flavoured in its passage through clover-fields, gorse, and heather; rejoice in the woods and flowers, golden sunsets and purple mountains; the glory of the ocean and the sea-shore."

But we must be unselfish, if we would really enjoy our holiday. It is difficult to resist the temptation to obtain the best possible return for our money, and a little over, even at the expense of others. Always think of some one else-- the short Zacchaeus who cannot see over your shoulder! The child who loves to look out of the carriage window; the invalid who cannot stand the draught! the tired mother with the restless children! Look out for daily opportunities for showing the gentleness, sweetness, and unselfishness of the Lord Jesus.

Make time to be alone sometimes. It is a mistake always to be in the presence of another. The soul must be still and quiet. There are accents in the voice of God so deep and still, that the breathing of a companion may make them inaudible. But it is delightful to have a choice friend and companion with whom you can hold sweet fellowship, and "there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." He will draw near and walk with you, and as He talks with you by the way, your hearts will bum within you.

Remember those who are in poverty, in sickness, and in need, and amidst your own gladness and joy, send a portion unto them for whom nothing is prepared (Neh 8:10-12).

**PRAYER: What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?**

**I will praise, and bless, and give thee Thanks, all the days of my life. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power. AMEN.**

## September 24: BREAD WINNING!

**"He answered: It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone," "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."-- Mt 4:4; Mt 6:33.**

THE QUESTION which Satan put to our Lord, has to be settled in every life. Where does bread and bread-getting come in? Is it to be our first consideration or the last? According to Satan's way of looking at life, the bread question is paramount; according to Christ, secondary. Have you ever seriously considered which policy is yours, and what you would do if you had to choose in any supreme crisis? This temptation which came to our Lord occurs to us all; sooner or later, whether on the lone mountain-side, or in the crowded thoroughfares of life, the Devil comes to us with the suggestion that we must live, and in the last resort we must make or get our bread, leaving considerations of purity, truth, honour of God and Eternity to come in second best!

At every important turning-point in the history of the inner life these two methods are suggested: Satan says: "Make these stones into bread"; Christ says: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the word of God." We must choose between God and mammon. We are liable to attacks of hunger in various parts of our nature--for food, Satan bids us snatch it; for love, we are tempted to gratify it apart from God; for knowledge, we are apt to seek it in ways that are not illumined by the light of eternal truth.

God, who gave us these strong appetites and desires, knows that we need food. The body is more than meat, and if He gave the one, He is responsible for meeting the other. The blessed angels of His help are even now on their way to you, and have been commissioned to bring with them supplies for every need in your life. Do not take your life out of God's hands and act at the dictate of passion! Throw all the responsibility on Him; they cannot be ashamed that wait for Him. Remember the angel that prepared the meal for Elijah in the desert, and the breakfast that our Lord Himself prepared for His tired and hungry friends. If you will dare to trust and wait for Him even though there be but a step between you and death, He will supply all your need, according to His riches in glory. "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the laud, and verily thou shalt be fed."

**PRAYER: Give us grace to seek first Thy kingdom and its righteousness, in the sure and certain faith that all else shall be added unto us. AMEN.**

## September 25: THE FILE LEADER

**"Behold, I have given him for a Witness to the people; a Leader and Commander to the people." -- Isa 55:4.**

FOUR TIMES in the New Testament our Lord is called Leader or Prince.

Originally the word means the First of a file of men, and therefore their Captain or Commanding Officer (see Acts 3:15; Acts 5:31; Heb 2:10; Heb 12:2).

Christ leads from death into Life. Probably Joshua was the first to pass over the dried bed of the Jordan, as the priests stood by bearing the Ark of the Covenant; but this, at least is true, that our Saviour has preceded us through the waters of death, and will hold them back until each of the ransomed has passed "clean over" (Joshua 3:17).

Christ leads His followers into victory. When our Lord was exalted to the right hand of power, He opened up a path to be trodden throughout the ages by a company which no man can number. As He overcame, we may overcome; as He reigns over all principality and power, so we believe that He will bruise Satan under our feet, and make us more than conquerors.

Christ leads those who suffer to perfection. Though He was the Son of God, He learned obedience by the things that He suffered, and transformed suffering, showing that it was an emblem, a purifying furnace, a means of discipline, strength, and ennoblement. If we are thrust into the fiery furnace we shall find the Son of God walking at our side, and shall emerge without our bonds, and with no smell of fire upon us. Jesus is the Leader of a long procession of martyrs and sufferers. He leads through no darker rooms than He went through before; He knows exactly how much we can bear, and will not test us beyond our strength. He is with us "all the days," and will help us to learn obedience, faith, and hope, as we follow in His footsteps.

**PRAYER: O Lord, whose way is perfect, help us always to trust in Thy goodness: that walking with Thee and following Thee in all simplicity, we may possess quiet and contented minds; and may cast all our care on Thee, for Thou carest for us. AMEN.**



## September 26: BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength; put on thy beautiful garments."-- Isa 52:1.

"It is high time to awake out of sleep: let us cast off the works of darkness; let us put on the armour of light."

-- Ro 13:11-12.

**PUT ON strength.** We have not to purchase it, or generate it by prayers and resolutions, but simply to put it on. As we awake in the early morning hour, and have to pass out into the arena of life, which has so often witnessed failure and defeat, let us put on the strength and might of the living Christ. He waits to strengthen us with all power, according to the riches of His glory (Eph 3:16). Do not simply pray to be kept and helped, but put on the whole armour of God. "*The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?*" (Ps 27:1)

**Put on beautiful garments.** The emblem of the life of the Christian soul is that of the bridegroom or the bride (Rev19:7) decked with jewels; or a garden filled with beautiful flowers (Isa 61:10-11). We are not only to do right things, but we must do them beautifully; not only to speak the truth, but to speak it in love (Eph 4:15); not only to give to those who need our help, but to do it graciously and joyously. We must cultivate the bloom of the soul, which is made up of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, generosity (Col 3:12). The beauty of the Lord our God must be upon us.

We cannot weave these beautiful robes, or fashion them out of our own nature, but they are all prepared for us **in Christ**, who is "made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption." (1Cor 1:30) Let us wake up out of sleep (Eph 5:12), put off the works of darkness (Ro 13:13), and put on the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the armor of Light. (Ro 13:14)

**PRAYER: Lord of Power and Love! I come, trusting in Thine almighty strength, and Thine infinite goodness, to beg from Thee what is wanting in myself; even that grace which shall help me such to be, and such to do, as Thou wouldst have me. I will trust Thee, in Whom is everlasting strength. Be Thou my Helper, to carry me on beyond my own strength, and to make all that I think, and speak, and do, acceptable in Thy sight, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.**

## September 27: MODERN MIRACLES

**"Many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things John spake of this Man were true. And many believed on Him there."-- Jn 10:41-42.**

THE PEOPLE were inclined to disparage the life of John the Baptist because he performed no miracle. But surely his whole life was a miracle; from first to last it vibrated with Divine power. This is still the mistake of men. They allege that the age of miracles has passed. If they admit that such prodigies may possibly have happened once, they insist that the world has outgrown them, and that in its maturity mankind has put them away as childish things!

No miracles! But last summer God made the handfuls of grain, which the farmers cast on the fields, sufficient to feed all the populations of the world as easily as He made five barley loaves suffice for more than five thousand persons! No miracles! But last autumn He changed the dews of night and the showers of morning into the fruits that rejoice the heart of man, as once in Cana He turned the water drawn from the stone jars into the blushing wine! No miracles! but next spring, from tiny seeds and dead-looking bulbs, He will clothe the world with beauty and colour and perfume.

Many who will read these lines seem powerless to work miracles. For them the monotony of the commonplace, the grey sky of uneventful routine seems the predestined lot. But let all such take heart! The real greatness of life is within their reach, if they will only claim it by the grace of God. Do not try to do a great thing, or you may waste all your life waiting for the opportunity which may never come. But since little things are always claiming your attention, do them as they come from a great motive, for the glory of God and to do good to men. No such action, however trivial, goes without the swift recognition and the ultimate recompense of Christ. All life is so interesting, but we need eyes to see and hearts to understand! Dare to be yourself--a simple, humble, sincere follower of Jesus, and it may be said also of you: "He or she did no miracle, but by life and word spoke true things about Jesus Christ, which we have tested for ourselves. Indeed, they led us to believe in Christ for ourselves."

### **PRAYER:**

*Teach me, my God and King,*

*And what I do in anything,*

*A servant with this clause*

*Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,*

*In all things Thee to see,*

*To do it as for Thee.*

*Makes drudgery divine!*

*Makes that and th'action fine. AMEN.*

## September 28: OBEDIENCE

**"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness."-- Jn 12:46.  
(cp Ps 119:130, Jn 1:9, 1:4, 3:19-21,8:12, 9:5, 2Ti1:10 Isa 9:2, Mal 4:2)**

THE LIGHT of Christ is always distinguishable because it means the deepest impression of what is right, the clearest conviction of the will of God. Everywhere men are asking how they may come to know Christ, and there is but one answer: believe that He loves you, that He died on the Cross to save you, that He is prompting you by His Spirit to follow every perception and longing for a better and holier life.

How different is this teaching from that of the world around! There we are bidden to know before we dare entrust our lives to any leader, whatever be his fair speeches and promises; but Christ bids us obey the first glimmer of light breaking on us, and He undertakes that if we do, we shall not walk in darkness. Disobedience, like scales, veils Christ from us; whilst obedience leads us into His very presence (cp Jn 7:17, 1Sa 15:22-23). The judgment always becomes just, and the vision clear, when we deny ourselves (Mk 8:34, Lk 9:23 adds "daily"! ) to follow whatsoever things are lovely, true, pure, just, and of good report (Php 4:8).

It may be that as you read these lines there is some duty you shirk, some cross you refuse to lift, some act from which you flinch. Though you may not have directly associated it with Christ, yet you cannot doubt that it is His will for you, and that in the doing He will be pleased (2Co 5:9). It is useless to try to know Him until that nearest act of obedience is wrought. Men can never know what the mighty forces of Nature will do for them until they set themselves to obey, in the minutest detail, its laws. And it is so in relation to Christ and the laws of the spiritual realm. That was a true word which the mother of our Lord spoke to the servants at Cana, when she said: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it!" (Jn 2:5) She had probably learnt that lesson in those long, quiet, blessed years at Nazareth. She knew that there was no such way of understanding Him, as by rendering Him literal obedience, and she passed on the results of her experience to us all.

"Walk while ye have the light," (Jn 12:35) so you will know the Light, and become light in the Lord. (Eph 5:8)

**PRAYER: My son, forsake thyself, and thou shalt find Me Lord, how often shall I resign myself, and wherein shall I forsake myself? Always, yea, every hour, as well in small things as in great. AMEN.**

## September 29: THE TALE OF THE YEARS

**"For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told."-- Ps 90:9.**

THIS PSALM (Ps 90) is almost without parallel for sublimity, a worthy monument of the inspired genius of Moses, "the man of God." It reflects the wanderings and experiences of the wilderness march; the watch in the night against the intrusion of the Bedouin thief, or the prowling of the wild beast; the rush of the flood, caused by torrential rain, but disappearing as quickly as on the sandy soil; the morning grass, scorched by the sirocco; the tales borne by the camp spies so soon ended; the disappointment of the springs of Marah; the inevitable leaving of Elim! the long weary days of marching, the mother and babe, the aged and little children, the weakling on the desert trail; the constant pitching and removal of tents--all these emblems of transitoriness, depicting the hard experiences of life's toil and trial. Secret sins and iniquities; the averted face of God because of transgression; the death of the old at eighty, and of the young child cut down as a frail flower. Yes! But in spite of all this, God as the dwelling-place and home of the individual soul, as of the succeeding generation.

Shall we not make the concluding petitions of this Psalm our own? For we, too, are pilgrims over the desert-waste to the eternal Home. We need to be more careful of our days, watching their decreasing number, with careful anxiety to make the most of those that are left. We need to be satisfied and replenished each morning with God's mercy, that we may have perennial springs of rejoicing and gladness. We long to help in the overthrowing of the power of evil, and as we grow older, we pray that the beauty of the Lord our God may be upon us, and may we feel that He has given permanence to the work of our hands.

**PRAYER: HOW shall we thank Thee sufficiently, dear Lord, that Thou hast demolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to light. Give us grace to follow Thee all the days of our life, and when the Call comes to us to pass over may the waters of the River be at the lowest ebb. AMEN.**

## September 30: THE TALISMAN OF VICTORY

**"In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."-- Ro 8:37.**

CAN ANYTHING separate me from the love of Christ? was the only question that St. Paul felt worth consideration. In this paragraph he takes the extreme conditions of being, and carefully investigates them, knowing that they include all between. First, he interrogates Existence--"death and life"; next, created Intelligences--"Angels, principalities, and powers"; next, the extremes of Time--"things present, things to come"; next, of Space---"height and depth"; lastly, the created Universe --"any other creature." Each of these extremes is passed in review. He is like a man proving every link of the chain in which he is going to swing out over the abyss. Carefully and fervently he has tested all, and is satisfied that none of them can cut him off from the love of God.

We strangely misjudge and mistrust the Love of God our Father, and think that our distresses and sufferings, our sins and failures, may make Him love us less. But in the home, it is not the troop of sturdy children that engross the mother's care so much as the puny feeble life, that lies in the cot, unable to help itself and reciprocate her love. And in the world, death and pain, disease and sorrow, sin and failure, so far from separating us from God's love, bind us closer.

Oh blessed Love! that comes down to us from the heart of Jesus, the essence of the eternal love of God-- nothing can ever staunch, exhaust, intercept it. It is not our love to Him, but His to us, and since nothing can separate us from the love of God, He will go on loving us for ever, and pouring into us the entire fullness of His life and glory. Whatever our difficulties, whatever our weakness and infirmity, we shall he kept steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; gaining by our losses, succeeding by our failures, triumphing in our defeats, and ever more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

**PRAYER: Yea thro' life, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed: Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning, Christ is the beginning, for the end is Christ.**

## October 1: THE DIMENSIONS OF GOD'S LOVE

**"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." -- Eph 3:17-19**

THE DIMENSIONS of the Love of Christ! It is broad as humanity, "for God so loved the world" (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 3:16); the length God's love had no date of origin, and shall have none of conclusion. God is Love (1Jn 4:8, 16), it continues ever, indissoluble, unchangeable, a perpetual present tense. Its height--as the Flood out-topped the highest mountains, so that Love covers our highest sins (Ro 5:20). 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 (Dt 33:27) 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 (1Jn 4:11-12; 1Jn 4:20-21).

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.**

## October 2: THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S LOVE

**"We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. We love Him, because He first loved us."-- 1Jo4:16-19**

GOD 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 (Mar16:7; Joh21:15).

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.**

## October 3: THE WONDER OF GOD'S LOVE

**"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16.**

AS 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. The A.V. gives the word "everlasting," but the R.V. translates it as "eternal." 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; 2Pe1:4).

**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.**



## October 4: LOVE AND LIBERTY

**"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 in the Lord's."-- Ro14:7-8.**

THE 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.**

## October 5: LOVED AND LOOSED

**"Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His Blood; and He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."**

**-- Rev 1:5-6 (R.V.).**

WHATEVER 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 to-day 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 (Lk 13:11-13, R.V.). 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 (Ro 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.**

## October 6: GOD'S RESTORING LOVE

**"Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely."-- Hos 14:2-4.**

**"Simon... lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."-- Jn 21:16.**

THE 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.**

## October 7: STEPPING HEAVENWARD

**"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ." -- 2Th3:5 (R.V.).**

THE 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 unfaltering 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.**

## October 8: PRACTISING CHRISTIANITY

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

IT 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 (1Jn 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 (1Jn 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.**

## October 9: MY BROTHER!

**"The Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said: I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"**

**-- Ge 4:9.**

**"He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness."-- 1Jn 2:11.**

MAN'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 (1Jn 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.**

## October 10: FORGIVENESS

**"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?"-- Mat 18:2.**

THE 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 millions 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 unforgetting? 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.**

## October 11: OUR POSSESSIONS

**"Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth."-- Lk12:15.**

**"Little children, guard yourselves from idols."-- 1Jo5:21 (R.V.).**

THE 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 2Co 9:1-15.

Sensual appetite is an idol with many (Phi3:19). 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 (1Ti4:4-5).

**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.**



## October 12: GOD'S LARGESSE AND BOUNTY

**"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? They did eat, and were well filled."-- Ps78:19, Ps78:20, Ps78:29.**

THIS 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 grass-hoppers, and lose heart! Let us not forget that we are sons and daughters of God, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (cf Nu13:33 and Ro8:17.)

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 demeanor. 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.**

## October 13: THE BLESSING OF THANKFULNESS

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

**"Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually."-- Heb 13:15.**

SOME 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 sugar-plums 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 (2Co 6:10).

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

**October 14: BURDEN-BEARING:**

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."-- Gal 6:2.**

IN 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.**

## October 15: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

**"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."-- Lk 14:33.**

THREE 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.** (Luke 14:26) 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.** (Luke 14:27) 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 daily 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.**

## October 16: THE JOY OF THE LORD

**"This day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength."-- Neh 8:10.**

JOY AND gladness is a very necessary element in human well-being. 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 heart-break 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 (Jn 15:11; Jn 16:22-23).

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 (Jn 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.**

## October 17: MAKING A COVENANT WITH GOD

"We make a sure covenant, and write it."-- Neh 9:38.

"He is the Mediator of a better covenant."-- Heb 8:6.

IT 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,  
To that same lot, however mean or high,  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,*

*It shall be still in strictest measure even  
Toward which Time leads me and the will of Heaven.  
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 merry-making, 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 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 safe-guard 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**

## October 18: PREVAILING POWER

**"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."-- Act 4:31**

THE 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 lives 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.**

## October 19: THE FAR COUNTRY

**"When he came to himself, he said... I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned..."-- Lk 15:17-19.**

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.**



## October 20: VICTORY OUT OF DEFEAT

**"I will give 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."-- Hos 2:15.**

THE 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 mellower 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 to-day 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 to-day, and let us taste afresh the glad sense of Thy pardoning love. AMEN.**

## October 21: A NEW CREATION

**"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." 2Co 5:17(R.V. marg.).**

TRUE 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 (2Co5:14-15). 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 2Co5:18. 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.**

## October 22: THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**"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."**

**-- Act 2:17.**

IN 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 (Acts 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.**

## October 23: THE ROLL OF FAITH

**"Time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah... who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises."--Heb 11:32-33**

FAITH 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 11:32-39)

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.**

## October 24: CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD

**"I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine."-- Jn 10:14.**

GOD 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.

The R.V. 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 (Jn 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 (Jn 10:27-28, R.V.).

**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.**

## October 25: OUR LORD'S PRAYER

**"Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are."**

**-- Jn 17:11.**

THIS 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-obliteration. 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-obliteration 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.**

## October 26: THE BLAMELESS LIFE

**"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."-- 1Th 5:23-24.**

HE 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.**

## October 27: SPRING IN THE HEART

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

THERE 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 cast 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, 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.**



## October 28: GIRD AND SERVE

**"Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve Me... and afterward thou shalt eat and drink."**

**-- Lk 17:8.**

THERE 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 (Joh 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.**

## October 29: KEPT FOR JESUS CHRIST

**"Judas, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ."-- Jude 1:1 (R.V. marg.).**

THE 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.**

## October 30: THE TIMELESS CROSS

**"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?" -- Heb 9:14.**

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." (2Co 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.**

## OCTOBER 31: GIVING GOD PLEASURE

**"The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him."--Ps. 147:11.**

GOD 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.**

## November 1: WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

**"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."-- Gal 5:16.**

WHEN 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 fulfill the lust of the flesh (Ed: Not exactly true! The desire is still there. The fulfilling of the desire is not.). The desire for the gratification of natural appetite may be (**Ed: IT WILL BE!**) latent in the soul, and may flash through the thoughts, but he does not fulfil it. The desire cannot be prevented, but its fulfillment 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 lovingfellowship. Order my steps in Thy way, and walk with me, that I may do the thing that pleases Thee. AMEN.**

## November 2: THE MESSAGE OF PENTECOST

**"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit."-- Acts 2:4; Eph 5:18.**

IT IS good to know that there is just as much of the Holy Spirit's presence to-day, 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 business-man in his store, the young men and women in office or shop.

The result of this baptism of spiritual power was very remarkable. Thousands were converted and baptized, and they continued stedfastly. 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 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 Mt 25:20-21; Lk 12:42-44.)

Notice their exuberant joy (Acts 2:46-47). It is characteristic of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life, and the result 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.**

### November 3: THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

**"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever."-- Jn 14:16.**

THE 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" (Acts 2:33). In 1Jo 2:1 (R.V.) marg. 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 so 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.**

## November 4: THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT

**"Teach me to do Thy Will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."**

**-- Ps 143:10.**

TEACH 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 school-house, 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, & do it

### **PRAYER:**

**I need a hand to lead me through the darkness,**

**And if alone I have to take my journey,**

**For I am weak and helpless as a child;**

**My feet will stumble on the mountains wild. AMEN.**



## November 5: WITNESS-BEARING FOR CHRIST

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

ALL MACHINERY needs driving-power. A motor-car 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 Judea--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 (1Jn 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.*

## November 6: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--LOVE!

**"But now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three, and the greatest of these is Love."-- 1Co 13:13.**

LET 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. 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.**

## November 7: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--JOY

**"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be fulfilled."-- Jn 15:11.**

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." (Ep 2:19) 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, 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 (Ro 6:11), 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." (Jn 15:7) We must remove any hindrances from the indwelling of Christ (He 12:1), 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 (Jn 16:24, 17:13).

**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.**

## **November 8: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT PEACE**

**"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 fearful."-- Jn 14:27.**

BEING 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 evil-doer 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 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 fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, and peace, to Thy honour and glory. AMEN.**

## **November 9: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--LONGSUFFERING**

**"If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name. Inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, Rejoice!"-- 1Pe 4:13-16.**

THE 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 despitefully 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.**

## November 10: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--GENTLENESS

**"The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all... forbearing."-- 2Ti 2:24.**

IT 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 a 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 fruits 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.**

## November 11: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--GOODNESS

**"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith."-- Acts 11:24.**

GOODNESS IS the radiance or out-shining 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 (1Sa 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 after-life 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 after-thoughts. 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 unfaltering 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 to-day. AMEN.**

## November 12: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--FAITH

**"Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised."-- Heb 10:23.**

FAITH 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 o f faith with power. AMEN.**



## November 13: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--MEEKNESS

**"Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love."-- Eph 4:1-2.**

THE 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" (Ps 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.**

## **November 14: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--SELF-CONTROL**

**"Every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.-- 1Co 9:25.**

IN HIS early life Paul must have been keen on sport! 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 (1Co 9:22). He needed to discipline himself, putting aside much that was innocent in itself, and which others could enjoy without reproach (Ro 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.**

## November 15: JESUS, THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

**"The first Adam became a living soul; the last Adam became a Life-Giving Spirit."-- 1Co 15:45.**

ARE 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.**

## November 16: "1"

**"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Who shall deliver me...? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."-- Ro 7:19-25.**

THIS 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 (2Co 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 to-day, 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.**

## November 17: THE SECRET OF THE INNER WAY

**"Walk, in the Way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous."-- Pr 2:20.**

THIS 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 was alone 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 (Pr 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 (Pr 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.**

## November 18: ABOUNDING IN THIS GRACE ALSO

**"If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."**

**-- 2Co 8:12.**

IF ST. PAUL were living to-day 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" (2Co 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 (Mk 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.**

## November 19: BEARING THE CROSS

**"He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."-- Mat 10:38.**

HOW 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.**

## November 20: STILLING LIFE'S STORMS

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

**THIS PSALM contains five wonderful pictures of life.**

**First**, we see the travelers who have lost their way (Ps 107:4-9); **next**, prisoners and captives who sit in darkness (Ps 107:10-16); **then** we see a sick-room (Ps 107:17-22); **next**, a terrific storm at sea (Ps 107:23-32); **and finally**, the lovely picture of a desert land being turned into a fertile landscape (Ps 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 (a very small part of a) barque (boat, small sailing vessel) 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.**



## November 21: RABBONI--MY MASTER

**"But Mary stood without at the tomb weeping Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master."--Jn 20:11-16.**

WHEN 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.**

## November 22: THE GOD OF PATIENCE AND COMFORT

**"Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Jesus Christ."-- Ro 15:5.**

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 unfailing 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.**

## November 23: THE GOD OF HOPE

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

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 had 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, that to do thus (not keep His oath - see Nu 14:13-20), would not be worthy of Himself!. 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 (Ro 15:4). They shall not be ashamed that hope in Him! (cp Ps 119:116)

**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 (Ep 1:18-19). Above all, grant me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Thyself (Ep 1:17) AMEN.**

## November 24: THE GOD OF PEACE

**"Now the God of Peace be with you all."-- Rom 15:33.**

**"Having made peace through the blood of His Cross."-- Col 1:20.**

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 skeptic 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 give 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.**

## November 25: HOW THE SONG OF THE LORD BEGAN

"When the burnt offering began, the Song of the Lord began."-- 2Chr 29:27.

"They sing as it were a new Song before the Throne." -- Rev 14:3.

HEZEKIAH, 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 re-opened, 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, sound-proof, 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.**

## November 26: THE GRACE OF GRATITUDE

**"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"-- Psa 116:12.**

GOD'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 (Ps 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 (Ps 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 (Ps 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, constrains us to live not to ourselves but unto Him (Re 1:5). 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.**

## November 27: THE GARDEN OF OUR SOUL

**"A pleasant vineyard, sing ye of it. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."-- Isa 27:2-3, (See R.V. marg.).**

THE 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 Mt 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" (Ge 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.**

## November 28: SPIRITUAL FOOD

**"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable. ... That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."-- 2Ti 3:16-17.**

**"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."  
-- Jn 6:51.**

IT 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 saltness of flavour. The Bible is the Word of God, and the whole of it is profitable for one of the four uses mentioned in 2Ti 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.**



## November 29: THE MESSAGE OF THE SERAPHIM

**"Then flew one of the Seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand., and said, lo this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."-- Isa 6:6-7.**

EACH 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.**

## November 30: OUR HERITAGE AND OUR GOAL

**"Ye are come unto the City of the living God ... to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant."-- Heb 12:22-24.**

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." (Heb 12:23)

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 realize 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 rite, 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.**

## December 1: WALKING IN THE LIGHT

**"God said, Let there be Light; and there was Light."--- Gen1:3.**

**"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: Walk as children of Light."-- Eph 5:8.**

ST. 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.**

## December 2: JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

**"I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."**

**-- Jn 8:12.**

THE 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 search-light, 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, eye-lashes, 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 cleansing 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.**

### December 3: ILLUMINATED LIVES

**"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord."-- Pr 20:27. "For Thou wilt light my candle."-- Ps 18:28.**

THE 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 Pangs to be Thy temple. AMEN.**

## December 4: THE SOLAR LOOK

**"Light is sown for the righteous, And gladness for the upright in heart."-- Psa 97:11.**

WRITING 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" (1Sa 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 At-one-ment, 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.**

## December 5: LIGHT IN DARKNESS

**"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of deep darkness, upon them hath the light shined."-- Isa 9:2 (R.V. marg.).**

AS 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 Counselor. 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 to-day to humbly put the government of everything that concerns your life upon the shoulders of Christ, and then you will find the joy and peace will increase. Such joy as thou hast never known! Such peace as has never before uttered its benison upon thy heart (Isa 9:3).

**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.**

## December 6: MAN'S WAY! GOD'S DIRECTION

**"A man's heart devises his way: but the Lord directs his steps."-- Pr 16:9.**

THE 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 fight.

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 (Pr 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, bypaths 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.**



## December 7: THE QUEST FOR THE ETERNAL

**"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."--Psa 63:1.**

THIS 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 three-fold 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.**

## December 8: THE MIRROR OF TRUTH

**"If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."-- Jas 1:23-24.**

THERE 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.**

## December 9: CHRIST'S REVELATION OF GOD

**"Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us, Jesus saith .. he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."-- Jn 14:8-9.**

PHILIP'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 suffices 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 (Jn 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 (Jn 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 (Jn 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 to 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.**

## December 10: THE BROAD AND THE NARROW WAY

**"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life."**

**-- Mat 7:13-14.**

AT 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.**

## December 11: TAKING SIDES

**"Who is on the Lord's side!"-- Exo 32:26.**

**"How long halt ye between two opinions! If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, follow him. And the people answered him not a word."-- 1Ki 18:21.**

MOSES 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.**

## December 12: IN THE BEGINNING GOD

**"In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth."-- Gen 1:1.**

**"In the beginning was the Word... all things were made by Him."-- John 1:1-3.**

GENESIS 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 corner-stone 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 made me for Thyself, and my heart is restless until it repose in Thee. AMEN.**

## December 13: GOD'S THOUGHT OF ME

**"Thou art a God that seeth me."-- Gen 16:13 (R.V. marg.).**

**"How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God."-- Psa 139:17.**

HAGAR 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.**

## December 14: COMMUNION AND TRANSFORMATION

"Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him."-- Ex 34:29.

"We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image."  
-- 2Co 3:18.

MOSES, 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 shows that the light which shone upon the face of Moses is the symbol of the luster 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.**



## December 15: CONFESSING OUR SINS

**"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."-- 1Jn 1:8-9.**

TO 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 (a room in a hospital used especially for therapeutic exposure to light); you must definitely ask forgiveness!

When God forgives He forgets (Isa 43:25). As David puts it, and he had reason to know, "He restores my soul." Remember that He delights 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.**

## December 16: AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

**"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you."-- John 15:16.**

**"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, And, lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age."-- Mat 28:18-20 (R.V.).**

IT 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 (Lk 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 realized 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 (Ge 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.**

## December 17: QUIET RESTING PLACES

**"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."-- Isa 32:18.**

ISAIAH'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 well-being 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 scepter 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 coven from the tropical tempest (Isa 32:1-2). Isaiah says this quietness and confidence rests 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 (Ro 5:1).

**PRAYER: O God, may there be a pause in the busy rush of daily 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**

## December 18: A NEW NAME!

**"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel."-- Gen 32:28.**

**"He that overcometh, I will write upon him Mine own New Name."-- Rev 3:12.**

THROUGH 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 (Ex 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 (Mat 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.**

## December 19: THE ELDER BROTHER

**"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."-- Lk 15:28-31.**

OF 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.**

## December 20: FIDELITY TO OUR PLEDGES

**"For Thou, O God, hast heard my vows: Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear Thy Name." "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of His people."-- Psa 61:5; Psa 116:18.**

THE 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 (Jn 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 duplication 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 exceeding frail and indisposed to every virtuous and gallant undertaking, Grant that we may bring our vessel safe to shore, unto our desired haven. AMEN.**

## December 21: THE PROMISE OF RESURRECTION

**"The third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." -- Hos 6:2.**

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

DEATH 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.**

## December 22: PRAISING THE LORD

**"Praise ye the Lord; for it is good to sing praises unto our God."-- Psa 147:1.**

IT 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 child-like, 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.**



## December 23: GLADNESS AND THANKSGIVING

**"It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us...we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."-- Isa 25:9.**

THIS 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 Babylon's 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 key-note 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**

## December 24: CHRISTIAN COURTESY

**"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."**

**-- 1Pe 3:8.**

IT 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 doctrine is 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.**

## December 25: THE GLORY OF CHRIST

**"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."-- Jn 1:14.**

THE GLORY of Christ is apparent, as we study the titles which are given to Him in the first chapter of John's Gospel. The Word (Jn 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 (Jn 14:9). The Psalmist said that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows 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 (Jn 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 (Jn 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 (Jn 1:10-11). "He came unto His own."

The Shekinah (Jn 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 (Jn 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;**

**And this great love for us in boundless store;**

**Love changeless, love rejoicing, love victorious!**

**God's everlasting love! What would we more.**

## December 26: A COMFORTING LETTER

**"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."-- Jer 29:11.**

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 to-day?" (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.**

## **December 27: THE LORD REIGNETH!**

**"Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. Clouds and darkness are round about Him; Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His Throne."-- Psa 97:2-12.**

BEHIND 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 hail-storm 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 life-time 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.**

## December 28: JESUS AS KING

**"Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a King, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King."-- Jn 18:37.**

OUR 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; Ro 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 acclaim-hag Christ as King. (Rev 15:3-4, R.V).

**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.**

## December 29: THE MARCH OF GOD'S PROGRESS

**"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. For He must reign."-- 1Co 15:24.**

WHITHER 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.**

## **December 30: MORTALITY SWALLOWED UP OF LIFE**

**"For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens."-- 2Co 5:1.**

THIS 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,  
Speak to me out of the silent night,  
That Thy pierced hands**

**Man of Nazareth, Christ for me!  
That my spirit may know, as onward I go,  
Are lifting me over the ford. AMEN.**



## **December 31: LIGHT IN DARKNESS**

**"What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light."-- Mat 10:27.**

CHRIST 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.**

**OSWALD  
CHAMBERS**

**MY UTMOST  
FOR HIS HIGHEST**

## OSWALD CHAMBERS

### OSWALD CHAMBERS SOMETIMES STARTLED AUDIENCES WITH HIS VIGOROUS THINKING AND HIS VIVID EXPRESSION.

Even those who disagreed with what he said found his teachings difficult to dismiss and all but impossible to ignore. Often his humor drove home a sensitive point: “Have we ever got into the way of letting God work, or are we so amazingly important that we really wonder in our nerves and ways what the Almighty does before we are up in the morning!”

Oswald Chambers was not famous during his lifetime. At the time of his death in 1917 at the age of forty-three, only three books bearing his name had been published. Among a relatively small circle of Christians in Britain and the U.S., Chambers was much appreciated as a teacher of rare insight and expression, but he was not widely known.

Chambers was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1874, the youngest son of a Baptist minister. He spent his boyhood years in Perth; then his family moved to London when Oswald was fifteen. Shortly after the move to London, Oswald made his public profession of faith in Christ and became a member of Rye Lane Baptist Church. This marked a period of rapid spiritual growth, along with an intense struggle to find God’s will and way for his life.

*A gifted artist and musician, Chambers trained at London’s Royal Academy of Art, sensing God’s direction to be an ambassador for Christ in the world of art and aesthetics.*

While studying at the University of Edinburgh (1895-96), he decided, after an agonizing internal battle, to study for the ministry. He left the university and entered Dunoon College, near Glasgow, where he remained as a student, then a tutor for nine years.

In 1906 he traveled to the United States, spending six months teaching at God’s Bible School in Cincinnati, Ohio. From there, he went to Japan, visiting the Tokyo Bible School, founded by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cowman. This journey around the world in 1906-1907 marked his transition from Dunoon College to fulltime work with the Pentecostal League of Prayer.

During the last decade of his life, Chambers served as:

- traveling speaker and representative of the League of Prayer, 1907-10
- principal and main teacher of the Bible Training College, London, 1911-15
- YMCA chaplain to British Commonwealth soldiers in Egypt, 1915-17

He died in Cairo on November 15, 1917, of complications following an emergency appendectomy. The complete story of his life is told in [\*Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God\*](#) (1993).

## January 1: LET US KEEP TO THE POINT

*"My eager desire and hope being that I may never feel ashamed, but that now as ever I may do honour to Christ in my own person by fearless courage."*

**Philippians 1:20 (MOFFATT)**

**My Utmost for His Highest.** "My eager desire and hope being that I may never feel ashamed." We shall all feel very much ashamed if we do not yield to Jesus on the point He has asked us to yield to Him. Paul says - "My determination is to be my utmost for His Highest." To get there is a question of will, not of debate nor of reasoning, but a surrender of will, an absolute and irrevocable surrender on that point. An overweening consideration for ourselves is the thing that keeps us from that decision, though we put it that we are considering others. When we consider what it will cost others if we obey the call of Jesus, we tell God He does not know what our obedience will mean. Keep to the point; He does know. Shut out every other consideration and keep yourself before God for this one thing only - My Utmost for His Highest. I am determined to be absolutely and entirely for Him and for Him alone.

**My Undeterredness for His Holiness.** "Whether that means life or death, no matter!" (v.21.) Paul is determined that nothing shall deter him from doing exactly what God wants. God's order has to work up to a crisis in our lives because we will not heed the gentler way. He brings us to the place where He asks us to be our utmost for Him, and we begin to debate; then He produces a providential crisis where we have to decide - for or against, and from that point the "Great Divide" begins.

If the crisis has come to you on any line, surrender your will to Him absolutely and irrevocably.

## January 2: WILL YOU GO OUT WITHOUT KNOWING?

*"He went out, not knowing whither he went." Hebrews 11:8*

Have you been "out" in this way? If so, there is no logical statement possible when anyone asks you what you are doing. One of the difficulties in Christian work is this question - "What do you expect to do?" You do not know what you are going to do; the only thing you know is that God knows what He is doing. Continually revise your attitude towards God and see if it is a going out of everything, trusting in God entirely. It is this attitude that keeps you in perpetual wonder - you do not know what God is going to do next. Each morning you wake it is to be a "going out," building in confidence on God. "Take no thought for your life, . . . nor yet for your body" - take no thought for the things for which you did take thought before you "went out."

Have you been asking God what He is going to do? He will never tell you. God does not tell you what He is going to do; He reveals to you Who He is. Do you believe in a miracle-working God, and will you go out in surrender to Him until you are not surprised an atom at anything He does?

Suppose God is the God you know Him to be when you are nearest to Him - what an impertinence worry is! Let the attitude of the life be a continual "going out" in dependence upon God, and your life will have an ineffable charm about it which is a satisfaction to Jesus. You have to learn to go out of convictions, out of creeds, out of experiences, until so far as your faith is concerned, there is nothing between yourself and God.

## January 3: CLOUDS AND DARKNESS

***"Clouds and darkness are round about Him." Psalm 97:2***

A man who has not been born of the Spirit of God Will tell you that the teachings of Jesus are simple. But when you are baptized with the Holy Ghost, you find "clouds and darkness are round about Him." When we come into close contact with the teachings of Jesus Christ we have our first insight into this aspect of things. The only possibility of understanding the teaching of Jesus is by the light of the Spirit of God on the inside. If we have never had the experience of taking our commonplace religious shoes off our commonplace religious feet, and getting rid of all the undue familiarity with which we approach God, it is questionable whether we have ever stood in His presence. The people who are flippant and familiar are those who have never yet been introduced to Jesus Christ. After the amazing delight and liberty of realizing what Jesus Christ *does*, comes the impenetrable darkness of realizing Who He *is*.

Jesus said: "The words that I speak unto you," not the words I have spoken, "they are spirit, and they are life." The Bible has been so many words to us - clouds and darkness - then all of a sudden the words become spirit and life because Jesus re-speaks them to us in a particular condition. That is the way God speaks to us, not by visions and dreams, but by words. When a man gets to God it is by the most simple way of words.

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## January 4: WHY CANNOT I FOLLOW THEE NOW?

***"Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now?" John 13:37***

There are times when you cannot understand why you cannot do what you want to do. When God brings the blank space, see that you do not fill it in, but wait. The blank space may come in order to teach you what sanctification means, or it may come after sanctification to teach you what service means. Never run before God's guidance. If there is the slightest doubt, then He is not guiding. Whenever there is doubt - *don't*.

In the beginning you may see clearly what God's will is - the severance of a friendship, the breaking off of a business relationship, something you feel distinctly before God is His will for you to do, never do it on the impulse of that feeling. If you do, you will end in making difficulties that will take years of time to put right. Wait for God's time to bring it round and He will do it without any heartbreak or disappointment. When it is a question of the providential will of God, wait for God to move.

Peter did not wait on God, he forecast in his mind where the test would come, and the test came where he did not expect it. "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Peter's declaration was honest but ignorant. "Jesus answered him ...The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice." This was said with a deeper knowledge of Peter than Peter had of himself. He could not follow Jesus because he did not know himself, of what he was capable. Natural devotion may be all very well to attract us to Jesus, to make us feel His fascination, but it will never make us disciples. Natural devotion will always deny Jesus somewhere or other.

## January 5: THE AFTERWARDS OF THE LIFE OF POWER

*"Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." John 13:36*

"And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me." Three years before, Jesus had said - "Follow Me," and Peter had followed easily, the fascination of Jesus was upon him, he did not need the Holy Spirit to help him to do it. Then he came to the place where he denied Jesus, and his heart broke. Then he received the Holy Spirit, and now Jesus says again - "Follow Me." There is no figure in front now saving the Lord Jesus Christ. The first "Follow Me" had nothing mystical in it, it was an external following; now it is a following in internal martyrdom (cf. John 21:18).

Between these times Peter had denied Jesus with oaths and curses, he had come to the end of himself and all his self-sufficiency, there was not one strand of himself he would ever rely upon again, and in his destitution he was in a fit condition to receive an impartation from the risen Lord. "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." No matter what changes God has wrought in you, never rely upon them, build only on a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, and on the Spirit He gives.

All our vows and resolutions end in denial because we have no power to carry them out. When we have come to the end of ourselves, not in imagination but really, we are able to receive the Holy Spirit. *"Receive ye the Holy Ghost"* - the idea is that of invasion. There is only one lodestar in the life now, the Lord Jesus Christ.



## January 6: WORSHIP

*"And he pitched his tent having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east:  
and there he builded an altar." Genesis 12:8*

Worship is giving God the best that He has given you. Be careful what you do with the best you have. Whenever you get a blessing from God, give it back to Him as a love gift. Take time to meditate before God and offer the blessing back to Him in a deliberate act of worship. If you hoard a thing for yourself, it will turn into spiritual dry rot, as the manna did when it was hoarded. God will never let you hold a spiritual thing for your self, it has to be given back to Him that He may make it a blessing to others.

Bethel is the symbol of communion with God; Ai is the symbol of the world. Abraham pitched his tent between the two. The measure of the worth of our public activity for God is the private profound communion we have with Him. Rush is wrong every time, there is always plenty of time to worship God. Quiet days with God may be a snare. We have to pitch our tents where we shall always have quiet times with God, however noisy our times with the world may be. There are not three stages in spiritual life - worship, waiting and work. Some of us go in jumps like spiritual frogs, we jump from worship to waiting, and from waiting to work. God's idea is that the three should go together. They were always together in the life of Our Lord. He was unhasting and unresting. It is a discipline, we cannot get into it all at once.

## January 7: INTIMATE WITH JESUS

*"Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known Me?" John 14:9*

These words are not spoken as a rebuke, nor even with surprise; Jesus is leading Philip on. The last One with whom we get intimate is Jesus. Before Pentecost the disciples knew Jesus as the One Who gave them power to conquer demons and to bring about a revival (see Luke 10:18-20). It was a wonderful intimacy, but there was a much closer intimacy to come - "I have called you friends." Friendship is rare on earth. It means identity in thought and heart and spirit. The whole discipline of life is to enable us to enter into this closest relationship with Jesus Christ. We receive His blessings and know His word, but do we know Him?

Jesus said, "It is expedient for you that I go away" - in that relationship, so that He might lead them on. It is a joy to Jesus when a disciple takes time to step more intimately with Him. Fruit bearing is always mentioned as the manifestation of an intimate union with Jesus Christ (John 15:1-4).

When once we get intimate with Jesus we are never lonely, we never need sympathy, we can pour out all the time without being pathetic. The saint who is intimate with Jesus will never leave impressions of himself, but only the impression that Jesus is having unhindered way, because the last abyss of his nature has been satisfied by Jesus. The only impression left by such a life is that of the strong calm sanity that Our Lord gives to those who are intimate with Him.

## January 8: DOES MY SACRIFICE LIVE?

***"And Abraham built an altar . . . and bound Isaac his son."* Genesis 22:9**

This incident is a picture of the blunder we make in thinking that the final thing God wants of us is the sacrifice of death. What God wants is the sacrifice through death which enables us to do what Jesus did, viz., sacrifice our lives. Not - I am willing to go to death with Thee, but - I am willing to be identified with Thy death so that I may sacrifice my life to God. We seem to think that God wants us to give up things! God purified Abraham from this blunder, and the same discipline goes on in our lives. God nowhere tells us to give up things for the sake of giving them up. He tells us to give them up for the sake of the only thing worth having - viz., life with Himself. It is a question of loosening the bands that hinder the life, and immediately those bands are loosened by identification with the death of Jesus, we enter into a relationship with God whereby we can sacrifice our lives to Him.

It is of no value to God to give Him your life for death. He wants you to be a *"living sacrifice,"* to let Him have all your powers that have been saved and sanctified through Jesus. This is the thing that is acceptable to God.

## January 9: INTERCESSORY INTROSPECTION

*"And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless."*

**1 Thess 5:23**

"Your whole spirit. . ." The great mystical work of the Holy Spirit is in the dim regions of our personality which we cannot get at. Read the 139th Psalm; the Psalmist implies - "Thou art the God of the early mornings, the God of the late at nights, the God of the mountain peaks, and the God of the sea; but, my God, my soul has further horizons than the early mornings, deeper darkness than the nights of earth, higher peaks than any mountain peaks, greater depths than any sea in nature - Thou Who art the God of all these, be my God. I cannot reach to the heights or to the depths; there are motives I cannot trace, dreams I cannot get at - my God, search me out."

Do we believe that God can garrison the imagination far beyond where we can go? *"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin"* - if that means in conscious experience only, may God have mercy on us. The man who has been made obtuse by sin will say he is not conscious of sin. Cleansing from sin is to the very heights and depths of our spirit if we will keep in the light as God is in the light, and the very Spirit that fed the life of Jesus Christ will feed the life of our spirits. It is only when we are garrisoned by God with the stupendous sanctity of the Holy Spirit, that spirit, soul and body are preserved in unspotted integrity, undeserving of censure in God's sight, until Jesus comes.

We do not allow our minds to dwell as they should on these great massive truths of God.

## January 10: THE OPENED SIGHT

*"To open their eyes . . . that they may receive . . ." Acts 26:18*

This verse is the grandest condensation of the propaganda of a disciple of Jesus Christ in the whole of the New Testament.

The first sovereign work of grace is summed up in the word - "that they may receive remission of sins." When a man fails in personal Christian experience, it is nearly always because he has never received anything. The only sign that a man is saved is that he has received something from Jesus Christ. Our part as workers for God is to open men's eyes that they may turn themselves from darkness to light; but that is not salvation, that is conversion - the effort of a roused human being. I do not think it is too sweeping to say that the majority of nominal Christians are of this order; their eyes are opened, but they have received nothing. Conversion is not regeneration. This is one of the neglected factors in our preaching today. When a man is born again, he knows that it is because he has received something as a gift from Almighty God and not because of his own decision. People register their vows, and sign their pledges, and determine to go through, but none of this is salvation. Salvation means that we are brought to the place where we are able to receive something from God on the authority of Jesus Christ, viz., remission of sins.

Then there follows the second mighty work of grace - "and inheritance among them which are sanctified." In sanctification the regenerated soul deliberately gives up his right to himself to Jesus Christ, and identifies himself entirely with God's interest in other men.

## January 11: WHAT MY OBEDIENCE TO GOD COSTS OTHER PEOPLE

*"They laid hold upon one Simon . . . and on him they laid the cross." Luke 23:2*

If we obey God it is going to cost other people more than it costs us, and that is where the sting comes in. If we are in love with our Lord, obedience does not cost us anything, it is a delight, but it costs those who do not love Him a good deal. If we obey God it will mean that other people's plans are upset, and they will gibe us with it - "You call this Christianity?" We can prevent the suffering; but if we are going to obey God, we must not prevent it, we must let the cost be paid.

Our human pride entrenches itself on this point, and we say - I will never accept anything from anyone. We shall have to, or disobey God. We have no right to expect to be in any other relation than our Lord Himself was in (see Luke 8:2-3).

Stagnation in spiritual life comes when we say we will bear the whole thing ourselves. We cannot. We are so involved in the universal purposes of God that immediately we obey God, others are affected. Are we going to remain loyal in our obedience to God and go through the humiliation of refusing to be independent, or are we going to take the other line and say - I will not cost other people suffering? We can disobey God if we choose, and it will bring immediate relief to the situation, but we shall be a grief to our Lord. Whereas if we obey God, He will look after those who have been pressed into the consequences of our obedience. We have simply to obey and to leave all consequences with Him.

Beware of the inclination to dictate to God as to what you will allow to happen if you obey Him.

## January 12: HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ALONE WITH GOD?

*"When they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples." Mark 4:34*

**Our Solitude with Him.** Jesus does not take us alone and expound things to us all the time; He expounds things to us as we can understand them. Other lives are parables. God is making us spell out our own souls. It is slow work, so slow that it takes God all time and eternity to make a man and woman after His own purpose. The only way we can be of use to God is to let Him take us through the crooks and crannies of our own characters. It is astounding how ignorant we are about ourselves! We do not know envy when we see it, or laziness, or pride. Jesus reveals to us all that this body has been harbouring before His grace began to work. How many of us have learned to look in with courage?

We have to get rid of the idea that we understand ourselves, it is the last conceit to go. The only One Who understands us is God. The greatest curse in spiritual life is conceit. If we have ever had a glimpse of what we are like in the sight of God, we shall never say - "Oh, I am so unworthy," because we shall know we are, beyond the possibility of stating it. As long as we are not quite sure that we are unworthy, God will keep narrowing us in until He gets us alone. Wherever there is any element of pride or of conceit, Jesus cannot expound a thing. He will take us through the disappointment of a wounded pride of intellect, through disappointment of heart. He will reveal inordinate affection - things over which we never thought He would have to get us alone. We listen to many things in classes, but they are not an exposition to us yet. They will be when God gets us alone over them.

## January 13: HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ALONE WITH GOD?

*"When He was alone the twelve . . . asked of Him . . ."* Mark 4:10

**His Solitude with Us.** When God gets us alone by affliction, heartbreak, or temptation, by disappointment, sickness, or by thwarted affection, by a broken friendship, or by a new friendship - when He gets us absolutely alone, and we are dumbfounded, and cannot ask one question, then He begins to expound. Watch Jesus Christ's training of the twelve. It was the disciples, not the crowd outside, who were perplexed. They constantly asked Him questions, and He constantly expounded things to them; but they only understood after they had received the Holy Spirit (see John 14:26).

If you are going on with God, the only thing that is clear to you, and the only thing God intends to be clear, is the way He deals with your own soul. Your brother's sorrows and perplexities are an absolute confusion to you. We imagine we understand where the other person is, until God gives us a dose of the plague of our own hearts. There are whole tracts of stubbornness and ignorance to be revealed by the Holy Spirit in each one of us, and it can only be done when Jesus gets us alone. Are we alone with Him now, or are we taken up with little fussy notions, fussy comradeships in God's service, fussy ideas about our bodies? Jesus can expound nothing until we get through all the noisy questions of the head and are alone with Him.



## January 14: CALLED OF GOD

*"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."*

**Isaiah 6:8**

God did not address the call to Isaiah; Isaiah overheard God saying, "Who will go for us?" The call of God is not for the special few, it is for everyone. Whether or not I hear God's call depends upon the state of my ears; and what I hear depends upon my disposition. "Many are called but few are chosen," that is, few prove themselves the chosen ones. The chosen ones are those who have come into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ whereby their disposition has been altered and their ears unstopped, and they hear the still small voice questioning all the time, "Who will go for us?" It is not a question of God singling out a man and saying, "Now, *you* go." God did not lay a strong compulsion on Isaiah; Isaiah was in the presence of God and he overheard the call, and realized that there was nothing else for him but to say, in conscious freedom, "Here am I, send me." Get out of your mind the idea of expecting God to come with compulsions and pleadings. When our Lord called His disciples there was no irresistible compulsion from outside. The quiet passionate insistence of His "Follow Me" was spoken to men with every power wide awake. If we let the Spirit of God bring us face to face with God, we too shall hear something akin to what Isaiah heard, the still small voice of God; and in perfect freedom will say, "Here am I; send me."

## January 15: DO YOU WALK IN WHITE?

*"Buried with Him . . . that . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

### Romans 6:4

No one enters into the experience of entire sanctification without going through a "white funeral" - the burial of the old life. If there has never been this crisis of death, sanctification is nothing more than a vision. There must be a "white funeral," - a death that has only one resurrection - a resurrection into the life of Jesus Christ. Nothing can upset such a life, it is one with God for one purpose, to be a witness to Him.

Have you come to your last days really? You have come to them often in sentiment, but have you come to them *really*? You cannot go to your funeral in excitement, or die in excitement. Death means you stop being. Do you agree with God that you stop being the striving, earnest kind of Christian you have been? We skirt the cemetery and all the time refuse to go to death. It is not striving to go to death, it is dying - "baptized into His death."

Have you had your "white funeral," or are you sacredly playing the fool with your soul? Is there a place in your life marked as the last day, a place to which the memory goes back with a chastened and extraordinarily grateful remembrance - "Yes, it was then, at that 'white funeral,' that I made an agreement with God."

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification." When you realize what the *will* of God is, you will enter into sanctification as naturally as can be. Are you willing to go through that "white funeral" now? Do you agree with Him that this is your last day on earth? The moment of agreement depends upon you.

## January 16: THE VOICE OF THE NATURE OF GOD

*"I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send?"* Isaiah 6:8

When we speak of the call of God, we are apt to forget the most important feature, viz., the nature of the One Who calls. There is the call of the sea, the call of the mountains, the call of the great ice barriers, but these calls are only heard by the few. The call is the expression of the nature from which it comes, and we can only record the call if the same nature is in us. The call of God is the expression of God's nature, not of our nature. There are strands of the call of God providentially at work for us which we recognize and no one else does. It is the threading of God's voice to us in some particular matter, and it is no use consulting anyone else about it. We have to keep that profound relationship between our souls and God.

The call of God is not the echo of my nature; my affinities and personal temperament are not considered. As long as I consider my personal temperament and think about what I am fitted for, I shall never hear the call of God. But when I am brought into relationship with God, I am in the condition Isaiah was in. Isaiah's soul was so attuned to God by the tremendous crisis he had gone through that he recorded the call of God to his amazed soul. The majority of us have no ear for anything but ourselves, we cannot hear a thing God says. To be brought into the zone of the call of God is to be profoundly altered.

## January 17: THE VOCATION OF THE NATURAL LIFE

***"But when it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me . . ." Galatians 1:15-16***

The call of God is not a call to any particular service; my interpretation of it may be because contact with the nature of God has made me realize what I would like to do for Him. The call of God is essentially expressive of His nature; service is the outcome of what is fitted to my nature. The vocation of the natural life is stated by the apostle Paul - "When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him" (i.e., *sacramentally express* ) "among the Gentiles."

Service is the overflow of super abounding devotion; but, profoundly speaking, there is no *call* to that, it is my own little actual bit and is the echo of my identification with the nature of God. Service is the natural part of my life. God gets me into a relationship with Himself whereby I understand His call, then I do things out of sheer love for Him on my own account. To serve God is the deliberate love-gift of a nature that has heard the call of God. Service is expressive of that which is fitted to my nature: God's call is expressive of His nature; consequently when I receive His nature and hear His call, the voice of the Divine nature sounds in both and the two work together. The Son of God reveals Himself in me, and I serve Him in the ordinary ways of life out of devotion to Him.

## January 18: IT IS THE LORD!

***"Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God." John 20:2***

"Give Me to drink." How many of us are set upon Jesus Christ slaking our thirst when we ought to be satisfying Him? We should be pouring out now, spending to the last limit, not drawing on Him to satisfy us. "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me" - that means a life of unsullied, uncompromising and unbribed devotion to the Lord Jesus, a satisfaction to Him wherever He places us.

Beware of anything that competes with loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of devotion to Jesus is service for Him. It is easier to serve than to be drunk to the dregs. The one aim of the call of God is the satisfaction of God, not a call to do something for Him. We are not sent to battle for God, but to be used by God in His battlings. Are we being more devoted to service than to Jesus Christ?

## January 19: VISION AND DARKNESS

*"An horror of great darkness fell upon him."* Genesis 15:1

Whenever God gives a vision to a saint, He puts him, as it were, in the shadow of His hand, and the saint's duty is to be still and listen. There is a darkness which comes from excess of light, and then is the time to listen. Genesis 16 is an illustration of listening to good advice when it is dark instead of waiting for God to send the light. When God gives a vision and darkness follows, wait. God will make you in accordance with the vision He has given if you will wait His time. Never try and help God fulfil His word. Abraham went through thirteen years of silence, but in those years all self-sufficiency was destroyed; there was no possibility left of relying on common-sense ways. Those years of silence were a time of discipline, not of displeasure. Never pump up joy and confidence, but stay upon God (cf. Isaiah 1:10,11).

Have I any confidence in the flesh? Or have I got beyond all confidence in myself and in men and women of God; in books and prayers and ecstasies; and is my confidence placed now in God Himself, not in His blessings? "I am the Almighty God" - El-Shaddai, the Father-Mother God. The one thing for which we are all being disciplined is to know that God is real. As soon as God becomes real, other people become shadows. Nothing that other saints do or say can ever perturb the one who is built on God.

## January 20: ARE YOU FRESH FOR EVERYTHING?

*"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3*

Sometimes we are fresh for a prayer meeting but not fresh for cleaning boots!

Being born again of the Spirit is an unmistakable work of God, as mysterious as the wind, as surprising as God Himself. We do not know where it begins, it is hidden away in the depths of our personal life. Being born again from above is a perennial, perpetual and eternal beginning; a freshness all the time in thinking and in talking and in living, the continual surprise of the life of God. Staleness is an indication of something out of joint with God - "I must do this thing or it will never be done." That is the first sign of staleness. Are we freshly born this minute or are we stale, raking in our minds for something to do? Freshness does not come from obedience but from the Holy Spirit; obedience keeps us in the light as God is in the light.

Guard jealously your relationship to God. Jesus prayed "that they may be one, even as we are one" - nothing between. Keep all the life perennially open to Jesus Christ, don't pretend with Him. Are you drawing your life from any other source than God Himself? If you are depending upon anything but Him, you will never know when He is gone.

Being born of the Spirit means much more than we generally take it to mean. It gives us a new vision and keeps us absolutely fresh for everything by the perennial supply of the life of God.

## January 21: RECALL WHAT GOD REMEMBERS

*"I remember . . . the kindness of thy youth." Jeremiah 2:2*

Am I as spontaneously kind to God as I used to be, or am I only expecting God to be kind to me? Am I full of the little things that cheer His heart over me, or am I whimpering because things are going hardly with me? There is no joy in the soul that has forgotten what God prizes. It is a great thing to think that Jesus Christ has need of me - "Give Me to drink." How much kindness have I shown Him this past week? Have I been kind to His reputation in my life?

God is saying to His people - You are not in love with Me now, but I remember the time when you were - "I remember . . . the love of thine espousals." Am I as full of the extravagance of love to Jesus Christ as I was in the beginning, when I went out of my way to prove my devotion to Him? Does He find me recalling the time when I did not care for anything but Himself? Am I there now, or have I become wise over loving Him? Am I so in love with Him that I take no account of where I go? or am I watching for the respect due to me; weighing how much service I ought to give?

If, as I recall what God remembers about me, I find He is not what He used to be to me, let it produce shame and humiliation, because that shame will bring the godly sorrow that works repentance.



## January 22: WHAT AM I LOOKING AT?

***"Look unto Me, and be ye saved."* Isaiah 14:22**

Do we expect God to come to us with His blessings and save us? He says - Look *unto Me*, and *be* saved. The great difficulty spiritually is to concentrate on God, and it is His blessings that make it difficult. Troubles nearly always make us look to God; His blessings are apt to make us look elsewhere. The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is, in effect - Narrow all your interests until the attitude of mind and heart and body is concentration on Jesus Christ. "Look unto Me."

Many of us have a mental conception of what a Christian should be, and the lives of the saints become a hindrance to our concentration on God. There is no salvation in this way, it is not simple enough. "Look unto Me" and - not "you will be saved," but "you *are* saved." The very thing we look for, we shall find if we will concentrate on Him. We get preoccupied and sulky with God, while all the time He is saying - "Look up and be saved." The difficulties and trials - the casting about in our minds as to what we shall do this summer, or tomorrow, all vanish when we look to God.

Rouse yourself up and look to God. Build your hope on Him. No matter if there are a hundred and one things that press, resolutely exclude them all and look to Him. "Look unto Me," and salvation *is*, the moment you look.

## January 23: TRANSFORMED BY INSIGHT

*"We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." 2 Corinthians 3:1*

The outstanding characteristic of a Christian is this unveiled frankness before God so that the life becomes a mirror for other lives. By being filled with the Spirit we are transformed, and by beholding we become mirrors. You always know when a man has been beholding the glory of the Lord, you feel in your inner spirit that he is the mirror of the Lord's own character. Beware of anything which would sully that mirror in you; it is nearly always a good thing, the good that is not the best.

The golden rule for your life and mine is this concentrated keeping of the life open towards God. Let everything else - work, clothes, food, everything on earth - go by the board, saving that one thing. The rush of other things always tends to obscure this concentration on God. We have to maintain ourselves in the place of beholding, keeping the life absolutely spiritual all through. Let other things come and go as they may, let other people criticize as they will, but never allow anything to obscure the life that is hid with Christ in God. Never be hurried out of the relationship of abiding in Him. It is the one thing that is apt to fluctuate but it ought not to. The severest discipline of a Christian's life is to learn how to keep "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord."

## January 24: THE OVERMASTERING DIRECTION

*"I have appeared unto thee for this purpose." Acts 26:16*

The vision Paul had on the road to Damascus was no passing emotion, but a vision that had very clear and emphatic directions for him, and he says, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Our Lord said, in effect, to Paul - Your whole life is to be overmastered by Me; you are to have no end, no aim, and no purpose but Mine. *"I have chosen him."*

When we are born again we all have visions, if we are spiritual at all, of what Jesus wants us to be, and the great thing is to learn not to be disobedient to the vision, not to say that it cannot be attained. It is not sufficient to know that God has redeemed the world, and to know that the Holy Spirit can make all that Jesus did effectual in me; I must have the basis of a personal relationship to Him. Paul was not given a message or a doctrine to proclaim, he was brought into a vivid, personal, overmastering relationship to Jesus Christ. Verse 16 is immensely commanding - "to make thee a minister and a witness." There is nothing there apart from the personal relationship. Paul was devoted to a Person not to a cause. He was absolutely Jesus Christ's, he saw nothing else, he lived for nothing else. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

## January 25: LEAVE ROOM FOR GOD

***"But when it pleased God. . ."* Galatians 1:15**

As workers for God we have to learn to make room for God - to give God "elbow room." We calculate and estimate, and say that this and that will happen, and we forget to make room for God to come in as He chooses. Would we be surprised if God came into our meeting or into our preaching in a way we had never looked for Him to come? Do not look for God to come in any particular way, *but look for Him*. That is the way to make room for Him. Expect Him to come, but do not expect Him only in a certain way. However much we may know God, the great lesson to learn is that at any minute He may break in. We are apt to overlook this element of surprise, yet God never works in any other way. All of a sudden God meets the life - "When it was the good pleasure of God. . ."

Keep your life so constant in its contact with God that His surprising power may break out on the right hand and on the left. Always be in a state of expectancy, and see that you leave room for God to come in as He likes.

## January 26: LOOK AGAIN AND CONSECRATE

*"If God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall He not much more clothe you?"*

**Matthew 6:30**

A simple statement of Jesus is always a puzzle to us if we are not simple. How are we going to be simple with the simplicity of Jesus? By receiving His Spirit, recognizing and relying on Him, obeying Him as He brings the word of God, and life will become amazingly simple.

"Consider," says Jesus, "how much more your Father Who clothes the grass of the field will clothe you, if you keep your relationship right with Him." Every time we have gone back in spiritual communion it has been because we have impertinently known better than Jesus Christ. We have allowed the cares of the world to come in, and have forgotten the "much more" of our Heavenly Father.

"Behold the fowls of the air" - their main aim is to obey the principle of life that is in them and God looks after them. Jesus says that if you are rightly related to Him and obey His Spirit that is in you, God will look after your 'feathers.'

"Consider the lilies of the field" - they grow where they are put. Many of us refuse to grow where we are put, consequently we take root nowhere. Jesus says that if we obey the life God has given us, He will look after all the other things. Has Jesus Christ told us a lie? If we are not experiencing the "much more," it is because we are not obeying the life God has given us, we are taken up with confusing considerations. How much time have we taken up worrying God with questions when we should have been absolutely free to concentrate on His work? Consecration means the continual separating of myself to one particular thing. We cannot consecrate once and for all. Am I continually separating myself to consider God every day of my life?

**January 27: LOOK AGAIN AND THINK**  
***"Take no thought for your life."* Matthew 6:25**

A warning which needs to be reiterated is that the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things entering in, will choke all that God puts in. We are never free from the recurring tides of this encroachment. If it does not come on the line of clothes and food, it will come on the line of money or lack of money; of friends or lack of friends; or on the line of difficult circumstances. It is one steady encroachment all the time, and unless we allow the Spirit of God to raise up the standard against it, these things will come in like a flood.

"Take no thought for your life." "Be careful about one thing only," says our Lord - "your relationship to Me." Common sense shouts loud and says - "That is absurd, I *must* consider how I am going to live, I *must* consider what I am going to eat and drink." Jesus says you must not. Beware of allowing the thought that this statement is made by One Who does not understand our particular circumstances. Jesus Christ knows our circumstances better than we do, and He says we must not think about these things so as to make them the one concern of our life. Whenever there is competition, be sure that you put your relationship to God first.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." How much evil has begun to threaten you today? What kind of mean little imps have been looking in and saying - Now what are you going to do next month - this summer? "Be anxious for nothing," Jesus says. Look again and think. Keep your mind on the "much more" of your heavenly Father.

## January 28: BUT IT IS HARDLY CREDIBLE THAT ONE COULD SO PERSECUTE JESUS!

*"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Acts 26:14*

Am I set on my own way for God? We are never free from this snare until we are brought into the experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. Obstinance and self-will will always stab Jesus Christ. It may hurt no one else, but it wounds His Spirit. Whenever we are obstinate and self-willed and set upon our own ambitions, we are hurting Jesus. Every time we stand on our rights and insist that this is what we intend to do, we are persecuting Jesus. Whenever we stand on our dignity we systematically vex and grieve His Spirit; and when the knowledge comes home that it is Jesus Whom we have been persecuting all the time, it is the most crushing revelation there could be.

Is the word of God tremendously keen to me as I hand it on to you, or does my life give the lie to the things I profess to teach? I may teach sanctification and yet exhibit the spirit of Satan, the spirit that persecutes Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus is conscious of one thing only - a perfect oneness with the Father, and He says, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." All I do ought to be founded on a perfect oneness with Him, not on a self-willed determination to be godly. This will mean that I can be easily put upon, easily over-reached, easily ignored; but if I submit to it for His sake, I prevent Jesus Christ being persecuted.

January 29:

**BUT IT IS HARDLY CREDIBLE THAT ONE COULD BE SO POSITIVELY IGNORANT!**

***"Who art Thou, Lord?" Acts 26:15***

"The Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand." There is no escape when Our Lord speaks, He always comes with an arrestment of the understanding. Has the voice of God come to you directly? If it has, you cannot mistake the intimate insistence with which it has spoken to you in the language you know best, not through your ears, but through your circumstances.

God has to destroy our determined confidence in our own convictions. "I know this is what I should do" - and suddenly the voice of God speaks in a way that overwhelms us by revealing the depths of our ignorance. We have shown our ignorance of Him in the very way we determined to serve Him. We serve Jesus in a spirit that is not His, we hurt Him by our advocacy for Him, we push His claims in the spirit of the devil. Our words sound all right, but our spirit is that of an enemy. "He rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." The spirit of our Lord in an advocate of His is described in 1 Corinthians 13.

Have I been persecuting Jesus by a zealous determination to serve Him in my own way? If I feel I have done my duty and yet have hurt Him in doing it, I may be sure it was not my duty, because it has not fostered the meek and quiet spirit, but the spirit of self-satisfaction. We imagine that whatever is unpleasant is our duty! Is that anything like the spirit of our Lord - "I *delight* to do Thy will, O My God."



## January 30: THE DILEMMA OF OBEDIENCE

*"And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision."* 1 Samuel 3:15

God never speaks to us in startling ways, but in ways that are easy to misunderstand, and we say, "I wonder if that is God's voice?" Isaiah said that the Lord spake to him "with a strong hand," that is, by the pressure of circumstances. Nothing touches our lives but it is God Himself speaking. Do we discern His hand or only mere occurrence?

Get into the habit of saying, "Speak, Lord," and life will become a romance. Every time circumstances press, say, "Speak, Lord"; make time to listen. Chastening is more than a means of discipline, it is meant to get me to the place of saying, "Speak, Lord." Recall the time when God did speak to you. Have you forgotten what He said? Was it Luke 11:13, or was it 1 Thess. 5:23? As we listen, our ear gets acute, and, like Jesus, we shall hear God all the time.

Shall I tell my "Eli" what God has shown to me? That is where the dilemma of obedience comes in. We disobey God by becoming amateur providences - I must shield "Eli," the best people we know. God did not tell Samuel to tell Eli; he had to decide that for himself. God's call to you may hurt your "Eli;" but if you try to prevent the suffering in another life, it will prove an obstruction between your soul and God. It is at your own peril that you prevent the cutting off of the right hand or the plucking out of the eye.

Never ask the advice of another about anything God makes you decide before Him. If you ask advice, you will nearly always side with Satan. "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

**January 31: DO YOU SEE YOUR CALLING?**  
***"Separated unto the Gospel."* Romans 1:1**

Our calling is not primarily to be holy men and women, but to be proclaimers of the Gospel of God. The one thing that is all important is that the Gospel of God should be realized as the abiding Reality. Reality is not human goodness, nor holiness, nor heaven, nor hell; but Redemption; and the need to perceive this is the most vital need of the Christian worker to-day. As workers we have to get used to the revelation that Redemption is the only Reality. Personal holiness is an effect, not a cause, and if we place our faith in human goodness, in the effect of Redemption, we shall go under when the test comes.

Paul did not say he separated himself, but - "when it pleased God who separated me. . ." Paul had not a hypersensitive interest in his own character. As long as our eyes are upon our own personal whiteness we shall never get near the reality of Redemption. Workers break down because their desire is for their own whiteness, and not for God. "Don't ask me to come into contact with the rugged reality of Redemption on behalf of the filth of human life as it is; what I want is anything God can do for me to make me more desirable in my own eyes." To talk in that way is a sign that the reality of the Gospel of God has not begun to touch me; there is no reckless abandon to God. God cannot deliver me while my interest is merely in my own character. Paul is unconscious of himself, he is recklessly abandoned, separated by God for one purpose - to proclaim the Gospel of God (cf. Rom. 9:3.)

## February 1: THE CALL OF GOD

***"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." 1 Corinthians 1:17***

Paul states here that the call of God is to preach the gospel; but remember what Paul means by "the gospel," viz., the reality of Redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are apt to make sanctification the end-all of our preaching. Paul alludes to personal experience by way of illustration, never as the end of the matter. We are nowhere commissioned to preach salvation or sanctification; we are commissioned to lift up Jesus Christ (John 12:32). It is a travesty to say that Jesus Christ travailed in Redemption to make *me* a saint. Jesus Christ travailed in Redemption to redeem the whole world, and place it unimpaired and rehabilitated before the throne of God. The fact that Redemption can be experienced by us is an illustration of the power of the reality of Redemption, but that is not the end of Redemption. If God were human, how sick to the heart and weary He would be of the constant requests we make for our salvation, for our sanctification. We tax His energies from morning till night for things for ourselves - some thing for *me* to be delivered from! When we touch the bedrock of the reality of the Gospel of God, we shall never bother God any further with little personal complaints.

The one passion of Paul's life was to proclaim the Gospel of God. He welcomed heart-breaks, disillusionments, tribulation, for one reason only, because these things kept him in unmoved devotion to the Gospel of God.

## February 2: THE CONSTRAINT OF THE CALL

***"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" 1 Corinthians 9:16***

Beware of stopping your ears to the call of God. Everyone who is saved is called to testify to the fact; but that is not the call to preach, it is merely an illustration in preaching. Paul is referring to the pangs produced in him by the constraint to preach the Gospel. Never apply what Paul says in this connection to souls coming in contact with God for salvation. There is nothing easier than getting saved because it is God's sovereign work - Come unto Me and I will save you. Our Lord never lays down the conditions of discipleship as the conditions of salvation. We are condemned to salvation through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Discipleship has an option with it - "IF any man. . . '

Paul's words have to do with being made a servant of Jesus Christ, and our permission is never asked as to what we will do or where we will go. God makes us broken bread and poured-out wine to please Himself. To be "separated unto the gospel" means to hear the call of God; and when a man begins to overhear that call, then begins agony that is worthy of the name. Every ambition is nipped in the bud, every desire of life quenched, every outlook completely extinguished and blotted out, saving one thing only - *"separated unto the gospel."* Woe be to the soul who tries to put his foot in any other direction when once that call has come to him. This College exists for you, and you - to see whether God has a man or woman here who cares about proclaiming His Gospel; to see whether God grips you. And be ware of competitors when God does grip you.

## February 3: THE RECOGNIZED BAN OF RELATIONSHIP

*"We are made as the filth of the world."* 1 Corinthians 4:9-13

These words are not an exaggeration. The reason they are not true of us who call ourselves ministers of the gospel is not that Paul forgot the exact truth in using them, but that we have too many discreet affinities to allow ourselves to be made refuse. "Filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" is not an evidence of sanctification, but of being "separated unto the gospel."

"Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you," says Peter. If we do think it strange concerning the things we meet with, it is because we are craven-hearted. We have discreet affinities that keep us out of the mire - I won't stoop, I won't bend. You do not need to, you can be saved by the skin of your teeth if you like; you can refuse to let God count you as one separated unto the gospel. Or you may say - "I do not care if I am treated as the offscouring of the earth as long as the Gospel is proclaimed." A servant of Jesus Christ is one who is willing to go to martyrdom for the reality of the gospel of God. When a merely moral man or woman comes in contact with baseness and immorality and treachery, the recoil is so desperately offensive to human goodness that the heart shuts up in despair. The marvel of the Redemptive Reality of God is that the worst and the vilest can never get to the bottom of His love. Paul did not say that God separated him to show what a wonderful man He could make of him, but *"to reveal His Son in me."*

## February 4: THE OVERMASTERING MAJESTY OF PERSONAL POWER

*"For the love of Christ constraineth us."* 2 Corinthians 5:14

Paul says he is overruled, overmastered, held as in a vice, by the love of Christ. Very few of us know what it means to be held in a grip by the love of God; we are held by the constraint of our experience only. The one thing that held Paul, until there was nothing else on his horizon, was the love of God. "The love of Christ constraineth us" - when you hear that note in a man or woman, you can never mistake it. You know that the Spirit of God is getting unhindered way in that life.

When we are born again of the Spirit of God, the note of testimony is on what God has done for us, and rightly so. But the baptism of the Holy Ghost obliterates that for ever, and we begin to realize what Jesus meant when He said - "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." Not witnesses to what Jesus can do - that is an elementary witness - but "*witnesses unto Me.*" We will take everything that happens as happening to Him, whether it be praise or blame, persecution or commendation. No one can stand like that for Jesus Christ who is not constrained by the majesty of His personal power. It is the only thing that matters, and the strange thing is that it is the last thing realized by the Christian worker. Paul says he is gripped by the love of God, that is why he acts as he does. Men may call him mad or sober, but he does not care; there is only one thing he is living for, and that is to persuade men of the judgment seat of God, and of the love of Christ. This abandon to the love of Christ is the one thing that bears fruit in the life, and it will always leave the impression of the holiness and of the power of God, never of our personal holiness.

## February 5: ARE YOU READY TO BE OFFERED?

*"Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith,  
I joy and rejoice with you all." Philippians 2:17*

Are you willing to be offered for the work of the faithful - to pour out your life blood as a libation on the sacrifice of the faith of others? Or do you say - "I am not going to be offered up just yet, I do not want God to choose my work. I want to choose the scenery of my own sacrifice; I want to have the right kind of people watching and saying, 'Well done.'

It is one thing to go on the lonely way with dignified heroism, but quite another thing if the line mapped out for you by God means being a door-mat under other people's feet. Suppose God wants to teach you to say, "I know how to be abased" - are you ready to be offered up like that? Are you ready to be not so much as a drop in a bucket - to be so hopelessly insignificant that you are never thought of again in connection with the life you served? Are you willing to spend and be spent; not seeking to be ministered unto, but to minister? Some saints cannot do menial work and remain saints because it is beneath their dignity.

## February 6: ARE YOU READY TO BE OFFERED?

*"I am already being poured out as a drink offering." 2 Timothy 4:6 (R. V. Marg.)*

"I am ready to be offered." It is a transaction of will, not of sentiment. *Tell* God you are ready to be offered; then let the consequences be what they may, there is no strand of complaint now, no matter what God chooses. God puts you through the crisis in private, no one person can help another. Externally the life may be the same; the difference is in will. Go through the crisis in will, then when it comes externally there will be no thought of the cost. If you do not transact in will with God along this line, you will end in awakening sympathy for yourself.

"Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." The altar means fire - burning and purification and insulation for one purpose only, the destruction of every affinity that God has not started and of every attachment that is not an attachment in God. *You* do not destroy it, God does; you bind the sacrifice to the horns of the altar; and see that you do not give way to self-pity when the fire begins. After this way of fire, there is nothing that oppresses or depresses. When the crisis arises, you realize that things cannot touch you as they used to do. What is your way of fire?

Tell God you are ready to be offered, and God will prove Himself to be all you ever dreamed He would be.



## February 7: THE DISCIPLINE OF DEJECTION

*"But we trusted . . . and beside all this, to-day is the third day . . ."* Luke 24:21

Every fact that the disciples stated was right; but the inferences they drew from those facts were wrong. Anything that savours of dejection spiritually is always wrong. If depression and oppression visit me, I am to blame; God is not, nor is anyone else. Dejection springs from one of two sources - I have either satisfied a lust or I have not. Lust means - I must have it at once. Spiritual lust makes me demand an answer from God, instead of seeking God Who gives the answer. What have I been trusting God would do? And to-day - the immediate present - is the third day, and He has not done it; therefore I imagine I am justified in being dejected and in blaming God. Whenever the insistence is on the point that God answers prayer, we are off the track. The meaning of prayer is that we get hold of God, not of the answer. It is impossible to be well physically and to be dejected. Dejection is a sign of sickness, and the same thing is true spiritually. Dejection spiritually is wrong, and we are always to blame for it.

We look for visions from heaven, for earthquakes and thunders of God's power (the fact that we are dejected proves that we do), and we never dream that all the time God is in the commonplace things and people around us. If we will do the duty that lies nearest, we shall see Him. One of the most amazing revelations of God comes when we learn that it is in the commonplace things that the Deity of Jesus Christ is realized.

## February 8: INSTANTANEOUS AND INSISTENT SANCTIFICATION

*"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly."* 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

When we pray to be sanctified, are we prepared to face the standard of these verses? We take the term sanctification much too lightly. Are we prepared for what sanctification will cost? It will cost an intense narrowing of all our interests on earth, and an immense broadening of all our interests in God. Sanctification means intense concentration on God's point of view. It means every power of body, soul and spirit chained and kept for God's purpose only. Are we prepared for God to do in us all that He separated us for? And then after His work is done in us, are we prepared to separate ourselves to God even as Jesus did? "For their sakes I sanctify Myself." The reason some of us have not entered into the experience of sanctification is that we have not realized the meaning of sanctification from God's standpoint. Sanctification means being made one with Jesus so that the disposition that ruled Him will rule us. Are we prepared for what that will cost? It will cost everything that is not of God in us.

Are we prepared to be caught up into the swing of this prayer of the apostle Paul's? Are we prepared to say - "Lord, make me as holy as You can make a sinner saved by grace"? Jesus has prayed that we might be one with Him as He is one with the Father. The one and only characteristic of the Holy Ghost in a man is a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ, and freedom from everything that is unlike Him. Are we prepared to set ourselves apart for the Holy Spirit's ministrations in us?

## February 9: ARE YOU EXHAUSTED SPIRITUALLY?

*"The everlasting God . . . fainteth not, neither is weary."* Isaiah 40:28

Exhaustion means that the vital forces are worn right out. Spiritual exhaustion never comes through sin but only through service, and whether or not you are exhausted will depend upon where you get your supplies. Jesus said to Peter - "Feed My sheep," but He gave him nothing to feed them with. The process of being made broken bread and poured out wine means that you have to be the nourishment for other souls until they learn to feed on God. They must drain you to the dregs. Be careful that you get your supply, or before long you will be utterly exhausted. Before other souls learn to draw on the life of the Lord Jesus direct, they have to draw on it through you; you have to be literally "sucked," until they learn to take their nourishment from God. We owe it to God to be our best for His lambs and His sheep as well as for Himself.

Has the way in which you have been serving God betrayed you into exhaustion? If so, then rally your affections. Where did you start the service from? From your own sympathy or from the basis of the Redemption of Jesus Christ? Continually go back to the foundation of your affections and recollect where the source of power is. You have no right to say - "O Lord, I am so exhausted." He saved and sanctified you in order to exhaust you. Be exhausted for God, but remember that your supply comes from Him. "All my fresh springs shall be in Thee."

## February 10: IS YOUR IMAGINATION OF GOD STARVED?

*"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." Isaiah 40:26*

The people of God in Isaiah's day had starved their imagination by looking on the face of idols, and Isaiah made them look up at the heavens, that is, he made them begin to use their imagination aright. Nature to a saint is sacramental. If we are children of God, we have a tremendous treasure in Nature. In every wind that blows, in every night and day of the year, in every sign of the sky, in every blossoming and in every withering of the earth, there is a real coming of God to us if we will simply use our starved imagination to realize it.

The test of spiritual concentration is bringing the imagination into captivity. Is your imagination looking on the face of an idol? Is the idol yourself? Your work? Your conception of what a worker should be? Your experience of salvation and sanctification? Then your imagination of God is starved, and when you are up against difficulties you have no power, you can only endure in darkness. If your imagination is starved, do not look back to your own experience; it is God Whom you need. Go right out of yourself, away from the face of your idols, away from everything that has been starving your imagination. Rouse yourself, take the gibe that Isaiah gave the people, and deliberately turn your imagination to God.

One of the reasons of stultification in prayer is that there is no imagination, no power of putting ourselves deliberately before God. We have to learn how to be broken bread and poured out wine on the line of intercession more than on the line of personal contact. Imagination is the power God gives a saint to posit himself out of himself into relationships he never was in.

## February 11: IS YOUR HOPE IN GOD FAINT AND DYING?

*"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose imagination is stayed on Thee."*

**Isaiah 26:3 (R. V. marg.)**

Is your imagination stayed on God or is it starved? The starvation of the imagination is one of the most fruitful sources of exhaustion and sapping in a worker's life. If you have never used your imagination to put yourself before God, begin to do it now. It is no use waiting for God to come; you must put your imagination away from the face of idols and look unto Him and he saved. Imagination is the greatest gift God has given us and it ought to be devoted entirely to Him. If you have been bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, it will be one of the greatest assets to faith when the time of trial comes, because your faith and the Spirit of God will work together. Learn to associate ideas worthy of God with all that happens in Nature - the sunrises and the sunsets, the sun and the stars, the changing seasons, and your imagination will never be at the mercy of your impulses, but will always be at the service of God.

"We have sinned with our fathers; . . . and have forgotten" - then put a stiletto in the place where you have gone to sleep. "God is not talking to me just now," but He ought to be. Remember Whose you are and Whom you serve. Provoke yourself by recollection, and your affection for God will increase tenfold; your imagination will not be starved any longer, but will be quick and enthusiastic, and your hope will be inexpressibly bright.

## February 12: MUST I LISTEN?

*"And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear:  
but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Exodus 20:19*

We do not consciously disobey God, we simply do not heed Him. God has given us His commands; there they are, but we do not pay any attention to them, not because of wilful disobedience but because we do not love and respect Him. "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments." When once we realize that we have been "disrespecting" God all the time, we are covered with shame and humiliation because we have not heeded Him.

"Speak thou with us . . . but let not God speak with us." We show how little we love God by preferring to listen to His servants only. We like to listen to personal testimonies, but we do not desire that God Himself should speak to us. Why are we so terrified lest God should speak to us? Because we know that if God does speak, either the thing must be done or we must tell God we will not obey Him. If it is only the servant's voice we hear, we feel it is not imperative, we can say, "Well, that is simply your own idea, though I don't deny it is probably God's truth."

Am I putting God in the humiliating position of having treated me as a child of His whilst all the time I have been ignoring Him? When I do hear Him, the humiliation I have put on Him comes back on me - "Lord, why was I so dull and so obstinate?" This is always the result when once we do hear God. The real delight of hearing Him is tempered with shame in having been so long in hearing Him.

## February 13: THE DEVOTION OF HEARING

*"Speak; for Thy servant heareth."* 1 Samuel 3:10

Because I have listened definitely to one thing from God, it does not follow that I will listen to everything He says. The way in which I show God that I neither love nor respect Him is by the obtuseness of my heart and mind towards what He says. If I love my friend, I intuitively detect what he wants, and Jesus says, "Ye are My friends." Have I disobeyed some command of my Lord's this week? If I had realized that it was a command of Jesus, I would not consciously have disobeyed it; but most of us show such disrespect to God that we do not even hear what He says, He might never have spoken.

The destiny of my spiritual life is such identification with Jesus Christ that I always hear God, and I know that God always hears me (John 11:41). If I am united with Jesus Christ, I hear God, by the devotion of hearing all the time. A lily, or a tree, or a servant of God, may convey God's message to me. What hinders me from hearing is that I am taken up with other things. It is not that I will not hear God, but I am not devoted in the right place. I am devoted to things, to service, to convictions, and God may say what He likes but I do not hear Him. The child attitude is always, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." If I have not cultivated this devotion of hearing, I can only hear God's voice at certain times; at other times I am taken up with things - things which I say I must do, and I become deaf to Him, I am not living the life of a child. Have I heard God's voice to-day?

## February 14: THE DISCIPLINE OF HEEDING

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

At times God puts us through the discipline of darkness to teach us to heed Him. Song birds are taught to sing in the dark, and we are put into the shadow of God's hand until we learn to hear Him. "What I tell you in darkness" - watch where God puts you into darkness, and when you are there keep your mouth shut. Are you in the dark just now in your circumstances, or in your life with God? Then remain quiet. If you open your mouth in the dark, you will talk in the wrong mood: darkness is the time to listen. Don't talk to other people about it; don't read books to find out the reason of the darkness, but listen and heed. If you talk to other people, you cannot hear what God is saying. When you are in the dark, listen, and God will give you a very precious message for someone else when you get into the light.

After every time of darkness there comes a mixture of delight and humiliation (if there is delight only, I question whether we have heard God at all), delight in hearing God speak, but chiefly humiliation - What a long time I was in hearing that! How slow I have been in understanding that! And yet God has been saying it all these days and weeks. Now He gives you the gift of humiliation which brings the softness of heart that will always listen to God *now*.



**February 15: AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?**  
***"None of us liveth to himself."* Romans 14:7.**

Has it ever dawned on you that you are responsible for other souls spiritually before God? For instance, if I allow any private deflection from God in my life, everyone about me suffers. We "*sit together* in heavenly places." "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." When once you allow physical selfishness, mental slovenliness, moral obtuseness, spiritual density, everyone belonging to your crowd will suffer. "But," you say, "who is sufficient for these things if you erect a standard like that?" "Our sufficiency is of God," and of Him alone.

"Ye shall be My witnesses." How many of us are willing to spend every ounce of nervous energy, of mental, moral and spiritual energy we have for Jesus Christ? That is the meaning of a *witness* in God's sense of the word. It takes time, be patient with yourself. God has left us on the earth - what for? To be saved and sanctified? No, to be at it for Him. Am I willing to be broken bread and poured out wine for Him? To be spoilt for this age, for this life, to be spoilt from every standpoint but one - saving as I can disciple men and women to the Lord Jesus Christ. My life as a worker is the way I say "thank you" to God for His unspeakable salvation. Remember it is quite possible for any one of us to be flung out as reprobate silver - ". . . lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

## February 16: THE INSPIRATION OF SPIRITUAL INITIATIVE

*"Arise from the dead."* Ephesians 5:14

All initiative is not inspired. A man may say to you - "Buck up, take your disinclination by the throat, throw it overboard, and walk out into the thing!" That is ordinary human initiative. But when the Spirit of God comes in and says, in effect, "Buck up," we find that the initiative is inspired.

We all have any number of visions and ideals when we are young, but sooner or later we find that we have no power to make them real. We cannot do the things we long to do, and we are apt to settle down to the visions and ideals as dead, and God has to come and say - "Arise from the dead." When the inspiration of God does come, it comes with such miraculous power that we are able to arise from the dead and do the impossible thing. The remarkable thing about spiritual initiative is that the life comes after we do the "bucking up." God does not give us overcoming life; He gives us life *as we overcome*. When the inspiration of God comes, and He says - "Arise from the dead," we have to get up; God does not lift us up. Our Lord said to the man with the withered hand - "Stretch forth thy hand," and as soon as the man did so, his hand was healed, but he had to take the initiative. If we will do the overcoming, we shall find we are inspired of God because He gives life immediately.

## February 17: THE INITIATIVE AGAINST DEPRESSION

*"Arise and eat."* 1 Kings 19:5

The angel did not give Elijah a vision, or explain the Scriptures to him, or do anything remarkable; he told Elijah to do the most ordinary thing, viz., to get up and eat. If we were never depressed we should not be alive; it is the nature of a crystal never to be depressed. A human being is capable of depression, otherwise there would be no capacity for exaltation. There are things that are calculated to depress, things that are of the nature of death; and in taking an estimate of yourself, always take into account the capacity for depression.

When the Spirit of God comes He does not give us visions, He tells us to do the most ordinary things conceivable. Depression is apt to turn us away from the ordinary commonplace things of God's creation, but whenever God comes, the inspiration is to do the most natural simple thing - the things we would never have imagined God was in, and as we do them we find He is there. The inspiration which comes to us in this way is an initiative against depression; we have to do the next thing and do it in the inspiration of God. If we do a thing in order to overcome depression, we deepen the depression; but if the Spirit of God makes us feel intuitively that we must do the thing, and we do it, the depression is gone. Immediately we arise and obey, we enter on a higher plane of life.

## February 18: THE INITIATIVE AGAINST DESPAIR

*"Rise, let us be going."* Matthew 26:46

The disciples went to sleep when they should have kept awake, and when they realized what they had done it produced despair. The sense of the irreparable is apt to make us despair, and we say - "It is all up now, it is no use trying any more." If we imagine that this kind of despair is exceptional, we are mistaken, it is a very ordinary human experience. Whenever we realize that we have not done that which we had a magnificent opportunity of doing, then we are apt to sink into despair; and Jesus Christ comes and says - "Sleep on now, that opportunity is lost for ever, you cannot alter it, but arise and go to the next thing." Let the past sleep, but let it sleep on the bosom of Christ, and go out into the irresistible future with Him.

There are experiences like this in each of our lives. We are in despair, the despair that comes from actualities, and we cannot lift ourselves out of it. The disciples in this instance had done a downright unforgivable thing; they had gone to sleep instead of watching with Jesus, but He came with a spiritual initiative against their despair and said - "Arise and do the next thing." If we are inspired of God, what is the next thing? To trust Him absolutely and to pray on the ground of His Redemption.

Never let the sense of failure corrupt your new action.

## February 19: THE INITIATIVE AGAINST DRUDGERY

*"Arise, shine."* Isaiah 60:1

We have to take the first step as though there were no God. It is no use to wait for God to help us, He will not; but immediately we arise we find He is there. Whenever God inspires, the initiative is a moral one. We must do the thing and not lie like a log. If we will arise and shine, drudgery becomes divinely transfigured.

Drudgery is one of the finest touchstones of character there is. Drudgery is work that is very far removed from anything to do with the ideal - the utterly mean grubby things; and when we come in contact with them we know instantly whether or not we are spiritually real. Read John 13. We see there the Incarnate God doing the most desperate piece of drudgery, washing fishermen's feet, and He says - "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." It requires the inspiration of God to go through drudgery with the light of God upon it. Some people do a certain thing and the way in which they do it hallows that thing for ever afterwards. It may be the most commonplace thing, but after we have seen them do it, it becomes different. When the Lord does a thing through us, He always transfigures it. Our Lord took on Him our human flesh and transfigured it, and it has become for every saint the temple of the Holy Ghost.

## February 20: THE INITIATIVE AGAINST DREAMING

*"Arise, let us go hence."* John 14:31

Dreaming about a thing in order to do it properly is right; but dreaming about it when we should be doing it is wrong. After Our Lord had said those wonderful things to His disciples, we might have expected that He would tell them to go away and meditate over them all; but Our Lord never allowed "mooning." When we are getting into contact with God in order to find out what He wants, dreaming is right; but when we are inclined to spend our time in dreaming over what we have been told to do, it is a bad thing and God's blessing is never on it. God's initiative is always in the nature of a stab against this kind of dreaming, the stab that bids us "neither sit nor stand but go."

If we are quietly waiting before God and He has said - "Come ye yourselves apart," then that is meditation before God in order to get at the line He wants; but always beware of giving over to mere dreaming when once God has spoken. Leave Him to be the source of all your dreams and joys and delights, and go out and obey what He has said. If you are in love, you do not sit down and dream about the one you love all the time, you go and do something for him; and that is what Jesus Christ expects us to do. Dreaming after God has spoken is an indication that we do not trust Him.

## February 21: HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CARRIED AWAY FOR HIM?

*"She hath wrought a good work on Me."* Mark 14:6

If human love does not carry a man beyond himself, it is not love. If love is always discreet, always wise, always sensible and calculating, never carried beyond itself, it is not love at all. It may be affection, it may be warmth of feeling, but it has not the true nature of love in it. Have I ever been carried away to do something for God not because it was my duty, nor because it was useful, nor because there was anything in it at all beyond the fact that I love Him? Have I ever realized that I can bring to God things which are of value to Him, or am I mooning round the magnitude of His Redemption whilst there are any number of things I might be doing? Not Divine, colossal things which could be recorded as marvellous, but ordinary, simple human things which will give evidence to God that I am abandoned to Him? Have I ever produced in the heart of the Lord Jesus what Mary of Bethany produced? There are times when it seems as if God watches to see if we will give Him the abandoned tokens of how genuinely we do love Him. Abandon to God is of more value than personal holiness. Personal holiness focuses the eye on our own whiteness; we are greatly concerned about the way we walk and talk and look, fearful lest we offend Him. Perfect love casts out all that when once we are abandoned to God. We have to get rid of this notion - "Am I of any use?" and make up our minds that we are not, and we may be near the truth. It is never a question of being of use, but of being of value to God Himself. When we are abandoned to God, He works through us all the time.

## February 22: THE DISCIPLINE OF SPIRITUAL TENACITY

*"Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10*

Tenacity is more than endurance, it is endurance combined with the absolute certainty that what we are looking for is going to transpire. Tenacity is more than hanging on, which may be but the weakness of being too afraid to fall off. Tenacity is the supreme effort of a man refusing to believe that his hero is going to be conquered. The greatest fear a man has is not that he will be damned, but that Jesus Christ will be worsted, that the things He stood for - love and justice and forgiveness and kindness among men - will not win out in the end; the things He stands for look like will-o'-the-wisps. Then comes the call to spiritual tenacity, not to hang on and do nothing, but to work deliberately on the certainty that God is not going to be worsted.

If our hopes are being disappointed just now, it means that they are being purified. There is nothing noble the human mind has ever hoped for or dreamed of that will not be fulfilled. One of the greatest strains in life is the strain of waiting for God. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience."

Remain spiritually tenacious.



## February 23: THE DETERMINATION TO SERVE

***"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."* Matthew 20:28**

Paul's idea of service is the same as Our Lord's: "I am among you as He that serveth;" "ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." We have the idea that a man called to the ministry is called to be a different kind of being from other men. According to Jesus Christ, he is called to be the "door-mat" of other men; their spiritual leader, but never their superior. "I know how to be abased," says Paul. This is Paul's idea of service - "I will spend myself to the last ebb for you; you may give me praise or give me blame, it will make no difference." So long as there is a human being who does not know Jesus Christ, I am his debtor to serve him until he does. The mainspring of Paul's service is not love for men, but love for Jesus Christ. If we are devoted to the cause of humanity, we shall soon be crushed and broken-hearted, for we shall often meet with more ingratitude from men than we would from a dog; but if our motive is love to God, no ingratitude can hinder us from serving our fellow men.

Paul's realization of how Jesus Christ had dealt with him is the secret of his determination to serve others. "I was before a perjurer, a blasphemer, an injurious person" - no matter how men may treat me, they will never treat me with the spite and hatred with which I treated Jesus Christ. When we realize that Jesus Christ has served us to the end of our meanness, our selfishness, and sin, nothing that we meet with from others can exhaust our determination to serve men for His sake.

## February 24: THE DELIGHT OF SACRIFICE

*"I will very gladly spend and be spent for you;"* 2 Corinthians 12:15

When the Spirit of God has shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, we begin deliberately to identify ourselves with Jesus Christ's interests in other people, and Jesus Christ is interested in every kind of man there is. We have no right in Christian work to be guided by our affinities; this is one of the biggest tests of our relationship to Jesus Christ. The delight of sacrifice is that I lay down my life for my Friend, not fling it away, but deliberately lay my life out for Him and His interests in other people, not for a cause. Paul spent himself for one purpose only - that he might win men to Jesus Christ. Paul attracted to Jesus all the time, never to himself. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." When a man says he must develop a holy life alone with God, he is of no more use to his fellow men: he puts himself on a pedestal, away from the common run of men. Paul became a sacramental personality; wherever he went, Jesus Christ helped Himself to his life. Many of us are after our own ends, and Jesus Christ cannot help Himself to our lives. If we are abandoned to Jesus, we have no ends of our own to serve. Paul said he knew how to be a "door-mat" without resenting it, because the mainspring of his life was devotion to Jesus. We are apt to be devoted, not to Jesus Christ, but to the things which emancipate us spiritually. That was not Paul's motive. "I could wish my self were accursed from Christ for my brethren" - wild, extravagant - is it? When a man is in love it is not an exaggeration to talk in that way, and Paul is in love with Jesus Christ.

## February 25: THE DESTITUTION OF SERVICE

*"Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."* 2 Corinthians 12:15

Natural love expects some return, but Paul says - I do not care whether you love me or not, I am willing to destitute myself completely, not merely for your sakes, but that I may get you to God. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." Paul's idea of service is exactly along that line - I do not care with what extravagance I spend myself, and I will do it gladly. It was a joyful thing to Paul.

The ecclesiastical idea of a servant of God is not Jesus Christ's idea. His idea is that we serve Him by being the servants of other men. Jesus Christ out-socialists the socialists. He says that in His Kingdom he that is greatest shall be the servant of all. The real test of the saint is not preaching the gospel, but washing disciples' feet, that is, doing the things that do not count in the actual estimate of men but count everything in the estimate of God. Paul delighted to spend himself out for God's interests in other people, and he did not care what it cost. We come in with our economical notions - "Suppose God wants me to go there - what about the salary? What about the climate? How shall I be looked after? A man must consider these things." All that is an indication that we are serving God with a reserve. The apostle Paul had no reserve. Paul focuses Jesus Christ's idea of a New Testament saint in his life, viz.: not one who proclaims the Gospel merely, but one who becomes broken bread and poured out wine in the hands of Jesus Christ for other lives.

## February 26: INFERIOR MISGIVINGS ABOUT JESUS

*"Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with." John 4:11*

"I am impressed with the wonder of what God says, but He cannot expect me really to live it out in the details of my life!" When it comes to facing Jesus Christ on His own merits, our attitude is one of pious superiority - Your ideals are high and they impress us, but in touch with actual things, it cannot be done. Each of us thinks about Jesus in this way in some particular. These misgivings about Jesus start from the amused questions put to us when we talk of our transactions with God - Where are you going to get your money from? How are you going to be looked after? Or they start from ourselves when we tell Jesus that our case is a bit too hard for Him. It is all very well to say "Trust in the Lord," but a man must live, and Jesus has nothing to draw with - nothing whereby to give us these things. Beware of the pious fraud in you which says - I have no misgivings about Jesus, only about myself. None of us ever had misgivings about ourselves; we know exactly what we cannot do, but we do have misgivings about Jesus. We are rather hurt at the idea that He can do what we cannot.

My misgivings arise from the fact that I ransack my own person to find out how He will be able to do it. My questions spring from the depths of my own inferiority. If I detect these misgivings in myself, let me bring them to the light and confess them - "Lord, I have had misgivings about Thee, I have not believed in Thy wits apart from my own; I have not believed in Thine almighty power apart from my finite understanding of it."

## February 27: IMPOVERISHED MINISTRY OF JESUS

*"From whence then hast Thou that living water?" John 4:11*

"The well is deep" - and a great deal deeper than the Samaritan woman knew! Think of the depths of human nature, of human life, think of the depths of the "wells" in you. Have you been impoverishing the ministry of Jesus so that He can not do anything? Suppose there is a well of fathomless trouble inside your heart, and Jesus comes and says - "Let not your heart be troubled"; and you shrug your shoulders and say, "But, Lord, the well is deep; You cannot draw up quietness and comfort out of it." No, He will bring them down from above. Jesus does not bring anything up from the wells of human nature. We limit the Holy One of Israel by remembering what we have allowed Him to do for us in the past, and by saying, "Of course I cannot expect God to do this thing." The thing that taxes almightiness is the very thing which we as disciples of Jesus ought to believe He will do. We impoverish His ministry the moment we forget He is Almighty; the impoverishment is in us, not in Him. We will come to Jesus as Comforter or as Sympathizer, but we will not come to Him as Almighty.

The reason some of us are such poor specimens of Christianity is because we have no Almighty Christ. We have Christian attributes and experiences, but there is no abandonment to Jesus Christ. When we get into difficult circumstances, we impoverish His ministry by saying - "Of course He cannot do any thing," and we struggle down to the deeps and try to get the water for ourselves. Beware of the satisfaction of sinking back and saying - "It can't be done"; you know it can be done if you look to Jesus. The well of your incompleteness is deep, but make the effort and look away to Him.

## February 28: DO YE NOW BELIEVE?

*"By this we believe . . . Jesus answered, Do ye now believe?" John 16:30-31*

Now we believe. Jesus says - Do you? The time is coming when you will leave Me alone. Many a Christian worker has left Jesus Christ alone and gone into work from a sense of duty, or from a sense of need arising out of his own particular discernment. The reason for this is the absence of the resurrection life of Jesus. The soul has got out of intimate contact with God by leaning to its own religious understanding. There is no sin in it, and no punishment attached to it; but when the soul realizes how he has hindered his understanding of Jesus Christ, and produced for himself perplexities and sorrows and difficulties, it is with shame and contrition he has to come back.

We need to rely on the resurrection life of Jesus much deeper down than we do, to get into the habit of steadily referring everything back to Him; instead of this we make our common-sense decisions and ask God to bless them. He cannot, it is not in His domain, it is severed from reality. If we do a thing from a sense of duty, we are putting up a standard in competition with Jesus Christ. We become a "superior person," and say - "Now in this matter I must do this and that." We have put our sense of duty on the throne instead of the resurrection life of Jesus. We are not told to walk in the light of conscience or of a sense of duty, but to walk in the light *as God is in the light*. When we do anything from a sense of duty, we can back it up by argument; when we do anything in obedience to the Lord, there is no argument possible; that is why a saint can be easily ridiculed.

## February 29: WHAT DO YOU WANT THE LORD TO DO FOR YOU?

*Lord, that I may receive my sight." Luke 18:41*

What is the thing that not only disturbs you but makes you a disturbance? It is always something you cannot deal with yourself. "They rebuked him that he should hold his peace . . . but he cried so much the more." Persist in the disturbance until you get face to face with the Lord Himself; do not deify common sense. When Jesus asks us what we want Him to do for us in regard to the incredible thing with which we are faced, remember that He does not work in common - sense ways, but in supernatural ways.

Watch how we limit the Lord by remembering what we have allowed Him to do for us in the past: I always failed there, and I always shall; consequently we do not ask for what we want. "It is ridiculous to ask God to do this." If it is an impossibility, it is the thing we have to ask. If it is not an impossible thing, it is not a real disturbance. God will do the absolutely impossible.

This man received his sight. The most impossible thing to you is that you should be so identified with the Lord that there is nothing of the old life left. He will do it if you ask Him. But you have to come to the place where you believe Him to be Almighty. Faith is not in what Jesus says but in Himself; if we only look at what He says we shall never believe. When once we see Jesus, He does the impossible thing as naturally as breathing. Our agony comes through the wilful stupidity of our own heart. We *won't* believe, we *won't* cut the shore line, we prefer to worry on.

## March 1: THE UNDEVIATING QUESTION

### *"Lovest thou Me?"* John 21:17

Peter declares nothing now (cf. Matthew 26:33-35). Natural individuality professes and declares; the love of the personality is only discovered by the hurt of the question of Jesus Christ. Peter loved Jesus in the way in which any natural man loves a good man. That is temperamental love; it may go deep into the individuality, but it does not touch the centre of the person. True love never professes anything. Jesus said - "Whosoever shall confess Me before men," i.e., confess his love not merely by his words, but by everything he does.

Unless we get hurt right out of every deception about ourselves, the word of God is not having its way with us. The word of God hurts as no sin can ever hurt, because sin blunts feeling. The question of the Lord intensifies feeling, until to be hurt by Jesus is the most exquisite hurt conceivable. It hurts not only in the natural way but in the profound personal way. The word of the Lord pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, there is no deception left. There is no possibility of being sentimental with the Lord's question; you cannot say nice things when the Lord speaks directly to you, the hurt is too terrific. It is such a hurt that it stings every other concern out of account. There never can be any mistake about the hurt of the Lord's word when it comes to His child; but the point of the hurt is the great point of revelation.



## March 2: HAVE YOU FELT THE HURT OF THE LORD?

*"Jesus said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me?" John 21:17*

Have you felt the hurt of the Lord to the uncovered quick, the place where the real sensitiveness of your life is lodged? The devil never hurts there, neither sin nor human affection hurts there, nothing goes through to that place but the word of God. "Peter was grieved because Jesus said unto him the third time. . . ." He was awakening to the fact that in the real true centre of his personal life he was devoted to Jesus, and he began to see what the patient questioning meant. There was not the slightest strand of delusion left in Peter's mind, he never could be deluded again. There was no room for passionate utterance, no room for exhilaration or sentiment. It was a revelation to him to realize how much he did love the Lord, and with amazement he said - "Lord, Thou knowest all things." Peter began to see how much he did love Jesus; but he did not say - "Look at this or that to confirm it." Peter was beginning to discover to himself how much he did love the Lord, that there was no one in heaven above or upon earth beneath beside Jesus Christ; but he did not know it until the probing, hurting questions of the Lord came. The Lord's questions always reveal me to myself.

The patient directness and skill of Jesus Christ with Peter! Our Lord never asks questions until the right time. Rarely, but probably once, He will get us into a corner where He will hurt us with His undeviating questions, and we will realize that we do love Him far more deeply than any profession can ever show.

## March 3: THE UNRELIEVED QUEST

*"Feed My sheep."* John 21:17

This is love in the making. The love of God is tin-made, it is God's nature. When we receive the Holy Spirit He unites us with God so that His love is manifested in us. When the soul is united to God by the indwelling Holy Spirit, that is not the end; the end is that we may be one with the Father as Jesus was. What kind of oneness had Jesus Christ with the Father? Such a oneness that the Father sent Him down here to be spent for us, and He says - "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

Peter realizes now with the revelation of the Lord's hurting question that he does love Him; then comes the point - "Spend it out." Don't testify how much you love Me, don't profess about the marvellous revelation you have had, but - "Feed My sheep." And Jesus has some extraordinarily funny sheep, some bedraggled, dirty sheep, some awkward, butting sheep, some sheep that have gone astray! It is impossible to weary God's love, and it is impossible to weary that love in me if it springs from the one centre. The love of God pays no attention to the distinctions made by natural individuality. If I love my Lord I have no business to be guided by natural temperament; I have to feed His sheep. There is no relief and no release from this commission. Beware of counterfeiting the love of God by working along the line of natural human sympathy, because that will end in blaspheming the love of God.

## March 4: COULD THIS BE TRUE OF ME?

*"But none of these things move me,  
neither count I my life dear unto myself." Acts 20:24*

It is easier to serve God without a vision, easier to work for God without a call, because then you are not bothered by what God requires; common sense is your guide, veneered over with Christian sentiment. You will be more prosperous and successful, more leisure-hearted, if you never realize the call of God. But if once you receive a commission from Jesus Christ, the memory of what God wants will always come like a goad; you will no longer be able to work for Him on the common-sense basis.

What do I really count dear? If I have not been gripped by Jesus Christ, I will count service dear, time given to God dear, my life dear unto myself. Paul says he counted his life dear only in order that he might fulfil the ministry he had received; he refused to use his energy for any other thing. Acts 20:24 states Paul's almost sublime annoyance at being asked to consider himself; he was absolutely indifferent to any consideration other than that of fulfilling the ministry he had received. Practical work may be a competitor against abandonment to God, because practical work is based on this argument - Remember how 'useful you are here, or - Think how much value you would be in that particular type of work." That attitude does not put Jesus Christ as the Guide as to where we should go, but our judgment as to where we are of most use. Never consider whether you are of use; but ever consider that you are not your own but His.

## March 5: IS HE REALLY LORD?

*" . . . so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus." Acts 20:24*

Joy means the perfect fulfilment of that for which I was created and regenerated, not the successful doing of a thing. The joy Our Lord had lay in doing what the Father sent Him to do, and He says - "As My Father hath sent Me, even so am I sending you." Have I received a ministry from the Lord? If so, I have to be loyal to it, to count my life precious only for the fulfilling of that ministry. Think of the satisfaction it will be to hear Jesus say - "Well done, good and faithful servant"; to know that you have done what He sent you to do. We have all to find our niche in life, and spiritually we find it when we receive our ministry from the Lord. In order to do this we must have companied with Jesus; we must know Him as more than a personal Saviour. "I will show him how great things he must suffer *for My sake.*" "Lovest thou Me?" Then - "Feed My sheep." There is no choice of service, only absolute loyalty to Our Lord's commission; loyalty to what you discern when you are in closest contact with God. If you have received a ministry from the Lord Jesus, you will know that the need is never the call: the need is the opportunity. The call is loyalty to the ministry you received when you were in real touch with Him. This does not imply that there is a campaign of service marked out for you, but it does mean that you will have to ignore the demands for service along other lines.

## March 6: AMID A CROWD OF PALTRY THINGS

*" . . . in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses." 2 Corinthians 6:4*

It takes Almighty grace to take the next step when there is no vision and no spectator - the next step in devotion, the next step in your study, in your reading, in your kitchen; the next step in your duty, when there is no vision from God, no enthusiasm and no spectator. It takes far more of the grace of God, far more conscious drawing upon God to take that step, than it does to preach the Gospel.

Every Christian has to partake of what was the essence of the Incarnation, he must bring the thing down into flesh and blood actualities and work it out through the finger tips. We flag when there is no vision, no uplift, but just the common round, the trivial task. The thing that tells in the long run for God and for men is the steady persevering work in the unseen, and the only way to keep the life uncrushed is to live looking to God. Ask God to keep the eyes of your spirit open to the Risen Christ, and it will be impossible for drudgery to damp you. Continually get away from pettiness and paltriness of mind and thought out into the thirteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel.

## March 7: UNDAUNTED RADIANCE

***"Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Romans 8:37***

Paul is speaking of the things that might seem likely to separate or wedge in between the saint and the love of God; but the remarkable thing is that nothing *can* wedge in between the love of God and the saint. These things can and do come in between the devotional exercises of the soul and God and separate individual life from God; but none of them is able to wedge in between the love of God and the soul of the saint. The bedrock of our Christian faith is the unmerited, fathomless marvel of the love of God exhibited on the Cross of Calvary, a love we never can and never shall merit. Paul says this is the reason we are more than conquerors in all these things, super-victors, with a joy we would not have but for the very things which look as if they are going to overwhelm us.

The surf that distresses the ordinary swimmer produces in the surf-rider the super-joy of going clean through it. Apply that to our own circumstances, these very things - tribulation, distress, persecution, produce in us the super-joy; they are not things to fight. We are more than conquerors through Him in all these things, not in spite of them, but in the midst of them. The saint never knows the joy of the Lord in spite of tribulation, but *because* of it - "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation," says Paul.

Undaunted radiance is not built on anything passing, but on the love of God that nothing can alter. The experiences of life, terrible or monotonous, are impotent to touch the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## March 8: THE RELINQUISHED LIFE

*"I am crucified with Christ."* Galatians 2:20

No one is ever united with Jesus Christ until he is willing to relinquish not sin only, but his whole way of looking at things. To be born from above of the Spirit of God means that we must let go before we lay hold, and in the first stages it is the relinquishing of all pretence. What Our Lord wants us to present to Him is not goodness, nor honesty, nor endeavour, but real solid sin; that is all He can take from us. And what does He give in exchange for our sin? Real solid righteousness. But we must relinquish all pretence of being any thing, all claim of being worthy of God's consideration.

Then the Spirit of God will show us what further there is to relinquish. There will have to be the relinquishing of my claim to my right to myself in every phase. Am I willing to relinquish my hold on all I possess, my hold on my affections, and on everything, and to be identified with the death of Jesus Christ?

There is always a sharp painful disillusionment to go through before we do relinquish. When a man really sees himself as the Lord sees him, it is not the abominable sins of the flesh that shock him, but the awful nature of the pride of his own heart against Jesus Christ. When he sees himself in the light of the Lord, the shame and the horror and the desperate conviction come home.

If you are up against the question of relinquishing, go through the crisis, relinquish all, and God will make you fit for all that He requires of you.

**March 9: THE TIME OF RELAPSE**  
***"Will ye also go away?" John 6:67***

A penetrating question. Our Lord's words come home most when He talks in the most simple way. We know Who Jesus is, but in spite of that He says - "Will ye also go away?" We have to maintain a venturing attitude toward Him all the time.

"From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." They went back from walking with Jesus, not into sin, but they relapsed. Many to-day are spending and being spent in work for Jesus Christ, but they do not walk with Him. The one thing God keeps us to steadily is that we may be one with Jesus Christ. After sanctification the discipline of our spiritual life is along this line. If God gives a clear and emphatic realization to your soul of what He wants, do not try to keep yourself in that relationship by any particular method, but live a natural life of absolute dependence on Jesus Christ. Never try to live the life with God on any other line than God's line, and that line is absolute devotion to Him. The certainty that I do not know - that is the secret of going with Jesus. Peter only saw in Jesus Someone to minister salvation to him and to the world. Our Lord wants us to be yoke-fellows with Him.

v. 70. Jesus answers the great lack in Peter. We cannot answer for others.



## March 10: HAVE A MESSAGE AND BE ONE

*"Preach the word." 2 Timothy 4:2*

We are not saved to be "channels only," but to be sons and daughters of God. We are not turned into spiritual mediums, but into spiritual messengers; the message must be part of ourselves. The Son of God was His own message, His words were spirit and life; and as His disciples our lives must be the sacrament of our message. The natural heart will do any amount of serving, but it takes the heart broken by conviction of sin, and baptized by the Holy Ghost, and crumpled into the purpose of God before the life becomes the sacrament of its message.

There is a difference between giving a testimony and preaching. A preacher is one who has realized the call of God and is determined to use his every power to proclaim God's truth. God takes us out of our own ideas for our lives and we are "batter'd to shape and use," as the disciples were after Pentecost. Pentecost did not teach the disciples any thing; it made them the incarnation of what they preached - "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me."

Let God have perfect liberty when you speak. Before God's message can liberate other souls, the liberation must be real in you. Gather your material, and set it alight when you speak.

## March 11: VISION

***"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Acts 26:19***

If we lose the vision, we alone are responsible, and the way we lose the vision is by spiritual leakage. If we do not run our belief about God into practical issues, it is all up with the vision God has given. The only way to be obedient to the heavenly vision is to give our utmost for God's highest, and this can only be done by continually and resolutely recalling the vision. The test is the sixty seconds of every minute, and the sixty minutes of every hour, not our times of prayer and devotional meetings.

"Though it tarry, wait for it." We cannot attain to a vision, we must live in the inspiration of it until it accomplishes itself. We get so practical that we forget the vision. At the beginning we saw it but did not wait for it; we rushed off into practical work, and when the vision was fulfilled, we did not see it. Waiting for the vision that tarries is the test of our loyalty to God. It is at the peril of our soul's welfare that we get caught up in practical work and miss the fulfilment of the vision.

Watch God's cyclones. The only way God sows His saints is by His whirlwind. Are you going to prove an empty pod? It will depend on whether or not you are actually living in the light of what you have seen. Let God fling you out, and do not go until He does. If you select your own spot, you will prove an empty pod. If God sows you, you will bring forth fruit. It is essential to practise the walk of the feet in the light of the vision.

## March 12: ABANDONMENT

*"Then Peter began to say unto Him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee.."*

**Mark 10:28**

Our Lord replies in effect, that abandonment is for Himself, and not for what the disciples themselves will get from it. Beware of an abandonment which has the commercial spirit in it - "I am going to give myself to God because I want to be delivered from sin, because I want to be made holy." All that is the result of being right with God, but that spirit is not of the essential nature of Christianity. Abandonment is not *for* anything at all. We have got so commercialized that we only go to God for something from Him, and not for Himself. It is like saying, "No, Lord, I don't want Thee, I want myself; but I want myself clean and filled with the Holy Ghost; I want to be put in Thy show room and be able to say - 'This is what God has done for me.'" If we only give up something to God because we want more back, there is nothing of the Holy Spirit in our abandonment; it is miserable commercial self-interest. That we gain heaven, that we are delivered from sin, that we are made useful to God - these things never enter as considerations into real abandonment, which is a personal sovereign preference for Jesus Christ Himself.

When we come up against the barriers of natural relationship, where is Jesus Christ? Most of us desert Him - "Yes, Lord, I did hear Thy call; but my mother is in the road, my wife, my self-interest, and I can go no further." "Then," Jesus says, "you cannot be My disciple."

The test of abandonment is always over the neck of natural devotion. Go over it, and God's own abandonment will embrace all those you had to hurt in abandoning. Beware of stopping short of abandonment to God. Most of us know abandonment in vision only.

## March 13: THE ABANDONMENT OF GOD

*"God so loved the world that He gave. . ."* John 3:16

Salvation is not merely deliverance from sin, nor the experience of personal holiness; the salvation of God is deliverance out of self entirely into union with Himself. My experimental knowledge of salvation will be along the line of deliverance from sin and of personal holiness; but salvation means that the Spirit of God has brought me into touch with God's personality, and I am thrilled with something infinitely greater than myself, I am caught up into the abandonment of God.

To say that we are called to preach holiness or sanctification, is to get into a side eddy. We are called to proclaim Jesus Christ. The fact that He saves from sin and makes us holy is part of the effect of the wonderful abandonment of God.

Abandonment never produces the consciousness of its own effort, because the whole life is taken up with the One to Whom we abandon. Beware of talking about abandonment if you know nothing about it, and you will never know anything about it until you have realized that John 3:16 means that God gave Himself absolutely. In our abandonment we give ourselves over to God just as God gave Himself for us, without any calculation. The consequence of abandonment never enters into our outlook because our life is taken up with Him.

## March 14: OBEDIENCE

*"His servants ye are to whom ye obey."* Romans 6:16

The first thing to do in examining the power that dominates me is to take hold of the unwelcome fact that I am responsible for being thus dominated. If I am a slave to myself, I am to blame because at a point away back I yielded to myself. Likewise, if I obey God I do so because I have yielded myself to Him.

Yield in childhood to selfishness, and you will find it the most enchaining tyranny on earth. There is no power in the human soul of itself to break the bondage of a disposition formed by yielding. Yield for one second to anything in the nature of lust (remember what lust is: "I must have it at once," whether it be the lust of the flesh or the lust of the mind) - once yield and though you may hate yourself for having yielded, you are a bondsman to that thing. There is no release in human power at all but only in the Redemption. You must yield yourself in utter humiliation to the only One Who can break the dominating power viz., the Lord Jesus Christ - "He hath anointed me . . . to preach deliverance to all captives."

You find this out in the most ridiculously small ways - "Oh, I can give that habit up when I like." You cannot, you will find that the habit absolutely dominates you because you yielded to it willingly. It is easy to sing - "He will break every fetter" and at the same time believing a life of obvious slavery to yourself. Yielding to Jesus will break every form of slavery in any human life.

## March 15: THE DISCIPLINE OF DISMAY

*"And as they followed, they were afraid."* Mark 10:32

At the beginning we were sure we knew all about Jesus Christ, it was a delight to sell all and to fling ourselves out in a hardihood of love; but now we are not quite so sure. Jesus is on in front and He looks strange: "Jesus went before them and they were amazed."

There is an aspect of Jesus that chills the heart of a disciple to the core and makes the whole spiritual life gasp for breath. This strange Being with His face "set like a flint" and His striding determination, strikes terror into me. He is no longer Counsellor and Comrade, He is taken up with a point of view I know nothing about, and I am amazed at Him. At first I was confident that I understood Him, but now I am not so sure. I begin to realize there is a distance between Jesus Christ and me; I can no longer be familiar with Him. He is ahead of me and He never turns round; I have no idea where He is going, and the goal has become strangely far off.

Jesus Christ had to fathom every sin and every sorrow man could experience, and that is what makes Him seem strange. When we see Him in this aspect we do not know Him, we do not recognize one feature of His life, and we do not know how to begin to follow Him. He is on in front, a Leader Who is very strange, and we have no comradeship with Him.

The discipline of dismay is essential in the life of discipleship. The danger is to get back to a little fire of our own and kindle enthusiasm at it (cf. Isaiah 1:10-11). When the darkness of dismay comes, endure until it is over, because out of it will come that following of Jesus which is an unspeakable joy.

## March 16: THE MASTER ASSIZES

***"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:10***

Paul says that we must all, preacher and people alike, "appear before the judgment seat of Christ." If you learn to live in the white light of Christ here and now, judgment finally will cause you to delight in the work of God in you. Keep yourself steadily faced by the judgment seat of Christ; walk now in the light of the holiest you know. A wrong temper of mind about another soul will end in the spirit of the devil, no matter how saintly you are. One carnal judgment, and the end of it is hell in you. Drag it to the light at once and say - "My God, I have been guilty there." If you don't, hardness will come all through. The penalty of sin is confirmation in sin. It is not only God who punishes for sin; sin confirms itself in the sinner and gives back full pay. No struggling nor praying will enable you to stop doing some things, and the penalty of sin is that gradually you get used to it and do not know that it is sin. No power save the incoming of the Holy Ghost can alter the inherent consequences of sin.

"But if we walk in the light as *He is in the light.*" Walking in the light means for many of us walking according to our standard for another person. The deadliest Pharisaism to-day is not hypocrisy, but unconscious unreality.

## March 17: THE WORKER'S RULING PASSION

***"Wherefore we labour that . . . we may be accepted of Him." 2 Corinthians 5:9***

"Wherefore we *labour* . . ." It is arduous work to keep the master ambition in front. It means holding one's self to the high ideal year in and year out, not being ambitious to win souls or to establish churches or to have revivals, but being ambitious only to be "accepted of Him." It is not lack of spiritual experience that leads to failure, but lack of labouring to keep the ideal right. Once a week at least take stock before God and see whether you are keeping your life up to the standard He wishes. Paul is like a musician who does not heed the approval of the audience if he can catch the look of approval from his Master.

Any ambition which is in the tiniest degree away from this central one of being "approved unto God" may end in our being castaways. Learn to discern where the ambition leads, and you will see why it is so necessary to live facing the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says - "Lest my body should make me take another line, I am constantly watching so that I may bring it into subjection and keep it under." (1 Cor. 9:27.)

I have to learn to relate everything to the master ambition, and to maintain it without any cessation. My worth to God in public is what I am in private. Is my master ambition to please Him and be acceptable to Him, or is it something less, no matter how noble?



## March 18: SHALL I ROUSE MYSELF UP TO THIS?

*"Perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1*

"Having therefore these promises." I claim the fulfilment of God's promises, and rightly, but that is only the human side; the Divine side is that through the promises I recognize God's claim on me. For instance, am I realizing that my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, or have I a habit of body that plainly will not bear the light of God on it? By sanctification the Son of God is formed in me, then I have to transform my natural life into a spiritual life by obedience to Him. God educates us down to the scruple. When He begins to check, do not confer with flesh and blood, cleanse yourself at once. Keep yourself cleansed in your daily walk.

I have to cleanse myself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit until both are in accord with the nature of God. Is the mind of my spirit in perfect agreement with the life of the Son of God in me, or am I insubordinate in intellect? Am I forming the mind of Christ, Who never spoke from His right to Himself, but maintained an inner watchfulness whereby He continually submitted His spirit to His Father? I have the responsibility of keeping my spirit in agreement with His Spirit, and by degrees Jesus lifts me up to where He lived - in perfect consecration to His Father's will, paying no attention to any other thing. Am I perfecting this type of holiness in the fear of God? Is God getting His way with me, and are other people beginning to see God in my life more and more?

Be serious with God and leave the rest gaily alone. Put God first literally.

## March 19: THE WAY OF ABRAHAM IN FAITH

*He went out, not knowing whither he went."* Hebrews 11:8

In the Old Testament, personal relationship with God showed itself in separation, and this is symbolized in the life of Abraham by his separation from his country and from his kith and kin. To day the separation is more of a mental and moral separation from the way that those who are dearest to us look at things, that is, if they have not a personal relationship with God. Jesus Christ emphasized this (see Luke 14:26).

Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One Who is leading. It is a life of *Faith*, not of intellect and reason, but a life of knowing Who makes us "go." The root of faith is the knowledge of a Person, and one of the biggest snares is the idea that God is sure to lead us to success.

The final stage in the life of faith is attainment of character. There are many passing transfigurations of character; when we pray we feel the blessing of God enwrapping us and for the time being we are changed, then we get back to the ordinary days and ways and the glory vanishes. The life of faith is not a life of mounting up with wings, but a life of walking and not fainting. It is not a question of sanctification; but of something infinitely further on than sanctification, of faith that has been tried and proved and has stood the test. Abraham is not a type of sanctification, but a type of the life of faith, a tried faith built on a real God. *"Abraham believed God."*

## March 20: FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

*"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"* Genesis 18:17

**Its Delights.** This chapter brings out the delight of real friendship with God as compared with occasional feelings of His presence in prayer. To be so much in contact with God that you never need to ask Him to show you His will, is to be nearing the final stage of your discipline in the life of faith. When you are rightly related to God, it is a life of freedom and liberty and delight, you are God's will, and all your common-sense decisions are His will for you unless He checks. You decide things in perfect delightful friendship with God, knowing that if your decisions are wrong He will always check; when He checks, stop at once.

**Its Difficulties.** Why did Abraham stop praying when he did? He was not intimate enough yet to go boldly on until God granted his desire, there was something yet to be desired in his relationship to God. Whenever we stop short in prayer and say - "Well, I don't know; perhaps it is not God's will," there is still another stage to go. We are not so intimately acquainted with God as Jesus was, and as He wants us to be - "That they may be one even as we are one." Think of the last thing you prayed about - were you devoted to your desire or to God? Determined to get some gift of the Spirit or to get at God? "Your Heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." The point of asking is that you may get to know God better. "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Keep praying in order to get a perfect understanding of God Himself.

## March 21: INTEREST OR IDENTIFICATION?

*"I have been crucified with Christ."* Galatians 2:20

The imperative need spiritually is to sign the death warrant of the disposition of sin, to turn all emotional impressions and intellectual beliefs into a moral verdict against the disposition of sin, viz., my claim to my right to myself. Paul says - "I have been crucified with Christ"; he does not say - "I have determined to imitate Jesus Christ," or, "I will endeavour to follow Him" - but - "I have been *identified* with Him in His death." When I come to such a moral decision and act upon it, then all that Christ wrought *for* me on the Cross is wrought *in* me. The free committal of myself to God gives the Holy Spirit the chance to impart to me the holiness of Jesus Christ.

". . . nevertheless I live. . . ." The individuality remains, but the mainspring, the ruling disposition, is radically altered. The same human body remains, but the old satanic right to myself is destroyed.

"And the life which I now live in the flesh . . . ," not the life which I long to live and pray to live, but the life I now live in my mortal flesh, the life which men can see, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." This faith is not Paul's faith in Jesus Christ, but the faith that the Son of God has imparted to him - *"the faith of the Son of God."* It is no longer faith in faith, but faith which has overleapt all conscious bounds, the identical faith of the Son of God.

## March 22: THE BURNING HEART

*"Did not our heart burn within us?"* Luke 24:32

We need to learn this secret of the burning heart. Suddenly Jesus appears to us, the fires are kindled, we have wonderful visions, then we have to learn to keep the secret of the burning heart that will go through anything. It is the dull, bald, dreary, commonplace day, with commonplace duties and people, that kills the burning heart unless we have learned the secret of abiding in Jesus.

Much of our distress as Christians comes not because of sin, but because we are ignorant of the laws of our own nature. For instance, the only test as to whether we ought to allow an emotion to have its way is to see what the outcome of the emotion will be. Push it to its logical conclusion, and if the outcome is something God would condemn, allow it no more way. But if it be an emotion kindled by the Spirit of God and you do not let that emotion have its right issue in your life, it will react on a lower level. That is the way sentimentalists are made. The higher the emotion is, the deeper the degradation will be, if it is not worked out on its proper level. If the Spirit of God has stirred you, make as many things inevitable as possible, let the consequences be what they will. We cannot stay on the mount of transfiguration, but we must obey the light we received there; we must act it out. When God gives a vision, transact business on that line, no matter what it costs.

"We cannot kindle when we will  
The fire which in the heart resides,  
The spirit bloweth and is still,  
In mystery our soul abides;  
But tasks in hours of insight will'd  
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd."

**March 23: AM I CARNALLY MINDED?**  
***"Whereas there is among you jealousy and strife,  
are ye not carnal?" 1 Corinthians 3:3***

No natural man knows anything about carnality. The flesh lusting against the Spirit that came in at regeneration, and the Spirit lusting against the flesh, produces carnality. "Walk in the Spirit," says Paul, "and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh"; and carnality will disappear.

Are you contentious, easily troubled about trifles? "Oh, but no one who is a Christian ever is!" Paul says they are, he connects these things with carnality. Is there a truth in the Bible that instantly awakens petulance in you? That is a proof that you are yet carnal. If sanctification is being worked out, there is no trace of that spirit left.

If the Spirit of God detects anything in you that is wrong, He does not ask you to put it right; He asks you to accept the light, and He will put it right. A child of the light confesses instantly and stands bared before God; a child of the darkness says - "Oh, I can explain that away." When once the light breaks and the conviction of wrong comes, be a child of the light, and confess, and God will deal with what is wrong; if you vindicate yourself, you prove yourself to be a child of the darkness.

What is the proof that carnality has gone? Never deceive yourself; when carnality is gone it is the most real thing imaginable. God will see that you have any number of opportunities to prove to yourself the marvel of His grace. The practical test is the only proof. "Why," you say, "if this had happened before, there would have been the spirit of resentment!" You will never cease to be the most amazed person on earth at what God has done for you on the inside.

## March 24: DECREASING INTO HIS PURPOSE

*"He must increase, but I must decrease."* John 3:30

If you become a necessity to a soul, you are out of God's order. As a worker, your great responsibility is to be a friend of the Bridegroom. When once you see a soul in sight of the claims of Jesus Christ, you know that your influence has been in the right direction, and instead of putting out a hand to prevent the throes, pray that they grow ten times stronger until there is no power on earth or in hell that can hold that soul away from Jesus Christ. Over and over again, we become amateur providences, we come in and prevent God; and say - "This and that must not be." Instead of proving friends of the Bridegroom, we put our sympathy in the way, and the soul will one day say - "That one was a thief, he stole my affections from Jesus, and I lost my vision of Him."

Beware of rejoicing with a soul in the wrong thing, but see that you do rejoice in the right thing. "The friend of the Bridegroom . . . rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." This is spoken with joy and not with sadness - at last they are to see the Bride groom! And John says this is his joy. It is the absolute effacement of the worker, he is never thought of again.

Watch for all you are worth until you hear the Bridegroom's voice in the life of another. Never mind what havoc it brings, what upsets, what crumbings of health, rejoice with divine hilarity when once His voice is heard. You may often see Jesus Christ wreck a life before He saves it. (Cf. Matt. 10:34.)

## March 25: THE MOST DELICATE MISSION ON EARTH

*"The friend of the Bridegroom."* John 3:29

Goodness and purity ought never to attract attention to themselves, they ought simply to be magnets to draw to Jesus Christ. If my holiness is not drawing towards Him, it is not holiness of the right order, but an influence that will awaken inordinate affection and lead souls away into side-eddies. A beautiful saint may be a hindrance if he does not present Jesus Christ but only what Christ has done for him. He will leave the impression - "What a fine character that man is!" That is not being a true friend of the Bridegroom; / am increasing all the time, He is not.

In order to maintain this friendship and loyalty to the Bridegroom, we have to be more careful of our moral and vital relationship to Him than of any other thing, even of obedience. Sometimes there is nothing to obey, the only thing to do is to maintain a vital connection with Jesus Christ, to see that nothing interferes with that. Only occasionally do we have to obey. When a crisis arises we have to find out what God's will is, but the greater part of the life is not conscious obedience but the maintenance of this relationship - the friend of the Bridegroom. Christian work may be a means of evading the soul's concentration on Jesus Christ. Instead of being friends of the Bridegroom, we may become amateur providences, and may work against Him whilst we use His weapons.



## March 26: VISION BY PERSONAL PURITY

***"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8***

Purity is not innocence, it is much more. Purity is the outcome of sustained spiritual sympathy with God. We have to grow in purity. The life with God may be right and the inner purity remain unsullied, and yet every now and again the bloom on the outside may be sullied. God does not shield us from this possibility, because in this way we realize the necessity of maintaining the vision by personal purity. If the spiritual bloom of our life with God is getting impaired in the tiniest degree, we must leave off everything and get it put right. Remember that vision depends on character - *the pure in heart* see God.

God makes us pure by His sovereign grace, but we have something to look after, this bodily life by which we come in contact with other people and with other points of view, it is these that are apt to sully. Not only must the inner sanctuary be kept right with God, but the outer courts as well are to be brought into perfect accord with the purity God gives us by His grace. The spiritual understanding is blurred immediately the outer court is sullied. If we are going to retain personal contact with the Lord Jesus Christ, it will mean there are some things we must scorn to do or to think, some legitimate things we must scorn to touch.

A practical way of keeping personal purity unsullied in relation to other people is to say to yourself - That man, that woman, *perfect in Christ Jesus!* That friend, that relative, *perfect in Christ Jesus!*

## March 27: VISION BY PERSONAL CHARACTER

*"Come up hither, and I will shew thee things."* Revelation 4:1

An elevated mood can only come out of an elevated habit of personal character. If in the externals of your life you live up to the highest you know, God will continually say - "Friend, go up higher." The golden rule in temptation is - Go higher. When you get higher up, you face other temptations and characteristics. Satan uses the strategy of elevation in temptation, and God does the same, but the effect is different. When the devil puts you into an elevated place, he makes you screw your idea of holiness beyond what flesh and blood could ever hear, it is a spiritual acrobatic performance, you are just poised and dare not move; but when God elevates you by His grace into the heavenly places, instead of finding a pinnacle to cling to, you find a great table-land where it is easy to move.

Compare this week in your spiritual history with the same week last year and see how God has called you up higher. We have all been brought to see from a higher standpoint. Never let God give you one point of truth which you do not instantly live up to. Always work it out, keep in the light of it.

Growth in grace is measured not by the fact that you have not gone back, but that you have an insight into where you are spiritually; you have heard God say "Come up higher," not to you personally, but to the insight of your character.

"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" God has to hide from us what He does until by personal character we get to the place where He can reveal it.

## March 28: ISN'T THERE SOME MISUNDERSTANDING?

*"Let us go into Judea. His disciples say unto Him . . .*

*.....Goest Thou thither again?" John 11:7-8*

I may not understand what Jesus Christ says, but it is dangerous to say that therefore He was mistaken in what He said. It is never right to think that my obedience to a word of God will bring dishonour to Jesus. The only thing that will bring dishonour is not obeying Him. To put my view of His honour in place of what He is plainly impelling me to do is never right, although it may arise from a real desire to prevent Him being put to open shame. I know when the proposition comes from God because of its quiet persistence: When I have to weigh the *pros* and *cons*, and doubt and debate come in, I am bringing in an element that is not of God, and I come to the conclusion that the suggestion was not a right one. Many of us are loyal to our notions of Jesus Christ, but how many of us are loyal to Him? Loyalty to Jesus means I have to step out where I do not see anything (cf. Matt. 14:29); loyalty to my notions means that I clear the ground first by my intelligence. Faith is not intelligent understanding, faith is deliberate commitment to a Person where I see no way. Are you debating whether to take a step in faith in Jesus or to wait until you can see how to do the thing yourself? Obey Him with glad reckless joy. When He says something and you begin to debate, it is because you have a conception of His honour which is not His honour. Are you loyal to Jesus or loyal to your notion of Him? Are you loyal to what He says, or are you trying to compromise with conceptions which never came from Him? "Whatsoever He saith unto you, *do it.*"

## March 29: OUR LORD'S SURPRISE VISITS

*"Be ye therefore ready also."* Luke 12:40

The great need for the Christian worker is to be ready to face Jesus Christ at any and every turn. This is not easy, no matter what our experience is. The battle is not against sin or difficulties or circumstances, but against being so absorbed in work that we are not ready to face Jesus Christ at every turn. That is the one great need, not the facing our belief, or our creed, the question whether we are of any use, but to face *Him*.

Jesus rarely comes where we expect Him; He appears where we least expect Him, and always in the most illogical connections. The only way a worker can keep true to God is by being ready for the Lord's surprise visits. It is not service that matters, but intense spiritual reality, expecting Jesus Christ at every turn. This will give our life the attitude of child-wonder which He wants it to have. If we are going to be ready for Jesus Christ, we have to stop being religious (that is, using religion as a higher kind of culture) and be spiritually real. If you are "looking off unto Jesus," avoiding the call of the religious age you live in, and setting your heart on what He wants, on thinking on His line - you will be called unpractical and dreamy; but when He appears in the burden and the heat of the day, you will be the only one who is ready. Trust no one, not even the finest saint who ever walked this earth, ignore him, if he hinders your sight of Jesus Christ.

## March 30: HOLINESS V. HARDNESS Towards GOD

*"And He . . . wondered that there was no intercessor." Isaiah 59:16*

The reason many of us leave off praying and become hard towards God is because we have only a sentimental interest in prayer. It sounds right to say that we pray; we read books on prayer which tell us that prayer is beneficial, that our minds are quieted and our souls uplifted when we pray; but Isaiah implies that God is amazed at such thoughts of prayer.

Worship and intercession must go together, the one is impossible without the other.

Intercession means that we rouse ourselves up to get the mind of Christ about the one for whom we pray. Too often instead of worshipping God, we construct statements as to how prayer works. Are we worshipping or are we in dispute with God - "I don't see how You are going to do it." This is a sure sign that we are not worshipping. When we lose sight of God we become hard and dogmatic. We hurl our own petitions at God's throne and dictate to Him as to what we wish Him to do. We do not worship God, nor do we seek to form the mind of Christ. If we are hard towards God, we will become hard towards other people.

Are we so worshipping God that we rouse our selves up to lay hold on Him so that we may be brought into contact with His mind about the ones for whom we pray? Are we living in a holy relationship to God, or are we hard and dogmatic?

"But there is no one interceding properly" - then be that one yourself, be the one who worships God and who lives in holy relationship to Him. Get into the real work of intercession, and remember it is a work, a work that taxes every power; but a work which has no snare. Preaching the gospel has a snare; intercessory prayer has none.

## March 31: HEEDFULNESS V. HYPOCRISY IN OURSELVES

*"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him Life for them that sin not unto death." 1 John 5:16*

If we are not heedful of the way the Spirit of God works in us, we will become spiritual hypocrites. We see where other folks are failing, and we turn our discernment into the gibe of criticism instead of into intercession on their behalf. The revelation is made to us not through the acuteness of our minds, but by the direct penetration of the Spirit of God, and if we are not heedful of the source of the revelation, we will become criticizing centres and forget that God says - ". . . he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." Take care lest you play the hypocrite by spending all your time trying to get others right before you worship God yourself.

One of the subtlest burdens God ever puts on us as saints is this burden of discernment concerning other souls. He reveals things in order that we may take the burden of these souls before Him and form the mind of Christ about them, and as we intercede on His line, God says He will give us "life for them that sin not unto death." It is not that we bring God into touch with our minds, but that we rouse ourselves until God is able to convey His mind to us about the one for whom we intercede.

Is Jesus Christ seeing of the travail of His soul in us? He cannot unless we are so identified with Himself that we are roused up to get His view about the people for whom we pray. May we learn to intercede so whole-heartedly that Jesus Christ will be abundantly satisfied with us as intercessors.

## **April 1: HEARTINESS V. HEARTLESSNESS TOWARDS OTHERS**

***"It is Christ . . . who also maketh intercession for us." Romans 8:34***

***"The Spirit . . . maketh intercession for the saints." Romans 8:27***

Do we need any more argument than this to become intercessors - that Christ "ever liveth to make intercession;" that the Holy Spirit "maketh intercession for the saints"? Are we living in such a vital relationship to our fellow men that we do the work of intercession as the Spirit-taught children of God? Begin with the circumstances we are in - our homes, our business, our country, the present crisis as it touches us and others - are these things crushing us? Are they badgering us out of the presence of God and leaving us no time for worship? Then let us call a halt, and get into such living relationship with God that our relationship to others may be maintained on the line of intercession whereby God works His marvels.

Beware of outstripping God by your very longing to do His will. We run ahead of Him in a thousand and one activities, consequently we get so burdened with persons and with difficulties that we do not worship God, we do not intercede. If once the burden and the pressure come upon us and we are not in the worshipping attitude, it will produce not only hardness toward God but despair in our own souls. God continually introduces us to people for whom we have no affinity, and unless we are worshipping God, the most natural thing to do is to treat them heartlessly, to give them a text like the jab of a spear, or leave them with a rapped-out counsel of God and go. A heartless Christian must be a terrible grief to Our Lord.

Are we in the direct line of the intercession of our Lord and of the Holy Spirit?

## April 2: THE GLORY THAT EXCELS

*"The Lord . . . hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight." Acts 9:17*

When Paul received his sight, he received spiritually an insight into the Person of Jesus Christ, and the whole of his subsequent life and preaching was nothing but Jesus Christ - "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." No attraction was ever allowed to hold the mind and soul of Paul save the face of Jesus Christ.

We have to learn to maintain an unimpaired state of character up to the last notch revealed in the vision of Jesus Christ.

The abiding characteristic of a spiritual man is the interpretation of the Lord Jesus Christ to himself, and the interpretation to others of the purposes of God. The one concentrated passion of the life is Jesus Christ. Whenever you meet this note in a man, you feel he is a man after God's own heart.

Never allow anything to deflect you from insight into Jesus Christ. It is the test of whether you are spiritual or not. To be unspiritual means that other things have a growing fascination for you.

"Since mine eyes have looked on Jesus,  
I've lost sight of all beside,  
So enchained my spirit's vision,  
Gazing on the Crucified."



### April 3: IF THOU HADST KNOWN!

*"If thou hadst known . . . in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Luke 19:42*

Jesus had entered into Jerusalem in triumph, the city was stirred to its foundations; but a strange god was there, the pride of Pharisaism; it was religious and upright, but a "whited sepulchre."

What is it that blinds me in this "my day"? Have I a strange god - not a disgusting monster, but a disposition that rules me? More than once God has brought me face to face with the strange god and I thought I should have to yield, but I did not do it. I got through the crisis by the skin of my teeth and I find myself in the possession of the strange god still; I am blind to the things which belong to my peace. It is an appalling thing that we can be in the place where the Spirit of God should be getting at us unhinderedly, and yet increase our condemnation in God's sight.

"If thou hadst known" - God goes direct to the heart, with the tears of Jesus behind. These words imply culpable responsibility; God holds us responsible for what we do not see. "Now they are hid from thine eyes" - because the disposition has never been yielded. The unfathomable sadness of the "might have been!" God never opens doors that have been closed. He opens other doors, but He reminds us that there are doors which we have shut, doors which need never have been shut, imaginations which need never have been sullied. Never be afraid when God brings back the past. Let memory have its way. It is a minister of God with its rebuke and chastisement and sorrow. God will turn the "might have been" into a wonderful culture for the future.

## April 4: THOSE BORDERS OF DISTRUST

*"Behold, the hour cometh . . . that ye shall be scattered." John 16:32*

Jesus is not rebuking the disciples, their faith was real, but it was disturbed; it was not at work in actual things. The disciples were scattered to their own interests, alive to interests that never were in Jesus Christ. After we have been perfectly related to God in sanctification, our faith has to be worked out in actualities. We shall be scattered, not into work, but into inner desolations and made to know what internal death to God's blessings means. Are we prepared for this? It is not that we choose it, but that God engineers our circumstances so that we are brought there. Until we have been through that experience, our faith is bolstered up by feelings and by blessings. When once we get there, no matter where God places us or what the inner desolations are, we can praise God that all is well. That is faith being worked out in actualities.

". . . and shall leave Me alone." Have we left Jesus alone by the scattering of His providence? Because we do not see God in our circumstances? Darkness comes by the sovereignty of God. Are we prepared to let God do as He likes with us - prepared to be separated from conscious blessings? Until Jesus Christ is Lord, we all have ends of our own to serve; our faith is real, but it is not permanent yet. God is never in a hurry; if we wait, we shall see that God is pointing out that we have not been interested in Himself but only in His blessings. The sense of God's blessing is elemental.

"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Spiritual grit is what we need.

## April 5: HIS AGONY AND OUR FELLOWSHIP

***"Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, tarry ye here, and watch with Me." Matthew 26:36, 38***

We can never fathom the agony in Gethsemane, but at least we need not misunderstand it. It is the agony of God and Man in one, face to face with sin. We know nothing about Gethsemane in personal experience. Gethsemane and Calvary stand for something unique; they are the gateway into Life for us.

It was not the death on the cross that Jesus feared in Gethsemane; He stated most emphatically that He came on purpose to die. In Gethsemane He feared lest He might not get through as Son of Man. He would get through as Son of God - Satan could not touch Him there; but Satan's onslaught was that He would get through as an isolated Figure only; and that would mean that He could be no Saviour. Read the record of the agony in the light of the temptation: "Then the devil leaveth Him for a season." In Gethsemane Satan came back and was again overthrown. Satan's final onslaught against our Lord as *Son of Man* is in Gethsemane.

The agony in Gethsemane is the agony of the Son of God in fulfilling His destiny as the Saviour of the world. The veil is drawn aside to reveal all it cost Him to make it possible for us to become sons of God. His agony is the basis of the simplicity of our salvation. The Cross of Christ is a triumph for the *Son of Man*. It was not only a sign that Our Lord had triumphed, but that He had triumphed to save the human race. Every human being can get through into the presence of God now because of what the Son of Man went through.

## April 6: THE COLLISION OF GOD AND SIN

***"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." 1 Peter 2:24***

The Cross of Jesus is the revelation of God's judgment on sin. Never tolerate the idea of martyrdom about the Cross of Jesus Christ. The Cross was a superb triumph in which the foundations of hell were shaken. There is nothing more certain in Time or Eternity than what Jesus Christ did on the Cross: He switched the whole of the human race back into a right relationship with God. He made Redemption the basis of human life, that is, He made a way for every son of man to get into communion with God.

The Cross did not *happen* to Jesus: He came on purpose for it. He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The whole meaning of the Incarnation is the Cross. Beware of separating *God manifest in the flesh* from *the Son becoming sin*. The Incarnation was for the purpose of Redemption. God became incarnate for the purpose of putting away sin; not for the purpose of Self-realization. The Cross is the centre of Time and of Eternity, the answer to the enigmas of both.

The Cross is not the cross of a man but the Cross of God, and the Cross of God can never be realized in human experience. The Cross is the exhibition of the nature of God, the gateway whereby any individual of the human race can enter into union with God. When we get to the Cross, we do not go through it; we abide in the life to which the Cross is the gateway.

The centre of salvation is the Cross of Jesus, and the reason it is so easy to obtain salvation is because it cost God so much. The Cross is the point where God and sinful man merge with a crash and the way to life is opened - but the crash is on the heart of God.

## **April 7: WHY ARE WE NOT TOLD PLAINLY?**

***"He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead." Mark 9:9***

Say nothing until the Son of man is risen in you - until the life of the risen Christ so dominates you that you understand what the historic Christ taught. When you get to the right state on the inside, the word which Jesus has spoken is so plain that you are amazed you did not see it before. You could not understand it before, you were not in the place in disposition where it could be borne.

Our Lord does not hide these things; they are unbearable until we get into a fit condition of spiritual life. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." There must be communion with His risen life before a particular word can be borne by us. Do we know anything about the impartation of the risen life of Jesus? The evidence that we do is that His word is becoming interpretable to us. God cannot reveal anything to us if we have not His Spirit. An obstinate outlook will effectually hinder God from revealing anything to us. If we have made up our minds about a doctrine, the light of God will come no more to us on that line, we cannot get it. This obtuse stage will end immediately [when] His resurrection life has its way with us.

"Tell no man . . ." - so many do tell what they saw on the mount of transfiguration. They have had the vision and they testify to it, but the life does not tally with it, the Son of man is not yet risen in them. I wonder when He is going to be formed in you and in me?

**April 8: HIS RESURRECTION DESTINY**  
***"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,  
and to enter into His glory?" Luke 24:2***

Our Lord's Cross is the gateway into His life: His Resurrection means that He has power now to convey His life to me. When I am born again from above, I receive from the Risen Lord His very life.

Our Lord's Resurrection destiny is to bring "many sons unto glory." The fulfilling of His destiny gives Him the right to make us sons and daughters of God. We are never in the relationship to God that the Son of God is in; but we are brought by the Son into the relation of sonship. When Our Lord rose from the dead, He rose to an absolutely new life, to a life He did not live before He was incarnate. He rose to a life that had never been before; and His resurrection means for us that we are raised to His risen life, not to our old life. One day we shall have a body like unto His glorious body, but we can know now the efficacy of His resurrection and walk in newness of life. "I would know Him *in the power of His resurrection.*"

"As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." "Holy Spirit" is the experimental name for Eternal Life working in human beings here and now. The Holy Spirit is the Deity in proceeding power Who applies the Atonement to our experience. Thank God it is gloriously and majestically true that the Holy Ghost can work in us the very nature of Jesus if we will obey Him.

## April 9: HAVE I SEEN HIM?

*"After that He appeared in another form unto two of them." Mark 16:12*

Being saved and seeing Jesus are not the same thing. Many are partakers of God's grace who have never seen Jesus. When once you have seen Jesus, you can never be the same, other things do not appeal as they used to do.

Always distinguish between what you see Jesus to be, and what He has done for you. If you only know what He has done for you, you have not a big enough God; but if you have had a vision of Jesus as He is, experiences can come and go, you will endure "as seeing Him Who is invisible." The man blind from his birth did not know Who Jesus was until He appeared and revealed Himself to him. Jesus appears to those for whom He has done something; but we cannot dictate when He will come. Suddenly at any turn He may come. "Now I see Him!"

Jesus must appear to your friend as well as to you, no one can see Jesus with your eyes. Severance takes place where one and not the other has seen Jesus. You cannot bring your friend unless God brings him. Have you seen Jesus? Then you will want others to see Him too. "And they went and told it unto the residue, neither believed they them." You must tell, although they do not believe.

"O could I tell, ye surely would believe it!

O could I only say what I have seen!

How should I tell or how can ye receive it,

How, till He bringeth you where I have been?"

## April 10: MORAL DECISION ABOUT SIN

*"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Romans 6:6*

**Co-Crucifixion.** Have I made this decision about sin - that it must be killed right out in me? It takes a long time to come to a moral decision about sin, but it is the great moment in my life when I do decide that just as Jesus Christ died for the sin of the world, so sin must die out in me, not be curbed or suppressed or counteracted, but crucified. No one can bring anyone else to this decision. We may be earnestly convinced, and religiously convinced, but what we need to do is to come to the decision which Paul forces here.

Haul yourself up, take a time alone with God, make the moral decision and say - "Lord, identify me with Thy death until I know that sin is dead in me." Make the moral decision that sin in you must be put to death.

It was not a divine anticipation on the part of Paul, but a very radical and definite experience. Am I prepared to let the Spirit of God search me until I know what the disposition of sin is - the thing that lusts against the Spirit of God in me? Then if so, will I agree with God's verdict on that disposition of sin - that it should be identified with the death of Jesus? I cannot reckon myself "dead indeed unto sin" unless I have been through this radical issue of will before God.

Have I entered into the glorious privilege of being crucified with Christ until all that is left is the life of Christ in my flesh and blood? "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."



## April 11: MORAL DIVINITY

*"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Romans 6:5*

**Co-Resurrection.** The proof that I have been through crucifixion with Jesus is that I have a decided likeness to Him. The incoming of the Spirit of Jesus into me readjusts my personal life to God. The resurrection of Jesus has given Him authority to impart the life of God to me, and my experimental life must be constructed on the basis of His life. I can have the resurrection life of Jesus now, and it will show itself in holiness.

The idea all through the apostle Paul's writings is that after the moral decision to be identified with Jesus in His death has been made, the resurrection life of Jesus invades every bit of my human nature. It takes omnipotence to live the life of the Son of God in mortal flesh. The Holy Spirit cannot be located as a Guest in a house, He invades every thing. When once I decide that my "old man" (i.e., the heredity of sin) should be identified with the death of Jesus, then the Holy Spirit invades me. He takes charge of everything, my part is to walk in the light and to obey all that He reveals. When I have made the moral decision about sin, it is easy to reckon actually that I am dead unto sin, because I find the life of Jesus there all the time. Just as there is only one stamp of humanity, so there is only one stamp of holiness, the holiness of Jesus, and it is His holiness that is gifted to me. God puts the holiness of His Son into me, and I belong to a new order spiritually.

## April 12: MORAL DOMINION

*"Death hath no more dominion over Him . . . in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." Romans 6:9-11*

**Co-Eternal Life.** Eternal life was the life which Jesus Christ exhibited on the human plane, and it is the same life, not a copy of it, which is manifested in our mortal flesh when we are born of God. Eternal life is not a gift from God, eternal life is the gift *of God*. The energy and the power which was manifested in Jesus will be manifested in us by the sheer sovereign grace of God when once we have made the moral decision about sin.

"Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost" - not power as a gift from the Holy Ghost; the power is the Holy Ghost, not something which He imparts. The life that was in Jesus is made ours by means of His Cross when once we make the decision to be identified with Him. If it is difficult to get right with God, it is because we will not decide definitely about sin. Immediately we do decide, the full life of God comes in. Jesus came to give us endless supplies of life: "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eternal Life has nothing to do with Time, it is the life which Jesus lived when He was down here. The only source of Life is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The weakest saint can experience the power of the Deity of the Son of God if once he is willing to "let go." Any strand of our own energy will blur the life of Jesus. We have to keep letting go, and slowly and surely the great full life of God will invade us in every part, and men will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

## April 13: WHAT TO DO UNDER THE CONDITIONS

*"Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Psalm 55:22*

We must distinguish between the burden-bearing that is right and the burden-bearing that is wrong. We ought never to bear the burden of sin or of doubt, but there are burdens placed on us by God which He does not intend to lift off, He wants us to roll them back on Him. "Cast that He hath given thee upon the Lord." (R.V. marg.) If we undertake work for God and get out of touch with Him, the sense of responsibility will be overwhelmingly crushing; but if we roll back on God that which He has put upon us, He takes away the sense of responsibility by bringing in the realization of Himself.

Many workers have gone out with high courage and fine impulses, but with no intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ, and before long they are crushed. They do not know what to do with the burden, it produces weariness, and people say - "What an embittered end to such a beginning!"

"Roll thy burden upon the Lord" - you have been bearing it all; deliberately put one end on the shoulders of God. "The government shall be upon His shoulder." Commit to God "that He hath given thee"; not fling it off, but put it over on to Him and yourself with it, and the burden is lightened by the sense of companionship. Never disassociate yourself from the burden.

## April 14: INSPIRED INVINCIBILITY

*"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." Matthew 11:29*

"Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth." How petty our complaining is! Our Lord begins to bring us into the place where we can have communion with Him, and we groan and say - "O Lord, let me be like other people!" Jesus is asking us to take one end of the yoke - "My yoke is easy, get alongside Me and we will pull together." Are you identified with the Lord Jesus like that? If so, you will thank God for the pressure of His hand.

"To them that have no might He increaseth strength." God comes and takes us out of our sentimentality, and our complaining turns into a pæan of praise. The only way to know the strength of God is to take the yoke of Jesus upon us and learn of Him.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." Where do the saints get their joy from? If we did not know some saints, we would say - "Oh, he, or she, has nothing to bear." Lift the veil. The fact that the peace and the light and the joy of God are there is proof that the burden is there too. The burden God places squeezes the grapes and out comes the wine; most of us see the wine only. No power on earth or in hell can conquer the Spirit of God in a human spirit, it is an inner unconquerableness.

If you have the whine in you, kick it out ruthlessly. It is a positive crime to be weak in God's strength.

## April 15: THE RELAPSE OF CONCENTRATION

*"But the high places were not taken away out of Israel;*

*nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days."* 2 Chronicles 15:17

Asa was incomplete in his external obedience, he was right in the main but not entirely right. Beware of the thing of which you say - "Oh, that does not matter much." The fact that it does not matter much to you may mean that it matters a very great deal to God. Nothing is a light matter with a child of God. How much longer are some of us going to keep God trying to teach us one thing? He never loses patience. You say - "I know I am right with God"; but still the "high places" remain, there is something over which you have not obeyed. Are you protesting that your heart is right with God, and yet is there something in your life about which He has caused you to doubt? Whenever there is doubt, quit immediately, no matter what it is. Nothing is a mere detail.

Are there some things in connection with your bodily life, your intellectual life, upon which you are not concentrating at all? You are all right in the main but you are slipshod; there is a relapse on the line of concentration. You no more need a holiday from spiritual concentration than your heart needs a holiday from beating. You cannot have a moral holiday and remain moral, nor can you have a spiritual holiday and remain spiritual. God wants you to be entirely His, and this means that you have to watch to keep yourself fit. It takes a tremendous amount of time. Some of us expect to "clear the numberless ascensions" in about two minutes.

## April 16: CAN YOU COME DOWN?

*"While ye have light, believe in the light." John 12:36*

We all have moments when we feel better than our best, and we say - "I feel fit for anything; if only I could be like this always!" We are not meant to be. Those moments are moments of in sight which we have to live up to when we do not feel like it. Many of us are no good for this workaday world when there is no high hour. We must bring our commonplace life up to the standard revealed in the high hour.

Never allow a feeling which was stirred in you in the high hour to evaporate. Don't put your mental feet on the mantelpiece and say - "What a marvellous state of mind to be in!" Act immediately, do something, if only because you would rather not do it. If in a prayer meeting God has shown you something to do, don't say - "I'll do it"; *do it!* Take yourself by the scruff of the neck and shake off your incarnate laziness. Laziness is always seen in cravings for the high hour; we talk about working up to a time on the mount. We have to learn to live in the grey day according to what we saw on the mount.

Don't cave in because you have been baffled once, get at it again. Burn your bridges behind you, and stand committed to God by your own act. Never revise your decisions, but see that you make your decisions in the light of the high hour.

## April 17: NECK OR NOTHING

*"Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him . . . and did cast himself into the sea." John 21:7*

Have you ever had a crisis in which you deliberately and emphatically and recklessly abandoned everything? It is a crisis of will. You may come up to it many times externally, but it amounts to nothing. The real deep crisis of abandonment is reached internally, not externally. The giving up of external things may be an indication of being in total bondage.

Have you deliberately committed your will to Jesus Christ? It is a transaction of will, not of emotion; the emotion is simply the gilt-edge of the transaction. If you allow emotion first, you will never make the transaction. Do not ask God what the transaction is to be, but make it in regard to the thing you do see, either in the shallow or the profound place.

If you have heard Jesus Christ's voice on the billows, let your convictions go to the winds, let your consistency go to the winds, but maintain your relationship to Him.

## April 18: READINESS

*"God called unto him and he said, Here am I" Exodus 3:4*

When God speaks, many of us are like men in a fog, we give no answer. Moses' reply revealed that he was somewhere. Readiness means a right relationship to God and a knowledge of where we are at present. We are so busy telling God where we would like to go. The man or woman who is ready for God and His work is the one who carries off the prize when the summons comes. We wait with the idea of some great opportunity, something sensational, and when it comes we are quick to cry - "Here am I." Whenever Jesus Christ is in the ascendant, we are there, but we are not ready for an obscure duty. Readiness for God means that we are ready to do the tiniest little thing or the great big thing, it makes no difference. We have no choice in what we want to do, whatever God's programme may be we are there, ready. When any duty presents itself we hear God's voice as Our Lord heard His Father's voice, and we are ready for it with all the alertness of our love for Him. Jesus Christ expects to do with us as His Father did with Him. He can put us where He likes, in pleasant duties or in mean duties, because the union is that of the Father and Himself. "That they may be one, even as We are one."

Be ready for the sudden surprise visits of God. A ready person never needs to get ready. Think of the time we waste trying to get ready when God has called! The burning bush is a symbol of everything that surrounds the ready soul, it is ablaze with the presence of God.



## **April 19: IS IT NOT IN THE LEAST LIKELY?**

***"For Joab had turned after Adonijah,  
though he turned not after Absalom." 1 Kings 2:28***

Joab stood the big test, he remained absolutely loyal and true to David and did not turn after the fascinating and ambitious Absalom, but yet towards the end of his life he turned after the craven Adonijah. Always remain alert to the fact that where one man has gone back is exactly where any one may go back (see 1 Cor. 10:13). You have gone through the big crisis, now be alert over the least things; take into calculation the "retired sphere of the leasts."

We are apt to say - "It is not in the least likely that having been through the supreme crisis, I shall turn now to the things of the world." Do not forecast where the temptation will come, it is the least likely thing that is the peril. In the aftermath of a great spiritual transaction the "retired sphere of the leasts" begins to tell; it is not dominant, but remember it is there, and if you are not warned, it will trip you up. You have remained true to God under great and intense trials, now beware of the undercurrent. Do not be morbidly introspective, looking forward with dread, but keep alert; keep your memory bright before God. Unguarded strength is double weakness because that is where the "retired sphere of the leasts" saps. The Bible characters fell on their strong points, never on their weak ones. "Kept by the power of God" - that is the only safety.

## April 20: CAN A SAINT SLANDER GOD?

*"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen."* 2 Corinthians 1:20

Jesus told the parable of the talents recorded in Matthew 25 as a warning that it is possible for us to misjudge our capacity. This parable has not to do with natural gifts, but with the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost. We must not measure our spiritual capacity by education or by intellect; our capacity in spiritual things is measured by the promises of God. If we get less than God wants us to have, before long we will slander Him as the servant slandered his master: "You expect more than You give me power to do; You demand too much of me, I cannot stand true to You where I am placed." When it is a question of God's Almighty Spirit, never say "I can't." Never let the limitation of natural ability come in. If we have received the Holy Spirit, God expects the work of the Holy Spirit to be manifested in us.

The servant justified himself in everything he did and condemned his lord on every point - "Your demand is out of all proportion to what you give." Have we been slandering God by daring to worry when He has said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"? Worrying means exactly what this servant implied - "I know You mean to leave me in the lurch." The person who is lazy naturally is always captious - "I haven't had a decent chance," and the one who is lazy spiritually is captious with God. Lazy people always strike out on an independent line.

Never forget that our capacity in spiritual matters is measured by the promises of God. Is God able to fulfil His promises? Our answer depends on whether we have received the Holy Spirit.

## April 21: NOW DON'T HURT THE LORD!

*"Have I been so long time with you,  
and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" John 14:9*

Our Lord must be repeatedly astounded at us - astounded at how un-simple we are. It is opinions of our own which make us stupid, when we are simple we are never stupid, we discern all the time. Philip expected the revelation of a tremendous mystery, but not in the One Whom he knew. The mystery of God is not in what is going to be, it is now; we look for it presently, in some cataclysmic event. We have no reluctance in obeying Jesus, but it is probable that we are hurting Him by the questions we ask. "Lord, show us the Father." His answer comes straight back - "There He is, always here or nowhere." We look for God to manifest Himself to His children: God only manifests Himself *in* His children. Other people see the manifestation, the child of God does not. We want to be conscious of God; we cannot be conscious of our consciousness and remain sane. If we are asking God to give us experiences, or if conscious experience is in the road, we hurt the Lord. The very questions we ask hurt Jesus because they are not the questions of a child.

"Let not your heart be troubled" - then am I hurting Jesus by allowing my heart to be troubled? If I believe the character of Jesus, am I living up to my belief? Am I allowing anything to perturb my heart, any morbid questions to come in? I have to get to the implicit relationship that takes everything as it comes from Him. God never guides presently, but always now. Realize that the Lord is here *now*, and the emancipation is immediate.

## April 22: THE LIGHT THAT FAILS

*"We all with open face beholding . . . the glory of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18*

A servant of God must stand so much alone that he never knows he is alone. In the first phases of Christian life disheartenments come, people who used to be lights flicker out, and those who used to stand with us pass away. We have to get so used to it that we never know we are standing alone. "All men forsook me . . . notwithstanding the Lord stood with me" (2 Tim. 4:16-17). We must build our faith, not on the fading light, but on the light that never fails. When "big" men go we are sad, until we see that they are meant to go, the one thing that remains is looking in the face of God for ourselves.

Allow nothing to keep you from looking God sternly in the face about yourself and about your doctrine, and every time you preach see that you look God in the face about things first, then the glory will remain all through. A Christian worker is one who perpetually looks in the face of God and then goes forth to talk to people. The characteristic of the ministry of Christ is that of unconscious glory that abides. "Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him."

We are never called on to parade our doubts or to express the hidden ecstasies of our life with God. The secret of the worker's life is that he keeps in tune with God all the time.

## April 23: THE WORSHIP OF THE WORK

*"Labourers together with God."* 1 Corinthians 3:9

Beware of any work for God which enables you to evade concentration on Him. A great many Christian workers worship their work. The one concern of a worker should be concentration on God, and this will mean that all the other margins of life, mental, moral and spiritual, are free with the freedom of a child, a worshipping child, not a wayward child. A worker without this solemn dominant note of concentration on God is apt to get his work on his neck; there is no margin of body, mind or spirit free, consequently he becomes spent out and crushed. There is no freedom, no delight in life; nerves, mind and heart are so crushingly burdened that God's blessing cannot rest. But the other side is just as true - when once the concentration is on God, all the margins of life are free and under the dominance of God alone. There is no responsibility on you for the work; the only responsibility you have is to keep in living constant touch with God, and to see that you allow nothing to hinder your co-operation with Him. The freedom after sanctification is the freedom of a child, the things that used to keep the life pinned down are gone. But be careful to remember that you are freed for one thing only - to be absolutely devoted to your co-Worker.

We have no right to judge where we should be put, or to have preconceived notions as to what God is fitting us for. God engineers everything; wherever He puts us our one great aim is to pour out a whole-hearted devotion to Him in that particular work. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

## **April 24: THE WARNING AGAINST WANTONING**

*"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not,*

*that the spirits are subject unto you."* **Luke 10:20**

As Christian workers, worldliness is not our snare, sin is not our snare, but spiritual wantoning is, viz.: taking the pattern and print of the religious age we live in, making eyes at spiritual success. Never court anything other than the approval of God, go "without the camp, bearing His reproach." Jesus told the disciples not to rejoice in successful service, and yet this seems to be the one thing in which most of us do rejoice. We have the commercial view - so many souls saved and sanctified, thank God, now it is all right. Our work begins where God's grace has laid the foundation; we are not to save souls, but to disciple them. Salvation and sanctification are the work of God's sovereign grace; our work as His disciples is to disciple lives until they are wholly yielded to God. One life wholly devoted to God is of more value to God than one hundred lives simply awakened by His Spirit. As workers for God we must reproduce our own kind spiritually, and that will be God's witness to us as workers. God brings us to a standard of life by His grace, and we are responsible for reproducing that standard in others.

Unless the worker lives a life hidden with Christ in God, he is apt to become an irritating dictator instead of an indwelling disciple. Many of us are dictators, we dictate to people and to meetings. Jesus never dictates to us in that way. Whenever Our Lord talked about discipleship, He always prefaced it with an "IF," never with an emphatic assertion - "You must." Discipleship carries an option with it.

## April 25: INSTANT IN SEASON

*Be instant in season, out of season."* 2 Timothy 4:2

Many of us suffer from the morbid tendency to be instant "out of season." The season does not refer to time, but to us - 'Be instant in season, out of season,' whether we feel like it or not. If we do only what we feel inclined to do, some of us would do nothing for ever and ever. There are unemployables in the spiritual domain, spiritually decrepit people, who refuse to do anything unless they are supernaturally inspired. The proof that we are rightly related to God is that we do our best whether we feel inspired or not.

One of the great snares of the Christian worker is to make a fetish of his rare moments. When the Spirit of God gives you a time of inspiration and insight, you say - "Now I will always be like this for God." No, you will not, God will take care you are not. Those times are the gift of God entirely. You cannot give them to yourself when you choose. If you say you will only be at your best, you become an intolerable drag on God; you will never do anything unless God keeps you consciously inspired. If you make a god of your best moments, you will find that God will fade out of your life and never come back until you do the duty that lies nearest, and have learned not to make a fetish of your rare moments.

## April 26: THE SUPREME CLIMB

*"Take now thy son . . . and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Genesis 22:2*

Character determines how a man interprets God's will (cf. Psalm 18:25-26). Abraham interpreted God's command to mean that he had to kill his son, and he could only leave this tradition behind by the pain of a tremendous ordeal. God could purify his faith in no other way. If we obey what God says according to our sincere belief, God will break us from those traditions that misrepresent Him. There are many such beliefs to be got rid of, e.g., that God removes a child because the mother loves him too much - a devil's lie! and a travesty of the true nature of God. If the devil can hinder us from taking the supreme climb and getting rid of wrong traditions about God, he will do so; but if we keep true to God, God will take us through an ordeal which will bring us out into a better knowledge of Himself.

The great point of Abraham's faith in God was that he was prepared to do anything for God. He was there to obey God, no matter to what belief he went contrary. Abraham was not a devotee of his convictions, or he would have slain Isaac and said that the voice of the angel was the voice of the devil. That is the attitude of a fanatic. If you will remain true to God, God will lead you straight through every barrier into the inner chamber of the knowledge of Himself; but there is always this point of giving up convictions and traditional beliefs. Don't ask God to test you. Never declare as Peter did - "I will do anything, I will go to death with Thee." Abraham did not make any such declaration, he remained true to God, and God purified his faith.



## April 27: WHAT DO YOU WANT?

*"Seekest thou great things for thyself?"* Jeremiah 14:5

Are you seeking great things for yourself? Not seeking to be a great one, but seeking great things from God for yourself. God wants you in a closer relationship to Himself than receiving His gifts, He wants you to get to know Him. A great thing is accidental, it comes and goes. God never gives us anything accidental. There is nothing easier than getting into a right relationship with God except when it is not God Whom you want but only what He gives.

If you have only come the length of asking God for things, you have never come to the first strand of abandonment, you have become a Christian from a standpoint of your own. "I did ask God for the Holy Spirit, but He did not give me the rest and the peace I expected." Instantly God puts His finger on the reason - you are not seeking the Lord at all, you are seeking something for yourself. Jesus says - "Ask, and it shall be given you." Ask God for what you want, and you cannot ask if you are not asking for a right thing. When you draw near to God, you cease from asking for things. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." Then why ask? That you may get to know Him.

Are you seeking great things for yourself? "O Lord, baptize me with the Holy Ghost." If God does not, it is because you are not abandoned enough to Him, there is something you will not do. Are you prepared to ask yourself what it is you want from God and why you want it? God always ignores the present perfection for the ultimate perfection. He is not concerned about making you blessed and happy just now; He is working out His ultimate perfection all the time - "that they may be one even as We are."

## April 28: WHAT YOU WILL GET

*"Thy life will I give thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest."* Jeremiah 14:5

This is the unshakable secret of the Lord to those who trust Him - "I will give thee thy life." What more does a man want than his life? It is the essential thing. "Thy life for a prey" means that wherever you may go, even if it is into hell, you will come out with your life, nothing can harm it. So many of us are caught up in the shows of things, not in the way of property and possessions, but of blessings. All these have to go; but there is something grander that never can go - the life that is "hid with Christ in God."

Are you prepared to let God take you into union with Himself, and pay no more attention to what you call the great things? Are you prepared to abandon entirely and let go? The test of abandonment is in refusing to say - "Well, what about this?" Beware of suppositions. Immediately you allow - What about this? - it means you have not abandoned, you do not really trust God. Immediately you do abandon, you think no more about what God is going to do. Abandon means to refuse yourself the luxury of asking any questions. If you abandon entirely to God, He says at once, "Thy life will I give thee for a prey." The reason people are tired of life is because God has not given them anything, they have not got their life as a prey. The way to get out of that state is to abandon to God. When you do get through to abandonment to God, you will be the most surprised and delighted creature on earth; God has got you absolutely and has given you your life. If you are not there, it is either because of disobedience or a refusal to be simple enough.

## April 29: THE GRACIOUSNESS OF UNCERTAINTY

*"It doth not yet appear what we shall be." 1 John 3:2*

Naturally, we are inclined to be so mathematical and calculating that we look upon uncertainty as a bad thing. We imagine that we have to reach some end, but that is not the nature of spiritual life. The nature of spiritual life is that we are certain in our uncertainty, consequently we do not make our nests anywhere. Common sense says - "Well, supposing I were in that condition . . ." We cannot suppose ourselves in any condition we have never been in. Certainty is the mark of the common-sense life: gracious uncertainty is the mark of the spiritual life. To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways, we do not know what a day may bring forth. This is generally said with a sigh of sadness, it should be rather an expression of breathless expectation. We are uncertain of the next step, but we are certain of God. Immediately we abandon to God, and do the duty that lies nearest, He packs our life with surprises all the time. When we become advocates of a creed, something dies; we do not believe God, we only believe our belief about Him. Jesus said, "Except ye become as little children." Spiritual life is the life of a child. We are not uncertain of God, but uncertain of what He is going to do next. If we are only certain in our beliefs, we get dignified and severe and have the ban of finality about our views; but when we are rightly related to God, life is full of spontaneous, joyful uncertainty and expectancy.

"Believe also in Me," said Jesus, not - "Believe certain things about Me." Leave the whole thing to Him, it is gloriously uncertain how He will come in, but He will come. Remain loyal to Him.

## April 30: THE SPONTANEITY OF LOVE

*"Love suffereth long, and is kind . . ."* 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is not premeditated, it is spontaneous, i.e., it bursts up in extraordinary ways. There is nothing of mathematical certainty in Paul's category of love. We cannot say - "Now I am going to think no evil; I am going to believe all things." The characteristic of love is spontaneity. We do not set the statements of Jesus in front of us as a standard; but when His Spirit is having His way with us, we live according to His standard with out knowing it, and on looking back we are amazed at the disinterestedness of a particular emotion, which is the evidence that the spontaneity of real love was there. In everything to do with the life of God in us, its nature is only discerned when it is past.

The springs of love are in God, not in us. It is absurd to look for the love of God in our hearts naturally, it is only there when it has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

If we try to prove to God how much we love Him, it is a sure sign that we do not love Him. The evidence of our love for Him is the absolute spontaneity of our love, it comes naturally. In looking back we cannot tell why we did certain things, we did them according to the spontaneous nature of His love in us. The life of God manifests itself in this spontaneous way because the springs of love are in the Holy Ghost. (Romans 5:5.)

## May 1: INSIGHT NOT EMOTION

*"I have to lead my life in faith, without seeing Him." 2 Corinthians 5:7 (MOFFATT)*

For a time we are conscious of God's attentions, then, when God begins to use us in His enterprises, we take on a pathetic look and talk of the trials and the difficulties, and all the time God is trying to make us do our duty as obscure people. None of us would be obscure spiritually if we could help it. Can we do our duty when God has shut up heaven? Some of us always want to be illuminated saints with golden babes and the flush of inspiration, and to have the saints of God dealing with us all the time. A gilt-edged saint is no good, he is abnormal, unfit for daily life, and altogether unlike God. We are here as men and women, not as half-fledged angels, to do the work of the world, and to do it with an infinitely greater power to stand the turmoil because we have been born from above.

If we try to re-introduce the rare moments of inspiration, it is a sign that it is not God we want. We are making a fetish of the moments when God did come and speak, and insisting that He must do it again; whereas what God wants us to do is to "walk by faith." How many of us have laid ourselves by, as it were, and said - "I cannot do any more until God appears to me." He never will, and without any inspiration, without any sudden touch of God, we will have to get up. Then comes the surprise - "Why, He was there all the time, and I never knew it!" Never live for the rare moments, they are surprises. God will give us touches of inspiration when He sees we are not in danger of being led away by them. We must never make our moments of inspiration our standard; our standard is our duty.

## May 2: THE PASSION OF PATIENCE

*"Though it tarry, wait for it."* Habakkuk 2:3

Patience is not indifference; patience conveys the idea of an immensely strong rock withstanding all onslaughts. The vision of God is the source of patience, because it imparts a moral inspiration. Moses endured, not because he had an ideal of right and duty, but because he had a vision of God. He "endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible." A man with the vision of God is not devoted to a cause or to any particular issue; he is devoted to God Himself. You always know when the vision is of God because of the inspiration that comes with it; things come with largeness and tonic to the life because everything is energized by God. If God gives you a time spiritually, as He gave His Son actually, of temptation in the wilderness, with no word from Himself at all, endure, and the power to endure is there because you see God.

"Though it tarry, wait for it." The proof that we have the vision is that we are reaching out for more than we have grasped. It is a bad thing to be satisfied spiritually. "What shall I render unto the Lord?" said the Psalmist. "I will take the cup of salvation." We are apt to look for satisfaction in ourselves - "Now I have got the thing; now I am entirely sanctified; now I can endure." Instantly we are on the road to ruin. Our reach must exceed our grasp. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." If we have only what we have experienced, we have nothing; if we have the inspiration of the vision of God, we have more than we can experience. Beware of the danger of relaxation spiritually.

## May 3: VITAL INTERCESSION

*"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Ephesians 6:18*

As we go on in intercession we may find that our obedience to God is going to cost other people more than we thought. The danger then is to begin to intercede in sympathy with those whom God was gradually lifting to a totally different sphere in answer to our prayers. Whenever we step back from identification with God's interest in others into sympathy with them, the vital connection with God has gone, we have put our sympathy, our consideration for them in the way, and this is a deliberate rebuke to God.

It is impossible to intercede vitally unless we are perfectly sure of God, and the greatest dissipator of our relationship to God is personal sympathy and personal prejudice. Identification is the key to intercession, and whenever we stop being identified with God, it is by sympathy, not by sin. It is not likely that sin will interfere with our relationship to God, but sympathy will, sympathy with ourselves or with others which makes us say - "I will not allow that thing to happen." Instantly we are out of vital connection with God.

Intercession leaves you neither time nor inclination to pray for your own "sad sweet self." The thought of yourself is not kept out, because it is not there to keep out; you are completely and entirely identified with God's interests in other lives.

Discernment is God's call to intercession, never to fault finding.

## May 4: VICARIOUS INTERCESSION

*"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Hebrews 10:19*

Beware of imagining that intercession means bringing our personal sympathies into the presence of God and demanding that He does what we ask. Our approach to God is due entirely to the vicarious identification of our Lord with sin. We have "boldness to enter into the holiest *by the blood of Jesus.*"

Spiritual stubbornness is the most effectual hindrance to intercession, because it is based on sympathy with that in ourselves and in others that we do not think needs atoning for. We have the notion that there are certain right and virtuous things in us which do not need to be based on the Atonement, and just in the domain of "stodge" that is produced by this idea we cannot intercede. We do not identify ourselves with God's interests in others, we get petulant with God; we are always ready with our own ideas, and intercession becomes the glorification of our own natural sympathies. We have to realize that the identification of Jesus with sin means the radical alteration of all our sympathies. Vicarious intercession means that we deliberately substitute God's interests in others for our natural sympathy with them.

Am I stubborn or substituted? Petted or perfect in my relationship to God? Sulky or spiritual? Determined to have my own way or determined to be identified with Him?



## May 5: JUDGMENT ON THE ABYSS OF LOVE

*"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." 1 Peter 4:17*

The Christian worker must never forget that salvation is God's thought, not man's; therefore it is an unfathomable abyss. Salvation is the great thought of God, not an experience. Experience is only a gateway by which salvation comes into our conscious life. Never preach the experience; preach the great thought of God behind. When we preach we are not proclaiming how man can be saved from hell and be made moral and pure; we are conveying good news about God.

In the teachings of Jesus Christ the element of judgment is always brought out, it is the sign of God's love. Never sympathize with a soul who finds it difficult to get to God, God is not to blame. It is not for us to find out the reason why it is difficult, but so to present the truth of God that the Spirit of God will show what is wrong. The great sterling test in preaching is that it brings everyone to judgment. The Spirit of God locates each one to himself.

If Jesus ever gave us a command He could not enable us to fulfil, He would be a liar; and if we make our inability a barrier to obedience, it means we are telling God there is something He has not taken into account. Every element of self-reliance must be slain by the power of God. Complete weakness and dependence will always be the occasion for the Spirit of God to manifest His power.

## May 6: LIBERTY ON THE ABYSS OF THE GOSPEL

*"Stand fast therefore in the liberty*

*wherewith Christ hath made us free."* Galatians 5:1

A spiritually minded man will never come to you with the demand - "Believe this and that;" but with the demand that you square your life with the standards of Jesus. We are not asked to believe the Bible, but to believe the One Whom the Bible reveals (cf. John 5:39-40). We are called to present liberty of conscience, not liberty of view. If we are free with the liberty of Christ, others will be brought into that same liberty - the liberty of realizing the dominance of Jesus Christ.

Always keep your life measured by the standards of Jesus. Bow your neck to His yoke alone, and to no other yoke whatever; and be careful to see that you never bind a yoke on others that is not placed by Jesus Christ. It takes God a long time to get us out of the way of thinking that unless everyone sees as we do, they must be wrong. That is never God's view. There is only one liberty, the liberty of Jesus at work in our conscience enabling us to do what is right.

Don't get impatient, remember how God dealt with you - with patience and with gentleness; but never water down the truth of God. Let it have its way and never apologize for it. Jesus said, "Go and make *disciples*," not "make converts to your opinions."

## May 7: BUILDING FOR ETERNITY

***"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" Luke 14:28***

Our Lord refers not to a cost we have to count, but to a cost which He has counted. The cost was those thirty years in Nazareth, those three years of popularity, scandal and hatred, the deep unfathomable agony in Gethsemane, and the onslaught at Calvary - the pivot upon which the whole of Time and Eternity turns. Jesus Christ has counted the cost. Men are not going to laugh at Him at last and say - "This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

The conditions of discipleship laid down by Our Lord in vv. 26, 27 and 33 mean that the men and women He is going to use in His mighty building enterprises are those in whom He has done everything. "If any man come to Me, and hate not . . . *he cannot be My disciple.*" Our Lord implies that the only men and women He will use in His building enterprises are those who love Him personally, passionately and devotedly beyond any of the closest ties on earth. The conditions are stern, but they are glorious.

All that we build is going to be inspected by God. Is God going to detect in His searching fire that we have built on the foundation of Jesus some enterprise of our own? These are days of tremendous enterprises, days when we are trying to work for God, and therein is the snare. Profoundly speaking, we can never work for God. Jesus takes us over for *His* enterprises, *His* building schemes entirely, and no soul has any right to claim where he shall be put.

## May 8: THE PATIENCE OF FAITH

***"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience." Revelation 3:10***

Patience is more than endurance. A saint's life is in the hands of God like a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something the saint cannot see, and He stretches and strains, and every now and again the saint says - "I cannot stand any more." God does not heed, He goes on stretching till His purpose is in sight, then He lets fly. Trust yourself in God's hands. For what have you need of patience just now? Maintain your relationship to Jesus Christ by the patience of faith. "Though He slay me, yet will I wait for Him."

Faith is not a pathetic sentiment, but robust vigorous confidence built on the fact that God is holy love. You cannot see Him just now, you cannot understand what He is doing, but you know *Him*. Shipwreck occurs where there is not that mental poise which comes from being established on the eternal truth that God is holy love. Faith is the heroic effort of your life, you fling yourself in reckless confidence on God.

God has ventured all in Jesus Christ to save us, now He wants us to venture our all in abandoned confidence in Him. There are spots where that faith has not worked in us as yet, places untouched by the life of God. There were none of those spots in Jesus Christ's life, and there are to be none in ours. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee." The real meaning of eternal life is a life that can face anything it has to face without wavering. If we take this view, life becomes one great romance, a glorious opportunity for seeing marvellous things all the time. God is disciplining us to get us into this central place of power.

## May 9: GRASP WITHOUT REACH

*"Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint."* Proverbs 29:18 (R.V.)

There is a difference between an ideal and a vision. An ideal has no moral inspiration; a vision has. The people who give themselves over to ideals rarely do anything. A man's conception of Deity may be used to justify his deliberate neglect of his duty. Jonah argued that because God was a God of justice and of mercy, therefore everything would be all right. I may have a right conception of God, and that may be the very reason why I do not do my duty. But wherever there is vision, there is also a life of rectitude because the vision imparts moral incentive.

Ideals may lull to ruin. Take stock of yourself spiritually and see whether you have ideals only or if you have vision.

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what's a heaven for?"

"Where there is no vision. . . ." When once we lose sight of God, we begin to be reckless, we cast off certain restraints, we cast off praying, we cast off the vision of God in little things, and begin to act on our own initiative. If we are eating what we have out of our own hand, doing things on our own initiative without expecting God to come in, we are on the downward path, we have lost the vision. Is our attitude to-day an attitude that springs from our vision of God? Are we expecting God to do greater things than He has ever done? Is there a freshness and vigour in our spiritual outlook?

## May 10: TAKE THE INITIATIVE

***"Add to your faith virtue. . ." ("Furnish your faith with resolution.")  
(MOFFATT.) 2 Peter 1:5***

"Add" means there is something we have to do. We are in danger of forgetting that we cannot do what God does, and that God will not do what we can do. We cannot save ourselves nor sanctify ourselves, God does that; but God will not give us good habits, He will not give us character, He will not make us walk aright. We have to do all that ourselves, we have to work out the salvation God has worked in. "Add" means to get into the habit of doing things, and in the initial stages it is difficult. To take the initiative is to make a beginning, to instruct yourself in the way you have to go.

Beware of the tendency of asking the way when you know it perfectly well. Take the initiative, stop hesitating, and take the first step. Be resolute when God speaks, act in faith immediately on what He says, and never revise your decisions. If you hesitate when God tells you to do a thing, you endanger your standing in grace. Take the initiative, take it yourself, take the step with your will now, make it impossible to go back. Burn your bridges behind you - "*I will* write that letter"; "*I will* pay that debt." Make the thing inevitable.

We have to get into the habit of hearkening to God about everything, to form the habit of finding out what God says. If when a crisis comes, we instinctively turn to God, we know that the habit has been formed. We have to take the initiative where we *are*, not where we are not.

## May 11: YOU WON'T REACH IT ON TIPTOE

*"Add to your brotherliness . . . love." 2 Peter 1:7*

Love is indefinite to most of us, we do not know what we mean when we talk about love. Love is the sovereign preference of one person for another, and spiritually Jesus demands that that preference be for Himself (cf. Luke 14:26). When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ is easily first; then we must practise the working out of these things mentioned by Peter.

The first thing God does is to knock pretence and the pious pose right out of me. The Holy Spirit reveals that God loved me not because I was lovable, but because it was His nature to do so. Now, He says to me, show the same love to others - *"Love as I have loved you."* "I will bring any number of people about you whom you can not respect, and you must exhibit My love to them as I have exhibited it to you." *You won't reach it on tiptoe.* Some of us have tried to, but we were soon tired.

*"The Lord suffereth long. . . ."* Let me look within and see His dealings with me. The knowledge that God has loved me to the uttermost, to the end of all my sin and meanness and selfishness and wrong, will send me forth into the world to love in the same way. God's love to me is inexhaustible, and I must love others from the bedrock of God's love to me. Growth in grace stops the moment I get huffed. I get huffed because I have a peculiar person to live with. Just think how disagreeable I have been to God! Am I prepared to be so identified with the Lord Jesus that His life and His sweetness are being poured out all the time? Neither natural love nor Divine love will remain unless it is cultivated. Love is spontaneous, but it has to be maintained by discipline.

## **May 12: MAKE a HABIT of HAVING no HABITS**

*"For if these things are yours and abound,*

*they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful." 2 Peter 1:8 (R.V.)*

When we begin to form a habit we are conscious of it. There are times when we are conscious of becoming virtuous and patient and godly, but it is only a stage; if we stop there we shall get the strut of the spiritual prig. The right thing to do with habits is to lose them in the life of the Lord, until every habit is so practised that there is no conscious habit at all. Our spiritual life continually resolves into introspection because there are some qualities we have not added as yet. Ultimately the relationship is to be a completely simple one.

Your god may be your little Christian habit, the habit of prayer at stated times, or the habit of Bible reading. Watch how your Father will upset those times if you begin to worship your habit instead of what the habit symbolizes - I can't do that just now, I am praying; it is my hour with God. No, it is your hour with your habit. There is a quality that is lacking in you. Recognize the defect and then look for the opportunity of exercising yourself along the line of the quality to be added.

Love means that there is no habit visible, you have come to the place where the habit is lost, and by practice you do the thing unconsciously. If you are consciously holy, there are certain things you imagine you cannot do, certain relationships in which you are far from simple; that means there is something to be added. The only supernatural life is the life the Lord Jesus lived, and He was at home with God anywhere. Is there anywhere where you are not at home with God? Let God press through in that particular circumstance until you gain Him, and life becomes the simple life of a child.



## May 13: The HABIT of a GOOD CONSCIENCE

*"A conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Acts 24:16*

God's commands are given to the life of His Son in us, consequently to the human nature in which His Son has been formed, His commands are difficult, but immediately we obey they become divinely easy.

Conscience is that faculty in me which attaches itself to the highest that I know, and tells me what the highest I know demands that I do. It is the eye of the soul which looks out either towards God or towards what it regards as the highest, and therefore conscience records differently in different people. If I am in the habit of steadily facing myself with God, my conscience will always introduce God's perfect law and indicate what I should do. The point is, will I obey? I have to make an effort to keep my conscience so sensitive that I walk without offence. I should be living in such perfect sympathy with God's Son, that in every circumstance the spirit of my mind is renewed, and I "make out" at once "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

God always educates us down to the scruple. Is my ear so keen to hear the tiniest whisper of the Spirit that I know what I should do? "Grieve not the Holy Spirit." He does not come with a voice like thunder; His voice is so gentle that it is easy to ignore it. The one thing that keeps the conscience sensitive to Him is the continual habit of being open to God on the inside. When there is any debate, quit. "Why shouldn't I do this?" You are on the wrong track. There is no debate possible when conscience speaks. At your peril, you allow one thing to obscure your inner communion with God. Drop it, whatever it is, and see that you keep your inner vision clear.

## **May 14: THE HABIT OF ENJOYING THE DISAGREEABLE**

*"That life also of Jesus might be made manifest*

*in our mortal flesh." 2 Corinthians 4:10*

We have to form habits to express what God's grace has done in us. It is not a question of being saved from hell, but of being saved in order to manifest the life of the Son of God in our mortal flesh, and it is the disagreeable things which make us exhibit whether or not we are manifesting His life. Do I manifest the essential sweetness of the Son of God, or the essential irritation of "myself" apart from Him? The only thing that will enable me to enjoy the disagreeable is the keen enthusiasm of letting the life of the Son of God manifest itself in me. No matter how disagreeable a thing may be, say - "Lord, I am delighted to obey Thee in this matter," and instantly the Son of God will press to the front, and there will be manifested in my human life that which glorifies Jesus.

There must be no debate. The moment you obey the light, the Son of God presses through you in that particular; but if you debate you grieve the Spirit of God. You must keep yourself fit to let the life of the Son of God be manifested, and you cannot keep yourself fit if you give way to self-pity. Our circumstances are the means of manifesting how wonderfully perfect and extraordinarily pure the Son of God is. The thing that ought to make the heart beat is a new way of manifesting the Son of God. It is one thing to choose the disagreeable, and another thing to go into the disagreeable by God's engineering. If God puts you there, He is amply sufficient. Keep your soul fit to manifest the life of the Son of God. Never live on memories; let the word of God be always living and active in you.

## May 15: The HABIT of RISING to the OCCASION

*"That ye may know what is the hope of His calling . . ."* Ephesians 1:18

Remember what you are saved for - that the Son of God might be manifested in your mortal flesh. Bend the whole energy of your powers to realize your election as a child of God; rise to the occasion every time.

You cannot do anything for your salvation, but you must do something to manifest it, you must work out what God has worked in. Are you working it out with your tongue, and your brain and your nerves? If you are still the same miserable crosspatch, set on your own way, then it is a lie to say that God has saved and sanctified you.

God is the Master Engineer, He allows the difficulties to come in order to see if you can vault over them properly - "By my God have I leaped over a wall." God will never shield you from any of the requirements of a son or daughter of His. Peter says - "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." Rise to the occasion; do the thing. It does not matter how it hurts as long as it gives God the chance to manifest Him self in your mortal flesh.

May God not find the whine in us any more, but may He find us full of spiritual pluck and athleticism, ready to face anything He brings. We have to exercise ourselves in order that the Son of God may be manifested in our mortal flesh. God never has museums. The only aim of the life is that the Son of God may be manifested, and all dictation to God vanishes. Our Lord never dictated to His Father, and we are not here to dictate to God; we are here to submit to His will so that He may work through us what He wants. When we realize this, He will make us broken bread and poured out wine to feed and nourish others.

## May 16: THE HABIT OF WEALTH

*"Partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4*

We are made partakers of the Divine nature through the promises; then we have to "manipulate" the Divine nature in our human nature by habits, and the first habit to form is the habit of realizing the provision God has made. "Oh, I can't afford it," we say - one of the worst lies is tucked up in that phrase. It is ungovernably bad taste to talk about money in the natural domain, and so it is spiritually, and yet we talk as if our Heavenly Father had cut us off with a shilling! We think it a sign of real modesty to say at the end of a day - "Oh, well, I have just got through, but it has been a severe tussle." And all the Almighty God is ours in the Lord Jesus! And He will tax the last grain of sand and the remotest star to bless us if we will obey Him. What does it matter if external circumstances are hard? Why should they not be! If we give way to self-pity and indulge in the luxury of misery, we banish God's riches from our own lives and hinder others from entering into His provision. No sin is worse than the sin of self-pity, because it obliterates God and puts self-interest upon the throne. It opens our mouths to spit out murmurings and our lives become craving spiritual sponges, there is nothing lovely or generous about them.

When God is beginning to be satisfied with us He will impoverish everything in the nature of fictitious wealth, until we learn that all our fresh springs are in Him. If the majesty and grace and power of God are not being manifested in us (not to our consciousness), God holds us responsible. "God is able to make all grace abound," then learn to lavish the grace of God on others. Be stamped with God's nature, and His blessing will come through you all the time.

## May 17: HIS ASCENSION AND OUR UNION

*And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Luke 24:51*

We have no corresponding experience to the events in Our Lord's life after the Transfiguration. From then onwards Our Lord's life' was altogether vicarious. Up to the time of the Transfiguration He had exhibited the normal perfect life of a man; from the Transfiguration onwards - Gethsemane, the Cross, the Resurrection - everything is unfamiliar to us. His Cross is the door by which every member of the human race can enter into the life of God; by His Resurrection He has the right to give eternal life to any man, and by His Ascension Our Lord enters heaven and keeps the door open for humanity.

On the Mount of Ascension the Transfiguration is completed. If Jesus had gone to heaven from the Mount of Transfiguration, He would have gone alone; He would have been nothing more to us than a glorious Figure. But He turned His back on the glory, and came down from the Mount to identify Himself with fallen humanity.

The Ascension is the consummation of the Transfiguration. Our Lord does now go back into His primal glory; but He does not go back simply as Son of God; He goes back to God as *Son of Man* as well as Son of God. There is now freedom of access for anyone straight to the very throne of God by the Ascension of the Son of Man. As Son of Man Jesus Christ deliberately limited omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience in Himself. Now they are His in absolute full power. As Son of Man Jesus Christ has all power at the throne of God. He is King of kings and Lord of lords from the day of His Ascension until now.

## May 18: CAREFUL UNREASONABLENESS

***"Behold the fowls of the air." . . . "Consider the lilies of the field." Matthew 6:26, 28***

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they simply *are!* Think of the sea, the air, the sun, the stars and the moon - all these are, and what a ministration they exert. So often we mar God's designed influence through us by our self-conscious effort to be consistent and useful. Jesus says that there is only one way to develop spiritually, and that is by concentration on God. "Do not bother about being of use to others; believe on Me" - pay attention to the Source, and out of you will flow rivers of living water. We cannot get at the springs of our natural life by common sense, and Jesus is teaching that growth in spiritual life does not depend on our watching it, but on concentration on our Father in heaven. Our heavenly Father knows the circumstances we are in, and if we keep concentrated on Him we will grow spiritually as the lilies.

The people who influence us most are not those who buttonhole us and talk to us, but those who live their lives like the stars in heaven and the lilies in the field, perfectly simply and unaffectedly. Those are the lives that mould us.

If you want to be of use to God, get rightly related to Jesus Christ and He will make you of use unconsciously every minute you live.

## May 19: "OUT OF THE WRECK I RISE"

***"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Romans 8:35***

God does not keep a man immune from trouble; He says - "I will be with him in trouble." It does not matter what actual troubles in the most extreme form get hold of a man's life, not one of them can separate him from his relationship to God. We are "more than conquerors in all these things." Paul is not talking of imaginary things, but of things that are desperately actual; and he says we are super-victors in the midst of them, not by our ingenuity, or by our courage, or by anything other than the fact that not one of them affects our relationship to God in Jesus Christ. Rightly or wrongly, we are where we are, exactly in the condition we are in. I am sorry for the Christian who has not something in his circumstances he wishes was not there.

"Shall tribulation . . . ?" Tribulation is never a noble thing; but let tribulation be what it may - exhausting, galling, fatiguing, it is not able to separate us from the love of God. Never let cares or tribulations separate you from the fact that God loves you.

"Shall anguish . . . ?" - can God's love hold when everything says that His love is a lie, and that there is no such thing as justice?

"Shall famine . . . ?" - can we not only believe in the love of God but be more than conquerors, even while we are being starved?

Either Jesus Christ is a deceiver and Paul is deluded, or some extraordinary thing happens to a man who holds on to the love of God when the odds are all against God's character. Logic is silenced in the face of every one of these things. Only one thing can account for it - the *love of God in Christ Jesus*. "Out of the wreck I rise" every time.

## May 20: THE REALM OF THE REAL

*"In your patience possess ye your souls."* Luke 21:19

When a man is born again, there is not the same robustness in his thinking or reasoning for a time as formerly. We have to make an expression of the new life, to form the mind of Christ. "Acquire your soul with patience." Many of us prefer to stay at the threshold of the Christian life instead of going on to construct a soul in accordance with the new life God has put within. We fail because we are ignorant of the way we are made, we put things down to the devil instead of our own undisciplined natures. Think what we can be when we are roused!

There are certain things we must not pray about - moods, for instance. Moods never go by praying, moods go by kicking. A mood nearly always has its seat in the physical condition, not in the moral. It is a continual effort not to listen to the moods which arise from a physical condition, never submit to them for a second. We have to take ourselves by the scruff of the neck and shake ourselves, and we will find that we can do what we said we could not. The curse with most of us is that we won't. The Christian life is one of incarnate spiritual pluck.



## May 21: DIVINE REASONINGS OF FAITH

***"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33***

Immediately we look at these words of Jesus, we find them the most revolutionary statement human ears ever listened to. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God." We argue in exactly the opposite way, even the most spiritually-minded of us - "But I *must* live; I *must* make so much money; I *must* be clothed; I *must* be fed." The great concern of our lives is not the kingdom of God, but how we are to fit ourselves to live. Jesus reverses the order: Get rightly related to God first, maintain that as the great care of your life, and never put the concern of your care on the other things.

*"Take no thought for your life. . . ."* Our Lord points out the utter unreasonableness from His standpoint of being so anxious over the means of living. Jesus is not saying that the man who takes thought for nothing is blessed - that man is a fool. Jesus taught that a disciple has to make his relationship to God the dominating concentration of his life, and to be carefully careless about every thing else in comparison to that. Jesus is saying - "Don't make the ruling factor of your life what you shall eat and what you shall drink, but be concentrated absolutely on God." Some people are careless over what they eat and drink, and they suffer for it; they are careless about what they wear, and they look as they have no business to look; they are careless about their earthly affairs, and God holds them responsible. Jesus is saying that the great care of the life is to put the relationship to God first, and everything else second.

It is one of the severest disciplines of the Christian life to allow the Holy Spirit to bring us into harmony with the teaching of Jesus in these verses.

## May 22: NOW THIS EXPLAINS IT

*"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee,  
that they also may be one in us." John 17:21*

If you are going through a solitary way, read John 17, it will explain exactly why you are where you are - Jesus has prayed that you may be one with the Father as He is. Are you helping God to answer that prayer, or have you some other end for your life? Since you became a disciple you cannot be as independent as you used to be.

The purpose of God is not to answer our prayers, but by our prayers we come to discern the mind of God, and this is revealed in John 17. There is one prayer God must answer, and that is the prayer of Jesus - "that they may be one, even as We are One." Are we as close to Jesus Christ as that?

God is not concerned about our plans; He does not say - Do you want to go through this bereavement; this upset? He allows these things for His own purpose. The things we are going through are either making us sweeter, better, nobler men and women; or they are making us more captious and fault-finding, more insistent upon our own way. The things that happen either make us fiends, or they make us saints; it depends entirely upon the relationship we are in to God. If we say - "Thy will be done," we get the consolation of John 17, the consolation of knowing that our Father is working according to His own wisdom. When we understand what God is after we will not get mean and cynical. Jesus has prayed nothing less for us than absolute oneness with Himself as He was one with the Father. Some of us are far off it, and yet God will not leave us alone until we *are* one with Him, because Jesus has prayed that we may be.

## May 23: CAREFUL INFIDELITY

***"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink;  
nor yet for your body what ye shall put on." Matthew 6:25***

Jesus sums up common-sense carefulness in a disciple as infidelity. If we have received the Spirit of God, He will press through and say - Now where does God come in in this relationship, in this mapped out holiday, in these new books? He always presses the point until we learn to make Him our first consideration. Whenever we put other things first, there is confusion.

"Take no thought . . ." don't take the pressure of forethought upon yourself. It is not only wrong to worry, it is infidelity, because worrying means that we do not think that God can look after the practical details of our lives, and it is never any thing else that worries us. Have you ever noticed what Jesus said would choke the word He puts in? The devil? No, the cares of this world. It is the little worries always. I will not trust where I cannot see, that is where infidelity begins. The only cure for infidelity is obedience to the Spirit.

The great word of Jesus to His disciples is *abandon*.

## May 24: THE DELIGHT OF DESPAIR

*"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." Revelation 1:17*

It may be that like the apostle John you know Jesus Christ intimately, when suddenly He appears with no familiar characteristic at all, and the only thing you can do is to fall at His feet as dead. There are times when God cannot reveal Himself in any other way than in His majesty, and it is the awfulness of the vision which brings you to the delight of despair; if you are ever to be raised up, it must be by the hand of God.

"He laid His right hand upon me." In the midst of the awfulness, a touch comes, and you know it is the right hand of Jesus Christ. The right hand not of restraint nor of correction nor of chastisement, but the right hand of the Everlasting Father. Whenever His hand is laid upon you, it is ineffable peace and comfort, the sense that "underneath are the everlasting arms," full of sustaining and comfort and strength. When once His touch comes, nothing at all can cast you into fear again. In the midst of all His ascended glory the Lord Jesus comes to speak to an insignificant disciple, and to say - "Fear not." His tenderness is ineffably sweet. Do I know Him like that?

Watch some of the things that strike despair. There is despair in which there is no delight, no horizon, no hope of anything brighter; but the delight of despair comes when I know that "in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." I delight to know that there is that in me which must fall prostrate before God when He manifests Himself, and if I am ever to be raised up it must be by the hand of God. God can do nothing for me until I get to the limit of the possible.

## May 25: THE TEST OF SELF-INTEREST

*"If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right;*

*or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."* **Genesis 13:9**

As soon as you begin to live the life of faith in God, fascinating and luxurious prospects will open up before you, and these things are yours by right; but if you are living the life of faith you will exercise your right to waive your rights, and let God choose for you. God sometimes allows you to get into a place of testing where your own welfare would be the right and proper thing to consider if you were not living a life of faith; but if you are, you will joyfully waive your right and leave God to choose for you. This is the discipline by means of which the natural is transformed into the spiritual by obedience to the voice of God.

Whenever *right* is made the guidance in the life, it will blunt the spiritual insight. The great enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but the good which is not good enough. The good is always the enemy of the best. It would seem the wisest thing in the world for Abraham to choose, it was his right, and the people around would consider him a fool for not choosing. Many of us do not go on spiritually because we prefer to choose what is right instead of relying on God to choose for us. We have to learn to walk according to the standard which has its eye on God. *"Walk before Me."*

## May 26: THINK AS JESUS TAUGHT

***"Pray without ceasing."* 1 Thessalonians 5:17**

We think rightly or wrongly about prayer according to the conception we have in our minds of prayer. If we think of prayer as the breath in our lungs and the blood from our hearts, we think rightly. The blood flows ceaselessly, and breathing continues ceaselessly; we are not conscious of it, but it is always going on. We are not always conscious of Jesus keeping us in perfect joint with God, but if we are obeying Him, He always is. Prayer is not an exercise, it is the life. Beware of anything that stops ejaculatory prayer. "Pray without ceasing," keep the childlike habit of ejaculatory prayer in your heart to God all the time.

Jesus never mentioned unanswered prayer, He had the boundless certainty that prayer is always answered. Have we by the Spirit the unspeakable certainty that Jesus had about prayer, or do we think of the times when God does not seem to have answered prayer? "Every one that asketh receiveth." We say - "But . . . , but . . ." God answers prayer in the best way, not sometimes, but every time, although the immediate manifestation of the answer in the domain in which we want it may not always follow. Do we expect God to answer prayer?

The danger with us is that we want to water down the things that Jesus says and make them mean something in accordance with common sense; if it were only common sense, it was not worth while for Him to say it. The things Jesus says about prayer are supernatural revelations.

**May 27: THE LIFE THAT LIVES**  
***"Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem,***

***until ye be endued with power from on high."* Luke 24:49**

The disciples had to tarry until the day of Pentecost not for their own preparation only; they had to wait until the Lord was glorified historically. As soon as He was glorified, what happened? "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." The parenthesis in John 7:39 ("For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified") does not apply to us; the Holy Ghost *has been* given, the Lord *is* glorified; the waiting depends not on God's providence, but on our fitness.

The Holy Spirit's influence and power were at work before Pentecost, but *He* was not here. Immediately Our Lord was glorified in Ascension, the Holy Spirit came into this world, and He has been here ever since. We have to receive the revelation that He is here. The reception of the Holy Spirit is the maintained attitude of a believer. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we receive quickening life from the ascended Lord.

It is not the baptism of the Holy Ghost which changes men, but the power of the ascended Christ coming into men's lives by the Holy Ghost that changes them. We too often divorce what the New Testament never divorces. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is not an experience apart from Jesus Christ: it is the evidence of the ascended Christ.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost does not make you think of Time or Eternity, it is one amazing glorious NOW. "This is life eternal that they might know Thee." Begin to know Him now, and finish never.

## May 28: UNQUESTIONED REVELATION

***"And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing." John 16:23***

When is "that day"? When the Ascended Lord makes you one with the Father. In that day you will be one with the Father as Jesus is, and "in that day," Jesus says, "ye shall ask Me nothing." Until the resurrection life of Jesus is manifested in you, you want to ask this and that; then after a while you find all questions gone, you do not seem to have any left to ask. You have come to the place of entire reliance on the resurrection life of Jesus which brings you into perfect contact with the purpose of God. Are you living that life now? If not, why shouldn't you?

There may be any number of things dark to your understanding, but they do not come in between your heart and God. "And in that day ye shall ask Me no question" - you do not need to, you are so certain that God will bring things out in accordance with His will. John 14:1 has become the real state of your heart, and there are no more questions to be asked. If anything is a mystery to you and it is coming in between you and God, never look for the explanation in your intellect, look for it in your disposition, it is that which is wrong. When once your disposition is willing to submit to the life of Jesus, the understanding will be perfectly clear, and you will get to the place where there is no distance between the Father and His child because the Lord has made you one, and "in that day ye shall ask Me no question."



## May 29: UNDISTURBED RELATIONSHIP

*"At that day ye shall ask in My name . . ."*

*"The Father Himself loveth you." John 16:26, 27*

"At that day ye shall ask in My name," i.e., in My nature. Not - "You shall use My name as a magic word," but - "You will be so intimate with Me that you will be one with Me." "That day" is not a day hereafter, but a day meant for here and now. "The Father Himself loveth you" - the union is so complete and absolute. Our Lord does not mean that life will be free from external perplexities, but that just as He knew the Father's heart and mind, so by the baptism of the Holy Ghost He can lift us into the heavenly places where He can reveal the counsels of God to us.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name. . . ." "That day" is a day of undisturbed relationship between God and the saint. Just as Jesus stood unsullied in the presence of His Father, so by the mighty efficacy of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we can be lifted into that relationship - "that they may be one, even as We are One."

"He will give it you." Jesus says that God will recognize our prayers. What a challenge! By the Resurrection and Ascension power of Jesus, by the sent-down Holy Ghost, we can be lifted into such a relationship with the Father that we are at one with the perfect sovereign will of God by our free choice even as Jesus was. In that wonderful position, placed there by Jesus Christ, we can pray to God in His name, in His nature, which is gifted to us by the Holy Ghost, and Jesus says - "What soever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." - The sovereign character of Jesus Christ is tested by His own statements.

**May 30: YES - BUT . . . !"**

***"Lord, I will follow Thee; but . . ."* Luke 9:61**

Supposing God tells you to do something which is an enormous test to your common sense, what are you going to do? Hang back? If you get into the habit of doing a thing in the physical domain, you will do it every time until you break the habit determinedly; and the same is true spiritually. Again and again you will get up to what Jesus Christ wants, and every time you will turn back when it comes to the point, until you abandon resolutely. "Yes, but - supposing I do obey God in this matter, what about . . . ?" "Yes, I will obey God if He will let me use my common sense, but don't ask me to take a step in the dark." Jesus Christ demands of the man who trusts Him the same reckless sporting spirit that the natural man exhibits. If a man is going to do anything worth while, there are times when he has to risk everything on his leap, and in the spiritual domain Jesus Christ demands that you risk everything you hold by common sense and leap into what He says, and immediately you do, you find that what He says fits on as solidly as common sense. At the bar of common sense Jesus Christ's statements may seem mad; but bring them to the bar of faith, and you begin to find with awestruck spirit that they are the words of God. Trust entirely in God, and when He brings you to the venture, see that you take it. We act like pagans in a crisis, only one out of a crowd is daring enough to bank his faith in the character of God.

## May 31: GOD FIRST

**Put God First in Trust.** *"Jesus did not commit Himself unto them*

*. . . for He knew what was in man."* John 2:24-25

Our Lord trusted no man; yet He was never suspicious, never bitter, never in despair about any man, because He put God first in trust; He trusted absolutely in what God's grace could do for any man. If I put my trust in human beings first, I will end in despairing of everyone; I will become bitter, because I have insisted on man being what no man ever can be - absolutely right. Never trust anything but the grace of God in yourself or in anyone else.

**Put God's Needs First.** *"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."* Hebrews 10:9

A man's obedience is to what he sees to be a need; Our Lord's obedience was to the will of His Father. The cry to-day is - "We must get some work to do; the heathen are dying without God; we must go and tell them of Him." We have to see first of all that God's needs in us personally are being met. "Tarry ye until. . . ." The purpose of this College is to get us rightly related to the needs of God. When God's needs in us have been met, then He will open the way for us to realize His needs elsewhere.

**Put God's Trust First.** *"And whoso receiveth one such little child in my name receiveth Me."* Matthew 18:5

God's trust is that He gives me Himself as a babe. God expects my personal life to be a "Bethlehem." Am I allowing my natural life to be slowly transfigured by the indwelling life of the Son of God? God's ultimate purpose is that His Son might be manifested in my mortal flesh.

## June 1: THE STAGGERING QUESTION

*"Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel 37:3*

Can that sinner be turned into a saint? Can that twisted life be put right? There is only one answer: "O Lord, Thou knowest, I don't." Never trample in with religious common sense and say - "Oh, yes, with a little more Bible reading and devotion and prayer, I see how it can be done."

It is much easier to *do* something than to trust in God; we mistake panic for inspiration. That is why there are so few fellow workers with God and so many workers for Him. We would far rather work for God than believe in Him. Am I quite sure that God will do what I cannot do? I despair of men in the degree in which I have never realized that God has done anything for me. Is my experience such a wonderful realization of God's power and might that I can never despair of anyone I see? Have I had any spiritual work done in me at all? The degree of panic is the degree of the lack of personal spiritual experience.

"Behold, O my people, I will open your graves." When God wants to show you what human nature is like apart from Himself, He has to show it you in yourself. If the Spirit of God has given you a vision of what you are apart from the grace of God (and He only does it when His Spirit is at work), you know there is no criminal who is half so bad in actuality as you know yourself to be in possibility. My "grave" has been opened by God and "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." God's Spirit continually reveals what human nature is like apart from His grace.

## June 2: WHAT ARE YOU HAUNTED BY?

*What man is he that feareth the Lord?" Psalm 25:12*

What are you haunted by? You will say - By nothing, but we are all haunted by something, generally by ourselves, or, if we are Christians, by our experience. The Psalmist says we are to be haunted by God. The abiding consciousness of the life is to be God, not thinking about Him. The whole of our life inside and out is to be absolutely haunted by the presence of God. A child's consciousness is so mother-haunted that although the child is not consciously thinking of its mother, yet when calamity arises, the relationship that abides is that of the mother. So we are to live and move and have our being in God, to look at everything in relation to God, because the abiding consciousness of God pushes itself to the front all the time.

If we are haunted by God, nothing else can get in, no cares, no tribulation, no anxieties. We see now why Our Lord so emphasized the sin of worry. How can we dare be so utterly unbelieving when God is round about us? To be haunted by God is to have an effective barricade against all the onslaughts of the enemy.

"His soul shall dwell at ease." In tribulation, misunderstanding, slander, in the midst of all these things, if our life is hid with Christ in God, He will keep us at ease. We rob ourselves of the marvellous revelation of this abiding companionship of God. "God is our Refuge" - nothing can come through that shelter.

### June 3: THE SECRET OF THE LORD

*"The secret (friendship R.V.) of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Psalm 25:14*

What is the sign of a friend? That he tells you secret Sorrows? No, that he tells you secret joys. Many will confide to you their secret sorrows, but the last mark of intimacy is to confide secret joys. Have we ever let God tell us any of His joys, or are we telling God our secrets so continually that we leave no room for Him to talk to us? At the beginning of our Christian life we are full of requests to God, then we find that God wants to get us into relationship with Himself, to get us in touch with His purposes. Are we so wedded to Jesus Christ's idea of prayer - "Thy will be done" - that we catch the secrets of God? The things that make God dear to us are not so much His great big blessings as the tiny things, because they show His amazing intimacy with us; He knows every detail of our individual lives.

". . . him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose." At first we want the consciousness of being guided by God, then as we go on we live so much in the consciousness of God that we do not need to ask what His will is, because the thought of choosing any other will never occur to us. If we are saved and sanctified God guides us by our ordinary choices, and if we are going to choose what He does not want, He will check, and we must heed. Whenever there is doubt, Stop at once. Never reason it out and say - "I wonder why I shouldn't?" God instructs us in what we choose, that is, He guides our common sense, and we no longer hinder His Spirit by continually saying - "Now, Lord, what is Thy will?"

## June 4: THE NEVER-FAILING GOD

*"For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5*

What line does my thought take? Does it turn to what God says or to what I fear? Am I learning to say not what God says, but to say something after I have heard what He says?

"He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

"I will in no wise fail thee" - not for all my sin and selfishness and stubbornness and waywardness. Have I really let God say to me that He will never fail me? If I have listened to this say-so of God's, then let me listen again.

"Neither will I in any wise forsake thee." Sometimes it is not difficulty that makes me think God will forsake me, but drudgery. There is no Hill Difficulty to climb, no vision given, nothing wonderful or beautiful, just the commonplace day in and day out - can I hear God's say-so in these things?

We have the idea that God is going to do some exceptional thing, that He is preparing and fitting us for some extraordinary thing by and bye, but as we go on in grace we find that God is glorifying Himself here and now, in the present minute. If we have God's say-so behind us, the most amazing strength comes, and we learn to sing in the ordinary days and ways.

## June 5: GOD'S SAY-SO

*"He hath said . . . so that we may boldly say . . ."* Hebrews 8:5-6

My say-so is to be built on God's say-so. God says - "I will never leave thee," then I can with good courage say - "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear - " I will not be haunted by apprehension. This does not mean that I will not be tempted to fear, but I will remember God's say-so. I will be full of courage, like a child "bucking himself up" to reach the standard his father wants. Faith in many a one falters when the apprehensions come, they forget the meaning of God's say-so, forget to take a deep breath spiritually. The only way to get the dread taken out of us is to listen to God's say-so.

What are you dreading? You are not a coward about it, you are going to face it, but there is a feeling of dread. When there is nothing and no one to help you, say - "But the Lord is my Helper, this second, in my present outlook." Are you learning to say things after listening to God, or are you saying things and trying to make God's word fit in? Get hold of the Father's say-so, and then say with good courage - "I will not fear." It does not matter what evil or wrong may be in the way, He has said - "I will never leave thee."

Frailty is another thing that gets in between God's say-so and ours. When we realize how feeble we are in facing difficulties, the difficulties become like giants, we become like grasshoppers, and God becomes a nonentity. Remember God's say-so - *"I will in no wise fail you."* Have we learned to sing after hearing God's key-note? Are we always possessed with the courage to say - "The Lord is my helper," or are we succumbing?



## June 6: WORK OUT WHAT GOD WORKS IN

### *"Work out your own salvation."* Philippians 2:12-13

Your will agrees with God, but in your flesh there is a disposition which renders you powerless to do what you know you ought to do. When the Lord is presented to the conscience, the first thing conscience does is to rouse the will, and the will always agrees with God. You say - "But I do not know whether my will is in agreement with God." Look to Jesus and you will find that your will and your conscience are in agreement with Him every time. The thing in you which makes you say "I shan't" is something less profound than your will; it is perversity, or obstinacy, and they are never in agreement with God. The profound thing in man is his will, not sin. Will is the essential element in God's creation of man: sin is a perverse disposition which entered into man. In a regenerated man the source of will is almighty. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." You have to work out with concentration and care what God works in; not *work your own salvation*, but *work it out*, while you base resolutely in unshaken faith on the complete and perfect Redemption of the Lord. As you do this, you do not bring an opposed will to God's will, God's will is your will, and your natural choices are along the line of God's will, and the life is as natural as breathing. God is the source of your will, therefore you are able to work out His will. Obstinacy is an unintelligent 'wedge' that refuses to be enlightened; the only thing is for it to be blown up with dynamite, and the dynamite is obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Do I believe that Almighty God is the source of my will? God not only expects me to do His will, but He is in me to do it.

## June 7: DON'T SLACK OFF

***"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do." John 14:13***

Am I fulfilling this ministry of the interior? There is no snare or any danger of infatuation or pride in intercession, it is a hidden ministry that brings forth fruit whereby the Father is glorified. Am I allowing my spiritual life to be frittered away, or am I bringing it all to one centre - the Atonement of my Lord? Is Jesus Christ more and more dominating every interest in my life? If the one central point, the great exerting influence in my life is the Atonement of the Lord, then every phase of my life will bear fruit for Him.

I must take time to realize what is the central point of power. Do I give one minute out of sixty to concentrate upon it? "If ye abide in Me" - continue to act and think and work from that centre - "ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Am I abiding? Am I taking time to abide? What is the greatest factor of power in my life? Is it work, service, sacrifice for others, or trying to work for God? The thing that ought to exert the greatest power in my life is the Atonement of the Lord. It is not the thing we spend the most time on that moulds us most; the greatest element is the thing that exerts most power. We must determine to be limited and concentrate our affinities.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do." The disciple who abides in Jesus *is* the will of God, and his apparently free choices are God's fore-ordained decrees. Mysterious? Logically contradictory and absurd? Yes, but a glorious truth to a saint.

## June 8: WHAT NEXT?

Determine to know more than others.

*"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13:17*

If you do not cut the moorings, God will have to break them by a storm and send you out. Launch all on God, go out on the great swelling tide of His purpose, and you will get your eyes open. If you believe in Jesus, you are not to spend all your time in the smooth waters just inside the harbour bar, full of delight, but always moored; you have to get out through the harbour bar into the great deeps of God and begin to know for yourself, begin to have spiritual discernment.

When you know you should do a thing, and do it, immediately you know more. Revise where you have become stodgy spiritually, and you will find it goes back to a point where there was something you knew you should do, but you did not do it because there seemed no immediate call to, and now you have no perception, no discernment; at a time of crisis you are spiritually distracted instead of spiritually self-possessed. It is a dangerous thing to refuse to go on knowing.

The counterfeit of obedience is a state of mind in which you work up occasions to sacrifice your self; ardour is mistaken for discernment. It is easier to sacrifice yourself than to fulfil your spiritual destiny, which is stated in Romans 12:1-2. It is a great deal better to fulfil the purpose of God in your life by discerning His will than to perform great acts of self-sacrifice. "To obey is better than sacrifice." Beware of harking back to what you were once when God wants you to be something you have never been. "If any man will do . . . he shall know."

## June 9: THE NEXT BEST THING TO DO

**Ask if you have not Received. "For every one that asketh receiveth." Luke 11:10**

There is nothing more difficult than to ask. We will long and desire and crave and suffer, but not until we are at the extreme limit will we ask. A sense of unreality makes us ask. Have you ever asked out of the depths of moral poverty? "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . . but be sure that you do lack wisdom. You cannot bring yourself up against Reality when you like. The next best thing to do if you are not spiritually real, is to ask God for the Holy Spirit on the word of Jesus Christ (see Luke 11:13). The Holy Spirit is the One Who makes real in you all that Jesus did for you.

"For every one that asketh receiveth." This does not mean you will not get if you do not ask (cf. Matt. 5:45), but until you get to the point of asking you won't *receive* from God. To receive means you have come into the relationship of a child of God, and now you perceive with intelligent and moral appreciation and spiritual understanding that these things come from God.

"If any of you lack wisdom . . ." If you realize you are lacking, it is because you have come in contact with spiritual reality; do not put your reasonable blinkers on again. People say - Preach us the simple gospel: don't tell us we have to be holy, because that produces a sense of abject poverty, and it is not nice to feel abjectly poor. "Ask" means *beg*. Some people are poor enough to be interested in their poverty, and some of us are like that spiritually. We will never receive if we ask with an end in view; if we ask, not out of our poverty but out of our lust. A pauper does not ask from any other reason than the abject panging condition of his poverty, he is not ashamed to beg. - Blessed are the *paupers* in spirit.

## June 10: THE NEXT BEST THING TO DO

**Seek if you have not Found. "Seek, and ye shall find." Luke 11:9**

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss." If you ask for things from life instead of from God, you ask amiss, i.e., you ask from a desire for self-realization. The more you realize yourself the less will you seek God. "Seek, and ye shall find." Get to work, narrow your interests to this one. Have you ever sought God with your whole heart, or have you only given a languid cry to Him after a twinge of moral neuralgia? Seek, concentrate, and you will find.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Are you thirsty, or smugly indifferent - so satisfied with your experience that you want nothing more of God? Experience is a gateway, not an end. Beware of building your faith on experience, the metallic note will come in at once, the censorious note. You can never give another person that which you have found, but you can make him homesick for what you have.

"Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "Draw nigh to God." Knock - the door is closed, and you suffer from palpitation as you knock. "Cleanse your hands" - knock a bit louder, you begin to find you are dirty. "Purify your heart" - this is more personal still, you are desperately in earnest now - you will do anything. "Be afflicted" - have you ever been afflicted before God at the state of your inner life? There is no strand of self-pity left, but a heartbreaking affliction of amazement to find you are the kind of person that you are.

"Humble yourself" - it is a humbling business to knock at God's door - you have to knock with the crucified thief. "To him that knocketh, *it shall be opened.*"

## June 11: GETTING THERE

**Where the sin and the sorrow cease, and the song and the saint commence.**

***"Come unto Me."* Matthew 11:28**

Do I want to get there? I can now. The questions that matter in life are remarkably few, and they are all answered by the words - "Come unto Me." Not - Do this, or don't do that; but - "Come unto Me." If I will come to Jesus my actual life will be brought into accord with my real desires; I will actually cease from sin, and actually find the song of the Lord begin.

Have you ever come to Jesus? Watch the stubbornness of your heart, you will do anything rather than the one simple childlike thing - "Come unto Me." If you want the actual experience of ceasing from sin, you must come to Jesus.

Jesus Christ makes Himself the touchstone. Watch how He used the word "Come." At the most unexpected moments there is the whisper of the Lord - "Come unto Me," and you are drawn immediately. Personal contact with Jesus alters everything. Be stupid enough to come and commit yourself to what He says. The attitude of coming is that the will resolutely lets go of everything and deliberately commits all to Him.

". . . and I will give you rest," i.e., I will stay you. Not - I will put you to bed and hold your hand and sing you to sleep; but - I will get you out of bed, out of the languor and exhaustion, out of the state of being half dead while you are alive; I will imbue you with the spirit of life, and you will be stayed by the perfection of vital activity. We get pathetic and talk about "suffering the will of the Lord!" Where is the majestic vitality and might of the Son of God about that?

## June 12: GETTING THERE

Where the self-interest sleeps and the real interest awakens.

***"Master, where dwellest Thou? . . . Come and see." "Come with Me." John 1:39***

"They abode with Him that day." That is about all some of us ever do, then we wake up to actualities, self-interest arises and the abiding is passed. There is no condition of life in which we cannot abide in Jesus.

"Thou art Simon, thou shalt be called Cephas." God writes the new name on those places only in our lives where He has erased the pride and self-sufficiency and self-interest. Some of us have the new name in spots only, like spiritual measles. In sections we look all right. When we have our best spiritual mood on, you would think we were very high-toned saints; but don't look at us when we are not in that mood. The disciple is one who has the new name written all over him; self-interest and pride and self-sufficiency have been completely erased.

Pride is the deification of self, and this to-day in some of us is not of the order of the Pharisee, but of the publican. To say "Oh, I'm no saint," is acceptable to human pride, but it is unconscious blasphemy against God. It literally means that you defy God to make you a saint, "I am much too weak and hopeless, I am outside the reach of the Atonement." Humility before men may be unconscious blasphemy before God. Why are you not a saint? It is either that you do not want to be a saint, or that you do not believe God can make you one. It would be all right, you say, if God saved you and took you straight to heaven. That is just what He will do! "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Make no conditions, let Jesus be everything, and He will take you home with Him not only for a day, but for ever.

## June 13: GETTING THERE

Where the selective affinity dies and the sanctified abandon lives.

*"Come ye after Me."* Mark 1:17

One of the greatest hindrances in coming to Jesus is the excuse of temperament. We make our temperament and our natural affinities barriers to coming to Jesus. The first thing we realize when we come to Jesus is that He pays no attention whatever to our natural affinities. We have the notion that we can consecrate our gifts to God. You cannot consecrate what is not yours; there is only one thing you can consecrate to God, and that is your right to yourself (Romans 12:1). If you will give God your right to yourself, He will make a holy experiment out of you. God's experiments always succeed. The one mark of a saint is the moral originality which springs from abandonment to Jesus Christ. In the life of a saint there is this amazing wellspring of original life all the time; the Spirit of God is a well of water springing up, perennially fresh. The saint realizes that it is God Who engineers circumstances, consequently there is no whine, but a reckless abandon to Jesus. Never make a principle out of your experience; let God be as original with other people as He is with you.

If you abandon to Jesus, and come when He says "Come," He will continue to say "Come" through you; you will go out into life reproducing the echo of Christ's "Come." That is the result in every soul who has abandoned and come to Jesus.

Have I come to Jesus? Will I come *now*?



**June 14: GET A MOVE ON**  
**In the Matter of Determination.**

***"Abide in Me."* John 15:4**

The Spirit of Jesus is put into me by the Atonement, then I have to construct with patience the way of thinking that is exactly in accordance with my Lord. God will not make me think like Jesus, I have to do it myself; I have to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. "Abide in Me" - in intellectual matters, in money matters, in every one of the matters that make human life what it is. It is not a bandbox life.

Am I preventing God from doing things in my circumstances because I say it will hinder my communion with Him? That is an impertinence. It does not matter what my circumstances are, I can be as sure of abiding in Jesus in them as in a prayer meeting. I have not to change and arrange my circumstances myself. With Our Lord the inner abiding was unsullied; He was at home with God wherever His body was placed. He never chose His own circumstances, but was meek towards His Father's dispensations for Him. Think of the amazing leisure of Our Lord's life! We keep God at excitement point, there is none of the serenity of the life hid with Christ in God about us.

Think of the things that take you out of abiding in Christ - Yes, Lord, just a minute, I have got this to do; Yes, I will abide when once this is finished; when this week is over, it will be all right, I will abide then. *Get a move on*; begin to abide *now*. In the initial stages it is a continual effort until it becomes so much the law of life that you abide in Him unconsciously. Determine to abide in Jesus wherever you are placed.

**June 15: GET A MOVE ON  
In the Matter of Drudgery.**

***"And beside this . . . add . . ." 2 Peter 1:5***

You have inherited the Divine nature, says Peter (v.4), now screw your attention down and form habits, give diligence, concentrate. "Add" means all that character means. No man is born either naturally or supernaturally with character, he has to make character. Nor are we born with habits; we have to form habits on the basis of the new life God has put into us. We are not meant to be illuminated versions, but the common stuff of ordinary life exhibiting the marvel of the grace of God. Drudgery is the touchstone of character. The great hindrance in spiritual life is that we will look for big things to do. "Jesus took a towel . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet."

There are times when there is no illumination and no thrill, but just the daily round, the common task. Routine is God's way of saving us between our times of inspiration. Do not expect God always to give you His thrilling minutes, but learn to live in the domain of drudgery by the power of God.

It is the "adding" that is difficult. We say we do not expect God to carry us to heaven on flowery beds of ease, and yet we act as if we did! The tiniest detail in which I obey has all the omnipotent power of the grace of God behind it. If I do my duty, not for duty's sake, but because I believe God is engineering my circumstances, then at the very point of my obedience the whole superb grace of God is mine through the Atonement.

## June 16: WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS?

*"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." . . .*

*"I have called you friends." John 15:13, 15*

Jesus does not ask me to die for Him, but to lay down my life for Him. Peter said - "I will lay down my life for Thy sake" and he meant it; his sense of the heroic was magnificent. It would be a bad thing to be incapable of making such a declaration as Peter made; the sense of our duty is only realized by our sense of the heroic. Has the Lord ever asked you - "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?" It is far easier to die than to lay down the life day in and day out with the sense of the high calling. We are not made for brilliant moments, but we have to walk in the light of them in ordinary ways. There was only one brilliant moment in the life of Jesus, and that was on the Mount of Transfiguration; then He emptied Himself the second time of His glory, and came down into the demon-possessed valley. For thirty-three years Jesus laid out His life to do the will of His Father, and, John says, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." It is contrary to human nature to do it.

If I am a friend of Jesus, I have deliberately and carefully to lay down my life for Him. It is difficult, and thank God it is difficult. Salvation is easy because it cost God so much, but the manifestation of it in my life is difficult. God saves a man and endues him with the Holy Spirit, and then says in effect - "Now work it out, be loyal to Me, whilst the nature of things round about you would make you disloyal." "I have called you friends." Stand loyal to your Friend, and remember that His honour is at stake in your bodily life.

## June 17: THE UNCRITICAL TEMPER

*"Judge not, that ye be not judged."* Matthew 7:1

Jesus says regarding judging - Don't. The average Christian is the most penetratingly critical individual. Criticism is a part of the ordinary faculty of man; but in the spiritual domain nothing is accomplished by criticism. The effect of criticism is a dividing up of the powers of the one criticized; the Holy Ghost is the only One in the true position to criticize, He alone is able to show what is wrong without hurting and wounding. It is impossible to enter into communion with God when you are in a critical temper; it makes you hard and vindictive and cruel, and leaves you with the flattering unctiousness that you are a superior person. Jesus says, as a disciple cultivate the uncritical temper. It is not done once and for all. Beware of anything that puts you in the superior person's place.

There is no getting away from the penetration of Jesus. If I see the mote in your eye, it means I have a beam in my own. Every wrong thing that I see in you, God locates in me. Every time I judge, I condemn myself (see Romans 2:17-20). Stop having a measuring rod for other people. There is always one fact more in every man's case about which we know nothing. The first thing God does is to give us a spiritual spring-cleaning; there is no possibility of pride left in a man after that. I have never met the man I could despair of after discerning what lies in me apart from the grace of God.

## June 18: DON'T THINK NOW, TAKE THE ROAD

*"And Peter . . . walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid." Matthew 14:29-30*

The wind was actually boisterous, the waves were actually high, but Peter did not see them at first. He did not reckon with them, he simply recognized his Lord and stepped out in recognition of Him, and walked on the water. Then he began to reckon with the actual things, and down he went instantly. Why could not our Lord have enabled him to walk at the bottom of the waves as well as on the top of them? Neither could be done saving by recognition of the Lord Jesus.

We step right out on God over some things, then self-consideration enters in and down we go. If you are recognizing your Lord, you have no business with where He engineers your circumstances. The actual things are, but immediately you look at them you are overwhelmed, you cannot recognize Jesus, and the rebuke comes: "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Let actual circumstances be what they may, keep recognizing Jesus, maintain complete reliance on Him.

If you debate for a second when God has spoken, it is all up. Never begin to say - "Well, I wonder if He did speak?" Be reckless immediately, fling it all out on Him. You do not know when His voice will come, but whenever the realization of God comes in the faintest way imaginable, recklessly abandon. It is only by abandon that you recognize Him. You will only realize His voice more clearly by recklessness.

## June 19: SERVICE OF PASSIONATE DEVOTION

*"Lovest thou Me? . . . Feed My sheep."* John 21:16

Jesus did not say - Make converts to your way of thinking, but look after My sheep, see that they get nourished in the knowledge of Me. We count as service what we do in the way of Christian work; Jesus Christ calls service what we are to Him, not what we do for Him. Discipleship is based on devotion to Jesus Christ, not on adherence to a belief or a creed. "If any man come to Me and hate not . . . , he cannot be My disciple." There is no argument and no compulsion, but simply - If you would be My disciple, you must be devoted to Me. A man touched by the Spirit of God suddenly says - "Now I see Who Jesus is," and that is the source of devotion.

To-day we have substituted credal belief for personal belief, and that is why so many are devoted to causes and so few devoted to Jesus Christ. People do not want to be devoted to Jesus, but only to the cause He started. Jesus Christ is a source of deep offence to the educated mind of to-day that does not want Him in any other way than as a Comrade. Our Lord's first obedience was to the will of His Father, not to the needs of men; the saving of men was the natural outcome of His obedience to the Father. If I am devoted to the cause of humanity only, I will soon be exhausted and come to the place where my love will falter; but if I love Jesus Christ personally and passionately, I can serve humanity though men treat me as a door-mat. The secret of a disciple's life is devotion to Jesus Christ, and the characteristic of the life is its unobtrusiveness. It is like a corn of wheat, which falls into the ground and dies, but presently it will spring up and alter the whole landscape (John 12:24).

## June 20: HAVE YOU COME TO "WHEN" YET?

***"And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends." Job 42:10***

The plaintive, self-centred, morbid kind of prayer, a dead-set that I want to be right, is never found in the New Testament. The fact that I am trying to be right with God is a sign that I am rebelling against the Atonement. "Lord, I will purify my heart if You will answer my prayer; I will walk rightly if You will help me." I *cannot* make myself right with God, I cannot make my life perfect; I can only be right with God if I accept the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ as an absolute gift. Am I humble enough to accept it? I have to resign every kind of claim and cease from every effort, and leave myself entirely alone in His hands, and then begin to pour out in the priestly work of intercession. There is much prayer that arises from real disbelief in the Atonement. Jesus is not beginning to save us, He has saved us, the thing is done, and it is an insult to ask Him to do it.

If you are not getting the hundredfold more, not getting insight into God's word, then start praying for your friends, enter into the ministry of the interior. "The Lord turned the captivity of Job *when he prayed for his friends.*" The real business of your life as a saved soul is intercessory prayer. Wherever God puts you in circumstances, pray immediately, pray that His Atonement may be realized in other lives as it has been in yours. Pray for your friends *now*; pray for those with whom you come in contact *now*.

## June 21: THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

*"But ye are . . . a royal priesthood." 1 Peter 2:9*

By what right do we become "a royal priesthood"? By the right of the Atonement. Are we prepared to leave ourselves resolutely alone and to launch out into the priestly work of prayer? The continual grubbing on the inside to see whether we are what we ought to be generates a self-centred, morbid type of Christianity, not the robust, simple life of the child of God. Until we get into a right relationship to God, it is a case of banging on by the skin of our teeth, and we say - What a wonderful victory I have got. There is nothing indicative of the miracle of Redemption in that. Launch out in reckless belief that the Redemption is complete, and then bother no more about yourself, but begin to do as Jesus Christ said - pray for the friend who comes to you at midnight, pray for the saints, pray for all men. Pray on the realization that you are only perfect in Christ Jesus, not on this plea - "O Lord, I have done my best, please hear me."

How long is it going to take God to free us from the morbid habit of thinking about ourselves? We must get sick unto death of ourselves, until there is no longer any surprise at anything God can tell us about ourselves. We cannot touch the depths of meanness in ourselves. There is only one place where we are right, and that is in Christ Jesus. When we are there, then we have to pour out for all we are worth in this ministry of the interior.



## June 22: THE UNDEVIATING TEST

*"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged;*

*and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matthew 7:2*

This statement is not a haphazard guess, it is an eternal law of God. Whatever judgment you give, it is measured to you again. There is a difference between retaliation and retribution. Jesus says that the basis of life is retribution - "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." If you have been shrewd in finding out the defects in others, remember that will be exactly the measure given to you. Life serves back in the coin you pay. This law works from God's throne downwards (cf. Psalm 18:25-26).

Romans 2 applies it in a still more definite way, and says that the one who criticizes another is guilty of the very same thing. God looks not only at the act, He looks at the possibility. We do not believe the statements of the Bible to begin with. For instance, do we believe this statement, that the things we criticize in others we are guilty of ourselves? The reason we see hypocrisy and fraud and unreality in others is because they are all in our own hearts. The great characteristic of a saint is humility - Yes, all those things and other evils would have been manifested in me but for the grace of God, therefore I have no right to judge.

Jesus says - "Judge not, that ye be not judged" if you do judge, it will be measured to you exactly as you have judged. Who of us would dare to stand before God and say - "My God, judge me as I have judged my fellow men?" We have judged our fellow men as sinners; if God should judge us like that we would be in hell. God judges us through the marvellous Atonement of Jesus Christ.

## June 23: ACQUAINTANCE WITH GRIEF

*"A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Isaiah 53:3*

We are not acquainted with grief in the way in which Our Lord was acquainted with it; we endure it, we get through it, but we do not become intimate with it. At the beginning of life we do not reconcile ourselves to the fact of sin. We take a rational view of life and say that a man by controlling his instincts, and by educating himself, can produce a life which will slowly evolve into the life of God. But as we go on, we find the presence of something which we have not taken into consideration, viz., sin, and it upsets all our calculations. Sin has made the basis of things wild and not rational. We have to recognize that sin is a fact, not a defect; sin is red-handed mutiny against God. Either God or sin must die in my life. The New Testament brings us right down to this one issue. If sin rules in me, God's life in me will be killed; if God rules in me, sin in me will be killed. There is no possible ultimate but that. The climax of sin is that it crucified Jesus Christ, and what was true in the history of God on earth will be true in your history and in mine. In our mental outlook we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact of sin as the only explanation as to why Jesus Christ came, and as the explanation of the grief and sorrow in life.

## June 24: RECONCILING ONE'S SELF TO THE FACT OF SIN

*This is your hour, and the power of darkness."* Luke 22:53

It is not being reconciled to the fact of sin that produces all the disasters in life. You may talk about the nobility of human nature, but there is something in human nature which will laugh in the face of every ideal you have. If you refuse to agree with the fact that there is vice and self-seeking, something downright spiteful and wrong in human beings, instead of reconciling yourself to it, when it strikes your life, you will compromise with it and say it is of no use to battle against it. Have you made allowance for this hour and the power of darkness, or do you take a recognition of yourself that misses out sin? In your bodily relationships and friendships do you reconcile yourself to the fact of sin? If not, you will be caught round the next corner and you will compromise with it. If you reconcile yourself to the fact of sin, you will realize the danger at once - Yes, I see what that would mean. The recognition of sin does not destroy the basis of friendship; it establishes a mutual regard for the fact that the basis of life is tragic. Always beware of an estimate of life which does not recognize the fact that there is sin.

Jesus Christ never trusted human nature, yet He was never cynical, never suspicious, because He trusted absolutely in what He could do for human nature. The pure man or woman, not the innocent, is the safeguarded man or woman. You are never safe with an innocent man or woman. Men and women have no business to be innocent; God demands that they be pure and virtuous. Innocence is the characteristic of a child; it is a blameworthy thing for a man or woman not to be reconciled to the fact of sin.

## June 25: RECEIVING ONE'S SELF IN THE FIRES OF SORROW

*"What shall I say? Father, save me, from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name."* John 12:27-29 (R.V.)

My attitude as a saint to sorrow and difficulty is not to ask that they may be prevented, but to ask that I may preserve the self God created me to be through every fire of sorrow. Our Lord received Himself in the fire of sorrow, He was saved not *from* the hour, but *out of* the hour.

We say that there ought to be no sorrow, but there *is* sorrow, and we have to receive ourselves in its fires. If we try and evade sorrow, refuse to lay our account with it, we are foolish. Sorrow is one of the biggest facts in life; it is no use saying sorrow ought not to be. Sin and sorrow and suffering *are*, and it is not for us to say that God has made a mistake in allowing them.

Sorrow burns up a great amount of shallowness, but it does not always make a man better. Suffering either gives me my self or it destroys my self. You cannot receive your self in success, you lose your head; you cannot receive your self in monotony, you grouse. The way to find yourself is in the fires of sorrow. Why it should be so is another matter, but that it is so is true in the Scriptures and in human experience. You always know the man who has been through the fires of sorrow and received himself, you are certain you can go to him in trouble and find that he has ample leisure for you. If a man has not been through the fires of sorrow, he is apt to be contemptuous, he has no time for you. If you receive yourself in the fires of sorrow, God will make you nourishment for other people.

## June 26: ALWAYS NOW

***"We . . . beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." 2 Corinthians 6:1***

The grace you had yesterday will not do for to-day. Grace is the overflowing favour of God; you can always reckon it is there to draw upon. "In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses" - that is where the test for patience comes. Are you failing the grace of God there? Are you saying - Oh, well, I won't count this time? It is not a question of praying and asking God to help you; it is taking the grace of God *now*. We make prayer the preparation for work, it is never that in the Bible. Prayer is the exercise of drawing on the grace of God. Don't say - I will endure this until I can get away and pray. Pray *now*; draw on the grace of God in the moment of need. Prayer is the most practical thing, it is not the reflex action of devotion. Prayer is the last thing in which we learn to draw on God's grace.

"In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours" - in all these things manifest a drawing upon the grace of God that will make you a marvel to yourself and to others. Draw now, not presently. The one word in the spiritual vocabulary is *Now*. Let circumstances bring you where they will, keep drawing on the grace of God in every conceivable condition you may be in. One of the greatest proofs that you are drawing on the grace of God is that you can be humiliated without manifesting the slightest trace of anything but His grace.

"Having nothing . . ." Never reserve anything. Pour out the best you have, and always be poor. Never be diplomatic and careful about the treasure God gives. This is poverty triumphant.

## June 27: THE OVERSHADOWING PERSONAL DELIVERANCE

*"I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 1:8*

God promised Jeremiah that He would deliver him personally - "Thy life will I give unto thee for a prey." That is all God promises His children. Wherever God sends us, He will guard our lives. Our personal property and possessions are a matter of indifference, we have to sit loosely to all those things; if we do not, there will be panic and heartbreak and distress. That is the inwardness of the overshadowing of personal deliverance.

The Sermon on the Mount indicates that when we are on Jesus Christ's errands, there is no time to stand up for ourselves. Jesus says, in effect, Do not be bothered with whether you are being justly dealt with or not. To look for justice is a sign of deflection from devotion to Him. Never look for justice in this world, but never cease to give it. If we look for justice, we will begin to grouse and to indulge in the discontent of self-pity - Why should I be treated like this? If we are devoted to Jesus Christ we have nothing to do with what we meet, whether it is just or unjust. Jesus says - Go steadily on with what I have told you to do and I will guard your life. If you try to guard it yourself, you remove yourself from My deliverance. The most devout among us become atheistic in this connection; we do not believe God, we enthrone common sense and tack the name of God on to it. We do lean to our own understanding, instead of trusting God with all our hearts.

## June 28: APPREHENDED BY GOD

***"If that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended." Philipians 3:12***

Never choose to be a worker; but when once God has put His call on you, woe be to you if you turn to the right hand or to the left. We are not here to work for God because we have chosen to do so, but because God has apprehended us. There is never any thought of - "Oh, well, I am not fitted for this." What you are to preach is determined by God, not by your own natural inclinations. Keep your soul steadfastly related to God, and remember that you are called not to bear testimony only, but to preach the gospel. Every Christian must testify, but when it comes to the call to preach, there must be the agonizing grip of God's hand on you, your life is in the grip of God for that one thing. How many of us are held like that?

Never water down the word of God, preach it in its undiluted sternness; there must be unflinching loyalty to the word of God; but when you come to personal dealing with your fellow men, remember who you are - not a special being made up in heaven, but a sinner saved by grace.

"I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this one thing I do . . .*"

## June 29: DIRECTION OF DISCIPLINE

***"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Matthew 5:30***

Jesus did not say that everyone must cut off the right hand, but - If your right hand offends you in your walk with Me, cut it off. There are many things that are perfectly legitimate, but if you are going to concentrate on God you cannot do them. Your right hand is one of the best things you have, but, says Jesus, if it hinders you in following His precepts, cut it off. This line of discipline is the sternest one that ever struck mankind.

When God alters a man by regeneration, the characteristic of the life to begin with is that it is maimed. There are a hundred and one things you dare not do, things that to you and in the eyes of the world that knows you are as your right hand and your eye, and the unspiritual person says - Whatever is wrong in that? How absurd you are! There never has been a saint yet who did not have to live a maimed life to start with. But it is better to enter into life maimed and lovely in God's sight than to be lovely in man's sight and lame in God's. In the beginning Jesus Christ by His Spirit has to check you from doing a great many things that may be perfectly right for everyone else but not right for you. See that you do not use your limitations to criticize someone else.

It is a maimed life to begin with, but in v.48 Jesus gives the picture of a perfectly full-orbed life - "Ye shall be *perfect*, as your heavenly Father is perfect."



## June 30: DO IT NOW

***"Agree with thine adversary quickly." Matthew 5:25***

Jesus Christ is laying down this principle - Do what you know you must do, now, and do it quickly; if you do not, the inevitable process will begin to work and you will have to pay to the last farthing in pain and agony and distress. God's laws are unalterable; there is no escape from them. The teaching of Jesus goes straight to the way we are made up.

To see that my adversary gives me my rights is natural; but Jesus says that it is a matter of eternal and imperative importance to me that I pay my adversary what I owe him. From our Lord's standpoint it does not matter whether I am defrauded or not; what does matter is that I do not defraud. Am I insisting on my rights, or am I paying what I owe from Jesus Christ's standpoint?

Do the thing quickly, bring yourself to judgment now. In moral and spiritual matters, you must do it at once; if you do not, the inexorable process will begin to work. God is determined to have His child as pure and clean and white as driven snow, and as long as there is disobedience in any point of His teaching, He will prevent none of the working of His spirit. Our insistence in proving that we are right is nearly always an indication that there has been some point of disobedience. No wonder the Spirit so strongly urges to keep steadfastly in the light!

"Agree with thine adversary quickly." Have you suddenly turned a corner in any relationship and found that you had anger in your heart? Confess it quickly, quickly put it right before God, be reconciled to that one *-do it now.*

## July 1: THE INEVITABLE PENALTY

***"Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the uttermost farthing." Matthew 5:26***

There is no heaven with a little corner of hell in it. God is determined to make you pure and holy and right; He will not allow you to escape for one moment from the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit. He urged you to come to judgment right away when He convicted you, but you did not; the inevitable process began to work and now you are in prison, and you will only get out when you have paid the uttermost farthing. "Is this a God of mercy, and of love?" you say. Seen from God's side, it is a glorious ministry of love. God is going to bring you out pure and spotless and undefiled; but He wants you to recognize the disposition you were showing - the disposition of your right to yourself. The moment you are willing that God should alter your disposition, His recreating forces will begin to work. The moment you realize God's purpose, which is to get you rightly related to Himself and then to your fellow men, He will tax the last limit of the universe to help you take the right road. Decide it now - "Yes, Lord, I *will* write that letter to-night"; "I *will* be reconciled to that man now."

These messages of Jesus Christ are for the will and the conscience, not for the head. If you dispute the Sermon on the Mount with your head, you will blunt the appeal to your heart. "I wonder why I don't go on with God?" Are you paying your debts from God's standpoint? Do *now* what you will have to do some day. Every moral call has an "ought" behind it.

## July 2: THE CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP

*"If any man come to Me, and hate not . . .*

*he cannot be My disciple."* Luke 14:26, also 27, 33

If the closest relationships of life clash with the claims of Jesus Christ, He says it must be instant obedience to Himself. Discipleship means personal, passionate devotion to a Person, Our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a difference between devotion to a Person and devotion to principles or to a cause. Our Lord never proclaimed a cause; He proclaimed personal devotion to Himself. To be a disciple is to be a devoted love-slave of the Lord Jesus. Many of us who call ourselves Christians are not devoted to Jesus Christ. No man on earth has this passionate love to the Lord Jesus unless the Holy Ghost has imparted it to him. We may admire Him, we may respect Him and reverence Him, but we cannot love Him. The only Lover of the Lord Jesus is the Holy Ghost, and He sheds abroad the very love of God in our hearts. Whenever the Holy Ghost sees a chance of glorifying Jesus, He will take your heart, your nerves, your whole personality, and simply make you blaze and glow with devotion to Jesus Christ.

The Christian life is stamped by 'moral spontaneous originality,' consequently the disciple is open to the same charge that Jesus Christ was, viz., that of inconsistency. But Jesus Christ was always consistent to God, and the Christian must be consistent to the life of the Son of God in him, not consistent to hard and fast creeds. Men pour them selves into creeds, and God has to blast them out of their prejudices before they can become devoted to Jesus Christ.

## July 3: THE CONCENTRATION OF PERSONAL SIN

*"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." Isaiah 6:5*

When I get into the presence of God, I do not realize that I am a sinner in an indefinite sense; I realize the concentration of sin in a particular feature of my life. A man will say easily - 'Oh, yes, I know I am a sinner'; but when he gets into the presence of God he cannot get off with that statement. The conviction is concentrated on - I am this, or that, or the other. This is always the sign that a man or woman is in the presence of God. There is never any vague sense of sin, but the concentration of sin in some personal particular. God begins by convicting us of the one thing fixed on in the mind that is prompted by His Spirit; if we will yield to His conviction on that point, He will lead us down to the great disposition of sin underneath. That is the way God always deals with us when we are consciously in His presence.

This experience of the concentration of sin is true in the greatest and the least of saints as well as in the greatest and the least of sinners. When a man is on the first rung of the ladder of experience, he may say - I do not know where I have gone wrong; but the Spirit of God will point out some particular definite thing. The effect of the vision of the holiness of the Lord on Isaiah was to bring home to him that he was a man of unclean lips. "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." The cleansing fire had to be applied where the sin had been concentrated.

## July 4: ONE OF GOD'S GREAT DON'TS

*"Fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil doing." Psalm 37:8 (R.V.)*

Fretting means getting out at elbows mentally or spiritually. It is one thing to say "Fret not," but a very different thing to have such a disposition that you find yourself able not to fret. It sounds so easy to talk about "resting in the Lord" and "waiting patiently for Him" until the nest is upset - until we live, as so many are doing, in tumult and anguish, is it possible then to rest in the Lord? If this "don't" does not work there, it will work nowhere. This "don't" must work in days of perplexity as well as in days of peace, or it never will work. And if it will not work in your particular case, it will not work in anyone else's case. Resting in the Lord does not depend on external circumstances at all, but on your relationship to God Himself.

Fussing always ends in sin. We imagine that a little anxiety and worry are an indication of how really wise we are; it is much more an indication of how really wicked we are. Fretting springs from a determination to get our own way. Our Lord never worried and He was never anxious, because He was not "out" to realize His own ideas; He was "out" to realize God's ideas. Fretting is wicked if you are a child of God.

Have you been bolstering up that stupid soul of yours with the idea that your circumstances are too much for God? Put all "supposing" on one side and dwell in the shadow of the Almighty. Deliberately tell God that you will not fret about that thing. All our fret and worry is caused by calculating without God.

**July 5: DON'T CALCULATE WITHOUT GOD**  
***"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him;  
and He shall bring it to pass." Psalm 37:5***

**Don't calculate without God.**

God seems to have a delightful way of upsetting the things we have calculated on without taking Him into account. We get into circumstances which were not chosen by God, and suddenly we find we have been calculating without God; He has not entered in as a living factor. The one thing that keeps us from the possibility of worrying is bringing God in as the greatest factor in all our calculations.

In our religion it is customary to put God first, but we are apt to think it is an impertinence to put Him first in the practical issues of our lives. If we imagine we have to put on our Sunday moods before we come near to God, we will never come near Him. We must come as we are.

**Don't calculate with the evil in view.**

Does God really mean us to take no account of the evil? "Love . . . taketh no account of the evil." Love is not ignorant of the existence of the evil, but it does not take it in as a calculating factor. Apart from God, we do reckon with evil; we calculate with it in view and work all our reasonings from that standpoint.

**Don't calculate with the rainy day in view.**

You cannot lay up for a rainy day if you are trusting Jesus Christ. Jesus said - "Let not your heart be troubled." God will not keep your heart from being troubled. It is a command - "Let *not* . . ." Haul yourself up a hundred and one times a day in order to do it, until you get into the habit of putting God first and calculating with Him in view.

## July 6: VISION AND REALITY

*"And the parched ground shall become a pool." Isaiah 35:7*

We always have visions, before a thing is made real. When we realize that although the vision is real, it is not real in us, then is the time that Satan comes in with his temptations, and we are apt to say it is no use to go on. Instead of the vision becoming real, there has come the valley of humiliation.

"Life is not as idle ore,  
But iron dug from central gloom,  
And batter'd by the shocks of doom  
To shape and use."

God gives us the vision, then He takes us down to the valley to batter us into the shape of the vision, and it is in the valley that so many of us faint and give way. Every vision will be made real if we will have patience. Think of the enormous leisure of God! He is never in a hurry. We are always in such a frantic hurry. In the light of the glory of the vision we go forth to do things, but the vision is not real in us yet; and God has to take us into the valley, and put us through fires and floods to batter us into shape, until we get to the place where He can trust us with the veritable reality. Ever since we had the vision God has been at work, getting us into the shape of the ideal, and over and over again we escape from His hand and try to batter ourselves into our own shape.

The vision is not a castle in the air, but a vision of what God wants you to be. Let Him put you on His wheel and whirl you as He likes, and as sure as God is God and you are you, you will turn out exactly in accordance with the vision. Don't lose heart in the process. If you have ever had the vision of God, you may try as you like to be satisfied on a lower level, but God will never let you.

## July 7: ALL NOBLE THINGS ARE DIFFICULT

*"Enter ye in at the strait gate . . because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way. .  
." Matthew 7:13-14*

If we are going to live as disciples of Jesus, we have to remember that all noble things are difficult. The Christian life is gloriously difficult, but the difficulty of it does not make us faint and cave in, it rouses us up to overcome. Do we so appreciate the marvellous salvation of Jesus Christ that we are our utmost for His highest?

God saves men by His sovereign grace through the Atonement of Jesus; He works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure; but we have to work out that salvation in practical living. If once we start on the basis of His Redemption to do what He commands, we find that we can do it. If we fail, it is because we have not practised. The crisis will reveal whether we have been practising or not. If we obey the Spirit of God and practise in our physical life what God has put in us by His Spirit, then when the crisis comes, we shall find that our own nature as well as the grace of God will stand by us.

Thank God He does give us difficult things to do! His salvation is a glad thing, but it is also a heroic, holy thing. It tests us for all we are worth. Jesus is bringing many "sons" unto glory, and God will not shield us from the requirements of a son. God's grace turns out men and women with a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ, not milk sops. It takes a tremendous amount of discipline to live the noble life of a disciple of Jesus in actual things. It is always necessary to make an effort to be noble.



## July 8: THE WILL TO LOYALTY

***"Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Joshua 24:15***

Will is the whole man active. I cannot *give up* my will, I must exercise it. I must *will* to obey, and I must *will* to receive God's Spirit. When God gives a vision of truth it is never a question of what He will do, but of what we will do. The Lord has been putting before us all some big propositions, and the best thing to do is to remember what you did when you were touched by God before - the time when you were saved, or first saw Jesus, or realized some truth. It was easy then to yield allegiance to God; recall those moments now as the Spirit of God brings before you some new proposition.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve." It is a deliberate calculation, not something into which you drift easily; and everything else is in abeyance until you decide. The proposition is between you and God; do not confer with flesh and blood about it. With every new proposition other people get more and more "out of it," that is where the strain comes. God allows the opinion of His saints to matter to you, and yet you are brought more and more out of the certainty that others understand the step you are taking. You have no business to find out where God is leading, the only thing God will explain to you is Himself. Profess to Him - 'I will be loyal.' Immediately you choose to be loyal to Jesus Christ, you are a witness against yourself. Don't consult other Christians, but profess before Him - I will serve Thee. *Will* to be loyal - and give other people credit for being loyal too.

## July 9: THE GREAT PROBING

*"Ye cannot serve the Lord."* Joshua 24:19

Have you the slightest reliance on anything other than God? Is there a remnant of reliance left on any natural virtue, any set of circumstances? Are you relying on yourself in any particular in this new proposition which God has put before you? That is what the probing means. It is quite true to say - "I cannot live a holy life," but you can decide to let Jesus Christ make you holy. "Ye cannot serve the Lord God"; but you can put yourself in the place where God's almighty power will come through you. Are you sufficiently right with God to expect Him to manifest His wonderful life in you?

"Nay, but we will serve the Lord." It is not an impulse, but a deliberate commitment. You say - But God can never have called *me* to this, I am too unworthy, it can't mean *me*. It does mean you, and the weaker and feebler you are, the better. The one who has something to trust in is the last one to come anywhere near saying - "I will serve the Lord."

We say - "If I really could believe!" The point is - If I really *will* believe. No wonder Jesus Christ lays such emphasis on the sin of unbelief. "And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." If we really believed that God meant what He said - what should we be like! Dare I really let God be to me all that He says He will be?

## July 10: THE SPIRITUAL SLUGGARD

*"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." Hebrews 10:24-25*

We are all capable of being spiritual sluggards; we do not want to mix with the rough and tumble of life as it is, our one object is to secure retirement. The note struck in Hebrews 10 is that of provoking one another and of keeping together - both of which require initiative, the initiative of Christ-realization, not of self-realization. To live a remote, retired, secluded life is the antipodes of spirituality as Jesus Christ taught it.

The test of our spirituality comes when we come up against injustice and meanness and ingratitude and turmoil, all of which have the tendency to make us spiritual sluggards. We want to use prayer and Bible reading for the purpose of retirement. We utilize God for the sake of getting peace and joy, that is, we do not want to realize Jesus Christ, but only our enjoyment of Him. This is the first step in the wrong direction. All these things are effects and we try to make them causes.

"I think it meet," said Peter, ". . . to stir you up by putting you in remembrance." It is a most disturbing thing to be smitten in the ribs by some provoker of God, by someone who is full of spiritual activity. Active work and spiritual activity are not the same thing. Active work may be the counterfeit of spiritual activity. The danger of spiritual sluggishness is that we do not wish to be stirred up, all we want to hear about is spiritual retirement. Jesus Christ never encourages the idea of retirement - "Go tell My brethren . . ."

## July 11: THE SPIRITUAL SAINT

*"That I may know Him."* **Philippians 3:10**

The initiative of the saint is not towards self-realization, but towards knowing Jesus Christ. The spiritual saint never believes circumstances to be haphazard, or thinks of his life as secular and sacred; he sees everything he is dumped down in as the means of securing the knowledge of Jesus Christ. There is a reckless abandonment about him. The Holy Spirit is determined that we shall realize Jesus Christ in every domain of life, and He will bring us back to the same point again and again until we do. Self-realization leads to the enthronement of work; whereas the saint enthrones Jesus Christ in his work. Whether it be eating or drinking or washing disciples feet, whatever it is, we have to take the initiative of realizing Jesus Christ in it. Every phase of our actual life has its counterpart in the life of Jesus. Our Lord realized His relationship to the Father even in the most menial work. "Jesus knowing . . . that He was come from God, and went to God . . . took a towel . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet."

The aim of the spiritual saint is "that I may know Him." Do I know Him where I am to-day? If not, I am failing Him. I am here not to realize myself, but to know Jesus. In Christian work the initiative is too often the realization that something has to be done and I must do it. That is never the attitude of the spiritual saint, his aim is to secure the realization of Jesus Christ in every set of circumstances he is in.

## July 12: THE SPIRITUAL SOCIETY

*"Till we all come . .*

*unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."* Ephesians 4:13

Rehabilitation means the putting back of the whole human race into the relationship God designed it to be in, and this is what Jesus Christ did in Redemption. The Church ceases to be a spiritual society when it is on the look-out for the development of its own organization. The rehabilitation of the human race on Jesus Christ's plan means the realization of Jesus Christ in corporate life as well as in individual life. Jesus Christ sent apostles and teachers for this purpose - that the corporate Personality might be realized. We are not here to develop a spiritual life of our own, or to enjoy spiritual retirement; we are here so to realize Jesus Christ that the Body of Christ may be built up.

Am I building up the Body of Christ, or am I looking for my own personal development only? The essential thing is my personal relationship to Jesus Christ - "That I may know *Him*." To fulfil God's design means entire abandonment to Him. Whenever I want things for myself, the relationship is distorted. It will be a big humiliation to realize that I have not been concerned about realizing Jesus Christ, but only about realizing what He has done for me.

"My goal is God Himself, not joy nor peace,  
Nor even blessing, but Himself, my God."

Am I measuring my life by this standard or by anything less?

## July 13: THE PRICE OF VISION

*"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord." Isaiah 6:1*

Our soul's history with God is frequently the history of the "passing of the hero." Over and over again God has to remove our friends in order to bring Himself in their place, and that is where we faint and fail and get discouraged. Take it personally: In the year that the one who stood to me for all that God was, died - I gave up everything? I became ill? I got disheartened? or - I saw the Lord?

My vision of God depends upon the state of my character. Character determines revelation. Before I can say "I saw also the Lord," there must be something corresponding to God in my character. Until I am born again and begin to see the Kingdom of God, I see along the line of my prejudices only; I need the surgical operation of external events and an internal purification.

It must be God first, God second, and God third, until the life is faced steadily with God and no one else is of any account whatever. "In all the world there is none but thee, my God, there is none but thee." Keep paying the price. Let God see that you are willing to live up to the vision.

## July 14: THE ACCOUNT WITH PERSECUTION

*But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matthew 5:39, etc*

These verses reveal the humiliation of being a Christian. Naturally, if a man does not hit back, it is because he is a coward; but spiritually if a man does not hit back, it is a manifestation of the Son of God in him. When you are insulted, you must not only not resent it, but make it an occasion to exhibit the Son of God. You cannot imitate the disposition of Jesus; it is either there or it is not. To the saint personal insult becomes the occasion of revealing the incredible sweetness of the Lord Jesus.

The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is not - Do your duty, but - Do what is not your duty. It is not your duty to go the second mile, to turn the other cheek, but Jesus says if we are His disciples we shall always do these things. There will be no spirit of - "Oh, well, I cannot do any more, I have been so misrepresented and misunderstood." Every time I insist upon my rights, I hurt the Son of God; whereas I can prevent Jesus from being hurt if I take the blow myself. That is the meaning of filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. The disciple realizes that it is his Lord's honour that is at stake in his life, not his own honour.

Never look for right in the other man, but never cease to be right yourself. We are always looking for justice; the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is - Never look for justice, but never cease to give it.

## July 15: THE POINT OF SPIRITUAL HONOUR

*"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians."* Romans 1:14

Paul was overwhelmed with the sense of his indebtedness to Jesus Christ, and he spent himself to express it. The great inspiration in Paul's life was his view of Jesus Christ as his spiritual creditor. Do I feel that sense of indebtedness to Christ in regard to every unsaved soul? The spiritual honour of my life as a saint is to fulfil my debt to Christ in relation to them. Every bit of my life that is of value I owe to the Redemption of Jesus Christ; am I doing anything to enable Him to bring His Redemption into actual manifestation in other lives? I can only do it as the Spirit of God works in me this sense of indebtedness.

I am not to be a superior person amongst men, but a bondslave of the Lord Jesus. "Ye are not your own." Paul sold himself to Jesus Christ. He says - I am a debtor to everyone on the face of the earth because of the Gospel of Jesus; I am free to be an absolute slave only. That is the characteristic of the life when once this point of spiritual honour is realized. Quit praying about yourself and be spent for others as the bondslave of Jesus. That is the meaning of being made broken bread and poured out wine in reality.



## July 16: THE NOTION OF DIVINE CONTROL

*"How much more shall your Father which is in heaven  
give good things to them that ask Him?" Matthew 7:11*

Jesus is laying down rules of conduct for those who have His Spirit. By the simple argument of these verses He urges us to keep our minds filled with the notion of God's control behind every thing, which means that the disciple must maintain an attitude of perfect trust and an eagerness to ask and to seek.

Notion your mind with the idea that God is there. If once the mind is notioned along that line, then when you are in difficulties it is as easy as breathing to remember - Why, my Father knows all about it! It is not an effort, it comes naturally when perplexities press. Before, you used to go to this person and that, but now the notion of the Divine control is forming so powerfully in you that you go to God about it. Jesus is laying down the rules of conduct for those who have His Spirit, and it works on this principle - God is my Father, He loves me, I shall never think of anything He will forget, why should I worry?

There are times, says Jesus, when God cannot lift the darkness from you, but trust Him. God will appear like an unkind friend, but He is not; He will appear like an unnatural Father, but He is not; He will appear like an unjust judge, but He is not. Keep the notion of the mind of God behind all things strong and growing. Nothing happens in any particular unless God's will is behind it, therefore you can rest in perfect confidence in Him. Prayer is not only asking, but an attitude of mind which produces the atmosphere in which asking is perfectly natural. "Ask, and it shall be given you."

## July 17: THE MIRACLE OF BELIEF

***"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words." 1 Corinthians 2:1-5***

Paul was a scholar and an orator of the first rank; he is not speaking out of abject humility; but saying that he would veil the power of God if, when he preached the gospel, he impressed people with his "excellency of speech." Belief in Jesus is a miracle produced only by the efficacy of Redemption, not by impressiveness of speech, not by wooing and winning, but by the sheer unaided power of God. The creative power of the Redemption comes through the preaching of the Gospel, but never because of the personality of the preacher. The real fasting of the preacher is not from food, but rather from eloquence, from impressiveness and exquisite diction, from everything that might hinder the gospel of God being presented. The preacher is there as the representative of God - "as though God did beseech you by us." He is there to present the Gospel of God. If it is only because of my preaching that people desire to be better, they will never get anywhere near Jesus Christ. Anything that flatters me in my preaching of the Gospel will end in making me a traitor to Jesus; I prevent the creative power of His Redemption from doing its work.

*"I, if I be lifted up . . . , will draw all men unto Me."*

## July 18: THE MYSTERY OF BELIEVING

*"And he said, Who art Thou, Lord?" Acts 9:6*

By the miracle of Redemption Saul of Tarsus was turned in one second from a strong-willed, intense Pharisee into a humble, devoted slave of the Lord Jesus.

There is nothing miraculous about the things we can explain. We command what we are able to explain, consequently it is natural to seek to explain. It is not natural to obey; nor is it necessarily sinful to disobey. There is no moral virtue in obedience unless there is a recognition of a higher authority in the one who dictates. It is possibly an emancipation to the other person if he does not obey. If one man says to another - 'You must,' and - 'You shall,' he breaks the human spirit and unfits it for God. A man is a slave for obeying unless behind his obedience there is a recognition of a holy God. Many a soul begins to come to God when he flings off being religious, because there is only one Master of the human heart, and that is not religion but Jesus Christ. But woe be to me if when I see *Him* I say - I *will* not. He will never insist that I do, but I have begun to sign the death warrant of the Son of God in my soul. When I stand face to face with Jesus Christ and say - I will not, He will never insist; but I am backing away from the recreating power of His Redemption. It is a matter of indifference to God's grace how abominable I am if I come to the light; but woe be to me if I refuse the light (see John 3:19-21).

## July 19: MASTERY OVER THE BELIEVER

***"Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am."* John 13:13**

Our Lord never insists on having authority; He never says - Thou shalt. He leaves us perfectly free - so free that we can spit in His face, as men did; so free that we can put Him to death, as men did; and He will never say a word. But when His life has been created in me by His Redemption I instantly recognize His right to absolute authority over me. It is a moral domination - "Thou art *worthy* . . ." It is only the unworthy in me that refuses to bow down to the worthy. If when I meet a man who is more holy than myself, I do not recognize his worthiness and obey what comes through him, it is a revelation of the unworthy in me. God educates us by means of people who are a little better than we are, not intellectually but "holily," until we get under the domination of the Lord Himself, and then the whole attitude of the life is one of obedience to Him.

If Our Lord insisted upon obedience He would become a taskmaster, and He would cease to have any authority. He never insists on obedience, but when we do see Him we obey Him instantly, He is easily Lord, and we live in adoration of Him from morning till night. The revelation of my growth in grace is the way in which I look upon obedience. We have to rescue the word "obedience" from the mire. Obedience is only possible between equals; it is the relationship between father and son, not between master and servant. "I and My Father are one." "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." The Son's obedience was as Redeemer, *because He was Son*, not in order to be Son.

## July 20: DEPENDENT ON GOD'S PRESENCE

***"They that wait upon the Lord . . . shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:31***

There is no thrill in walking; it is the test of all the stable qualities. To "walk and not faint" is the highest reach possible for strength. The word "walk" is used in the Bible to express the character - "John looking on Jesus *as He walked*, said, Behold the Lamb of God!" There is never any thing abstract in the Bible, it is always vivid and real. God does not say - Be spiritual, *but* - "*Walk before Me.*"

When we are in an unhealthy state physically or emotionally, we always want thrills. In the physical domain this will lead to counterfeiting the Holy Ghost; in the emotional life it leads to inordinate affection and the destruction of morality; and in the spiritual domain if we insist on getting thrills, on mounting up with wings, it will end in the destruction of spirituality.

The reality of God's presence is not dependent on any place, but only dependent upon the determination to set the Lord always before us. Our problems come when we refuse to bank on the reality of His presence. The experience the Psalmist speaks of - "Therefore will we not fear, though . . ." will be ours when once we are based on Reality, not the consciousness of God's presence but the reality of it - Why, He has been here all the time!

At critical moments it is necessary to ask guidance, but it ought to be unnecessary to be saying always - "O Lord, direct me here, and there." Of course He will! If our common-sense decisions are not His order, He will press through them and check; then we must be quiet and wait for the direction of His presence.

**July 21: THE GATEWAY TO THE KINGDOM**  
***"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Matthew 5:3***

Beware of placing Our Lord as a Teacher first. If Jesus Christ is a Teacher only, then all He can do is to tantalize me by erecting a standard I can not attain. What is the use of presenting me with an ideal I cannot possibly come near? I am happier without knowing it. What is the good of telling me to be what I never can be - to be pure in heart, to do more than my duty, to be perfectly devoted to God? I must know Jesus Christ as Saviour before His teaching has any meaning for me other than that of an ideal which leads to despair. But when I am born again of the Spirit of God, I know that Jesus Christ did not come to *teach* only: He came to *make me what He teaches I should be*. The Redemption means that Jesus Christ can put into any man the disposition that ruled His own life, and all the standards God gives are based on that disposition.

The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount produces despair in the natural man - the very thing Jesus means it to do. As long as we have a self-righteous, conceited notion that we can carry out Our Lord's teaching, God will allow us to go on until we break our ignorance over some obstacle, then we are willing to come to Him as paupers and receive from Him. "Blessed are the paupers in spirit," that is the first principle in the Kingdom of God. The bedrock in Jesus Christ's kingdom is poverty, not possession; not decisions for Jesus Christ, but a sense of absolute futility - I cannot begin to do it. Then Jesus says - Blessed are you. That is the entrance, and it does take us a long while to believe we are poor! The knowledge of our own poverty brings us to the moral frontier where Jesus Christ works.

## July 22: SANCTIFICATION

***"This is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thessalonians 4:3***

**The Death Side.** In sanctification God has to deal with us on the death side as well as on the life side. Many of us spend so much time in the place of death that we get sepulchral. There is always a battle royal before sanctification, always something that tugs with resentment against the demands of Jesus Christ. Immediately the Spirit of God begins to show us what sanctification means, the struggle begins. "If any man come to Me and hate not . . . his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

The Spirit of God in the process of sanctification will strip me until I am nothing but "myself," that is the place of death. Am I willing to be "myself," and nothing more - no friends, no father, no brother, no self-interest - simply ready for death? That is the condition of sanctification. No wonder Jesus said: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." This is where the battle comes, and where so many of us faint. We refuse to be identified with the death of Jesus on this point. "But it is so stern," we say; "He cannot wish me to do that." Our Lord is stern; and He does wish us to do that.

Am I willing to reduce myself simply to "me," determinedly to strip myself of all my friends think of me, of all I think of myself, and to hand that simple naked self over to God? Immediately I am, He will sanctify me wholly, and my life will be free from earnestness in connection with every thing but God.

When I pray - "Lord, show me what sanctification means for me," He will show me. It means being made one with Jesus. Sanctification is not something Jesus Christ puts into me: it is *Himself* in me. (1 Cor. 1:30.)

## July 23: SANCTIFICATION

*"Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . sanctification." 1 Corinthians 1:30*

**The Life Side.** The mystery of sanctification is that the perfections of Jesus Christ are imparted to me, not gradually, but instantly when by faith I enter into the realization that Jesus Christ is made unto me sanctification. Sanctification does not mean anything less than the holiness of Jesus being made mine manifestly.

The one marvellous secret of a holy life lies not in imitating Jesus, but in letting the perfections of Jesus manifest themselves in my mortal flesh. Sanctification is "Christ in you." It is *His* wonderful life that is imparted to me in sanctification, and imparted by faith as a sovereign gift of God's grace. Am I willing for God to make sanctification as real in me as it is in His word?

Sanctification means the impartation of the Holy qualities of Jesus Christ. It is His patience, His love, His holiness, His faith, His purity, His godliness, that is manifested in and through every sanctified soul. Sanctification is not drawing from Jesus the power to be holy; it is drawing from Jesus the holiness that was manifested in Him, and He manifests it in me. Sanctification is an impartation, not an imitation. Imitation is on a different line. In Jesus Christ is the perfection of everything, and the mystery of sanctification is that all the perfections of Jesus are at my disposal, and slowly and surely I begin to live a life of ineffable order and sanity and holiness: "Kept by the power of God."



## July 24: DISPOSITION AND DEEDS

***"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20***

The characteristic of a disciple is not that he does good things, but that he is good in motive because he has been made good by the super-natural grace of God. The only thing that exceeds right-*doing* is right-*being*. Jesus Christ came to put into any man who would let Him a new heredity which would exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus says - If you are My disciple you must be right not only in your living, but in your motives, in your dreams, in the recesses of your mind. You must be so pure in your motives that God Almighty can see nothing to censure. Who can stand in the Eternal Light of God and have nothing for God to censure? Only the Son of God, and Jesus Christ claims that by His Redemption He can put into any man His own disposition, and make him as unsullied and as simple as a child. The purity which God demands is impossible unless I can be remade within, and that is what Jesus has undertaken to do by His Redemption.

No man can make himself pure by obeying laws. Jesus Christ does not give us rules and regulations; His teachings are truths that can only be interpreted by the disposition He puts in. The great marvel of Jesus Christ's salvation is that He alters heredity. He does not alter human nature; He alters its mainspring.

## July 25: AM I BLESSED LIKE THIS?

### *Blessed are . . ."* Matthew 5:3-10

When we first read the statements of Jesus they seem wonderfully simple and unstartling, and they sink unobserved into our unconscious minds. For instance, the Beatitudes seem merely mild and beautiful precepts for all unworldly and useless people, but of very little practical use in the stern workaday world in which we live. We soon find, however, that the Beatitudes contain the dynamite of the Holy Ghost. They explode, as it were, when the circumstances of our lives cause them to do so. When the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance one of these Beatitudes we say - 'What a startling statement that is!' and we have to decide whether we will accept the tremendous spiritual upheaval that will be produced in our circumstances if we obey His words. That is the way the Spirit of God works. We do not need to be born again to apply the Sermon on the Mount literally. The literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount is child's play; the interpretation by the Spirit of God as He applies Our Lord's statements to our circumstances is the stern work of a saint.

The teaching of Jesus is out of all proportion to our natural way of looking at things and it comes with astonishing discomfort to begin with. We have slowly to form our walk and conversation on the line of the precepts of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit applies them to our circumstances. The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of rules and regulations: it is a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is getting His way with us.

## July 26: THE ACCOUNT WITH PURITY

*"Out of the heart proceed . . ."* Matthew 15:18-20

We begin by trusting our ignorance and calling it innocence, by trusting our innocence and calling it purity; and when we hear these rugged statements of Our Lord's, we shrink and say - But I never felt any of those awful things in my heart. We resent what Jesus Christ reveals. Either Jesus Christ is the supreme Authority on the human heart, or He is not worth paying any attention to. Am I prepared to trust His penetration, or do I prefer to trust my innocent ignorance? If I make conscious innocence the test, I am likely to come to a place where I find with a shuddering awakening that what Jesus Christ said is true, and I shall be appalled at the possibility of evil and wrong in me. As long as I remain under the refuge of innocence I am living in a fool's paradise. If I have never been a blackguard, the reason is a mixture of cowardice and the protection of civilized life; but when I am undressed before God, I find that Jesus Christ is right in His diagnosis.

The only thing that safeguards is the Redemption of Jesus Christ. If I will hand myself over to Him, I need never experience the terrible possibilities that are in my heart. Purity is too deep down for me to get to naturally: but when the Holy Spirit comes in, He brings into the centre of my personal life the very Spirit that was manifested in the life of Jesus Christ, viz., *Holy Spirit*, which is unsullied purity.

## July 27: THE WAY TO KNOW

***"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine . . ." John 7:17***

The golden rule for understanding spiritually is not intellect, but obedience. If a man wants scientific knowledge, intellectual curiosity is his guide; but if he wants insight into what Jesus Christ teaches, he can only get it by obedience. If things are dark to me, then I may be sure there is something I will not do. Intellectual darkness comes through ignorance; spiritual darkness comes because of something I do not intend to obey.

No man ever receives a word from God without instantly being put to the test over it. We disobey and then wonder why we don't go on spiritually. 'If when you come to the altar,' said Jesus, 'there you remember your brother hath ought against you . . . don't say another word to Me, but first go and put that thing right.' The teaching of Jesus hits us where we live. We cannot stand as humbugs before Him for one second. He educates us down to the scruple. The Spirit of God unearths the spirit of self-vindication; He makes us sensitive to things we never thought of before.

When Jesus brings a thing home by His word, don't shirk it. If you do, you will become a religious humbug. Watch the things you shrug your shoulders over, and you will know why you do not go on spiritually. *First go* - at the risk of being thought fanatical you must obey what God tells you.

## July 28: AFTER OBEDIENCE - WHAT?

*And straightway He constrained His disciples to get into the ship,  
and to go to the other side. . . ." Mark 6:45-52*

We are apt to imagine that if Jesus Christ constrains us, and we obey Him, He will lead us to great success. We must never put our dreams of success as God's purpose for us; His purpose may be exactly the opposite. We have an idea that God is leading us to a particular end, a desired goal; He is not. The question of getting to a particular end is a mere incident. What we call the process, God calls the end.

What is my dream of God's purpose? His purpose is that I depend on Him and on His power now. If I can stay in the middle of the turmoil calm and unperplexed, that is the end of the purpose of God. God is not working towards a particular finish; His end is the process - that I see Him walking on the waves, no shore in sight, no success, no goal, just the absolute certainty that it is all right because I see Him walking on the sea. It is the process, not the end, which is glorifying to God.

God's training is for now, not presently. His purpose is for this minute, not for something in the future. We have nothing to do with the afterwards of obedience; we get wrong when we think of the afterwards. What men call training and preparation, God calls the end.

God's end is to enable me to see that He can walk on the chaos of my life just now. If we have a further end in view, we do not pay sufficient attention to the immediate present: if we realize that obedience is the end, then each moment as it comes is precious.

## July 29: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN YOUR CLOUDS? "Behold, He cometh with clouds." Revelation 1:7

In the Bible clouds are always connected with God. Clouds are those sorrows or sufferings or providences, within or without our personal lives, which seem to dispute the rule of God. It is by those very clouds that the Spirit of God is teaching us how to walk by faith. If there were no clouds, we should have no faith. "The clouds are but the dust of our Father's feet." The clouds are a sign that He is there. What a revelation it is to know that sorrow and bereavement and suffering are the clouds that come along with God! God cannot come near without clouds, He does not come in clear shining.

It is not true to say that God wants to teach us something in our trials: through every cloud He brings, He wants us to *unlearn* something. His purpose in the cloud is to simplify our belief until our relationship to Him is exactly that of a child - God and my own soul, other people are shadows. Until other people become shadows, clouds and darkness will be mine every now and again. Is the relationship between myself and God getting simpler than ever it has been?

There is a connection between the strange providences of God and what we know of Him, and we have to learn to interpret the mysteries of life in the light of our knowledge of God. Unless we can look the darkest, blackest fact full in the face without damaging God's character, we do not yet know Him.

"They feared as they entered the cloud . . ." - Is there anyone "save Jesus only" in your cloud? If so, it will get darker; you must get to the place where there is "no one any more save Jesus only."

## July 30: THE DISCIPLINE OF DISILLUSIONMENT

*"Jesus did not commit Himself unto them for He knew what was in man."*

### John 2:24-25

Disillusionment means that there are no more false judgments in life. To be undeceived by disillusionment may leave us cynical and unkindly severe in our judgment of others, but the disillusionment which comes from God brings us to the place where we see men and women as they really are, and yet there is no cynicism, we have no stinging, bitter things to say. Many of the cruel things in life spring from the fact that we suffer from illusions. We are not true to one another as *facts*; we are true only to our *ideas* of one another. Everything is either delightful and fine, or mean and dastardly, according to our idea.

The refusal to be disillusioned is the cause of much of the suffering in human life. It works in this way - if we love a human being and do not love God, we demand of him every perfection and every rectitude, and when we do not get it we become cruel and vindictive; we are demanding of a human being that which he or she cannot give. There is only one Being Who can satisfy the last aching abyss of the human heart, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. Why Our Lord is apparently so severe regarding every human relationship is because He knows that every relationship not based on loyalty to Himself will end in disaster. Our Lord trusted no man, yet He was never suspicious, never bitter. Our Lord's confidence in God and in what His grace could do for any man, was so perfect that He despaired of no one. If our trust is placed in human beings, we shall end in despairing of everyone.

## July 31: TILL YOU ARE ENTIRELY HIS

*"Let your endurance be a finished product, so that you may be finished and complete, with never a defect." James 1:4 (MOFFATT)*

Many of us are all right in the main, but there are some domains in which we are slovenly. It is not a question of sin, but of the remnants of the carnal life which are apt to make us slovenly. Slovenliness is an insult to the Holy Ghost. There should be nothing slovenly, whether it be in the way we eat and drink, or in the way we worship God.

Not only must our relationship to God be right, but the external expression of that relationship must be right. Ultimately God will let nothing escape, every detail is under His scrutiny. In numberless ways God will bring us back to the same point over and over again. He never tires of bringing us to the one point until we learn the lesson, because He is producing the finished product. It may be a question of impulse, and again and again, with the most persistent patience, God has brought us back to the one particular point; or it may be mental wool-gathering, or independent individuality. God is trying to impress upon us the one thing that is not entirely right.

We have been having a wonderful time this Session over the revelation of God's Redemption, our hearts are perfect towards Him; His wonderful work in us makes us know that in the main we are right with Him. "Now," says the Spirit, through St. James, "let your endurance be a finished product." Watch the slipshod bits - "Oh, that will have to do for now." Whatever it is, God will point it out with persistence until we are entirely His.



## August 1: SOMETHING MORE ABOUT HIS WAYS

**He comes where He commands us to leave.**

*"When Jesus had made an end of commanding his disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities." Matthew 11:1.*

If when God said "Go," you stayed because you were so concerned about your people at home, you robbed them of the teaching and preaching of Jesus Christ Himself. When you obeyed and left all consequences to God, the Lord went into your city to teach; as long as you would not obey, you were in the way. Watch where you begin to debate and to put what you call duty in competition with your Lord's commands. "I know He told me to go, but they my duty was here;" that means you do not believe that Jesus means what He says.

**He teaches where He instructs us not to.**

*"Master, . . . let us make three tabernacles."*

Are we playing the spiritual amateur providence in other lives? Are we so noisy in our instruction of others that God cannot get anywhere near them? We have to keep our mouths shut and our spirits alert. God wants to instruct us in regard to His Son, He wants to turn our times of prayer into mounts of transfiguration, and we will not let Him. When we are certain of the way God is going to work, He will never work in that way any more.

**He works where He sends us to wait.**

*"Tarry ye . . . until . . ."*

Wait on God and He will work, but don't wait in spiritual sulks because you cannot see an inch in front of you! Are we detached enough from our own spiritual hysterics to wait on God? To wait is not to sit with folded hands, but to learn to do what we are told.

These are phases of His ways we rarely recognize.

## August 2: THE DISCIPLINE OF DIFFICULTY

*"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer;*

*I have overcome the world."* John 16:33

An average view of the Christian life is that it means deliverance from trouble. It is deliverance *in* trouble, which is very different. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High . . . *there* shall no evil befall thee" - no plague can come nigh the place where you are at one with God.

If you are a child of God, there certainly will be troubles to meet, but Jesus says do not be surprised when they come. "In the world yet shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, there is nothing for you to fear." Men who before they were saved would scorn to talk about troubles, often become "fashionless" after being born again because they have a wrong idea of a saint.

God does not give us overcoming life: He gives us life as we overcome. The strain is the strength. If there is no strain, there is no strength. Are you asking God to give you life and liberty and joy? He cannot, unless you will accept the strain. Immediately you face the strain, you will get the strength. Overcome your own timidity and take the step, and God will give you to eat of the tree of life and you will get nourishment. If you spend yourself out physically, you become exhausted; but spend yourself spiritually, and you get more strength. God never gives strength for tomorrow, or for the next hour, but only for the strain of the minute. The temptation is to face difficulties from a common-sense standpoint. The saint is hilarious when he is crushed with difficulties because the thing is so ludicrously impossible to anyone but God.

**August 3: THE BIG COMPELLING OF GOD**  
***"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." Luke 18:31***

Jerusalem stands in the life of Our Lord as the place where He reached the climax of His Father's will. "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." That was the one dominating interest all through our Lord's life, and the things He met with on the way, joy or sorrow, success or failure, never deterred Him from His purpose. "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

The great thing to remember is that we go up to Jerusalem to fulfil God's purpose, not our own. Naturally, our ambitions are our own; in the Christian life we have no aim of our own. There is so much said to-day about our decisions for Christ, our determination to be Christians, our decisions for this and that, but in the New Testament it is the aspect of God's compelling that is brought out. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." We are not taken up into conscious agreement with God's purpose, we are taken up into God's purpose without any consciousness at all. We have no conception of what God is aiming at, and as we go on it gets more and more vague. God's aim looks like missing the mark because we are too short sighted to see what He is aiming at. At the beginning of the Christian life we have our own ideas as to what God's purpose is - 'I am meant to go here or there,' 'God has called me to do this special work'; and we go and do the thing, and still the big compelling of God remains. The work we do is of no account, it is so much scaffolding compared with the big compelling of God. "He took unto Him the twelve," He takes us all the time. There is more than we have got at as yet.

## **August 4: THE BRAVE COMRADESHIP OF GOD**

***"Then He took unto Him the twelve." Luke 18:31***

The bravery of God in trusting us! You say - "But He has been unwise to choose me, because there is nothing in me; I am not of any value." That is why He chose you. As long as you think there is something in you, He cannot choose you because you have ends of your own to serve; but if you have let Him bring you to the end of your self-sufficiency then He can choose you to go with Him to Jerusalem, and that will mean the fulfilment of purposes which He does not discuss with you.

We are apt to say that because a man has natural ability, therefore he will make a good Christian. It is not a question of our equipment but of our poverty, not of what we bring with us, but of what God puts into us; not a question of natural virtues of strength of character, knowledge, and experience - all that is of no avail in this matter. The only thing that avails is that we are taken up into the big compelling of God and made His comrades (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-30). The comradeship of God is made up out of men who know their poverty. He can do nothing with the man who thinks that he is of use to God. As Christians we are not out for our own cause at all, we are out for the cause of God, which can never be our cause. We do not know what God is after, but we have to maintain our relationship with Him whatever happens. We must never allow anything to injure our relationship with God; if it does get injured we must take time and get it put right. The main thing about Christianity is not the work we do, but the relationship we maintain and the atmosphere produced by that relationship. That is all God asks us to look after, and it is the one thing that is being continually assailed.

## August 5: THE BAFFLING CALL OF GOD

*"And all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished . . . And they understood none of these things." Luke 18:31, 34*

God called Jesus Christ to what seemed unmitigated disaster. Jesus Christ called His disciples to see Him put to death; He led every one of them to the place where their hearts were broken. Jesus Christ's life was an absolute failure from every standpoint but God's. But what seemed failure from man's standpoint was a tremendous triumph from God's, because God's purpose is never man's purpose.

There comes the baffling call of God in our lives also. The call of God can never be stated explicitly; it is implicit. The call of God is like the call of the sea, no one hears it but the one who has the nature of the sea in him. It cannot be stated definitely what the call of God is to, because His call is to be in comradeship with Himself for His own purposes, and the test is to believe that God knows what He is after. The things that happen do not happen by chance, they happen entirely in the decree of God. God is working out His purposes.

If we are in communion with God and recognize that He is taking us into His purposes, we shall no longer try to find out what His purposes are. As we go on in the Christian life it gets simpler, because we are less inclined to say - Now why did God allow this and that? Behind the whole thing lies the compelling of God. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends." A Christian is one who trusts the wits and the wisdom of God, and not his own wits. If we have a purpose of our own, it destroys the simplicity and the leisureliness which ought to characterize the children of God.

## August 6: THE CROSS IN PRAYER

*"At that day ye shall ask in My name." John 16:26*

We are too much given to thinking of the Cross as something we have to get through; we get *through* it only in order to get into it. The Cross stands for one thing only for us - a complete and entire and absolute identification with the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is nothing in which this identification is realized more than in prayer.

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." Then why ask? The idea of prayer is not in order to get answers from God; prayer is perfect and complete oneness with God. If we pray because we want answers, we will get huffed with God. The answers come every time, but not always in the way we expect, and our spiritual huff shows a refusal to identify ourselves with Our Lord in prayer. We are not here to prove God answers prayer; we are here to be living monuments of God's grace.

"I say not that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you." Have you reached such an intimacy with God that the Lord Jesus Christ's life of prayer is the only explanation of your life of prayer? Has Our Lord's vicarious life become your vital life? "At that day" you will be so identified with Jesus that there will be no distinction.

When prayer seems to be unanswered, beware of trying to fix the blame on someone else. That is always a snare of Satan. You will find there is a reason which is a deep instruction to you, not to anyone else.

## August 7: PRAYER IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE

*Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" Luke 2:49 (R.V.)*

Our Lord's childhood was not immature man-hood; our Lord's childhood is an eternal fact. Am I a holy innocent child of God by identification with my Lord and Saviour? Do I look upon life as being in my Father's house? Is the Son of God living in His Father's house in me?

The abiding Reality is God, and His order comes through the moments. Am I always in contact with Reality, or do I only pray when things have gone wrong, when there is a disturbance in the moments of my life? I have to learn to identify myself with my Lord in holy communion in ways some of us have not begun to learn as yet. "I must be about My Father's business" - live the moments in My Father's house.

Narrow it down to your individual circumstances - are you so identified with the Lord's life that you are simply a child of God, continually talking to Him and realizing that all things come from His hands? Is the Eternal Child in you living in the Father's house? Are the graces of His ministering life working out through you in your home, in your business, in your domestic circle? Have you been wondering why you are going through the things you are? It is not that you have to go through them, it is because of the relation into which the Son of God has come in His Father's providence in your particular sainthood. Let Him have His way, keep in perfect union with Him.

The vicarious life of your Lord is to become your vital simple life; the way He worked and lived among men must be the way He lives in you.

**August 8: PRAYER IN THE FATHER'S HONOUR**  
***"That holy thing which shall be born of thee  
shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35***

If the Son of God is born into my mortal flesh, is His holy innocence and simplicity and oneness with the Father getting a chance to manifest itself in me? What was true of the Virgin Mary in the historic introduction of God's Son into this earth is true in every saint. The Son of God is born into me by the direct act of God; then I as a child of God have to exercise the right of a child, the right of being always face to face with my Father. Am I continually saying with amazement to my common-sense life - why do you want to turn me off here? Don't you know that I must be about my Father's business? Whatever the circumstances may be, that Holy Innocent Eternal Child must be in contact with His Father. Am I simple enough to identify myself with my Lord in this way? Is He getting his wonderful way in me? Is God realizing that His Son is formed in me, or have I carefully put Him on one side? Oh, the clamour of these days! Everyone is clamouring - for what? For the Son of God to be put to death. There is no room here for the Son of God just now, no room for quiet holy communion with the Father.

Is the Son of God praying in me or am I dictating to Him? Is He ministering in me as He did in the days of His flesh? Is the Son of God in me going through His passion for His own purposes? The more one knows of the inner life of God's ripest saints, the more one sees what God's purpose is - "filling up that which is behind of the affliction of Christ." There is always something to be done in the sense of "filling up."



## August 9: PRAYER IN THE FATHER'S HEARING

*"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me." John 11:41*

When the Son of God prays, He has only one consciousness, and that consciousness is of His Father. God always hears the prayers of His Son, and if the Son of God is formed in me the Father will always hear my prayers. I have to see that the Son of God is manifested in my mortal flesh. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," i.e., the Bethlehem of the Son of God. Is the Son of God getting His chance in me? Is the direct simplicity of the life of God's Son being worked out exactly as it was worked out in His historic life? When I come in contact with the occurrences of life as an ordinary human being, is the prayer of God's Eternal Son to His Father being prayed in me? "In that day ye shall ask in My name. . . ." What day? The day when the Holy Ghost has come to me and made me effectually one with my Lord.

Is the Lord Jesus Christ being abundantly satisfied in your life or have you got a spiritual strut on? Never let common sense obtrude and push the Son of God on one side. Common sense is a gift which God gave to human nature; but common sense is not the gift of His Son. Supernatural sense is the gift of His Son; never enthrone common sense. The Son detects the Father; common sense never yet detected the Father and never will. Our ordinary wits never worship God unless they are transfigured by the indwelling Son of God. We have to see that this mortal flesh is kept in perfect subjection to Him and that He works through it moment by moment. Are we living in such human dependence upon Jesus Christ that His life is being manifested moment by moment?

## August 10: THE SACRAMENT OF THE SAINT

*"Let them that suffer according to the will of God,*

*commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing."* 1 Peter 4:19

To choose to suffer means that there is something wrong; to choose God's Will even if it means suffering is a very different thing. No healthy saint ever chooses suffering; he chooses God's will, as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not. No saint dare interfere with the discipline of suffering in another saint.

The saint who satisfies the heart of Jesus will make other saints strong and mature for God. The people who do us good are never those who sympathize with us, they always hinder, because sympathy enervates. No one understands a saint but the saint who is nearest to the Saviour. If we accept the sympathy of a saint, the reflex feeling is - Well, God is dealing hardly with me. That is why Jesus said self-pity was of the devil (see Matt. 16:23). Be merciful to God's reputation. It is easy to blacken God's character because God never answers back, He never vindicates Himself. Beware of the thought that Jesus needed sympathy in His earthly life; He refused sympathy from man because He knew far too wisely that no one on earth understood what He was after. He took sympathy from His Father only, and from the angels in heaven. (Cf. Luke 15:10.)

Notice God's unutterable waste of saints, according to the judgment of the world. God plants His saints in the most useless places. We say - God intends me to be here because I am so useful. Jesus never estimated His life along the line of the greatest use. God puts His saints where they will glorify Him, and we are no judges at all of where that is.

**August 11: THIS EXPERIENCE MUST COME**  
***"And he saw him no more."* 2 Kings 2:12**

It is not wrong to depend upon Elijah as long as God gives him to you, but remember the time will come when he will have to go; when he stands no more to you as your guide and leader, because God does not intend he should. You say - "I cannot go on without Elijah." God says you must.

**Alone at your Jordan.** v.14. Jordan is the type of separation where there is no fellowship with anyone else, and where no one can take the responsibility for you. You have to put to the test now what you learned when you were with your Elijah. You have been to Jordan over and over again with Elijah, but now you are up against it alone. It is no use saying you cannot go; this experience has come, and you must go. If you want to know whether God is the God you have faith to believe Him to be, then go through your Jordan alone.

**Alone at your Jericho.** v.15. Jericho is the place where you have seen your Elijah do great things. When you come to your Jericho you have a strong disinclination to take the initiative and trust in God, you want someone else to take it for you. If you remain true to what you learned with Elijah, you will get the sign that God is with you.

**Alone at your Bethel.** v.23. At your Bethel you will find yourself at your wits' end and at the beginning of God's wisdom. When you get to your wits' end and feel inclined to succumb to panic, don't; stand true to God and He will bring His truth out in a way that will make your life a sacrament. Put into practice what you learned with your Elijah, use his cloak and pray. Determine to trust in God and do not look for Elijah any more.

## August 12: THE THEOLOGY OF REST

*"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"* Matthew 8:26

When we are in fear we can do nothing less than pray to God, but Our Lord has a right to expect that those who name His Name should have an understanding confidence in Him. God expects His children to be so confident in Him that in any crisis they are the reliable ones. Our trust is in God up to a certain point, then we go back to the elementary panic prayers of those who do not know God. We get to our wits' end, showing that we have not the slightest confidence in Him and His government of the world; He seems to be asleep, and we see nothing but breakers ahead.

"O ye of little faith!" What a pang must have shot through the disciples - 'Missed it again!' And what a pang will go through us when we suddenly realize that we might have produced down right joy in the heart of Jesus by remaining absolutely confident in Him, no matter what was ahead.

There are stages in life when there is no storm, no crisis, when we do our human best; it is when a crisis arises that we instantly reveal upon whom we rely. If we have been learning to worship God and to trust Him, the crisis will reveal that we will go to the breaking point and not break in our confidence in Him.

We have been talking a great deal about sanctification - what is it all going to amount to? It should work out into rest in God which means oneness with God, a oneness which will make us not only blameless in His sight, but a deep joy to Him.

## August 13: QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT

*"Quench not the Spirit."* 1 Thessalonians 5:19

The voice of the Spirit is as gentle as a zephyr, so gentle that unless you are living in perfect communion with God, you never hear it. The checks of the Spirit come in the most extraordinarily gentle ways, and if you are not sensitive enough to detect His voice you will quench it, and your personal spiritual life will be impaired. His checks always come as a still small voice, so small that no one but the saint notices them.

Beware if in personal testimony you have to hark back and say - "Once, so many years ago, I was saved." If you are walking in the light, there is no harking back, the past is transfused into the present wonder of communion with God. If you get out of the light you become a sentimental Christian and live on memories, your testimony has a hard, metallic note.

Beware of trying to patch up a present refusal to walk in the light by recalling past experiences when you did walk in the light. Whenever the Spirit checks, call a halt and get the thing right, or you will go on grieving Him without knowing it.

Suppose God has brought you up to a crisis and you nearly go through but not quite, He will engineer the crisis again, but it will not be so keen as it was before. There will be less discernment of God and more humiliation at not having obeyed; and if you go on grieving the Spirit, there will come a time when that crisis cannot be repeated, you have grieved Him away. But if you go through the crisis, there will be the pæan of praise to God. Never sympathize with the thing that is stabbing God all the time. God has to hurt the thing that must go.

## August 14: CHASTENING

*"Despise not the chastening of the Lord,  
nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." Hebrews 12:5*

It is very easy to quench the Spirit; we do it by despising the chastening of the Lord, by fainting when we are rebuked by Him. If we have only a shallow experience of sanctification, we mistake the shadow for the reality, and when the Spirit of God begins to check, we say - oh, that must be the devil.

Never quench the Spirit, and do not despise Him when He says to you - "Don't be blind on this point any more; you are not where you thought you were. Up to the present I have not been able to reveal it to you, but I reveal it now." When the Lord chastens you like that, let Him have His way. Let Him relate you rightly to God.

"Nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." We get into sulks with God and say - "Oh, well, I can't help it; I did pray and things did not turn out right, and I am going to give it all up." Think what would happen if we talked like this in any other domain of life!

Am I prepared to let God grip me by His power and do a work in me that is worthy of Himself? Sanctification is not my idea of what I want God to do for me; sanctification is God's idea of what He wants to do for me, and He has to get me into the attitude of mind and spirit where at any cost I will let Him sanctify me wholly.

## August 15: SIGNS OF THE NEW BIRTH

*"Ye must be born again." John 3:7*

The answer to the question "How can a man be born when he is old?" is - When he is old enough to die - to die right out to his "rag rights," to his virtues, to his religion, to everything, and to receive into himself the life which never was there before. The new life manifests itself in conscious repentance and unconscious holiness.

*"As many as received Him." (John 1:12.)* Is my knowledge of Jesus born of internal spiritual perception, or is it only what I have learned by listening to others? Have I something in my life that connects me with the Lord Jesus as my personal Saviour? All spiritual history must have a personal knowledge for its bedrock. To be born again means that I see Jesus.

*"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3.)* Do I seek for signs of the Kingdom, or do I perceive God's rule? The new birth gives a new power of vision whereby I begin to discern God's rule. His rule was there all the time, but true to His nature; now that I have received His nature I can see His rule.

*"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." (1 John 3:9.)* Do I seek to stop sinning or have I stopped sinning? To be born of God means that I have the supernatural power of God to stop sinning. In the Bible it is never - Should a Christian sin? The Bible puts it emphatically - *A Christian must not sin.* The effective working of the new birth life in us is that we do not commit sin, not merely that we have the power not to sin, but that we have stopped sinning. 1 John 3:9 does not mean that we *cannot* sin; it means that if we obey the life of God in us, we *need not* sin.

**August 16: DOES HE KNOW ME -**  
***"He calleth . . . by name."* John 10:3**

**When I have sadly misunderstood Him?** (John 10:17.) It is possible to know all about doctrine and yet not know Jesus. The soul is in danger when knowledge of doctrine outsteps intimate touch with Jesus. Why was Mary weeping? Doctrine was no more to Mary than the grass under her feet. Any Pharisee could have made a fool of Mary doctrinally, but one thing they could not ridicule out of her was the fact that Jesus had cast seven demons out of her; yet His blessings were nothing in comparison to Himself. Mary "saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus . . .;" immediately she heard the voice, she knew she had a past history with the One who spoke. "Master!"

**When I have stubbornly doubted?** (John 10:27.) Have I been doubting something about Jesus - an experience to which others testify but which I have not had? The other disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus, but Thomas doubted - "Except I shall see . . . , I will not believe." Thomas needed the personal touch of Jesus. When His touches come, or how they come, we do not know; but when they do come they are in describably precious. "My Lord and my God!"

**When I have selfishly denied Him?** (John 21:15-17.) Peter had denied Jesus Christ with oaths and curses, and yet after the Resurrection Jesus appeared to Peter alone. He restored him in private, then He restored him before the others. "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Have I a personal history with Jesus Christ? The one sign of discipleship is intimate connection with Him, a knowledge of Jesus Christ which nothing can shake.



## August 17: ARE YOU DISCOURAGED IN DEVOTION?

*"Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all that thou hast*

*. . and come, follow Me." Luke 18:22*

"And when he heard this . . ." Have you ever heard the Master say a hard word? If you have not, I question whether you have heard Him say anything. Jesus Christ says a great deal that we listen to, but do not hear; when we do hear, His words are amazingly hard.

Jesus did not seem in the least solicitous that this man should do what He told him, He made no attempt to keep him with Him. He simply said - Sell all you have, and come, follow Me. Our Lord never pleaded, He never cajoled, He never entrapped; He simply spoke the sternest words mortal ears ever listened to, and then left it alone.

Have I ever heard Jesus say a hard word? Has He said something personally to me to which I have deliberately listened? Not something I can expound or say this and that about, but something I have heard Him say to me? This man did understand what Jesus said, he heard it and he sized up what it meant, and it broke his heart. He did not go away defiant; he went away sorrowful, thoroughly discouraged. He had come to Jesus full of the fire of earnest desire, and the word of Jesus simply froze him; instead of producing an enthusiastic devotion, it produced a heart-breaking discouragement. And Jesus did not go after him, He let him go. Our Lord knows perfectly that when once His word is heard, it will bear fruit sooner or later. The terrible thing is that some of us prevent it bearing fruit in actual life. I wonder what we will say when we do make up our minds to be devoted to Him on that particular point? One thing is certain, He will never cast anything up at us.

## **August 18: HAVE YOU EVER BEEN EXPRESSIONLESS WITH SORROW?**

***"And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich." Luke 18:23***

The rich young ruler went away expressionless with sorrow; he had not a word to say. He had no doubt as to what Jesus said, no debate as to what it meant, and it produced in him a sorrow that had not any words. Have you ever been there? Has God's word come to you about something you are very rich in - temperament, personal affinity, relationships of heart and mind? Then you have often been expressionless with sorrow. The Lord will not go after you, He will not plead, but every time He meets you on that point He will simply repeat - If you mean what you say, those are the conditions.

"Sell all that thou hast," undress yourself morally before God of everything that might be a possession until you are a mere conscious human being, and then give God that. That is where the battle is fought - in the domain of the will before God. Are you more devoted to your idea of what Jesus wants than to Himself? If so, you are likely to hear one of His hard sayings that will produce sorrow in you. What Jesus says is hard, it is only easy when it is heard by those who have His disposition. Beware of allowing anything to soften a hard word of Jesus Christ's.

I can be so rich in poverty, so rich in the consciousness that I am nobody, that I shall never be a disciple of Jesus; and I can be so rich in the consciousness that I am somebody that I shall never be a disciple. Am I willing to be destitute of the sense that I am destitute? This is where discouragement comes in. Discouragement is disenchanting self-love, and self-love may be love of my devotion to Jesus.

## **August 19: SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**

### ***Come unto Me." Matthew 11:28***

God means us to live a fully-orbed life in Christ Jesus, but there are times when that life is attacked from the outside, and we tumble into a way of introspection which we thought had gone. Self-consciousness is the first thing that will upset the completeness of the life in God, and self-consciousness continually produces wrestling. Self-consciousness is not sin; it may be produced by a nervous temperament or by a sudden dumping down into new circumstances. It is never Gods will that we should be anything less than absolutely complete in Him. Anything that disturbs rest in Him must be cured at once, and it is not cured by being ignored, but by coming to Jesus Christ. If we come to Him and ask Him to produce Christ-consciousness, He will always do it until we learn to abide in Him.

Never allow the dividing up of your life in Christ to remain without facing it. Beware of leakage, of the dividing up of your life by the influence of friends or of circumstances; beware of anything that is going to split up your oneness with Him and make you see yourself separately. Nothing is so important as to keep right spiritually. The great solution is the simple one - "Come unto Me." The depth of our reality, intellectually, morally and spiritually, is tested by these words. In every degree in which we are not real, we will dispute rather than come.

## August 20: COMPLETENESS

***"And I will give you rest."* Matthew 11:28**

Whenever anything begins to disintegrate your life with Jesus Christ, turn to Him at once and ask Him to establish rest. Never allow anything to remain which is making the dis-peace. Take every element of disintegration as something to wrestle against, and not to suffer. Say - Lord, prove Thy consciousness in me, and self-consciousness will go and He will be all in all. Beware of allowing self-consciousness to continue because by slow degrees it will awaken self-pity, and self-pity is Satanic. Well, I am not understood; this is a thing they ought to apologize for; that is a point I really must have cleared up. Leave others alone and ask the Lord to give you Christ-consciousness, and He will poise you until the completeness is absolute.

The complete life is the life of a child. When I am consciously conscious, there is something wrong. It is the sick man who knows what health is. The child of God is not conscious of the will of God because he *is* the will of God. When there has been the slightest deviation from the will of God, we begin to ask - What is Thy will? A child of God never prays to be conscious that God answers prayer, he is so restfully certain that God always does answer prayer.

If we try to overcome self-consciousness by any common-sense method, we will develop it tremendously. Jesus says, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest," i.e., Christ-consciousness will take the place of self-consciousness. Wherever Jesus comes He establishes rest, the rest of the perfection of activity that is never conscious of itself.

**August 21: THE MINISTRY OF THE UNNOTICED**  
***"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Matthew 5:3***

The New Testament notices things which from our standards do not seem to count. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," literally - Blessed are the paupers - an exceedingly commonplace thing! The preaching of to-day is apt to emphasize strength of will, beauty of character - the things that are easily noticed. The phrase we bear so often, Decide for Christ, is an emphasis on something Our Lord never trusted. He never asks us to decide for Him, but to yield to Him - a very different thing. At the basis of Jesus Christ's Kingdom is the unaffected loveliness of the commonplace. The thing I am blessed in is my poverty. If I know I have no strength of will, no nobility of disposition, then Jesus says - Blessed are you, because it is through this poverty that I enter His Kingdom. I cannot enter His Kingdom as a good man or woman, I can only enter it as a complete pauper.

The true character of the loveliness that tells for God is always unconscious. Conscious influence is priggish and un-Christian. If I say - I wonder if I am of any use - I instantly lose the bloom of the touch of the Lord. "He that believeth in me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water." If I examine the outflow, I lose the touch of the Lord.

Which are the people who have influenced us most? Not the ones who thought they did, but those who had not the remotest notion that they were influencing us. In the Christian life the implicit is never conscious, if it is conscious it ceases to have this unaffected loveliness which is the characteristic of the touch of Jesus. We always know when Jesus is at work because He produces in the commonplace something that is inspiring.

**August 22: "I INDEED... BUT HE"**  
*I indeed baptize you with water*

***. . but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire." Matthew 3:11***

Have I ever come to a place in my experience where I can say - "I indeed - but He"? Until that moment does come, I will never know what the baptism of the Holy Ghost means. *I indeed* am at an end, I cannot do a thing: *but He* begins just there - He does the things no one else can ever do. Am I prepared for His coming? Jesus cannot come as long as there is anything in the way either of goodness or badness. When He comes am I prepared for Him to drag into the light every wrong thing I have done? It is just there that He comes. Wherever I know I am unclean, He will put His feet; wherever I think I am clean, He will withdraw them.

Repentance does not bring a sense of sin, but a sense of unutterable unworthiness. When I repent, I realize that I am utterly helpless; I know all through me that I am not worthy even to bear His shoes. Have I repented like that? Or is there a lingering suggestion of standing up for myself? The reason God cannot come into my life is because I am not through into repentance.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire." John does not speak of the baptism of the Holy Ghost as an experience, but as a work performed by Jesus Christ. "*He* shall baptize you." The only conscious experience those who are baptized with the Holy Ghost ever have is a sense of absolute unworthiness.

*I indeed* was this and that; *but He* came, and a marvellous thing happened. Get to the margin where He does everything.

## August 23: PRAYER CHOICE AND PRAYER CONFLICT

*"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet,  
and pray to thy Father which is in secret."* Matthew 6:6

Jesus did not say - Dream about thy Father in secret, but pray to thy Father in secret. Prayer is an effort of will. After we have entered our secret place and have shut the door, the most difficult thing to do is to pray; we cannot get our minds into working order, and the first thing that conflicts is wandering thoughts. The great battle in private prayer is the overcoming of mental wool-gathering. We have to discipline our minds and concentrate on wilful prayer.

We must have a selected place for prayer and when we get there the plague of flies begins - This must be done, and that. "Shut thy door." A secret silence means to shut the door deliberately on emotions and remember God. God is in secret, and He sees us from the secret place; He does not see us as other people see us, or as we see ourselves. When we live in the secret place it becomes impossible for us to doubt God, we become more sure of Him than of anything else. Your Father, Jesus says, is in secret and nowhere else. Enter the secret place, and right in the centre of the common round you find God there all the time. Get into the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless in the first waking moment of the day you learn to fling the door wide back and let God in, you will work on a wrong level all day; but swing the door wide open and pray to your Father in secret, and every public thing will be stamped with the presence of God.

## August 24: THE SPIRITUAL INDEX

*"Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread,  
will he give him a stone?" Matthew 7:9*

The illustration of prayer that Our Lord uses here is that of a good child asking for a good thing. We talk about prayer as if God heard us irrespective of the fact of our relationship to Him (cf. Matthew 5:45). Never say it is not God's will to give you what you ask, don't sit down and faint, but find out the reason, turn up the index. Are you rightly related to your wife, to your husband, to your children, to your fellow-students - are you a "good child" there? "O Lord, I have been irritable and cross, but I do want spiritual blessing." You cannot have it, you will have to do without until you come into the attitude of a good child.

We mistake defiance for devotion; arguing with God for abandonment. We will not look at the index. Have I been asking God to give me money for something I want when there is something I have not paid for? Have I been asking God for liberty while I am withholding it from someone who belongs to me? I have not forgiven someone his trespasses; I have not been kind to him; I have not been living as God's child among my relatives and friends. (v.12.)

I am a child of God only by regeneration, and as a child of God I am good only as I walk in the light. Prayer with most of us is turned into pious platitude, it is a matter of emotion, mystical communion with God. Spiritually we are all good at producing fogs. If we turn up the index, we will see very clearly what is wrong - that friendship, that debt, that temper of mind. It is no use praying unless we are living as children of God. Then, Jesus says - "Everyone that asketh receiveth."



## August 25: THE FRUITFULNESS OF FRIENDSHIP

*"I have called you friends."* John 15:15

We never know the joy of self-sacrifice until we abandon in every particular. Self-surrender is the most difficult thing - I will if . . . I Oh, well, I suppose I must devote my life to God. There is none of the joy of self-sacrifice in that.

As soon as we do abandon, the Holy Ghost gives us an intimation of the joy of Jesus. The final aim of self-sacrifice is laying down our lives for our Friend. When the Holy Ghost comes in, the great desire is to lay down the life for Jesus, and the thought of sacrifice never touches us because sacrifice is the love passion of the Holy Ghost.

Our Lord is our example in the life of self-sacrifice - "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." He went on with His sacrifice with exuberant joy. Have I ever yielded in absolute submission to Jesus Christ? If Jesus Christ is not the lodestar, there is no benefit in the sacrifice; but when the sacrifice is made with the eyes on Him, slowly and surely the moulding influence begins to tell.

Beware of letting natural affinities hinder your walk in love. One of the most cruel ways of killing natural love is by disdain built on natural affinities. The affinity of the saint is the Lord Jesus. Love for God is not sentimental, for the saint to love as God loves is the most practical thing.

"I have called you friends." It is a friendship based on the new life created in us which has no affinity with our old life, but only with the life of God. It is unutterably humble, unsulliedly pure, and absolutely devoted to God.

## August 26: ARE YOU EVER DISTURBED?

*"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." John 14:27*

There are times when our peace is based upon ignorance, but when we awaken to the facts of life, inner peace is impossible unless it is received from Jesus. When Our Lord speaks peace, He makes peace, His words are ever "spirit and life." Have I ever received what Jesus speaks? *"My peace I give unto you"* - it is a peace which comes from looking into His face and realizing His undisturbedness.

Are you painfully disturbed just now, distracted by the waves and billows of God's providential permission, and having, as it were, turned over the boulders of your belief, are you still finding no well of peace or joy or comfort; is all barren? Then look up and receive the undisturbedness of the Lord Jesus. Reflected peace is the proof that you are right with God because you are at liberty to turn your mind to Him. If you are not right with God, you can never turn your mind anywhere but on yourself. If you allow anything to hide the face of Jesus Christ from you, you are either disturbed or you have a false security.

Are you looking unto Jesus now, in the immediate matter that is pressing and receiving from Him peace? If so, He will be a gracious benediction of peace in and through you. But if you try to worry it out, you obliterate Him and deserve all you get. We get disturbed because we have not been considering Him. When one confers with Jesus Christ the perplexity goes, because He has no perplexity, and our only concern is to abide in Him. Lay it all out before Him, and in the face of difficulty, bereavement and sorrow, hear Him say, "Let not your heart be troubled."

## August 27: THEOLOGY ALIVE

***"Walk while ye have the light lest darkness come upon you." John 12:35***

Beware of not acting upon what you see in your moments on the mount with God. If you do not obey the light, it will turn into darkness. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" The second you waive the question of sanctification or any other thing upon which God gave you light, you begin to get dry rot in your spiritual life. Continually bring the truth out into actuality; work it out in every domain, or the very light you have will prove a curse.

The most difficult person to deal with is the one who has the smug satisfaction of an experience to which he can refer back, but who is not working it out in practical life. If you *say* you are sanctified, *show* it. The experience must be so genuine that it is shown in the life. Beware of any belief that makes you self-indulgent; it came from the pit, no matter how beautiful it sounds.

Theology must work itself out in the most practical relationships. "Except your righteousness shall *exceed* the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees . . ." said Our Lord, i.e., you must be more moral than the most moral being you know. You may know all about the doctrine of sanctification, but are you running it out into the practical issues of your life? Every bit of your life, physical, moral and spiritual, is to be judged by the standard of the Atonement.

## August 28: WHAT'S THE GOOD OF PRAYER?

*"Lord, teach us to pray."* Luke 11:1

It is not part of the life of a natural man to pray. We hear it said that a man will suffer in his life if he does not pray; I question it. What will suffer is the life of the Son of God in him, which is nourished not by food, but by prayer. When a man is born from above, the life of the Son of God is born in him, and he can either starve that life or nourish it. Prayer is the way the life of God is nourished. Our ordinary views of prayer are not found in the New Testament. We look upon prayer as a means of getting things for our selves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself.

"Ask and ye shall receive." We grouch before God, we are apologetic or apathetic, but we *ask* very few things. Yet what a splendid audacity a childlike child has! Our Lord says - "Except ye become as little children." Ask, and God will do. Give Jesus Christ a chance, give Him elbow room, and no man will ever do this unless he is at his wits' end. When a man is at his wits' end it is not a cowardly thing to pray, it is the only way he can get into touch with Reality. Be yourself before God and present your problems, the things you know you have come to your wits' end over. As long as you are self-sufficient, you do not need to ask God for anything.

It is not so true that "prayer changes things" as that prayer changes *me* and I change things. God has so constituted things that prayer on the basis of Redemption alters the way in which a man looks at things. Prayer is not a question of altering things externally, but of working wonders in a man's disposition.

## August 29: SUBLIME INTIMACY

*Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" John 11:40*

Every time you venture out in the life of faith, you will find something in your common-sense circumstances that flatly contradicts your faith. Common sense is not faith, and faith is not common sense; they stand in the relation of the natural and the spiritual. Can you trust Jesus Christ where your common sense cannot trust Him? Can you venture heroically on Jesus Christ's statements when the facts of your common-sense life shout - "It's a lie?" On the mount it is easy to say - 'Oh, yes, I believe God can do it'; but you have to come down into the demon-possessed valley and meet with facts that laugh ironically at the whole of your mount-of-transfiguration belief. Every time my programme of, belief is clear to my own mind, I come across something that contradicts it. Let me say I believe God will supply all my need, and then let me run dry, with no outlook, and see whether I will go through the trial of faith, or whether I will sink back to something lower.

Faith must be tested, because it can be turned into a personal possession only through conflict. What is your faith up against just now? The test will either prove that your faith is right, or it will kill it. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." The final thing is confidence in Jesus. Believe steadfastly on Him and all you come up against will develop your faith. There is continual testing in the life of faith, and the last great test is death. May God keep us in fighting trim! Faith is unutterable trust in God, trust which never dreams that He will not stand by us.

**August 30: AM I CONVINCED BY CHRIST?**  
***"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not . . . ,***

***but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."* Luke 10:19, 20**

Jesus Christ says, in effect, Don't rejoice in successful service, but rejoice because you are rightly related to Me. The snare in Christian work is to rejoice in successful service, to rejoice in the fact that God has used you. You never can measure what God will do through you if you are rightly related to Jesus Christ. Keep your relationship right with Him, then whatever circumstances you are in, and whoever you meet day by day, He is pouring rivers of living water through you, and it is of His mercy that He does not let you know it. When once you are rightly related to God by salvation and sanctification, remember that wherever you are, you are put there by God; and by the reaction of your life on the circumstances around you, you will fulfil God's purpose, as long as you keep in the light as God is in the light.

The tendency to-day is to put the emphasis on service. Beware of the people who make usefulness their ground of appeal. If you make usefulness the test, then Jesus Christ was the greatest failure that ever lived. The lodestar of the saint is God Him self, not estimated usefulness. It is the work that God does through us that counts, not what we do for Him. All that Our Lord heeds in a man's life is the relationship of worth to His Father. Jesus is bringing many *sons* to glory.

## August 31: MY JOY . . . YOUR JOY

***"That My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11***

What was the joy that Jesus had? It is an insult to use the word happiness in connection with Jesus Christ. The joy of Jesus was the absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice of Himself to His Father, the joy of doing that which the Father sent Him to do. "I delight to do Thy will." Jesus prayed that our joy might go on fulfilling itself until it was the same joy as His. Have I allowed Jesus Christ to introduce His joy to me?

The full flood of my life is not in bodily health, not in external happenings, not in seeing God's work succeed, but in the perfect understanding of God, and in the communion with Him that Jesus Himself had. The first thing that will hinder this joy is the captious irritation of thinking out circumstances. The cares of this world, said Jesus, will choke God's word. Before we know where we are, we are caught up in the shows of things. All that God has done for us is the mere threshold; He wants to get us to the place where we will be His witnesses and proclaim Who Jesus is.

Be rightly related to God, find your joy there, and out of you will flow rivers of living water. Be a centre for Jesus Christ to pour living water through. Stop being self-conscious, stop being a sanctified prig, and live the life hid with Christ. The life that is rightly related to God is as natural as breathing wherever it goes. The lives that have been of most blessing to you are those who were unconscious of it.

## September 1: DESTINY OF HOLINESS

*"Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:16 (R.V.)*

Continually restate to yourself what the purpose of your life is. The destined end of man is not happiness, nor health, but holiness. Nowadays we have far too many affinities, we are dissipated with them; right, good, noble affinities which will yet have their fulfilment, but in the meantime God has to atrophy them. The one thing that matters is whether a man will accept the God Who will make him holy. At all costs a man must be rightly related to God.

Do I believe I need to be holy? Do I believe God can come into me and make me holy? If by your preaching you convince me that I am unholy, I resent your preaching. The preaching of the gospel awakens an intense resentment because it must reveal that I am unholy; but it also awakens an intense craving. God has one destined end for mankind, viz., holiness. His one aim is the production of saints. God is not an eternal blessing-machine for men; He did not come to save men out of pity: He came to save men because He had created them to be holy. The Atonement means that God can put me back into perfect union with Himself, without a shadow between, through the Death of Jesus Christ.

Never tolerate through sympathy with yourself or with others any practice that is not in keeping with a holy God. Holiness means unsullied walking with the feet, unsullied talking with the tongue, unsullied thinking with the mind - every detail of the life under the scrutiny of God. Holiness is not only what God gives me, but what I manifest that God has given me.



## September 2: THE SACRAMENT OF SACRIFICE

***"He that believeth in Me . . . out of him shall flow. . . ." John 7:38***

Jesus did not say - "he that believeth in Me shall realize the blessing of the fulness of God," but - "he that believeth in Me out of him shall escape everything he receives." Our Lord's teaching is always *anti* -self-realization. His purpose is not the development of a man; His purpose is to make a man exactly like Himself, and the characteristic of the Son of God is self-expenditure. If we believe in Jesus, it is not what we gain, but what He pours through us that counts. It is not that God makes us beautifully rounded grapes, but that He squeezes the sweetness out of us. Spiritually, we cannot measure our life by success, but only by what God pours through us, and we cannot measure that at all.

When Mary of Bethany broke the box of precious ointment and poured it on Jesus' head, it was an act for which no one else saw any occasion; the disciples said it was a waste. But Jesus commended Mary for her extravagant act of devotion, and said that wherever His gospel was preached "this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Our Lord is carried beyond Himself with joy when He sees any of us doing what Mary did, not being set on this or that economy, but being abandoned to Him. God spilt the life of His Son that the world might be saved; are we prepared to spill out our lives for Him?

"He that believeth in Me out of him shall flow rivers of living water" - hundreds of other lives will be continually refreshed. It is time now to break the life, to cease craving for satisfaction, and to spill the thing out. Our Lord is asking who of us will do it for Him?

## September 3: THE WATERS OF SATISFACTION SCATTERED

*"Nevertheless he would not drink thereof,*

*but poured it out unto the Lord." 2 Samuel 23:16*

What has been like water from the well of Bethlehem to you recently - love, friendship, spiritual blessing? Then at the peril of your soul, you take it to satisfy yourself. If you do, you cannot pour it out before the Lord. You can never sanctify to God that with which you long to satisfy yourself. If you satisfy yourself with a blessing from God, it will corrupt you; you must sacrifice it, pour it out, do with it what common sense says is an absurd waste.

How am I to pour out unto the Lord natural love or spiritual blessing? In one way only - in the determination of my mind. There are certain acts of other people which one could never accept if one did not know God, because it is not within human power to repay them. But immediately I say - This is too great and worthy for me, it is not meant for a human being at all, I must pour it out unto the Lord, then these things pour out in rivers of living water all around. Until I do pour these things out before the Lord, they endanger those I love as well as myself because they will turn to lust. We can be lustful in things which are not sordid and vile. Love has to get to its transfiguration point of being poured out unto the Lord.

If you have become bitter and sour, it is because when God gave you a blessing you clutched it for yourself; whereas if you had poured it out unto the Lord, you would have been the sweetest person out of heaven. If you are always taking blessings to yourself and never learn to pour out anything unto the Lord, other people do not get their horizon enlarged through you.

## September 4: HIS!

***"Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." John 17:6***

The missionary is one in whom the Holy Ghost has wrought this realization - "Ye are not your own." To say, "I am not my own" is to have reached a great point in spiritual nobility. The true nature of the life in the actual whirl is the deliberate giving up of myself to another in sovereign preference, and that other is Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit expounds the nature of Jesus to me in order to make me one with my Lord, not that I might go off as a showroom exhibit. Our Lord never sent any of the disciples out on the ground of what He had done for them. It was not until after the Resurrection, when the disciples had perceived by the power of the Holy Spirit Whom He was, that Jesus said "Go."

"If any man come to me and hate not . . . , he cannot be My disciple," not, he cannot be good and upright, but, he cannot be one over whom Jesus writes the word "Mine." Any one of the relationships Our Lord mentions may be a competitive relationship. I may prefer to belong to my mother, or to my wife, or to myself; then, says Jesus, you cannot be My disciple. This does not mean I will not be saved, but it does mean that I cannot be "His."

Our Lord makes a disciple His own possession, He becomes responsible for him. "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." The spirit that comes in is not that of *doing* anything for Jesus, but of being a perfect delight to Him. The secret of the missionary is - I am His, and He is carrying out His enterprises through me.

Be entirely His.

## September 5: THE MISSIONARY WATCHING

### *"Watch with Me."* Matthew 26:40

"Watch with Me" - with no private point of view of your own at all, but watch entirely with Me. In the early stages we do not watch with Jesus, we watch for Him. We do not watch with Him through the revelation of the Bible; in the circumstances of our lives. Our Lord is trying to introduce us to identification with Himself in a particular Gethsemane, and we will not go; we say - "No, Lord, I cannot see the meaning of this, it is bitter." How can we possibly watch with Someone Who is inscrutable? How are we going to understand Jesus sufficiently to watch with Him in His Gethsemane, when we do not know even what His suffering is for? We do not know how to watch with Him; we are only used to the idea of Jesus watching with us.

The disciples loved Jesus Christ to the limit of their natural capacity, but they did not understand what He was after. In the Garden of Gethsemane they slept for their own sorrow, and at the end of three years of the closest intimacy they "all forsook Him and fled."

"They were all filled with the Holy Ghost" - the same "they," but something wonderful has happened in between - Our Lord's Death and Resurrection and Ascension; and the disciples have been invaded by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord had said - "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," and this meant that they learned to watch with Him all the rest of their lives.

## September 6: DIFFUSIVENESS OF LIFE

*"Rivers of living water." John 7:38*

A river touches places of which its source knows nothing, and Jesus says if we have received of His fulness, however small the visible measure of our lives, out of us will flow the rivers that will bless to the uttermost parts of the earth. We have nothing to do with the outflow - "This is the work of God that ye *believe*. . . ." God rarely allows a soul to see how great a blessing he is.

A river is victoriously persistent, it overcomes all barriers. For a while it goes steadily on its course, then it comes to an obstacle and for a while it is baulked, but it soon makes a pathway round the obstacle. Or a river will drop out of sight for miles, and presently emerge again broader and grander than ever. You can see God using some lives, but into your life an obstacle has come and you do not seem to be of any use. Keep paying attention to the Source, and God will either take you round the obstacle or remove it. The river of the Spirit of God overcomes all obstacles. Never get your eyes on the obstacle or on the difficulty. The obstacle is a matter of indifference to the river which will flow steadily through you if you remember to keep right at the Source. Never allow anything to come between yourself and Jesus Christ, no emotion, or experience; nothing must keep you from the one great sovereign Source.

Think of the healing and far-flung rivers nursing themselves in our souls! God has been opening up marvellous truths to our minds, and every point He has opened up is an indication of the wider power of the river He will flow through us. If you believe in Jesus, you will find that God has nourished in you mighty torrents of blessing for others.

## September 7: SPRINGS OF BENIGNITY

*"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water." John 4:14*

The picture Our Lord gives is not that of a channel but a fountain. "Be being filled," and the sweetness of vital relationship to Jesus will flow out of the saint as lavishly as it is imparted to him. If you find your life is not flowing out as it should, you are to blame; something has obstructed the flow. Keep right at the Source, and - you will be blessed personally? No, out of you will flow rivers of living water, irrepressible life.

We are to be centres through which Jesus can flow as rivers of living water in blessing to every one. Some of us are like the Dead Sea, always taking in but never giving out, because we are not rightly related to the Lord Jesus. As surely as we receive from Him, He will pour out through us, and in the measure He is not pouring out, there is a defect in our relationship to Him. Is there anything between you and Jesus Christ? Is there anything that hinders your belief in Him? If not, Jesus says, out of you will flow rivers of living water. It is not a blessing passed on, not an experience stated, but a river continually flowing. Keep at the Source, guard well your belief in Jesus Christ and your relationship to Him, and there will be a steady flow for other lives, no dryness and no deadness.

Is it not too extravagant to say that out of an individual believer rivers are going to flow? "I do not see the rivers," you say. Never look at yourself from the standpoint of - Who am I? In the history of God's work you will nearly always find that it has started from the obscure, the unknown, the ignored, but the steadfastly true to Jesus Christ.

## September 8: DO IT YOURSELF

**Determinedly Demolish some Things. "*Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.*" 2 Corinthians 10:5**

Deliverance from sin is not deliverance from human nature. There are things in human nature, such as prejudices, which the saint has to destroy by neglect; and other things which have to be destroyed by violence, i.e., by the Divine strength imparted by God's Spirit. There are some things over which we are not to fight, but to stand still in and see the salvation of God; but every theory or conception which erects itself as a rampart against the knowledge of God is to be determinedly demolished by drawing on God's power, not by fleshly endeavour or compromise (v. 4).

It is only when God has altered our disposition and we have entered into the experience of sanctification that the fight begins. The warfare is not against sin; we can never fight against sin: Jesus Christ deals with sin in Redemption. The conflict is along the line of turning our natural life into a spiritual life, and this is never done easily, nor does God intend it to be done easily. It is done only by a series of moral choices. God does not make us holy in the sense of character; He makes us holy in the sense of innocence, and we have to turn that innocence into holy character by a series of moral choices. These choices are continually in antagonism to the entrenchments of our natural life, the things which erect themselves as ramparts against the knowledge of God. We can either go back and make ourselves of no account in the Kingdom of God, or we can determinedly demolish these things and let Jesus bring another son to glory.

## September 9: DO IT YOURSELF

**Determinedly Discipline other Things. *"Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* 2 Corinthians 10:5**

This is another aspect of the strenuous nature of sainthood. Paul says, "I take every project prisoner to make it obey Christ." (Moffatt.) How much Christian work there is to-day which has never been disciplined, but has simply sprung into being by impulse! In Our Lord's life every project was disciplined to the will of His Father. There was not a movement of an impulse of His own will as distinct from His Father's - "The Son can do nothing of Himself." Then take ourselves - a vivid religious experience, and every project born of impulse put into action immediately, instead of being imprisoned and disciplined to obey Christ.

This is a day when practical work is overemphasized, and the saints who are bringing every project into captivity are criticized and told that they are not in earnest for God or for souls. True earnestness is found in obeying God, not in the inclination to serve Him that is born of undisciplined human nature. It is inconceivable, but true nevertheless, that saints are not bringing every project into captivity, but are doing work for God at the instigation of their own human nature which has not been spiritualized by determined discipline.

We are apt to forget that a man is not only committed to Jesus Christ for salvation; he is committed to Jesus Christ's view of God, of the world, of sin and of the devil, and this will mean that he must recognize the responsibility of being transformed by the renewing of his mind.



## September 10: MISSIONARY MUNITIONS

### Worshipping as Occasion Serves.

*"When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." John 1:48*

We imagine we would be all right if a big crisis arose; but the big crisis will only reveal the stuff we are made of, it will not put anything into us. "If God gives the call, of course I will rise to the occasion." You will not unless you have risen to the occasion in the workshop, unless you have been the real thing before God there. If you are not doing the thing that lies nearest, because God has engineered it; when the crisis comes instead of being revealed as fit, you will be revealed as unfit. Crises always reveal character.

The private relationship of worshipping God is the great essential of fitness. The time comes when there is no more "fig-tree" life possible, when it is out into the open, out into the glare and into the work, and you will find yourself of no value there if you have not been worshipping as occasion serves you in your home. Worship aright in your private relationships, then when God sets you free you will be ready, because in the unseen life which no one saw but God you have become perfectly fit, and when the strain comes you can be relied upon by God.

"I can't be expected to live the sanctified life in the circumstances I am in; I have no time for praying just now, no time for Bible reading, my opportunity hasn't come yet; when it does, of course I shall be all right." No, you will not. If you have not been worshipping as occasion serves, when you get into work you will not only be useless yourself, but a tremendous hindrance to those who are associated with you.

The workshop of missionary munitions is the hidden, personal, worshipping life of the saint.

## September 11: MISSIONARY MUNITIONS

**Ministering as Opportunity Surrounds Us. *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."* John 13:14**

Ministering as opportunity surrounds us does not mean selecting our surroundings, it means being very selectly God's in any haphazard surroundings which He engineers for us. The characteristics we manifest in our immediate surroundings are indications of what we will be like in other surroundings.

The things that Jesus did were of the most menial and commonplace order, and this is an indication that it takes all God's power in me to do the most commonplace things in His way. Can I use a towel as He did? Towels and dishes and sandals, all the ordinary sordid things of our lives, reveal more quickly than anything what we are made of. It takes God Almighty Incarnate in us to do the meanest duty as it ought to be done.

"I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." Watch the kind of people God brings around you, and you will be humiliated to find that this is His way of revealing to you the kind of person you have been to Him. Now, He says, exhibit to that one exactly what I have shown to you.

"Oh," you say, "I will do all that when I get out into the foreign field." To talk in this way is like trying to produce the munitions of war in the trenches - you will be killed while you are doing it.

We have to go the "second mile" with God. Some of us get played out in the first ten yards, because God compels us to go where we cannot see the way, and we say - "I will wait till I get nearer the big crisis." If we do not do the running steadily in the little ways, we shall do nothing in the crisis.

## September 12: BY SPIRITUAL CONFUSION

### *"Ye know not what ye ask."* Matthew 20:22

There are times in spiritual life when there is confusion, and it is no way out to say that there ought not to be confusion. It is not a question of right and wrong, but a question of God taking you by a way which in the meantime you do not understand, and it is only by going through the confusion that you will get at what God wants.

**The Shrouding of His Friendship.** Luke 11:5-8. Jesus gave the illustration of the man who looked as if he did not care for his friend, and He said that that is how the Heavenly Father will appear to you at times. You will think He is an unkind friend, but remember He is not; the time will come when everything will be explained. There is a cloud on the friendship of the heart, and often even love itself has to wait in pain and tears for the blessing of fuller communion. When God looks completely shrouded, will you hang on in confidence in Him?

**The Shadow on His Fatherhood.** Luke 11:11-13. Jesus says there are times when your Father will appear as if He were an unnatural father, as if He were callous and indifferent, but remember He is not; I have told you - "Everyone that asketh receiveth." If there is a shadow on the face of the Father just now, hang onto it that He will ultimately give His clear revealing and justify Himself in all that He permitted.

**The Strangeness of His Faithfulness.** Luke 18:1-8. "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Will He find the faith which banks on Him in spite of the confusion? Stand off in faith believing that what Jesus said is true, though in the meantime you do not understand what God is doing. He has bigger issues at stake than the particular things you ask.

## September 13: AFTER SURRENDER - WHAT?

*"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." John 17:4*

Surrender is not the surrender of the external life, but of the will; when that is done, all is done. There are very few crises in life; the great crisis is the surrender of the will. God never crushes a man's will into surrender, He never beseeches him, He waits until the man yields up his will to Him. That battle never needs to be re-fought.

**Surrender for Deliverance.** "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." It is after we have begun to experience what salvation means that we surrender our wills to Jesus for rest. Whatever is perplexing heart or mind is a call to the will - "Come unto Me." It is a voluntary coming.

**Surrender for Devotion.** "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." The surrender here is of my self to Jesus, my self with His rest at the heart of it. "If you would be My disciple, give up your right to yourself to Me." Then the remainder of the life is nothing but the manifestation of this surrender. When once the surrender has taken place we never need "suppose" anything. We do not need to care what our circumstances are, Jesus is amply sufficient.

**Surrender for Death.** John 21:18-19. "... another shall gird thee." Have you learned what it means to be bound for death? Beware of a surrender which you make to God in an ecstasy; you are apt to take it back again. It is a question of being united with Jesus in His death until nothing ever appeals to you that did not appeal to Him.

After surrender - what? The whole of the life after surrender is an aspiration for unbroken communion with God.

## September 14: IMAGINATION V. INSPIRATION

*"The simplicity that is in Christ."* 2 Corinthians 11:3

Simplicity is the secret of seeing things clearly. A saint does not think clearly for a long while, but a saint ought to *see* clearly without any difficulty. You cannot think a spiritual muddle clear, you have to obey it clear. In intellectual matters you can think things out, but in spiritual matters you will think yourself into cotton wool. If there is something upon which God has put His pressure, obey in that matter, bring your imagination into captivity to the obedience of Christ with regard to it and everything will become as clear as daylight. The reasoning capacity comes afterwards, but we never see along that line, we see like children; when we try to be wise we see nothing (Matthew 11:25).

The tiniest thing we allow in our lives that is not under the control of the Holy Spirit is quite sufficient to account for spiritual muddle, and all the thinking we like to spend on it will never make it clear. Spiritual muddle is only made plain by obedience. Immediately we obey, we discern. This is humiliating, because when we are muddled we know the reason is in the temper of our mind. When the natural power of vision is devoted to the Holy Spirit, it becomes the power of perceiving God's will and the whole life is kept in simplicity.

## September 15: WHAT TO RENOUNCE

***"But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty." 2 Corinthians 4:2***

Have you "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty" - the things that your sense of honour will not allow to come to the light? You can easily hide them. Is there a thought in your heart about anyone which you would not like to be dragged into the light? Renounce it as soon as it springs up; renounce the whole thing until there is no hidden thing of dishonesty or craftiness about you. Envy, jealousy, strife - these things arise not necessarily from the disposition of sin, but from the make - up of your body which was used for this kind of thing in days gone by (see Romans 6:19 and 1 Peter 4:1-2). Maintain a continual watchfulness so that nothing of which you would be ashamed arises in your life.

"Not walking in craftiness," that is, resorting to what will carry your point. This is a great snare. You know that God will only let you work in one way, then be careful never to catch people the other way; God's blight will be upon you if you do. Others are doing things which to you would be walking in craftiness, but it may not be so with them: God has given you another standpoint. Never blunt the sense of your Utmost for His Highest. For you to do a certain thing would mean the incoming of craftiness for an end other than the highest, and the blunting of the motive God has given you. Many have gone back because they are afraid of looking at things from God's standpoint. The great crisis comes spiritually when a man has to emerge a bit farther on than the creed he has accepted.

## September 16: THE DIVINE REGION OF RELIGION

***"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." Matthew 6:6***

The main idea in the region of religion is - Your eyes upon God, not on men. Do not have as your motive the desire to be known as a praying man. Get an inner chamber in which to pray where no one knows you are praying, shut the door and talk to God in secret. Have no other motive than to know your Father in heaven. It is impossible to conduct your life as a disciple without definite times of secret prayer.

But when ye pray use not vain repetitions . . . (v.7). God does not hear us because we are in earnest, but only on the ground of Redemption. God is never impressed by our earnestness. Prayer is not simply getting things from God, that is a most initial form of prayer; prayer is getting into perfect communion with God. If the Son of God is formed in us by regeneration, He will press forward in front of our common sense and change our attitude to the things about which we pray.

"Everyone that *asketh* receiveth." We pray pious blether, our will is not in it, and then we say God does not answer; we never *asked* for anything. "Ye shall ask what ye *will*," said Jesus. Asking means our will is in it. Whenever Jesus talked about prayer, He put it with the grand simplicity of a child: we bring in our critical temper and say - Yes, but . . . Jesus said "*Ask*." But remember that we have to ask of God things that are in keeping with the God Whom Jesus Christ revealed.

## September 17: WHAT'S THE GOOD OF TEMPTATION?

*"There hath no temptation taken you*

*but such as is common to man."* 1 Corinthians 10:13

The word "temptation" has come down in the world; we are apt to use it wrongly. Temptation is not sin, it is the thing we are bound to meet if we are men. Not to be tempted would be to be beneath contempt. Many of us, however, suffer from temptations from which we have no business to suffer, simply because we have refused to let God lift us to a higher plane where we would face temptations of another order.

A man's disposition on the inside, i.e., what he possesses in his personality, determines what he is tempted by on the outside. The temptation fits the nature of the one tempted, and reveals the possibilities of the nature. Every man has the setting of his own temptation, and the temptation will come along the line of the ruling disposition.

Temptation is a suggested short cut to the realization of the highest at which I aim - not towards what I understand as evil, but towards what I understand as good. Temptation is something that completely baffles me for a while, I do not know whether the thing is right or wrong. Temptation yielded to is lust deified, and is a proof that it was timidity that prevented the sin before.

Temptation is not something we may escape, it is essential to the full-orbed life of a man. Beware lest you think you are tempted as no one else is tempted; what you go through is the common inheritance of the race, not something no one ever went through before. God does not save us from temptations; He succours us in the midst of them (Heb. 2:18).



## September 18: HIS TEMPTATION AND OURS

*"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15*

Until we are born again, the only kind of temptation we understand is that mentioned by St. James - "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." But by regeneration we are lifted into another realm where there are other temptations to face, viz., the kind of temptations Our Lord faced. The temptations of Jesus do not appeal to us, they have no home at all in our human nature. Our Lord's temptations and ours move in different spheres until we are born again and become His brethren. The temptations of Jesus are not those of a man, but the temptations of God as Man. By regeneration the Son of God is formed in us, and in our physical life He has the same setting that He had on earth. Satan does not tempt us to do wrong things; he tempts us in order to make us lose what God has put into us by regeneration, viz., the possibility of being of value to God. He does not come on the line of tempting us to sin, but on the line of shifting the point of view, and only the Spirit of God can detect this as a temptation of the devil.

Temptation means the test by an alien power of the possessions held by a personality. This makes the temptation of Our Lord explainable. After Jesus in His baptism had accepted the vocation of bearing away the sin of the world, He was immediately put by God's Spirit into the testing machine of the devil, but He did not tire, He went through the temptation "without sin," and He retained the possessions of His personality intact.

## September 19: DO YOU CONTINUE TO GO WITH JESUS?

***"Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations."* Luke 22:28**

It is true that Jesus Christ is with us in our temptations, but are we going with Him in His temptations? Many of us cease to go with Jesus from the moment we have an experience of what He can do. Watch when God shifts your circumstances, and see whether you are going with Jesus, or siding with the world, the flesh and the devil. We wear His badge, but are we going with Him? "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him."

The temptations of Jesus continued throughout His earthly life, and they will continue throughout the life of the Son of God in us. Are we going with Jesus in the life we are living now?

We have the idea that we ought to shield our selves from some of the things God brings round us. Never! God engineers circumstances and what ever they may be like we have to see that we face them while abiding continually with Him in His temptations. They are *His* temptations, not temptations to us, but temptations to the life of the Son of God in us. The honour of Jesus Christ is at stake in your bodily life. Are you remaining loyal to the Son of God in the things which beset His life in you?

Do you continue to go with Jesus? The way lies through Gethsemane, through the city gate, outside the camp; the way lies alone, and the way lies until there is no trace of a footstep left, only the voice, *"Follow Me."*

## September 20: THE DIVINE RULE OF LIFE

***"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48***

Our Lord's exhortation in these verses is to be generous in our behaviour to all men. In the spiritual life beware of walking according to natural affinities. Everyone has natural affinities; some people we like and others we do not like. We must never let those likes and dislikes rule in our Christian life. "If we walk in the light as God is in the light," God will give us communion with people for whom we have no natural affinity.

The Example Our Lord gives us is not that of a good man, or even of a good Christian, but of God Himself. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect," show to the other man what God has shown to you; and God will give us ample opportunities in actual life to prove whether we are perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. To be a disciple means that we deliberately identify ourselves with God's interests in other people. "That ye love one another; as I have loved you . . ."

The expression of Christian character is not good doing, but God-likeness. If the Spirit of God has transformed you within, you will exhibit Divine characteristics in your life, not good human characteristics. God's life in us expresses itself as *God's* life, not as human life trying to be godly. The secret of a Christian is that the supernatural is made natural in him by the grace of God, and the experience of this works out in the practical details of life, not in times of communion with God. When we come in contact with things that create a buzz, we find to our amazement that we have power to keep wonderfully poised in the centre of it all.

## September 21: MISSIONARY PREDESTINATIONS

*"And now, saith the Lord, that formed me  
from the womb to be His servant." Isaiah 49:5*

The first thing that happens after we have realized our election to God in Christ Jesus is the destruction of our prejudices and our parochial notions and our patriotisms; we are turned into servants of God's own purpose. The whole human race was created to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever. Sin has switched the human race on to an other tack, but it has not altered God's purpose in the tiniest degree; and when we are born again we are brought into the realization of God's great purpose for the human race, viz., I am created for God, He made me. This realization of the election of God is the most joyful realization on earth, and we have to learn to rely on the tremendous creative purpose of God. The first thing God will do with us is to "force through the channels of a single heart" the interests of the whole world. The love of God, the very nature of God, is introduced into us, and the nature of Almighty God is focused in John 3:16 - *"God so loved the world. . ."*

We have to maintain our soul open to the fact of God's creative purpose, and not muddle it with our own intentions. If we do, God will have to crush our intentions on one side however much it may hurt. The purpose for which the missionary is created is that he may be God's servant, one in whom God is glorified. When once we realize that through the salvation of Jesus Christ we are made perfectly fit for God, we shall understand why Jesus Christ is so ruthless in His demands. He demands absolute rectitude from His servants, because He has put into them the very nature of God.

Beware lest you forget God's purpose for your life.

## September 22: THE MISSIONARY'S MASTER

*"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." John 13:13*

To have a master and to be mastered is not the same thing. To have a master means that there is one who knows me better than I know myself, one who is closer than a friend, one who fathoms the remotest abyss of my heart and satisfies it, one who has brought me into the secure sense that he has met and solved every perplexity and problem of my mind. To have a master is this and nothing less - "One is your Master, even Christ."

Our Lord never enforces obedience; He does not take means to make me do what He wants. At certain times I wish God would master me and make me do the thing, but He will not; in other moods I wish He would leave me alone, but He does not.

"Ye call me Master and Lord" - but is He? Master and Lord have little place in our vocabulary, we prefer the words Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer. The only word to describe mastership in experience is love and we know very little about love as God reveals it. This is proved by the way we use the word obey. In the Bible obedience is based on the relationship of equals, that of a son with his father. Our Lord was not God's servant, He was His Son. *"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience . . ."* If our idea is that we are being mastered, it is a proof that we have no master; if that is our attitude to Jesus, we are far away from the relationship He wants. He wants us in the relationship in which He is easily Master without our conscious knowledge of it, all we know is that we are His to obey.

## September 23: THE MISSIONARY'S GOAL

### *"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." Luke 18:31*

In the natural life our ambitions alter as we develop; in the Christian life the goal is given at the beginning, the beginning and the end are the same, viz., Our Lord Himself. We start with Christ and we end with Him - "until we all attain to the stature of the manhood of Christ Jesus," not to our idea of what the Christian life should be. The aim of the missionary is to do God's will, not to be useful, not to win the heathen; he is useful and he *does* win the heathen, but that is not his aim. His aim is to do the will of his Lord.

In Our Lord's life Jerusalem was the place where He reached the climax of His Father's will upon the Cross, and unless we go with Jesus there we will have no companionship with Him. Nothing ever discouraged Our Lord on His way to Jerusalem. He never hurried through certain villages where He was persecuted, or lingered in others where He was blessed. Neither gratitude nor ingratitude turned Our Lord one hair's breadth away from His purpose to go up to Jerusalem.

"The disciple is not above his Master." The same things will happen to us on our way to our Jerusalem. There will be the works of God manifested through us, people will get blessed, and one or two will show gratitude and the rest will show gross ingratitude, but nothing must deflect us from going up to our Jerusalem.

"There they crucified Him." That is what happened when Our Lord reached Jerusalem, and that happening is the gateway to our salvation. The saints do not end in crucifixion: by the Lord's grace they end in glory. In the meantime our watchword is - I, too, go up to Jerusalem.

## September 24: THE "GO" OF PREPARATION

***"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there thou rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matthew 5:23, 2***

It is easy to imagine that we will get to a place where we are complete and ready, but preparation is not suddenly accomplished, it is a process steadily maintained. It is dangerous to get into a settled state of experience. It is preparation and preparation.

The sense of sacrifice appeals readily to a young Christian. Humanly speaking, the one thing that attracts to Jesus Christ is our sense of the heroic, and the scrutiny of Our Lord's words suddenly brings this tide of enthusiasm to the test. "First be reconciled to thy brother." The "go" of preparation is to let the word of God scrutinize. The sense of heroic sacrifice is not good enough. The thing the Holy Spirit is detecting in you is the disposition that will never work in His service. No one but God can detect that disposition in you. Have you anything to hide from God? If you have, then let God search you with His light. If there is sin, *confess* it, not *admit* it. Are you willing to obey your Lord and Master whatever the humiliation to your right to yourself may be?

Never discard a conviction. If it is important enough for the Spirit of God to have brought it to your mind, it is that thing He is detecting. You were looking for a great thing to give up. God is telling you of some tiny thing; but at the back of it there lies the central citadel of obstinacy: I will not give up my right to myself - the thing God intends you to give up if ever you are going to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

## September 25: THE "GO" OF RELATIONSHIP

***"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."* Matthew 5:41**

The summing up of Our Lord's teaching is that the relationship which He demands is an impossible one unless He has done a supernatural work in us. Jesus Christ demands that there be not the slightest trace of resentment even suppressed in the heart of a disciple when he meets with tyranny and injustice. No enthusiasm will ever stand the strain that Jesus Christ will put upon His worker, only one thing will, and that is a personal relationship to Himself which has gone through the mill of His spring-cleaning until there is only one purpose left - I am here for God to send me where He will. Every other thing may get fogged, but this relationship to Jesus Christ must never be.

The Sermon on the Mount is not an ideal, it is a statement of what will happen in me when Jesus Christ has altered my disposition and put in a disposition like His own. Jesus Christ is the only One Who can fulfil the Sermon on the Mount.

If we are to be disciples of Jesus, we must be made disciples supernaturally; as long as we have the dead set purpose of being disciples we may be sure we are not. *"I have chosen you."* That is the way the grace of God begins. It is a constraint we cannot get away from; we can disobey it, but we cannot generate it. The drawing is done by the supernatural grace of God, and we never can trace where His work begins. Our Lord's making of a disciple is supernatural. He does not build on any natural capacity at all. God does not ask us to do the things that are easy to us naturally; He only asks us to do the things we are perfectly fitted to do by His grace, and the cross will come along that line always.



## September 26: THE UNBLAMEABLE ATTITUDE

*"If . . . thou rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee. . . ."*

### Matthew 5:23

If when you come to the altar, there you remember that your brother has anything against you, not - If you rake up something by a morbid sensitiveness, but - "If thou rememberest," that is, if it is brought to your conscious mind by the Spirit of God: "first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Never object to the intense sensitiveness of the Spirit of God in you when He is educating you down to the scruple.

"First be reconciled to thy brother . . ." Our Lord's direction is simple, "first be reconciled." Go back the way you came, go the way indicated to you by the conviction given at the altar; have an, attitude of mind and a temper of soul to the one who has something against you that makes reconciliation as natural as breathing. Jesus does not mention the other person, He says - *you* go. There is no question of your rights. The stamp of the saint is that he can waive his own rights and obey the Lord Jesus.

"And then come and offer thy gift." The process is clearly marked. First, the heroic spirit of self-sacrifice, then the sudden checking by the sensitiveness of the Holy Spirit, and the stoppage at the point of conviction, then the way of obedience to the word of God, constructing an unblameable attitude of mind and temper to the one with whom you have been in the wrong; then the glad, simple, unhindered offering of your gift to God.

## September 27: THE "GO" OF RENUNCIATION

*"Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Luke 9:57*

Our Lord's attitude to this man is one of severe discouragement because He knew what was in man. We would have said - "Fancy losing the opportunity of winning that man!" Fancy bringing about him a north wind that froze him and "turned him away discouraged!" Never apologize for your Lord. The words of the Lord hurt and offend until there is nothing left to hurt or offend. Jesus Christ has no tenderness whatever toward anything that is ultimately going to ruin a man in the service of God. Our Lord's answers are based not on caprice, but on a knowledge of what is in man. If the Spirit of God brings to your mind a word of the Lord that hurts you, you may be sure that there is something He wants to hurt to death.

V. 58. These words knock the heart out of serving Jesus Christ because it is pleasing to me. The rigour of rejection leaves nothing but my Lord, and myself, and a forlorn hope. "Let the hundredfold come or go, your lodestar must be your relationship to Me, and I have nowhere to lay My head."

v. 59. This man did not want to disappoint Jesus, nor to hurt his father. We put sensitive loyalty to relatives in place of loyalty to Jesus Christ and Jesus has to take the last place. In a conflict of loyalty, obey Jesus Christ at all costs.

V. 61. The one who says - "Yes, Lord, but . . ." is the one who is fiercely ready, but never goes. This man had one or two reservations. The exacting call of Jesus Christ has no margin of good-byes, because good-bye, as it is often used, is pagan, not Christian. When once the call of God comes, begin to go and never stop going.

## September 28: THE "GO" OF UNCONDITIONAL IDENTIFICATION

*"One thing thou lackest: . . . come, take up the cross, and follow Me."* Mark 10:21

The rich young ruler had the master passion to be perfect. When he saw Jesus Christ, he wanted to be like Him. Our Lord never puts personal holiness to the fore when He calls a disciple; He puts absolute annihilation of my right to myself and identification with Himself - a relationship with Himself in which there is no other relationship. Luke 14:26 has nothing to do with salvation or sanctification, but with unconditional identification with Jesus Christ. Very few of us know the absolute "go" of abandonment to Jesus.

"Then Jesus beholding him loved him." The look of Jesus will mean a heart broken for ever from allegiance to any other person or thing. Has Jesus ever looked at you? The look of Jesus transforms and transfixes. Where you are "soft" with God is where the Lord has looked at you. If you are hard and vindictive, insistent on your own way, certain that the other person is more likely to be in the wrong than you are, it is an indication that there are whole tracts of your nature that have never been transformed by His gaze.

"One thing thou lackest . . ." The only "good thing" from Jesus Christ's point of view is union with Himself and nothing in between.

"Sell whatsoever thou hast . . ." I must reduce myself until I am a mere conscious man, I must fundamentally renounce possessions of all kinds, not to save my soul (only one thing saves a man - absolute reliance upon Jesus Christ) - but in order to follow Jesus. "Come, and follow Me." And the road is the way He went.

**September 29: THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE CALL**  
***"For necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me,  
if I preach not the gospel!" 1 Corinthians 9:16***

We are apt to forget the mystical, supernatural touch of God. If you can tell where you got the call of God and all about it, I question whether you have ever had a call. The call of God does not come like that, it is much more supernatural. The realization of it in a man's life may come with a sudden thunder-clap or with a gradual dawning, but in whatever way it comes, it comes with the undercurrent of the supernatural, something that cannot be put into words, it is always accompanied with a glow. At any moment there may break the sudden consciousness of this incalculable, supernatural, surprising call that has taken hold of your life - "I have chosen you." The call of God has nothing to do with salvation and sanctification. It is not because you are sanctified that you are therefore called to preach the gospel; the call to preach the gospel is infinitely different. Paul describes it as a necessity laid upon him.

If you have been obliterating the great super natural call of God in your life, take a review of your circumstances and see where God has not been first, but your ideas of service, or your temperamental abilities. Paul said - "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" He had realized the call of God, and there was no competitor for his strength.

If a man or woman is called of God, it does not matter how untoward circumstances are, every force that has been at work will tell for God's purpose in the end. If you agree with God's purpose He will bring not only your conscious life, but all the deeper regions of your life which you cannot get at, into harmony.

## September 30: THE COMMISSION OF THE CALL

*"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake." Colossians 1:24*

We make calls out of our own spiritual consecration, but when we get right with God He brushes all these aside, and rivets us with a pain that is terrific to one thing we never dreamed of, and for one radiant flashing moment we see what He is after, and we say - "Here am I, send me."

This call has nothing to do with personal sanctification, but with being made broken bread and poured-out wine. God can never make us wine if we object to the fingers He uses to crush us with. If God would only use His own fingers, and make me broken bread and poured-out wine in a special way! But when He uses someone whom we dislike, or some set of circumstances to which we said we would never submit, and makes those the crushers, we object. We must never choose the scene of our own martyrdom. If ever we are going to be made into wine, we will have to be crushed; you cannot drink grapes. Grapes become wine only when they have been squeezed.

I wonder what kind of finger and thumb God has been using to squeeze you, and you have been like a marble and escaped? You are not ripe yet, and if God *had* squeezed you, the wine would have been remarkably bitter. To be a sacramental personality means that the elements of the natural life are presented by God as they are broken providentially in His service. We have to be adjusted into God before we can be broken bread in His hands. Keep right with God and let Him do what He likes, and you will find that He is producing the kind of bread and wine that will benefit His other children.

## October 1: THE SPHERE OF EXALTATION

*"Jesus leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves." Mark 9:2*

We have all had times on the mount, when we have seen things from God's standpoint and have wanted to stay there; but God will never allow us to stay there. The test of our spiritual life is the power to descend; if we have power to rise only, something is wrong. It is a great thing to be on the mount with God, but a man only gets there in order that afterwards he may get down among the devil-possessed and lift them up. We are not built for the mountains and the dawns and aesthetic affinities, those are for moments of inspiration, that is all. We are built for the valley, for the ordinary stuff we are in, and that is where we have to prove our mettle. Spiritual selfishness always wants repeated moments on the mount. We feel we could talk like angels and live like angels, if only we could stay on the mount. The times of exaltation are exceptional, they have their meaning in our life with God, but we must beware lest our spiritual selfishness wants to make them the only time. We are apt to think that everything that happens is to be turned into useful teaching, it is to be turned into something better than teaching, viz., into character. The mount is not meant to *teach* us anything, it is meant to *make* us something. There is a great snare in asking - What is the use of it? In spiritual matters we can never calculate on that line. The moments on the mountain tops are rare moments, and they are meant for something in God's purpose.

## October 2: THE SPHERE OF HUMILIATION

*"If Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." Mark 9:22*

After every time of exaltation we are brought down with a sudden rush into things as they are where it is neither beautiful nor poetic nor thrilling. The height of the mountain top is measured by the drab drudgery of the valley; but it is in the valley that we have to live for the glory of God. We see His glory on the mount, but we never *live* for His glory there. It is in the sphere of humiliation that we find our true worth to God, that is where our faithfulness is revealed. Most of us can do things if we are always at the heroic pitch because of the natural selfishness of our hearts, but God wants us at the drab commonplace pitch, where we live in the valley according to our personal relationship to Him. Peter thought it would be a fine thing for them to remain on the mount, but Jesus Christ took the disciples down from the mount into the valley, the place where the meaning of the vision is explained.

"If Thou canst do any thing . . ." It takes the valley of humiliation to root the scepticism out of us. Look back at your own experience, and you will find that until you learned Who Jesus was, you were a cunning sceptic about His power. When you were on the mount, you could believe anything, but what about the time when you were up against facts in the valley? You may be able to give a testimony to sanctification, but what about the thing that is a humiliation to you just now? The last time you were on the mount with God, you saw that all power in heaven and in earth be longed to Jesus - will you be sceptical now in the valley of humiliation?

## October 3: THE SPHERE OF MINISTRATION

*"This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." Mark 9:29*

"Why could not we cast him out?" The answer lies in a personal relationship to Jesus Christ. This kind can come forth by nothing but by concentration and redoubled concentration on Him. We can ever remain powerless, as were the disciples, by trying to do God's work not in concentration on His power, but by ideas drawn from our own temperament. We slander God by our very eagerness to work for Him without knowing Him.

You are brought face to face with a difficult case and nothing happens externally, and yet you know that emancipation will be given because you are concentrated on Jesus Christ. This is your line of service - to see that there is nothing between Jesus and yourself. Is there? If there is, you must get through it, not by ignoring it in irritation, or by mounting up, but by facing it and getting through it into the presence of Jesus Christ, then that very thing, and all you have been through in connection with it, will glorify Jesus Christ in a way you will never know till you see Him face to face.

We must be able to mount up with wings as eagles; but we must also know how to come down. The power of the saint lies in the coming down and the living down. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," said Paul, and the things he referred to were mostly humiliating things. It is in our power to refuse to be humiliated and to say - "No, thank you, I much prefer to be on the mountain top with God." Can I face things as they actually are in the light of the reality of Jesus Christ, or do things as they are efface altogether my faith in Him, and put me into a panic?



## October 4: THE VISION AND THE VERITY

### *"Called to be saints."* 1 Corinthians 1:2

Thank God for the sight of all you have never yet been. You have had the vision, but you are not there yet by any means. It is when we are in the valley, where we prove whether we will be the choice ones, that most of us turn back. We are not quite prepared for the blows which must come if we are going to be turned into the shape of the vision. We have seen what we are not, and what God wants us to be, but are we willing to have the vision "batter'd to shape and use" by God? The batterings always come in commonplace ways and through commonplace people.

There are times when we do know what God's purpose is; whether we will let the vision be turned into actual character depends upon us, not upon God. If we prefer to loll on the mount and live in the memory of the vision, we will be of no use actually in the ordinary stuff of which human life is made up. We have to learn to live in reliance on what we saw in the vision, not in ecstasies and conscious contemplation of God, but to live in actualities in the light of the vision until we get to the veritable reality. Every bit of our training is in that direction. Learn to thank God for making known His demands.

The little "I am" always sulks when God says *do*. Let the little "I am" be shrivelled up in God's indignation - "I AM THAT I AM hath sent thee." He must dominate. Is it not penetrating to realize that God knows where we live, and the kennels we crawl into! He will hunt us up like a lightning flash. No human being knows human beings as God does.

## October 5: THE BIAS OF DEGENERATION

*"Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12*

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin; but that the disposition of sin, viz., my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race by one man, and that another Man took on Him the sin of the human race and put it away (Heb. 9:26) - an infinitely profounder revelation. The disposition of sin is not immorality and wrong-doing, but the disposition of self-realization - I am my own god. This disposition may work out in decorous morality or in indecorous immorality, but it has the one basis, my claim to my right to myself. When Our Lord faced men with all the forces of evil in them, and men who were clean living and moral and up right, He did not pay any attention to the moral degradation of the one or to the moral attainment of the other; He looked at something we do not see, viz., the disposition.

Sin is a thing I am born with and I cannot touch it; God touches sin in Redemption. In the Cross of Jesus Christ God redeemed the whole human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. God nowhere holds a man responsible for having the heredity of sin. The condemnation is not that I am born with a heredity of sin, but if when I realize Jesus Christ came to deliver me from it, I refuse to let Him do so, from that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. "And this is the judgment" (the critical moment), "that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light."

## October 6: THE BENT OF REGENERATION

*"When it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me."* Galatians 1:15, 16

If Jesus Christ is to regenerate me, what is the problem He is up against? I have a heredity I had no say in; I am not holy, nor likely to be; and if all Jesus Christ can do is to tell me I must be holy, His teaching plants despair. But if Jesus Christ is a Regenerator, One Who can put into me His own heredity of holiness, then I begin to see what He is driving at when He says that I have to be holy. Redemption means that Jesus Christ can put into any man the hereditary disposition that was in Himself, and all the standards He gives are based on that disposition: *His teaching is for the life He puts in*. The moral transaction on my part is agreement with God's verdict on sin in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament teaching about regeneration is that when a man is struck by a sense of need, God will put the Holy Spirit into his spirit, and his personal spirit will be energized by the Spirit of the Son of God, "until Christ be formed in you." The moral miracle of Redemption is that God can put into me a new disposition whereby I can live a totally new life. When I reach the frontier of need and know my limitations, Jesus says - "Blessed are you." But I have to get there. God cannot put into me, a responsible moral being, the disposition that was in Jesus Christ unless I am conscious I need it.

Just as the disposition of sin entered into the human race by one man, so the Holy Spirit entered the human race by another Man; and Redemption means that I can be delivered from the heredity of sin and through Jesus Christ can receive an unsullied heredity, viz., the Holy Spirit.

## October 7: RECONCILIATION

***"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21***

Sin is a fundamental relationship; it is not wrong doing, it is wrong *being*, deliberate and emphatic independence of God. The Christian religion bases everything on the positive, radical nature of sin. Other religions deal with sins; the Bible alone deals with sin. The first thing Jesus Christ faced in men was the heredity of sin, and it is because we have ignored this in our presentation of the Gospel that the message of the Gospel has lost its sting and its blasting power.

The revelation of the Bible is not that Jesus Christ took upon Himself our fleshly sins, but that He took upon Himself the heredity of sin which no man can touch. God made His own Son to be sin that He might make the sinner a saint. All through the Bible it is revealed that Our Lord bore the sin of the world by *identification*, not by *sympathy*. He deliberately took upon His own shoulders, and bore in His own Person, the whole massed sin of the human race - "He hath *made Him to be sin for us*, who knew no sin," and by so doing He put the whole human race on the basis of Redemption. Jesus Christ rehabilitated the human race; He put it back to where God designed it to be, and anyone can enter into union with God on the ground of what Our Lord has done on the Cross.

A man cannot redeem himself; Redemption is God's "bit," it is absolutely finished and complete; its reference to individual men is a question of their individual action. A distinction must always be made between the revelation of Redemption and the conscious experience of salvation in a man's life.

## October 8: THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF CHRIST

*"Come unto Me."* Matthew 11:28

Is it not humiliating to be told that we must come to Jesus! Think of the things we will not come to Jesus Christ about. If you want to know how real you are, test yourself by these words - "Come unto Me." In every degree in which you are not real, you will dispute rather than come, you will quibble rather than come, you will go through sorrow rather than come, you will do anything rather than come the last lap of unutterable foolishness - "Just as I am." As long as you have the tiniest bit of spiritual impertinence, it will always reveal itself in the fact that you are expecting God to tell you to do a big thing, and all He is telling you to do is to "come."

"Come unto Me." When you hear those words you will know that something must happen in you before you can come. The Holy Spirit will show you what you have to do, anything at all that will put the axe at the root of the thing which is preventing you from getting through. You will never get further until you are willing to do that one thing. The Holy Spirit will locate the one impregnable thing in you, but He cannot budge it unless you are willing to let Him.

How often have you come to God with your requests and gone away with the feeling - Oh, well, I have done it this time! And yet you go away with nothing, whilst all the time God has stood with outstretched hands not only to take you, but for you to take Him. Think of the invincible, unconquerable, unwearying patience of Jesus - *"Come unto Me."*

## October 9: PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER

***"Yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."* Romans 6:13-22**

I cannot save and sanctify myself; I cannot atone for sin; I cannot redeem the world; I cannot make right what is wrong, pure what is impure, holy what is unholy. That is all the sovereign work of God. Have I faith in what Jesus Christ has done? He has made a perfect Atonement, am I in the habit of constantly realizing it? The great need is not to *do* things, but to *believe* things. The Redemption of Christ is not an experience, it is the great act of God which He has performed through Christ, and I have to build my faith upon it. If I construct my faith on my experience, I produce that most unscriptural type, an isolated life, my eyes fixed on my own whiteness. Beware of the piety that has no pre-supposition in the Atonement of the Lord. It is of no use for anything but a sequestered life; it is useless to God and a nuisance to man. Measure every type of experience by our Lord Himself. We cannot do anything pleasing to God unless we deliberately build on the pre-supposition of the Atonement.

The Atonement of Jesus has to work out in practical, unobtrusive ways in my life. Every time I obey, absolute Deity is on my side, so that the grace of God and natural obedience coincide. Obedience means that I have banked everything on the Atonement, and my obedience is met immediately by the delight of the supernatural grace of God.

Beware of the piety that denies the natural life, it is a fraud. Continually bring yourself to the bar of the Atonement - where is the discernment of the Atonement in this thing, and in that?

## October 10: WHEREBY SHALL I KNOW?

*"I thank Thee, O Father . . . because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matthew 11:25*

In spiritual relationship we do not grow step by step; we are either there or we are not. God does not cleanse us more and more from sin, but when we are in the light, walking in the light, we are cleansed from all sin. It is a question of obedience, and instantly the relationship is perfected. Turn away for one second out of obedience, and darkness and death are at work at once.

All God's revelations are sealed until they are opened to us by obedience. You will never get them open by philosophy or thinking. Immediately you obey, a flash of light comes. Let God's truth work in you by soaking in it, not by worrying into it. The only way you can get to know is to stop trying to find out and by being born again. Obey God in the thing He shows you, and instantly the next thing is opened up. One reads tomes on the work of the Holy Spirit, when one five minutes of drastic obedience would make things as clear as a sunbeam. "I suppose I shall understand these things some day!" You can understand them now. It is not study that does it, but obedience. The tiniest fragment of obedience, and heaven opens and the profoundest truths of God are yours straight away. God will never reveal more truth about Himself until you have obeyed what you know already. Beware of becoming "wise and prudent."

## October 11: AFTER GOD'S SILENCE - WHAT?

*"When He had heard therefore that he was sick,*

*He abode two days in the same place where he was." John 11:6*

Has God trusted you with a silence - a silence that is big with meaning? God's silences are His answers. Think of those days of absolute silence in the home at Bethany! Is there anything analogous to those days in your life? Can God trust you like that, or are you still asking for a visible answer? God will give you the blessings you ask if you will not go any further without them; but His silence is the sign that He is bringing you into a marvellous understanding of Himself. Are you mourning before God because you have not had an audible response? You will find that God has trusted you in the most intimate way possible, with an absolute silence, not of despair, but of pleasure, because He saw that you could stand a bigger revelation. If God has given you a silence, praise Him, He is bringing you into the great run of His purposes. The manifestation of the answer in time is a matter of God's sovereignty. Time is nothing to God. For a while you said - "I asked God to give me bread, and He gave me a stone." He did not, and to-day you find He gave you the bread of life.

A wonderful thing about God's silence is that the contagion of His stillness gets into you and you become perfectly confident - "I know God has heard me." His silence is the proof that He has. As long as you have the idea that God will bless you in answer to prayer, He will do it, but He will never give you the grace of silence. If Jesus Christ is bringing you into the understanding that prayer is for the glorifying of His Father, He will give you the first sign of His intimacy - silence.



## October 12: GETTING INTO GOD'S STRIDE

*"Enoch walked with God."* Genesis 5:24

The test of a man's religious life and character is not what he does in the exceptional moments of life, but what he does in the ordinary times, when there is nothing tremendous or exciting on. The worth of a man is revealed in his attitude to ordinary things when he is not before the footlights (cf. John 1:36). It is a painful business to get through into the stride of God, it means getting your second wind spiritually. In learning to walk with God there is always the difficulty of getting into His stride; but when we have got into it, the only characteristic that manifests itself is the life of God. The individual man is lost sight of in his personal union with God, and the stride and the power of God alone are manifested.

It is difficult to get into stride with God, because when we start walking with Him we find He has outstripped us before we have taken three steps. He has different ways of doing things, and we have to be trained and disciplined into His ways. It was said of Jesus - "He shall not fail nor be discouraged," because He never worked from His own individual standpoint but always from the standpoint of His Father, and we have to learn to do the same. Spiritual truth is learned by atmosphere, not by intellectual reasoning. God's Spirit alters the atmosphere of our way of looking at things, and things begin to be possible which never were possible before. Getting into the stride of God means nothing less than union with Himself. It takes a long time to get there, but keep at it. Don't give in because the pain is bad just now, get on with it, and before long you will find you have a new vision and a new purpose.

## **October 13: INDIVIDUAL DISCOURAGEMENT AND PERSONAL ENLARGEMENT**

***"Moses went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens." Exodus 2:11***

Moses saw the oppression of his people and felt certain that he was the one to deliver them, and in the righteous indignation of his own spirit he started to right their wrongs. After the first strike for God and for the right, God allowed Moses to be driven into blank discouragement, He sent him into the desert to feed sheep for forty years. At the end of that time, God appeared and told Moses to go and bring forth His people, and Moses said - "Who am I, that I should go?" In the beginning Moses realized that he was the man to deliver the people, but he had to be trained and disciplined by God first. He was right in the individual aspect, but he was not the man for the work until he had learned communion with God.

We may have the vision of God and a very clear understanding of what God wants, and we start to do the thing, then comes something equivalent to the forty years in the wilderness, as if God had ignored the whole thing, and when we are thoroughly discouraged God comes back and revives the call, and we get the quaver in and say - "Oh, who am I?" We have to learn the first great stride of God - "I AM THAT I AM hath sent thee." We have to learn that our individual effort for God is an impertinence; our individuality is to be rendered incandescent by a personal relationship to God (see Matthew 3:17). We fix on the individual aspect of things; we have the vision - "This is what God wants me to do;" but we have not got into God's stride. If you are going through a time of discouragement, there is a big personal enlargement ahead.

## **October 14: THE KEY TO THE MISSIONARY**

***"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.***

***Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."* Matthew 28:18-20**

The basis of missionary appeals is the authority of Jesus Christ, not the needs of the heathen. We are apt to look upon Our Lord as One Who assists us in our enterprises for God. Our Lord puts Himself as the absolute sovereign supreme Lord over His disciples. He does not say the heathen will be lost if we do not go; He simply says - "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." Go on the revelation of My sovereignty; teach and preach out of a living experience of Me.

"Then the eleven disciples went . . . unto a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." v. 16. If I want to know the universal sovereignty of Christ, I must know Him for myself, and how to get alone with Him; I must take time to worship the Being Whose Name I bear.

"Come unto Me" - that is the place to meet Jesus. Are you weary and heavy laden? How many missionaries are! We banish those marvellous words of the universal Sovereign of the world to the threshold of an after-meeting; they are the words of Jesus to His disciples.

"Go ye therefore. . . ." Go simply means live. Acts 1:8 is the description of how to go. Jesus did not say - Go into Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, but, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me" in all these places. He undertakes to establish the goings.

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you. . . ." - that is the way to keep going in our personal lives. Where we are placed is a matter of indifference; God engineers the goings.

"None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself . . ." That is how to keep going till we're gone.

## October 15: THE KEY TO THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE

*"And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only,  
but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2*

The key to the missionary message is the propitiation of Christ Jesus. Take any phase of Christ's work - the healing phase, the saving and sanctifying phase; there is nothing limitless about those. "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" - that is limitless. The missionary message is the limitless significance of Jesus Christ as the propitiation for our sins, and a missionary is one who is soaked in that revelation.

The key to the missionary message is the remissionary aspect of Christ's life, not His kindness and His goodness, and His revealing of the Fatherhood of God; the great limitless significance is that He is the propitiation for our sins. The missionary message is not patriotic, it is irrespective of nations and of individuals, it is for the whole world. When the Holy Ghost comes in He does not consider my predilections, He brings me into union with the Lord Jesus.

A missionary is one who is wedded to the charter of his Lord and Master, he has not to proclaim his own point of view, but to proclaim the Lamb of God. It is easier to belong to a coterie which tells what Jesus Christ has done for me, easier to become a devotee to Divine healing, or to a special type of sanctification, or to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Paul did not say - "Woe is unto me, if I do not preach what Christ has done for me," but - "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." This is the Gospel - "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

## October 16: THE KEY TO THE MASTER'S ORDERS

*"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest,  
that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." Matthew 9:38*

The key to the missionary problem is in the hand of God, and that key is prayer not work, that is, not work as the word is popularly understood to-day because that may mean the evasion of concentration on God. The key to the missionary problem is not the key of common sense, nor the medical key, nor the key of civilization or education or even evangelization. The key is prayer. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest." Naturally, prayer is not practical, it is absurd; we have to realize that prayer is stupid from the ordinary common-sense point of view.

There are no nations in Jesus Christ's outlook, but *the world*. How many of us pray with out respect of persons, and with respect to only one Person, Jesus Christ? He owns the harvest that is produced by distress and conviction of sin, and this is the harvest we have to pray that labourers may be thrust out to reap. We are taken up with active work while people all round are ripe to harvest, and we do not reap one of them, but waste our Lord's time in over-energized activities. Suppose the crisis comes in your father's life, in your brother's life, are you there as a labourer to reap the harvest for Jesus Christ? "Oh, but I have a special work to do!" No Christian has a special work to do. A Christian is called to be Jesus Christ's own, one who is not above his Master, one who does not dictate to Jesus Christ what he intends to do. Our Lord calls to no special work: He calls to Himself. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest," and He will engineer circumstances and thrust you out.

## October 17: GREATER WORKS

***"And greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father." John 14:12***

Prayer does not fit us for the greater works; prayer *is* the greater work. We think of prayer as a common-sense exercise of our higher powers in order to prepare us for God's work. In the teaching of Jesus Christ prayer is the working of the miracle of Redemption in me which produces the miracle of Redemption in others by the power of God. The way fruit remains is by prayer, but remember it is prayer based on the agony of Redemption, not on my agony. Only a child gets prayer answered; a wise man does not.

Prayer is the battle; it is a matter of indifference where you are. Whichever way God engineers circumstances, the duty is to pray. Never allow the thought - "I am of no use where I am;" because you certainly can be of no use where you are not. Wherever God has dumped you down in circumstances pray, ejaculate to Him all the time. "Whatsoever ye ask in My name, that will I do." We won't pray unless we get thrills, that is the intensest form of spiritual selfishness. We have to labour along the line of God's direction, and He says *pray*. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."

There is nothing thrilling about a labouring man's work, but it is the labouring man who makes the conceptions of the genius possible; and it is the labouring saint who makes the conceptions of his Master possible. You labour at prayer and results happen all the time from His standpoint. What an astonishment it will be to find, when the veil is lifted, the souls that have been reaped by you, simply because you had been in the habit of taking your orders from Jesus Christ.

## October 18: THE KEY TO MISSIONARY DEVOTION

*"For His name's sake they went forth."* 3 John 7

Our Lord has told us how love to Him is to manifest itself. "Lovest thou Me?" "Feed My sheep" - identify yourself with My interests in other people, not, identify *Me* with *your* interests in other people. 1 Corinthians 8:4-8 gives the character of this love, it is the love *of God* expressing itself. The test of my love for Jesus is the practical one, all the rest is sentimental jargon.

Loyalty to Jesus Christ is the supernatural work of Redemption wrought in me by the Holy Ghost Who sheds abroad the love of God in my heart, and that love works efficaciously through me in contact with everyone I meet. I remain loyal to His Name although every common-sense fact gives the lie to Him, and declares that He has no more power than a morning mist.

The key to missionary devotion means being attached to nothing and no one saving Our Lord Himself, not being detached from things externally. Our Lord was amazingly in and out among ordinary things; His detachment was on the inside towards God. External detachment is often an indication of a secret vital attachment to the things we keep away from externally.

The loyalty of a missionary is to keep his soul concentratedly open to the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. The men and women Our Lord sends out on His enterprises are the ordinary human stuff, plus dominating devotion to Himself wrought by the Holy Ghost.

## October 19: THE UNHEEDED SECRET

*"My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36*

The great enemy to the Lord Jesus Christ in the present day is the conception of practical work that has not come from the New Testament, but from the Systems of the world in which endless energy and activities are insisted upon, but no private life with God. The emphasis is put on the wrong thing. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, for lo the kingdom of God is within you," a hidden, obscure thing. An active Christian worker too often lives in the shop window. It is the innermost of the innermost that reveals the power of the life.

We have to get rid of the plague of the spirit of the religious age in which we live. In Our Lord's life there was none of the press and rush of tremendous activity that we regard so highly, and the disciple is to be as His Master. The central thing about the kingdom of Jesus Christ is a personal relationship to Himself, not public usefulness to men.

It is not its practical activities that are the strength of this Bible Training College, its whole strength lies in the fact that here you are put into soak before God. You have no idea of where God is going to engineer your circumstances, no knowledge of what strain is going to be put on you either at home or abroad, and if you waste your time in over-active energies instead of getting into soak on the great fundamental truths of God's Redemption, you will snap when the strain comes; but if this time of soaking before God is being spent in getting rooted and grounded in God on the unpractical line, you will remain true to Him what ever happens.



## October 20: IS GOD'S WILL MY WILL?

***"This is the will of God, even your sanctification."* 1 Thessalonians 4:3**

It is not a question of whether God is willing to sanctify me; is it *mywill*? Am I willing to let God do in me all that has been made possible by the Atonement? Am I willing to let Jesus be made sanctification to me, and to let the life of Jesus be manifested in my mortal flesh? Beware of saying - Oh, I am longing to be sanctified. You are not, stop longing and make it a matter of transaction - "Nothing in my hands I bring." Receive Jesus Christ to be made sanctification to you in implicit faith, and the great marvel of the Atonement of Jesus will be made real in you. All that Jesus made possible is made mine by the free loving gift of God on the ground of what He performed, my attitude as a saved and sanctified soul is that of profound humble holiness (there is no such thing as proud holiness), a holiness based on agonizing repentance and a sense of unspeakable shame and degradation; and also on the amazing realization that the love of God commended itself to me in that while I cared nothing about Him, He completed everything for my salvation and sanctification (see Rom. 5:8. R.V.). No wonder Paul says nothing is "able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Sanctification makes me one with Jesus Christ, and in Him one with God, and it is done only through the superb Atonement of Christ. Never put the effect as the cause. The effect in me is obedience and service and prayer, and is the out come of speechless thanks and adoration for the marvellous sanctification wrought out in me because of the Atonement.

## October 21: DIRECTION BY IMPULSE

*"Building up yourselves on your most holy faith." Jude 20*

There was nothing either of the nature of impulse or of cold-bloodedness about Our Lord, but only a calm strength that never got into panic. Most of us develop our Christianity along the line of our temperament, not along the line of God. Impulse is a trait in natural life, but Our Lord always ignores it, because it hinders the development of the life of a disciple. Watch how the Spirit of God checks impulse, His checks bring a rush of self-conscious foolishness which makes us instantly want to vindicate ourselves. Impulse is all right in a child, but it is disastrous in a man or woman; an impulsive man is always a petted man. Impulse has to be trained into intuition by discipline.

Discipleship is built entirely on the supernatural grace of God. Walking on the water is easy to impulsive pluck, but walking on dry land as a disciple of Jesus Christ is a different thing. Peter walked on the water to go to Jesus, but he followed Him afar off on the land. We do not need the grace of God to stand crises, human nature and pride are sufficient, we can face the strain magnificently; but it does require the supernatural grace of God to live twenty-four hours in every day as a saint, to go through drudgery as a disciple, to live an ordinary, unobserved, ignored existence as a disciple of Jesus. It is inbred in us that we have to do exceptional things for God; but we have not. We have to be exceptional in the ordinary things, to be holy in mean streets, among mean people, and this is not learned in five minutes.

## October 22: THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

***"The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit. . ."* Romans 8:16 (R.V.)**

We are in danger of getting the barter spirit when we come to God, we want the witness before we have done what God tells us to do. "Why does not God reveal Himself to me?" He cannot, it is not that He will not, but He cannot, because you are in the road as long as you won't abandon absolutely to Him. Immediately you do, God witnesses to Himself, He cannot witness to you, but He witnesses instantly to His own nature in you. If you had the witness before the reality, it would end in sentimental emotion. Immediately you transact on the Redemption, and stop the impertinence of debate, God gives on the witness. As soon as you abandon reasoning and argument, God witnesses to what He has done, and we are amazed at our impertinence in having kept Him waiting. If you are in debate as to whether God can deliver from sin, either let Him do it, or tell Him He cannot. Do not quote this and that person, try Matthew 11:28 - "Come unto Me." *Come*, if you are weary and heavy laden; *ask*, if you know you are evil (Luke 11:13).

The Spirit of God witnesses to the Redemption of Our Lord, He does not witness to anything else; He cannot witness to our reason. The simplicity that comes from our natural common-sense decisions is apt to be mistaken for the witness of the Spirit, but the Spirit witnesses only to His own nature, and to the work of Redemption, never to our reason. If we try to make Him witness to our reason, it is no wonder we are in darkness and perplexity. Fling it all overboard, trust in Him, and He will give the witness.

## October 23: NOT A BIT OF IT!

*"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:  
old things are passed away." 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Our Lord never nurses our prejudices, He mortifies them, runs clean athwart them. We imagine that God has a special interest in our particular prejudices; we are quite sure that God will never deal with us as He has to deal with other people. "God must deal with other people in a very stern way, but of course He knows that my prejudices are all right." We have to learn - "Not a bit of it!" Instead of God being on the side of our prejudices, He is deliberately wiping them out. It is part of our moral education to have our prejudices run straight across by His providence, and to watch how He does it. God pays no respect to anything we bring to Him. There is only one thing God wants of us, and that is our unconditional surrender.

When we are born again, the Holy Spirit begins to work His new creation in us, and there will come a time when there is not a bit of the old order left, the old solemnity goes, the old attitude to things goes, and "all things are of God." How are we going to get the life that has no lust, no self-interest, no sensitiveness to pokes, the love that is not provoked, that thinketh no evil, that is always kind? The only way is by allowing not a bit of the old life to be left; but only simple perfect trust in God, such trust that we no longer want God's blessings, but only want Himself. Have we come to the place where God can withdraw His blessings and it does not affect our trust in Him? When once we see God at work, we will never bother our heads about things that happen, because we are actually trusting in our Father in Heaven Whom the world cannot see.

## October 24: THE VIEWPOINT

*"Now thanks be to God,*

*which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." 2 Corinthians 2:14*

The viewpoint of a worker for God must not be as near the highest as he can get, it must be *the* highest. Be careful to maintain strenuously God's point of view, it has to be done every day, bit by bit; don't think on the finite. No outside power can touch the viewpoint.

The viewpoint to maintain is that we are here for one purpose only, viz., to be captives in the train of Christ's triumphs. We are not in God's showroom, we are here to exhibit one thing - the absolute captivity of our lives to Jesus Christ. How small the other points of view are - I am standing alone battling for Jesus; I have to maintain the cause of Christ and hold this fort for Him. Paul says - I am in the train of a conqueror, and it does not matter what the difficulties are, I am always led in triumph. Is this idea being worked out practically in us? Paul's secret joy was that God took him, a red-handed rebel against Jesus Christ, and made him a captive, and now that is all he is here for. Paul's joy was to be a captive of the Lord, he had no other interest in heaven or in earth. It is a shameful thing for a Christian to talk about getting the victory. The Victor ought to have got us so completely that it is His victory all the time, and we are more than conquerors through Him.

"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ." We are enwheeled with the odour of Jesus, and wherever we go we are a wonderful refreshment to God.

## October 25: THE ETERNAL CRUSH OF THINGS

*"I am made all things to all men,*

*that I might by all means save some." 1 Corinthians 9:22*

A Christian worker has to learn how to be God's noble man or woman amid a crowd of ignoble things. Never make this plea - If only I were somewhere else! All God's men are ordinary men made extraordinary by the matter He has given them. Unless we have the right matter in our minds intellectually and in our hearts affectionately, we will be hustled out of usefulness to God. We are not workers for God by choice. Many people deliberately choose to be workers, but they have no matter in them of God's almighty grace, no matter of His mighty word. Paul's whole heart and mind and soul were taken up with the great matter of what Jesus Christ came to do, he never lost sight of that one thing. We have to face ourselves with the one central fact - Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

"I have chosen you." Keep that note of greatness in your creed. It is not that you have got God but that He has got you. Here, in this College, God is at work, bending, breaking, moulding, doing just as He chooses. Why He is doing it, we do not know; He is doing it for one purpose only - that He may be able to say, This is My man, My woman. We have to be in God's hand so that He can plant men on the Rock as He has planted us.

Never choose to be a worker, but when God has put His call on you, woe be to you if you turn to the right hand or to the left. He will do with you what He never did with you before the call came He will do with you what He is not doing with other people. Let Him have His way.

## October 26: WHAT IS A MISSIONARY?

***"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."* John 20:21**

A missionary is one sent by Jesus Christ as He was sent by God. The great dominant note is not the needs of men, but the command of Jesus. The source of our inspiration in work for God is behind, not before. The tendency to-day is to put the inspiration ahead, to sweep everything in front of us and bring it all out to our conception of success. In the New Testament the inspiration is put behind us, the Lord Jesus. The ideal is to be true to Him, to carry out *His* enterprises.

Personal attachment to the Lord Jesus and His point of view is the one thing that must not be overlooked. In missionary enterprise the great danger is that God's call is effaced by the needs of the people until human sympathy absolutely overwhelms the meaning of being sent by Jesus. The needs are so enormous, the conditions so perplexing, that every power of mind falters and fails. We forget that the one great reason underneath all missionary enterprise is not first the elevation of the people, nor the education of the people, nor their needs; but first and foremost the command of Jesus Christ - "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

When looking back on the lives of men and women of God the tendency is to say - What wonderfully astute wisdom they had! How perfectly they understood all God wanted! The astute mind behind is the Mind of God, not human wisdom at all. We give credit to human wisdom when we should give credit to the Divine guidance of God through childlike people who were foolish enough to trust God's wisdom and the supernatural equipment of God.

## October 27: THE METHOD OF MISSIONS

***"Go ye therefore, and teach (disciple) all nations." Matthew 28:19***

Jesus Christ did not say - Go and save souls (the salvation of souls is the supernatural work of God), but - "Go and teach," i.e., disciple, "all nations," and you cannot make disciples unless you are a disciple yourself. When the disciples came back from their first mission they were filled with joy because the devils were subject to them, and Jesus said - Don't rejoice in successful service; the great secret of joy is that you are rightly related to Me. The great essential of the missionary is that he remains true to the call of God, and realizes that his one purpose is to disciple men and women to Jesus. There is a passion for souls that does not spring from God, but from the desire to make converts to our point of view.

The challenge to the missionary does not come on the line that people are difficult to get saved, that backsliders are difficult to reclaim, that there is a wedge of callous indifference; but along the line of his own personal relationship to Jesus Christ. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Our Lord puts that question steadily, it faces us in every individual case we meet. The one great challenge is - Do I know my Risen Lord? Do I know the power of His indwelling Spirit? Am I wise enough in God's sight, and foolish enough according to the world, to bank on what Jesus Christ has said, or am I abandoning the great supernatural position, which is the only call for a missionary, viz., boundless confidence in Christ Jesus? If I take up any other method I depart altogether from the methods laid down by Our Lord - "All power is given unto Me . . . , *therefore go ye.*"



## October 28: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

***"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Romans 5:10***

I am not saved by believing; I realize I am saved by believing. It is not repentance that saves me, repentance is the sign that I realize what God has done in Christ Jesus. The danger is to put the emphasis on the effect instead of on the cause. It is my obedience that puts me right with God, my consecration. Never! I am put right with God because prior to all, Christ died. When I turn to God and by belief accept what God reveals I can accept, instantly the stupendous Atonement of Jesus Christ rushes me into a right relationship with God; and by the supernatural miracle of God's grace I stand justified, not because I am sorry for my sin, not because I have repented, but because of what Jesus has done. The Spirit of God brings it with a breaking, all-over light, and I know, though I do not know how, that I am saved.

The salvation of God does not stand on human logic, it stands on the sacrificial Death of Jesus. We can be born again because of the Atonement of Our Lord. Sinful men and women can be changed into new creatures, not by their repentance or their belief, but by the marvellous work of God in Christ Jesus which is prior to all experience. The impregnable safety of justification and sanctification is God Himself. We have not to work out these things ourselves; they have been worked out by the Atonement. The supernatural becomes natural by the miracle of God; there is the realization of what Jesus Christ has already done - *"It is finished."*

## October 29: SUBSTITUTION

*"He hath made Him to be sin for us*

*. . . that we might be made the righteousness of God. . ."* 2 Corinthians 5:21

The modern view of the death of Jesus is that He died for our sins out of sympathy. The New Testament view is that He bore our sin not by sympathy, but by identification. He *was made to be sin*. Our sins are removed because of the death of Jesus, and the explanation of His death is His obedience to His Father, not His sympathy with us. We are acceptable with God not because we have obeyed, or because we have promised to give up things, but because of the death of Christ, and in no other way. We say that Jesus Christ came to reveal the Fatherhood of God, the loving-kindness of God; the New Testament says He came to bear away the sin of the world. The revelation of His Father is to those to whom He has been introduced as Saviour. Jesus Christ never spoke of Himself to the world as one Who revealed the Father, but as a stumbling block (see John 15:22-24). John 14:9 was spoken to His disciples.

That Christ died for me, therefore I go scot free, is never taught in the New Testament. What *is* taught in the New Testament is that "He died for all" (not - He died my death), and that by identification with His death I can be freed from sin, and have imparted to me His very righteousness. The substitution taught in the New Testament is twofold: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; *that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*" It is not Christ for me unless I am determined to have Christ formed *in* me.

## October 30: FAITH

***"Without faith it is impossible to please Him."* Hebrews 11:6**

Faith in antagonism to common sense is fanaticism, and common sense in antagonism to faith is rationalism. The life of faith brings the two into a right relation. Common sense is not faith, and faith is not common sense; they stand in the relation of the natural and the spiritual; of impulse and inspiration. Nothing Jesus Christ ever said is common sense, it is revelation sense, and it reaches the shores where common sense fails. Faith must be tried before the reality of faith is actual. "We know that all things work together for good," then no matter what happens, the alchemy of God's providence transfigures the ideal faith into actual reality. Faith always works on the personal line, the whole purpose of God being to see that the ideal faith is made real in His children.

For every detail of the common-sense life, there is a revelation fact of God whereby we can prove in practical experience what we believe God to be. Faith is a tremendously active principle which always puts Jesus Christ first - Lord, Thou hast said so and so (e.g., Matthew 6:33), it looks mad, but I am going to venture on Thy word. To turn head faith into a personal possession is a fight always, not sometimes. God brings us into circumstances in order to educate our faith, because the nature of faith is to make its object real. Until we know Jesus, God is a mere abstraction, we can not have faith in Him; but immediately we hear Jesus say - "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," we have something that is real, and faith is boundless. Faith is the whole man rightly related to God by the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

## October 31: DISCERNMENT OF FAITH

*"Faith as a grain of mustard seed. . ."* Matthew 17:20

We have the idea that God rewards us for our faith, it may be so in the initial stages; but we do not earn anything by faith, faith brings us into right relationship with God and gives God His opportunity. God has frequently to knock the bottom board out of your experience if you are a saint in order to get you into contact with Himself. God wants you to understand that it is a life of *faith*, not a life of sentimental enjoyment of His blessings. Your earlier life of faith was narrow and intense, settled around a little sun-spot of experience that had as much of sense as of faith in it, full of light and sweetness; then God withdrew His conscious blessings in order to teach you to walk by faith. You are worth far more to Him now than you were in your days of conscious delight and thrilling testimony.

Faith by its very nature must be tried, and the real trial of faith is not that we find it difficult to trust God, but that God's character has to be cleared in our own minds. Faith in its actual working out has to go through spells of unsyllabled isolation. Never confound the trial of faith with the ordinary discipline of life, much that we call the trial of faith is the inevitable result of being alive. Faith in the Bible is faith in God against everything that contradicts Him - I will remain true to God's character whatever He may do. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" - this is the most sublime utterance of faith in the whole of the Bible.

## November 1: YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN

*"Know ye not that . . . ye are not your own?"* 1 Corinthians 6:19

There is no such thing as a private life - "a world within the world" - for a man or woman who is brought into fellowship with Jesus Christ's sufferings. God breaks up the private life of His saints, and makes it a thoroughfare for the world on the one hand and for Himself on the other. No human being can stand that unless he is identified with Jesus Christ. We are not sanctified for our selves, we are called into the fellowship of the Gospel, and things happen which have nothing to do with us, God is getting us into fellowship with Himself. Let Him have His way, if you do not, instead of being of the slightest use to God in His Redemptive work in the world, you will be a hindrance and a clog.

The first thing God does with us is to get us based on rugged Reality until we do not care what becomes of us individually as long as He gets His way for the purpose of His Redemption. Why shouldn't we go through heartbreaks? Through those doorways God is opening up ways of fellowship with His Son. Most of us fall and collapse at the first grip of pain; we sit down on the threshold of God's purpose and die away of self-pity, and all so called Christian sympathy will aid us to our death bed. But God will not. He comes with the grip of the pierced hand of His Son, and says - "Enter into fellowship with Me; arise and shine." If through a broken heart God can bring His purposes to pass in the world, then thank Him for breaking your heart.

## November 2: AUTHORITY AND INDEPENDENCE

*"If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments." John 14:15 (R.V.)*

Our Lord never insists upon obedience; He tells us very emphatically what we ought to do, but He never takes means to make us do it. We have to obey Him out of a oneness of spirit. That is why whenever Our Lord talked about discipleship, He prefaced it with an IF - you do not need to unless you like. *"If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself,"* let him give up his right to himself to Me. Our Lord is not talking of eternal positions, but of being of value to Himself in this order of things, that is why He sounds so stern (cf. Luke 14:26). Never interpret these words apart from the One Who uttered them.

The Lord does not give me rules, He makes His standard very clear, and if my relationship to Him is that of love, I will do what He says without any hesitation. If I hesitate, it is because I love some one else in competition with Him, viz., myself. Jesus Christ will not help me to obey Him, I must obey Him; and when I do obey Him, I fulfil my spiritual destiny. My personal life may be crowded with small petty incidents, altogether unnoticeable and mean; but if I obey Jesus Christ in the haphazard circumstances, they become pinholes through which I see the face of God, and when I stand face to face with God I will discover that through my obedience thousands were blessed. When once God's Redemption comes to the point of obedience in a human soul, it always creates. If I obey Jesus Christ, the Redemption of God will rush through me to other lives, because behind the deed of obedience is the Reality of Almighty God.

## November 3: A BOND-SLAVE OF JESUS

*"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live;  
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Galatians 2:20*

These words mean the breaking of my independence with my own hand and surrendering to the supremacy of the Lord Jesus. No one can do this for me, I must do it myself. God may bring me up to the point three hundred and sixty-five times a year, but He cannot put me through it. It means breaking the husk of my individual independence of God, and the emancipating of my personality into oneness with Himself, not for my own ideas, but for absolute loyalty to Jesus. There is no possibility of dispute when once I am there. Very few of us know anything about loyalty to Christ - *"For My sake."* It is that which makes the iron saint.

Has that break come? All the rest is pious fraud. The one point to decide is - Will I give up, will I surrender to Jesus Christ, and make no conditions whatever as to how the break comes? I must be broken from my self-realization, and immediately that point is reached, the reality of the supernatural identification takes place at once, and the witness of the Spirit of God is unmistakable - "I have been crucified with Christ."

The passion of Christianity is that I deliberately sign away my own rights and become a bond-slave of Jesus Christ. Until I do that, I do not begin to be a saint.

One student a year who hears God's call would be sufficient for God to have called this College into existence. This College as an organization is not worth anything, it is not academic; it is for nothing else but for God to help Himself to live. Is He going to help Himself to us, or are we taken up with our conception of what we are going to be?

## ***November 4: THE AUTHORITY OF REALITY***

***"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." James 4:8***

It is essential to give people a chance of acting on the truth of God. The responsibility must be left with the individual, you cannot act for him, it must be his own deliberate act, but the evangelical message ought always to lead a man to act. The paralysis of refusing to act leaves a man exactly where he was before; when once he acts, he is never the same. It is the foolishness of it that stands in the way of hundreds who have been convicted by the Spirit of God. Immediately I precipitate myself over into an act, that second I live; all the rest is existence. The moments when I truly live are the moments when I act with my whole will.

Never allow a truth of God that is brought home to your soul to pass without acting on it, not necessarily physically, but in will. Record it, with ink or with blood. The feeblest saint who transacts business with Jesus Christ is emancipated the second he acts; all the almighty power of God is on his behalf. We come up to the truth of God, we confess we are wrong, but go back again; then we come up to it again, and go back; until we learn that we have no business to go back. We have to go clean over on some word of our redeeming Lord and transact business with Him. His word "come" means "transact." "Come unto Me." The last thing we do is to come; but everyone who does come knows that that second the supernatural rush of the life of God invades him instantly. The dominating power of the world, the flesh and the devil is paralysed, not by your act, but because your act has linked you on to God and His redemptive power.



## ***November 5: PARTAKERS OF HIS SUFFERINGS***

***"Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." 1 Peter 4:13***

If you are going to be used by God, He will take you through a multitude of experiences that are not meant for you at all, they are meant to make you useful in His hands, and to enable you to understand what transpires in other souls so that you will never be surprised at what you come across. Oh, I can't deal with that person. Why not? God gave you ample opportunity to soak before Him on that line, and you barged off because it seemed stupid to spend time in that way.

The sufferings of Christ are not those of ordinary men. He suffered "according to the will of God," not from the point of view we suffer from as individuals. It is only when we are related to Jesus Christ that we can understand what God is after in His dealings with us. It is part of Christian culture to know what God's aim is. In the history of the Christian Church the tendency has been to evade being identified with the sufferings of Jesus Christ; men have sought to procure the carrying out of God's order by a short cut of their own. God's way is always the way of suffering, the way of the "long, long trail."

Are we partakers of Christ's sufferings? Are we prepared for God to stamp our personal ambitions right out? Are we prepared for God to destroy by transfiguration our individual determinations? It will not mean that we know exactly why God is taking us that way, that would make us spiritual prigs. We never realize at the time what God is putting us through; we go through it more or less misunderstandingly; then we come to a luminous place, and say - ' "Why, God has girded me, though I did not know it!"

## **November 6: PROGRAMME OF BELIEF**

***"Believest thou this?" John 11:26***

Martha believed in the power at the disposal of Jesus Christ, she believed that if He had been present He could have healed her brother; she also believed that Jesus had a peculiar intimacy with God and that whatever He asked of God, God would do; but she needed a closer personal intimacy with Jesus. Martha's programme of belief had its fulfilment in the future; Jesus led her on until her belief became a personal possession, and then slowly emerged into a particular inheritance - "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ. . . "

Is there something like that in the Lord's dealings with you? Is Jesus educating you into a personal intimacy with Himself? Let Him press home His question to you - "Believest thou *this?*" What is your ordeal of doubt? Have you come, like Martha, to some overwhelming passage in your circumstances where your programme of belief is about to emerge into a personal belief? This can never be until a personal need arises out of a personal problem.

To believe is to commit. In the programme of mental belief I commit myself, and abandon all that is not related to that commitment. In personal belief I commit myself morally to this way of confidence and refuse to compromise with any other; and in particular belief I commit myself spiritually to Jesus Christ, and determine in that thing to be dominated by the Lord alone.

When I stand face to face with Jesus Christ and He says to me - "Believest thou *this?*" I find that faith is as natural as breathing, and I am staggered that I was so stupid as not to trust Him before.

## ***November 7: THE UNDETECTED SACREDNESS OF CIRCUMSTANCES***

***"All things work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28***

The circumstances of a saint's life are ordained of God. In the life of a saint there is no such thing as chance. God by His providence brings you into circumstances that you cannot understand at all, but the Spirit of God understands. God is bringing you into places and among people and into conditions in order that the intercession of the Spirit in you may take a particular line. Never put your hand in front of the circumstances and say - I am going to be my own providence here, I must watch this, and guard that. All your circumstances are in the hand of God, therefore never think it strange concerning the circumstances you are in. Your part in intercessory prayer is not to enter into the agony of intercession, but to utilize the common-sense circumstances God puts you in, and the common-sense people He puts you amongst by His providence, to bring them before God's throne and give the Spirit in you a chance to intercede for them. In this way God is going to sweep the whole world with His saints.

Am I making the Holy Spirit's work difficult by being indefinite, or by trying to do His work for Him? I must do the human side of intercession, and the human side is the circumstances I am in and the people I am in contact with. I have to keep my conscious life as a shrine of the Holy Ghost, then as I bring the different ones before God, the Holy Spirit makes intercession for them.

Your intercessions can never be mine, and my intercessions can never be yours, but the Holy Ghost makes intercession in our particular lives, without which intercession someone will be impoverished.

## **November 8: THE UNRIVALLED POWER OF PRAYER**

***"We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans 8:26***

We realize that we are energized by the Holy Spirit for prayer; we know what it is to pray in the Spirit; but we do not so often realize that the Holy Spirit Himself prays in us prayers which we cannot utter. When we are born again of God and are indwelt by the Spirit of God, He expresses for us the unutterable.

"He," the Spirit in you, "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God," and God searches your heart not to know what your conscious prayers are, but to find out what is the prayer of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God needs the nature of the believer as a shrine in which to offer His intercession. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." When Jesus Christ cleansed the temple, He "would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple." The Spirit of God will not allow you to use your body for your own convenience. Jesus ruthlessly cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and said - "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Have we recognized that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? If so, we must be careful to keep it undefiled for Him. We have to remember that our conscious life, though it is only a tiny bit of our personality, is to be regarded by us as a shrine of the Holy Ghost. He will look after the unconscious part that we know nothing of; but we must see that we guard the conscious part for which we are responsible.

## **November 9: SACRAMENTAL SERVICE**

***"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you,***

***and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. . . ." Colossians 1:2***

The Christian worker has to be a sacramental "go-between," to be so identified with his Lord and the reality of His Redemption that He can continually bring His creating life through him. It is not the strength of one man's personality being superimposed on another, but the real presence of Christ coming through the elements of the worker's life. When we preach the historic facts of the life and death of Our Lord as they are conveyed in the New Testament, our words are made sacramental, God uses them on the ground of His Redemption to create in those who listen that which is not created otherwise. If we preach the effects of Redemption in human life instead of the revelation regarding Jesus, the result in those who listen is not new birth, but refined spiritual culture, and the Spirit of God cannot witness to it because such preaching is in another domain. We have to see that we are in such living sympathy with God that as we proclaim His truth He can create in souls the things which He alone can do.

What a wonderful personality! What a fascinating man! Such marvellous insight! What chance has the Gospel of God through all that? It cannot get through, because the line of attraction is always the line of appeal. If a man attracts by his personality, his appeal is along that line; if he is identified with his Lord's personality, then the appeal is along the line of what Jesus Christ can do. The danger is to glory in men; Jesus says we are to lift *Him* up.

## **November 10: FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL**

***"Fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ." 1 Thessalonians 3:2***

After sanctification it is difficult to state what your aim in life is, because God has taken you up into His purpose by the Holy Ghost; He is using you now for His purposes throughout the world as He used His Son for the purpose of our salvation. If you seek great things for yourself - God has called me for this and that; you are putting a barrier to God's use of you. As long as you have a personal interest in your own character, or any set ambition, you cannot get through into identification with God's interests. You can only get there by losing for ever any idea of yourself and by letting God take you right out into His purpose for the world, and because your goings are of the Lord, you can never understand your ways.

I have to learn that the aim in life is God's, not mine. God is using me from His great personal standpoint, and all He asks of me is that I trust Him, and never say - Lord, this gives me such heart-ache. To talk in that way makes me a clog. When I stop telling God what I want, He can catch me up for what He wants without let or hindrance. He can crumple me up or exalt me, He can do any thing He chooses. He simply asks me to have implicit faith in Himself and in His goodness. Self pity is of the devil, if I go off on that line I cannot be used by God for His purpose in the world. I have "a world within the world" in which I live, and God will never be able to get me outside it because I am afraid of being frost-bitten.

**November 11: THE SUPREME CLIMB**  
**"Take now thy son ." Genesis 22:2**

God's command is - Take *now*, not presently. It is extraordinary how we debate! We know a thing is right, but we try to find excuses for not doing it at once. To climb to the height God shows can never be done presently, it must be done now. The sacrifice is gone through in will before it is performed actually.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning and went unto the place of which God had told him" (v. 3). The wonderful simplicity of Abraham! When God spoke, he did not confer with flesh and blood. Beware when you want to confer with flesh and blood, i.e., your own sympathies, your own insight, anything that is not based on your personal relationship to God. These are the things that compete with and hinder obedience to God.

Abraham did not choose the sacrifice. Always guard against self-chosen service for God; self-sacrifice may be a disease. If God has made your cup sweet, drink it with grace; if He has made it bitter, drink it in communion with Him. If the providential order of God for you is a hard time of difficulty, go through with it, but never choose the scene of your martyrdom. God chose the crucible for Abraham, and Abraham made no demur; he went steadily through. If you are not living in touch with Him, it is easy to pass a crude verdict on God. You must go through the crucible before you have any right to pronounce a verdict, because in the crucible you learn to know God better. God is working for His highest ends until His purpose and man's purpose become one.

## ***November 12: THE TRANSFIGURED LIFE***

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

What idea have you of the salvation of your soul? The experience of salvation means that in your actual life things are really altered, you no longer look at things as you used to; your desires are new, old things have lost their power. One of the touchstones of experience is - Has God altered the thing that matters? If you still hanker after the old things, it is absurd to talk about being born from above, you are juggling with yourself. If you are born again, the Spirit of God makes the alteration manifest in your actual life and reasoning, and when the crisis comes you are the most amazed person on earth at the wonderful difference there is in you. There is no possibility of imagining that *you* did it. It is this complete and amazing alteration that is the evidence that you are a saved soul.

What difference has my salvation and sanctification made? For instance, can I stand in the light of 1 Corinthians 13, or do I have to shuffle? The salvation that is worked out in me by the Holy Ghost emancipates me entirely, and as long as I walk in the light as God is in the light, He sees nothing to censure because His life is working out in every particular, not to my consciousness, but deeper than my consciousness.



## November 13: FAITH AND EXPERIENCE

***"The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20***

We have to battle through our moods into absolute devotion to the Lord Jesus, to get out of the hole-and-corner business of our experience into abandoned devotion to Him. Think Who the New Testament says that Jesus Christ is, and then think of the despicable meanness of the miserable faith we have - I haven't had this and that experience! Think what faith in Jesus Christ claims - that He can present us faultless before the throne of God, unutterably pure, absolutely rectified and profoundly justified. Stand in implicit adoring faith in Him, *He* is made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." How can we talk of making a sacrifice for the Son of God! Our salvation is from hell and perdition, and then we talk about making sacrifices!

We have to get out into faith in Jesus Christ continually; not a prayer meeting Jesus Christ, nor a book Jesus Christ, but the New Testament Jesus Christ, Who is God Incarnate, and Who ought to strike us to His feet as dead. Our faith must be in the One from Whom our experience springs. Jesus Christ wants our absolute abandon of devotion to Himself. We never can *experience* Jesus Christ, nor ever hold Him within the compass of our own hearts, but our faith must be built in strong emphatic confidence in Him.

It is along this line that we see the rugged impatience of the Holy Ghost against unbelief. All our fears are wicked, and we fear because we will not nourish ourselves in our faith. How can any one who is identified with Jesus Christ suffer from doubt or fear! It ought to be an absolute pæan of perfectly irrepressible, triumphant belief.

## **November 14: DISCOVERING DIVINE DESIGNS**

***"I being in the way, the Lord led me. . ." Genesis 24:27***

We have to be so one with God that we do not continually need to ask for guidance. Sanctification means that we are made the children of God, and the natural life of a child is obedience - until he wishes to be disobedient, then instantly there is the intuitive jar. In the spiritual domain the intuitive jar is the monition of the Spirit of God. When He gives the check, we have to stop at once and be renewed in the spirit of our mind in order to make out what God's will is. If we are born again of the Spirit of God, it is the abortion of piety to ask God to guide us here and there. "The Lord led me," and on looking back we see the presence of an amazing design, which, if we are born of God, we will credit to God.

We can all see God in exceptional things, but it requires the culture of spiritual discipline to see God in every detail. Never allow that the haphazard is anything less than God's appointed order, and be ready to discover the Divine designs any where.

Beware of making a fetish of consistency to your convictions instead of being devoted to God. I shall never do that - in all probability you will have to, if you are a saint. There never was a more inconsistent Being on this earth than Our Lord, but He was never inconsistent to His Father. The one consistency of the saint is not to a principle, but to the Divine life. It is the Divine life which continually makes more and more discoveries about the Divine mind. It is easier to be a fanatic than a faithful soul, because there is something amazingly humbling, particularly to our religious conceit, in being loyal to God.

## ***November 15: WHAT IS THAT TO THEE?***

***"Lord, what shall this man do?"***

***. . What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." John 21:21,2***

One of our severest lessons comes from the stubborn refusal to see that we must not interfere in other people's lives. It takes a long time to realize the danger of being an amateur providence, that is, interfering with God's order for others. You see a certain person suffering, and you say - He shall not suffer, and I will see that he does not. You put your band straight in front of God's permissive will to prevent it, and God says - "What is that to thee?" If there is stagnation spiritually, never allow it to go on, but get into God's presence and find out the reason for it. Possibly you will find it is because you have been interfering in the life of another; proposing things you had no right to propose; advising when you had no right to advise. When you do have to give advice to another, God will advise through you with the direct understanding of His Spirit; your part is to be so rightly related to God that His discernment comes through you all the time for the blessing of another soul.

Most of us live on the borders of consciousness - consciously serving, consciously devoted to God. All this is immature, it is not the real life yet. The mature stage is the life of a child which is never conscious; we become so abandoned to God that the consciousness of being used never enters in. When we are consciously being used as broken bread and poured-out wine, there is another stage to be reached, where all consciousness of ourselves and of what God is doing through us is eliminated. A saint is never consciously a saint; a saint is consciously dependent on God.

## ***November 16: STILL HUMAN!***

***"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31***

The great marvel of the Incarnation slips into ordinary childhood's life; the great marvel of the Transfiguration vanishes in the devil-possessed valley; the glory of the Resurrection descends into a breakfast on the sea-shore. This is not an anti-climax, but a great revelation of God.

The tendency is to look for the marvellous in our experience; we mistake the sense of the heroic for being heroes. It is one thing to go through a crisis grandly, but another thing to go through every day glorifying God when there is no witness, no limelight, no one paying the remotest attention to us. If we do not want mediaeval haloes, we want something that will make people say - What a wonderful man of prayer he is! What a pious devoted woman she is! If you are rightly devoted to the Lord Jesus, you have reached the sublime height where no one ever thinks of noticing you, all that is noticed is that the power of God comes through you all the time.

Oh, I have had a wonderful call from God! It takes Almighty God Incarnate in us to do the meanest duty to the glory of God. It takes God's Spirit in us to make us so absolutely humanly His that we are utterly unnoticeable. The test of the life of a saint is not success, but faithfulness in human life as it actually is. We will set up success in Christian work as the aim; the aim is to manifest the glory of God in human life, to live the life hid with Christ in God in human conditions. Our human relationships are the actual conditions in which the ideal life of God is to be exhibited.

## **November 17: THE ETERNAL GOAL**

***"By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing . . . that in blessing I will bless thee. . . ." Genesis 22:15-19***

Abraham has reached the place where he is in touch with the very nature of God, he understands now the Reality of God.

"My goal is God Himself . . .  
At any cost, dear Lord, by any road."

"At any cost, by any road" means nothing self-chosen in the way God brings us to the goal. There is no possibility of questioning when God speaks if He speaks to His own nature in me; prompt obedience is the only result. When Jesus say - "Come," I simply come; when He says - "Let go," I let go; when He says - "Trust in God in this matter," I do trust. The whole working out is the evidence that the nature of God is in me.

God's revelation of Himself to me is determined by my character, not by God's character.

"'Tis because I am mean,  
Thy ways so oft look mean to me."

By the discipline of obedience I get to the place where Abraham was and I see Who God is. I never have a real God until I have come face to face with Him in Jesus Christ, then I know that "in all the world, my God, there is none but Thee, there is none but Thee." The promises of God are of no value to us until by obedience we understand the nature of God. We read some things in the Bible three hundred and sixty-five times and they mean nothing to us, then all of a sudden we see what God means, because in some particular we have obeyed God, and instantly His nature is opened up. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." The "yea" must be born of obedience; when by the obedience of our lives we say "Amen" to a promise, then that promise is ours.

## **November 18: WINNING INTO FREEDOM**

***"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36***

If there is any remnant of individual conceit left, it always says "I can't." Personality never says "I can't," but simply absorbs and absorbs. Personality always wants more and more. It is the way we are built. We are designed with a great capacity for God; and sin and our individuality are the things that keep us from getting at God. God delivers us from sin: we have to deliver our selves from individuality, i.e., to present our natural life to God and sacrifice it until it is transformed into a spiritual life by obedience.

God does not pay any attention to our natural individuality in the development of our spiritual life. His order runs right across the natural life, and we have to see that we aid and abet God, not stand against Him and say - I can't do that. God will not discipline us, we must discipline ourselves. God will not bring every thought and imagination into captivity; we have to do it. Do not say - O Lord, I suffer from wandering thoughts. *Don't* suffer from wandering thoughts. Stop listening to the tyranny of your individuality and get emancipated out into personality.

"If the Son shall make you free . ." Do not substitute 'Saviour' for 'Son.' The Saviour sets us free from sin; this is the freedom of being set free *by the Son*. It is what Paul means in Gal. 2:20 - "I have been crucified with Christ," his natural individuality has been broken and his personality united with his Lord, not merged but united. "Ye shall be free indeed," free in essence, free from the inside. We will insist on energy, instead of being energized into identification with Jesus.

## ***November 19: WHEN HE IS COME***

***"And when He is come, He will convict the world of sin. . . ." John 16:8 (R.V.)***

Very few of us know anything about conviction of sin; we know the experience of being disturbed because of having done wrong things; but conviction of sin by the Holy Ghost blots out every relationship on earth and leaves one relationship only - "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned!" When a man is convicted of sin in this way, he knows with every power of his conscience that God dare not forgive him; if God did forgive him, the man would have a stronger sense of justice than God. God does forgive, but it cost the rending of His heart in the Death of Christ to enable Him to do so. The great miracle of the grace of God is that He forgives sin, and it is the death of Jesus Christ alone that enables the Divine nature to for give and to remain true to itself in doing so. It is shallow nonsense to say that God forgives us because He is love. When we have been convicted of sin we will never say this again. The love of God means Calvary, and nothing less; the love of God is spelt on the Cross and nowhere else. The only ground on which God can forgive me is through the Cross of my Lord. There, His conscience is satisfied.

Forgiveness means not merely that I am saved from hell and made right for heaven (no man would accept forgiveness on such a level); forgiveness means that I am forgiven into a recreated relationship, into identification with God in Christ. The miracle of Redemption is that God turns me, the unholy one, into the standard of Himself, the Holy One, by putting into me a new disposition, the disposition of Jesus Christ.

## **November 20: THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD**

***"In whom we have . . . the forgiveness of sins." Ephesians 1:7***

Beware of the pleasant view of the Fatherhood of God - God is so kind and loving that of course He will forgive us. That sentiment has no place whatever in the New Testament. The only ground on which God can forgive us is the tremendous tragedy of the Cross of Christ; to put forgiveness on any other ground is unconscious blasphemy. The only ground on which God can forgive sin and reinstate us in His favour is through the Cross of Christ, and in no other way. Forgiveness, which is so easy for us to accept, cost the agony of Calvary. It is possible to take the forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification with the simplicity of faith, and to forget at what enormous cost to God it was all made ours.

Forgiveness is the divine miracle of grace; it cost God the Cross of Jesus Christ before He could forgive sin and remain a holy God. Never accept a view of the Fatherhood of God if it blots out the Atonement. The revelation of God is that He cannot forgive; He would contradict His nature if He did. The only way we can be forgiven is by being brought back to God by the Atonement. God's forgiveness is only natural in the supernatural domain.

Compared with the miracle of the forgiveness of sin, the experience of sanctification is slight. Sanctification is simply the marvellous expression of the forgiveness of sins in a human life, but the thing that awakens the deepest well of gratitude in a human being is that God has forgiven sin. Paul never got away from this. When once you realize all that it cost God to forgive you, you will be held as in a vice, constrained by the love of God.



## **November 21: IT IS FINISHED**

***"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." John 17:4***

The Death of Jesus Christ is the performance in history of the very Mind of God. There is no room for looking on Jesus Christ as a martyr; His death was not something that happened to Him which might have been prevented: His death was the very reason why He came.

Never build your preaching of forgiveness on the fact that God is our Father and He will forgive us because He loves us. It is untrue to Jesus Christ's revelation of God; it makes the Cross unnecessary, and the Redemption "much ado about nothing." If God does forgive sin, it is because of the Death of Christ. God could forgive men in no other way than by the death of His Son, and Jesus is exalted to be Saviour because of His death. "We see Jesus because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." The greatest note of triumph that ever sounded in the ears of a startled universe was that sounded on the Cross of Christ - *"It is finished."* That is the last word in the Redemption of man.

Anything that belittles or obliterates the holiness of God by a false view of the love of God, is untrue to the revelation of God given by Jesus Christ. Never allow the thought that Jesus Christ stands with us against God out of pity and compassion; that He became a curse for us out of sympathy with us. Jesus Christ became a curse for us by the Divine decree. Our portion of realizing the terrific meaning of the curse is conviction of sin, the gift of shame and penitence is given us - this is the great mercy of God. Jesus Christ hates the wrong in man, and Calvary is the estimate of His hatred.

## ***November 22: SHALLOW AND PROFOUND***

***"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do,  
do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31***

Beware of allowing yourself to think that the shallow concerns of life are not ordained of God; they are as much of God as the profound. It is not your devotion to God that makes you refuse to be shallow, but your wish to impress other people with the fact that you are not shallow, which is a sure sign that you are a spiritual prig. Be careful of the production of contempt in yourself, it always comes along this line, and causes you to go about as a walking rebuke to other people because they are more shallow than you are. Beware of posing as a profound person; God became a Baby.

To be shallow is not a sign of being wicked, nor is shallowness a sign that there are no deeps: the ocean has a shore. The shallow amenities of life, eating and drinking, walking and talking, are all ordained by God. These are the things in which Our Lord lived. He lived in them as the Son of God, and He said that "the disciple is not above his Master."

Our safeguard is in the shallow things. We have to live the surface common-sense life in a common-sense way; when the deeper things come, God gives them to us apart from the shallow concerns. Never show the deeps to anyone but God. We are so abominably serious, so desperately interested in our own characters, that we refuse to behave like Christians in the shallow concerns of life.

Determinedly take no one seriously but God, and the first person you find you have to leave severely alone as being the greatest fraud you have ever known, is yourself.

## **November 23: DISTRACTION OF ANTIPATHY**

***"Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us:***

***for we are exceedingly piled with contempt." Psalm 123:3***

The thing of which we have to beware is not so much damage to our belief in God as damage to our Christian temper. "Therefore take heed to thy spirit, that ye deal not treacherously." The temper of mind is tremendous in its effects, it is the enemy that penetrates right into the soul and distracts the mind from God. There are certain tempers of mind in which we never dare indulge; if we do, we find they have distracted us from faith in God, and until we get back to the quiet mood before God, our faith in Him is *nil*, and our confidence in the flesh and in human ingenuity is the thing that rules.

Beware of "the cares of this world," because they are the things that produce a wrong temper of soul. It is extraordinary what an enormous power there is in simple things to distract our attention from God. Refuse to be swamped with the cares of this life.

Another thing that distracts us is the lust of vindication. St. Augustine prayed - "O Lord, deliver me from this lust of always vindicating myself." That temper of mind destroys the soul's faith in God. "I must explain myself; I must get people to understand." Our Lord never explained anything; He left mistakes to correct themselves.

When we discern that people are not going on spiritually and allow the discernment to turn to criticism, we block our way to God. God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede.

## ***November 24: DIRECTION OF ASPIRATION***

***"Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters . . .***

***so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God." Psalm 123:2***

This verse is a description of entire reliance upon God. Just as the eyes of the servant are riveted on his master, so our eyes are up unto God and our knowledge of His countenance is gained (cf. Isaiah 53:1. R.V). Spiritual leakage begins when we cease to lift up our eyes unto Him. The leakage comes not so much through trouble on the outside as in the imagination; when we begin to say - "I expect I have been stretching myself a bit too much, standing on tiptoe and trying to look like God in stead of being an ordinary humble person." We have to realize that no effort can be too high.

For instance, you came to a crisis when you made a stand for God and had the witness of the Spirit that all was right, but the weeks have gone by, and the years maybe, and you are slowly coming to the conclusion - 'Well, after all, was I not a bit too pretentious? Was I not taking a stand a bit too high?' Your rational friends come and say - Don't be a fool, we knew when you talked about this spiritual awakening, that it was a passing impulse, you can't keep up the strain, God does not expect you to. And you say - Well, I suppose I was expecting too much. It sounds humble to say it, but it means that reliance on God has gone and reliance on worldly opinion has come in. The danger is lest no longer relying on God you ignore the lifting up of your eyes to Him. Only when God brings you to a sudden halt, will you realize how you have been losing out. Whenever there is a leakage, remedy it immediately. Recognize that something has been coming between you and God, and get it readjusted at once.

## ***November 25: THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL COHERENCE***

***But God forbid that I should glory,***

***save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Galatians 6:14***

When a man is first born again, he becomes incoherent, there is an amount of unrelated emotion about him, unrelated phases of external things. In the apostle Paul there was a strong steady coherence underneath, consequently he could let his external life change as it liked and it did not distress him because he was rooted and grounded in God. Most of us are not spiritually coherent because we are more concerned about being coherent externally. Paul lived in the basement; the coherent critics live in the upper storey of the external statement of things, and the two do not begin to touch each other. Paul's consistency was down in the fundamentals. The great basis of his coherence was the agony of God in the Redemption of the world, viz., the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Re-state to yourself what you believe, then do away with as much of it as possible, and get back to the bedrock of the Cross of Christ. In external history the Cross is an infinitesimal thing; from the Bible point of view it is of more importance than all the empires of the world. If we get away from brooding on the tragedy of God upon the Cross in our preaching, it produces nothing. It does not convey the energy of God to man; it may be interesting but it has no power. But preach the Cross, and the energy of God is let loose. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." "We preach Christ crucified."

## ***November 26: THE CONCENTRATION OF SPIRITUAL ENERGY***

***"... save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Galatians 6:14***

If you want to know the energy of God (i.e., the resurrection life of Jesus) in your mortal flesh, you must brood on the tragedy of God. Cut yourself off from prying personal interest in your own spiritual symptoms and consider bare-spirited the tragedy of God, and instantly the energy of God will be in you. "Look unto *Me*," pay attention to the objective Source and the subjective energy will be there. We lose power if we do not concentrate on the right thing. The effect of the Cross is salvation, sanctification, healing, etc., but we are not to preach any of these, we are to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The proclaiming of Jesus will do its own work. Concentrate on God's centre in your preaching, and though your crowd may apparently pay no attention, they can never be the same again. If I talk my own talk, it is of no more importance to you than your talk is to me; but if I talk the truth of God, you will meet it again and so will I. We have to concentrate on the great point of spiritual energy - the Cross, to keep in contact with that centre where all the power lies, and the energy will be let loose. In holiness movements and spiritual experience meetings the concentration is apt to be put not on the Cross of Christ, but on the effects of the Cross.

The feebleness of the churches is being criticized to-day, and the criticism is justified. One reason for the feebleness is that there has not been this concentration of spiritual energy; we have not brooded enough on the tragedy of Calvary or on the meaning of Redemption.

## **November 27: THE CONSECRATION OF SPIRITUAL ENERGY**

***"By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Galatians 6:14***

If I brood on the Cross of Christ, I do not become a subjective pietist, interested in my own whiteness; I become dominantly concentrated on Jesus Christ's interests. Our Lord was not a recluse nor an ascetic, He did not cut Himself off from society, but He was inwardly disconnected all the time. He was not aloof, but He lived in an other world. He was so much in the ordinary world that the religious people of His day called Him a glutton and a wine-bibber. Our Lord never allowed anything to interfere with His consecration of spiritual energy.

The counterfeit of consecration is the conscious cutting off of things with the idea of storing spiritual power for use later on, but that is a hopeless mistake. The Spirit of God has spoiled the sin of a great many, yet there is no emancipation, no fullness in their lives. The kind of religious life we see abroad to-day is entirely different from the robust holiness of the life of Jesus Christ. "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." We are to be *in* the world but not *of* it; to be disconnected fundamentally, not externally.

We must never allow anything to interfere with the consecration of our spiritual energy. Consecration is our part, sanctification is God's part; and we have deliberately to determine to be interested only in that in which God is interested. The way to solve perplexing problems is to ask - Is this the kind of thing in which Jesus Christ is interested, or the kind of thing in which the spirit that is the antipodes of Jesus is interested?

## ***November 28: THE BOUNTY OF THE DESTITUTE***

***"Being justified freely by His grace. . ." Romans 3:24***

The Gospel of the grace of God awakens an intense longing in human souls and an equally intense resentment, because the revelation which it brings is not palatable. There is a certain pride in man that will give and give, but to come and accept is another thing. I will give my life to martyrdom, I will give myself in consecration, I will do anything, but do not humiliate me to the level of the most hell-deserving sinner and tell me that all I have to do is to accept the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

We have to realize that we cannot earn or win anything from God; we must either receive it as a gift or do without it. The greatest blessing spiritually is the knowledge that we are destitute; until we get there Our Lord is powerless. He can do nothing for us if we think we are sufficient of ourselves, we have to enter into His Kingdom through the door of destitution. As long as we are rich, possessed of anything in the way of pride or independence, God cannot do anything for us. It is only when we get hungry spiritually that we receive the Holy Spirit. The gift of the essential nature of God is made effectual in us by the Holy Spirit, He imparts to us the quickening life of Jesus, which puts "the beyond" within, and immediately "the beyond" has come within, it rises up to "the above," and we are lifted into the domain where Jesus lives. (John 3:5.)



## **November 29: THE ABSOLUTENESS OF JESUS CHRIST**

***"He shall glorify Me." John 16:14***

The pietistic movements of to-day have none of the rugged reality of the New Testament about them; there is nothing about them that needs the Death of Jesus Christ; all that is required is a pious atmosphere, and prayer and devotion. This type of experience is not supernatural nor miraculous, it did not cost the passion of God, it is not dyed in the blood of the Lamb, not stamped with the hall-mark of the Holy Ghost; it has not that mark on it which makes men say, as they look with awe and wonder - "That is the work of God Almighty." That and nothing else is what the New Testament talks about.

The type of Christian experience in the New Testament is that of personal passionate devotion to the Person of Jesus Christ. Every other type of Christian experience, so called, is detached from the Person of Jesus. There is no regeneration, no being born again into the Kingdom in which Christ lives, but only the idea that He is our Pattern. In the New Testament Jesus Christ is Saviour long before He is Pattern. To-day He is being despatched as the Figurehead of a Religion, a mere Example. He is that, but He is infinitely more; He is salvation itself, He is the Gospel of God.

Jesus said, "When He the Spirit of truth is come . . . He shall glorify Me." When I commit myself to the revelation made in the New Testament, I receive from God the gift of the Holy Spirit Who begins to interpret to me what Jesus did and does in me subjectively all that Jesus Christ did for me objectively.

## **November 30: BY THE GRACE OF GOD I AM WHAT I AM**

***"His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain." 1 Corinthians 15:10***

The way we continually talk about our own inability is an insult to the Creator. The deploring of our own incompetence is a slander against God for having overlooked us. Get into the habit of examining in the sight of God the things that sound humble before men, and you will be amazed at how staggeringly impertinent they are. "Oh, I shouldn't like to say I am sanctified; I'm not a saint." Say that before God; and it means - "No, Lord, it is impossible for You to save and sanctify me; there are chances I have not had; so many imperfections in my brain and body; no, Lord, it isn't possible." That may sound wonderfully humble before men, but before God it is an attitude of defiance.

Again, the things that sound humble before God 'may sound the opposite before men. To say Thank God, I know I am saved and sanctified is in the sight of God the acme of humility, it means you have so completely abandoned yourself to God that you know He is true. Never bother your head as to whether what you say sounds humble before men or not, but always be humble before God, and let Him be all in all.

There is only one relationship that matters, and that is your personal relationship to a personal Redeemer and Lord. Let everything else go, but maintain that at all costs, and God will fulfil His purpose through your life. One individual life may be of priceless value to God's purposes, and yours may be that life.

## **December 1: THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL**

***"For whosoever shall keep the whole law,***

***and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" James 2:10***

The moral law does not consider us as weak human beings at all, it takes no account of our heredity and infirmities, it demands that we be absolutely moral. The moral law never alters, either for the noblest or for the weakest, it is eternally and abidingly the same. The moral law ordained by God does not make itself weak to the weak, it does not palliate our shortcomings, it remains absolute for all time and eternity. If we do not realize this, it is because we are less than alive; immediately we are alive, life becomes a tragedy. "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." When we realize this, then the Spirit of God convicts us of sin. Until a man gets there and sees that there is no hope, the Cross of Jesus Christ is a farce to him. Conviction of sin always brings a fearful binding sense of the law, it makes a man hopeless - *"sold under sin."* I, a guilty sinner, can never get right with God, it is impossible. There is only one way in which I can get right with God, and that is by the Death of Jesus Christ. I must get rid of the lurking idea that I can ever be right with God because of my obedience - which of us could ever obey God to absolute perfection!

We only realize the power of the moral law when it comes with an "if." God never coerces us. In one mood we wish He would make us do the thing, and in another mood we wish He would leave us alone. Whenever God's will is in the ascendant, all compulsion is gone. When we choose deliberately to obey Him, then He will tax the remotest star and the last grain of sand to assist us with all His almighty power.

## **December 2: CHRISTIAN PERFECTION**

***"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect..."***

### **Philippians 3:1**

It is a snare to imagine that God wants to make us perfect specimens of what He can do; God's purpose is to make us one with Himself. The emphasis of holiness movements is apt to be that God is producing specimens of holiness to put in His museum. If you go off on this idea of personal holiness, the dead-set of your life will not be for God, but for what you call the manifestation of God in your life. "It can never be God's will that I should be sick." If it was God's will to bruise His own Son, why should He not bruise you? The thing that tells for God is not your relevant consistency to an idea of what a saint should be, but your real vital relation to Jesus Christ, and your abandonment to Him whether you are well or ill.

Christian perfection is not, and never can be, human perfection. Christian perfection is the perfection of a relationship to God which shows itself amid the irrelevancies of human life. When you obey the call of Jesus Christ, the first thing that strikes you is the irrelevancy of the things you have to do, and the next thing that strikes you is the fact that other people seem to be living perfectly consistent lives. Such lives are apt to leave you with the idea that God is unnecessary, by human effort and devotion we can reach the standard God wants. In a fallen world this can never be done. I am called to live in perfect relation to God so that my life produces a longing after God in other lives, not admiration for myself. Thoughts about myself hinder my usefulness to God. God is not after perfecting me to be a specimen in His show-room; He is getting me to the place where He can use me. Let Him do what He likes.

### ***December 3: NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER***

***"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." 1 Corinthians 2:4***

If in preaching the Gospel you substitute your clear knowledge of the way of salvation for confidence in the power of the Gospel, you hinder people getting to Reality. You have to see that while you proclaim your knowledge of the way of salvation, you yourself are rooted and grounded in faith in God. Never rely on the clearness of your exposition, but as you give your exposition see that *you* are relying on the Holy Spirit. Rely on the certainty of God's redemptive power, and He will create His own life in souls.

When once you are rooted in Reality, nothing can shake you. If your faith is in experiences, any thing that happens is likely to upset that faith; but nothing can ever upset God or the almighty Reality of Redemption; base your faith on that, and you are as eternally secure as God. When once you get into personal contact with Jesus Christ, you will never be moved again. That is the meaning of sanctification. God puts His disapproval on human experience when we begin to adhere to the conception that sanctification is merely an experience, and forget that sanctification itself has to be sanctified (see John 17:19). I have deliberately to give my sanctified life to God for His service, so that He can use me as His hands and His feet.

**December 4: THE LAW OF ANTAGONISM**  
***"To him that overcometh. . . ." Revelation 2:7***

Life without war is impossible either in nature or in grace. The basis of physical, mental, moral, and spiritual life is antagonism. This is the open fact of life.

Health is the balance between physical life and external nature, and it is maintained only by sufficient vitality on the inside against things on the outside. Everything outside my physical life is designed to put me to death. Things which keep me going when I am alive, disintegrate me when I am dead. If I have enough fighting power, I produce the balance of health. The same is true of the mental life. If I want to maintain a vigorous mental life, I have to fight, and in that way the mental balance called thought is produced.

Morally it is the same. Everything that does not partake of the nature of virtue is the enemy of virtue in me, and it depends on what moral calibre I have whether I overcome and produce virtue. Immediately I fight, I am moral in that particular. No man is virtuous because he cannot help it; virtue is acquired.

And spiritually it is the same. Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," i.e., every thing that is not spiritual makes for my undoing, but - "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." I have to learn to score off the things that come against me, and in that way produce the balance of holiness; then it becomes a delight to meet opposition.

Holiness is the balance between my disposition and the law of God as expressed in Jesus Christ.

## ***December 5: THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST***

***"Only in the throne will I be greater than thou." Genesis 41:40***

I have to account to God for the way in which I rule my body under His domination. Paul said he did not "frustrate the grace of God" - make it of no effect. The grace of God is absolute, the salvation of Jesus is perfect, it is done for ever. I am not being saved, I am saved; salvation is as eternal as God's throne; the thing for me to do is to work out what God works in. "Work out your own salvation," I am responsible for doing it. It means that I have to manifest in this body the life of the Lord Jesus, not mystically, but really and emphatically. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." Every saint can have his body under absolute control for God. God has made us to have government over all the temple of the Holy Spirit, over imaginations and affections. We are responsible for these, and we must never give way to inordinate affections. Most of us are much sterner with others than we are in regard to ourselves; we make excuses for things in ourselves whilst we condemn in others things to which we are not naturally inclined.

"I beseech you," says Paul, "present your bodies a living sacrifice." The point to decide is this - "Do I agree with my Lord and Master that my body shall be His temple?" If so, then for me the whole of the law for the body is summed up in this revelation, that my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

## **December 6: THE BOW IN THE CLOUD**

***"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth." Genesis 9:13***

It is the Will of God that human beings should get into moral relationship with Him, and His covenants are for this purpose. Why does not God save me? He has saved me, but I have not entered into relationship with Him. Why does not God do this and that? He has done it, the point is - Will I step into covenant relationship? All the great blessings of God are finished and complete, but they are not mine until I enter into relationship with Him on the basis of His covenant.

Waiting for God is incarnate unbelief, it means that I have no faith in Him; I wait for Him to do something in me that I may trust in that. God will not do it, because that is not the basis of the God-and-man relationship. Man has to go out of himself in his covenant with God as God goes out of Himself in His covenant with man. It is a question of faith in God - the rarest thing; we have faith only in our feelings. I do not believe God unless He will give me something in my hand whereby I may know I have it, then I say - "Now I believe." There is no faith there. *"Look unto Me, and be ye saved."*

When I have really transacted business with God on His covenant and have let go entirely, there is no sense of merit, no human ingredient in it at all, but a complete overwhelming sense of being brought into union with God, and the whole thing is transfigured with peace and joy.



## ***December 7: REPENTANCE***

***"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation." 2 Corinthians 7:10***

Conviction of sin is best portrayed in the words -

"My sins, my sins, my Saviour,  
How sad *on Thee* they fall."

Conviction of sin is one of the rarest things that ever strikes a man. It is the threshold of an understanding of God. Jesus Christ said that when the Holy Spirit came He would convict of sin, and when the Holy Spirit rouses a man's conscience and brings him into the presence of God, it is not his relationship with men that bothers him, but his relationship with God - "against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." The marvels of conviction of sin, forgiveness, and holiness are so interwoven that it is only the forgiven man who is the holy man, he proves he is forgiven by being the opposite to what he was, by God's grace. Repentance always brings a man to this point: I have sinned. The surest sign that God is at work is when a man says that and means it. Anything less than this is remorse for having made blunders, the reflex action of disgust at himself.

The entrance into the Kingdom is through the panging pains of repentance crashing into a man's respectable goodness; then the Holy Ghost, Who produces these agonies, begins the formation of the Son of God in the life. The new life will manifest itself in conscious repentance and unconscious holiness, never the other way about. The bedrock of Christianity is repentance. Strictly speaking, a man cannot repent when he chooses; repentance is a gift of God. The old Puritans used to pray for "the gift of tears." If ever you cease to know the virtue of repentance, you are in darkness. Examine yourself and see if you have forgotten how to be sorry.

## ***December 8: THE IMPARTIAL POWER OF GOD***

***"For by one offering he hath perfected***

***for ever them that are sanctified." Hebrews 10:14***

We trample the blood of the Son of God under foot if we think we are forgiven because we are sorry for our sins. The only explanation of the forgiveness of God and of the unfathomable depth of His forgetting is the Death of Jesus Christ. Our repentance is merely the outcome of our personal realization of the Atonement which He has worked out for us. "Christ Jesus . . . is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." When we realize that Christ is made all this to us, the boundless joy of God begins; wherever the joy of God is not present, the death sentence is at work.

It does not matter who or what we are, there is absolute reinstatement into God by the death of Jesus Christ and by no other way, not because Jesus Christ pleads, but because He died. It is not earned, but accepted. All the pleading which deliberately refuses to recognize the Cross is of no avail; it is battering at another door than the one which Jesus has opened. I don't want to come that way, it is too humiliating to be received as a sinner. "There is none other Name . . ." The apparent heartlessness of God is the expression of His real heart, there is boundless entrance in His way. "We have forgiveness through His blood." Identification with the death of Jesus Christ means identification with Him to the death of everything that never was in Him.

God is justified in saving bad men only as He makes them good. Our Lord does not pretend we are all right when we are all wrong. The Atonement is a propitiation whereby God through the death of Jesus makes an unholy man holy.

**December 9: THE OFFENCE OF THE NATURAL**  
***"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh***  
***with the affections and lusts."* Galatians 5:2**

The natural life is not sinful; we must be apostatized from sin, have nothing to do with sin in any shape or form. Sin belongs to hell and the devil; I, as a child of God, belong to heaven and God. It is not a question of giving up sin, but of giving up my right to myself, my natural independence and self-assertiveness, and this is where the battle has to be fought. It is the things that are right and noble and good from the natural stand point that keep us back from God's best. To discern that natural virtues antagonize surrender to God, is to bring our soul into the centre of its greatest battle. Very few of us debate with the sordid and evil and wrong, but we do debate with the good. It is the good that hates the best, and the higher up you get in the scale of the natural virtues, the more intense is the opposition to Jesus Christ. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" - it is going to cost the natural in you everything, not something. Jesus said - "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny *himself*," i.e., his right to himself, and a man has to realize Who Jesus Christ is before he will do it. Beware of refusing to go to the funeral of your own independence.

The natural life is not spiritual, and it can only be made spiritual by sacrifice. If we do not resolutely sacrifice the natural, the supernatural can never become natural in us. There is no royal road there; each of us has it entirely in his own hands. It is not a question of praying, but of performing.

***December 10: THE OFFERING OF THE NATURAL  
"Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid,  
the other by a freewoman." Galatians 4:22***

Paul is not dealing with sin in this chapter of Galatians, but with the relation of the natural to the spiritual. The natural must be turned into the spiritual by sacrifice, otherwise a tremendous divorce will be produced in the actual life. Why should God ordain the natural to be sacrificed? God did not. It is not God's order, but His permissive will. God's order was that the natural should be transformed into the spiritual by obedience; it is sin that made it necessary for the natural to be sacrificed.

Abraham had to offer up Ishmael before he offered up Isaac. Some of us are trying to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God before we have sacrificed the natural. The only way in which we can offer a spiritual sacrifice to God is by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice. Sanctification means more than deliverance from sin, it means the deliberate commitment of myself whom God has saved to God, and that I do not care what it costs.

If we do not sacrifice the natural to the spiritual, the natural life will mock at the life of the Son of God in us and produce a continual swither. This is always the result of an undisciplined spiritual nature. We go wrong because we stubbornly refuse to discipline ourselves, physically, morally or mentally. "I wasn't disciplined when I was a child." You must discipline yourself now. If you do not, you will ruin the whole of your personal life for God.

God is not with our natural life while we pamper it; but when we put it out in the desert and resolutely keep it under, then God will be with it; and He will open up wells and oases, and fulfill all His promises for the natural.

## ***December 11: INDIVIDUALITY***

***"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." Matthew 16:24***

Individuality is the husk of the personal life. Individuality is all elbows, it separates and isolates. It is the characteristic of the child and rightly so; but if we mistake individuality for the personal life, we will remain isolated. The shell of individuality is God's created natural covering for the protection of the personal life; but individuality must go in order that the personal life may come out and be brought into fellowship with God. Individuality counterfeits personality as lust counterfeits love. God designed human nature for Himself; individuality debases human nature for itself.

The characteristics of individuality are independence and self-assertiveness. It is the continual assertion of individuality that hinders our spiritual life more than anything else. If you say - "I cannot believe," it is because individuality is in the road; individuality never can believe. Personality cannot help believing. Watch yourself when the Spirit of God is at work. He pushes you to the margins of your individuality, and you have either to say - "I shan't," or to surrender, to break the husk of individuality and let the personal life emerge. The Holy Spirit narrows it down every time to one thing (cf. Matthew 5:23-24). The thing in you that will not be reconciled to your brother is your individuality. God wants to bring you into union with Himself, but unless you are willing to give up your right to yourself He cannot. "Let him deny himself" - deny his independent right to himself, then the real life has a chance to grow.

## ***December 12: PERSONALITY***

***"That they may be one, even as we are one." John 17:22***

Personality is that peculiar, incalculable thing that is meant when we speak of ourselves as distinct from everyone else. Our personality is always too big for us to grasp. An island in the sea may be but the top of a great mountain. Personality is like an island, we know nothing about the great depths underneath, consequently we cannot estimate ourselves. We begin by thinking that we can, but we come to realize that there is only one Being Who understands us, and that is our Creator.

Personality is the characteristic of the spiritual man as individuality is the characteristic of the natural man. Our Lord can never be defined in terms of individuality and independence, but only in terms of personality, "I and My Father are one." Personality merges, and you only reach your real identity when you are merged with an other person. When love, or the Spirit of God strikes a man, he is transformed, he no longer insists upon his separate individuality. Our Lord never spoke in terms of individuality, of a man's "elbows" or his isolated position, but in terms of personality - "that they may be one, even as We are one." If you give up your right to yourself to God, the real true nature of your personality answers to God straight away. Jesus Christ emancipates the personality, and the individuality is transfigured; the transfiguring element is love, personal devotion to Jesus. Love is the outpouring of one personality in fellowship with another personality.

## ***December 13: WHAT TO PRAY FOR***

***"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" Luke 18:1***

You cannot intercede if you do not believe in the reality of the Redemption; you will turn intercession into futile sympathy with human beings which will only increase their submissive content to being out of touch with God. In intercession you bring the person, or the circumstance that impinges on you before God until you are moved by His attitude towards that person or circumstance. Intercession means filling up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," and that is why there are so few intercessors. Intercession is put on the line of - "Put yourself in his place." Never! Try to put yourself in God's place.

As a worker, be careful to keep pace with the communications of reality from God or you will be crushed. If you know too much, more than God has engineered for you to know, you cannot pray, the condition of the people is so crushing that you cannot get through to reality.

Our work lies in coming into definite contact with God about everything, and we shirk it by becoming active workers. We do the things that can be tabulated but we will not intercede. Intercession is the one thing that has no snares, because it keeps our relationship with God completely open.

The thing to watch in intercession is that no soul is patched up, a soul must get through into contact with the life of God. Think of the number of souls God has brought about our path and we have dropped them! When we pray on the ground of Redemption, God creates something He can create in no other way than through intercessory prayer.

## ***December 14: THE GREAT LIFE***

***"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you:***

***. . Let not your heart be troubled." John 14:27***

Whenever a thing becomes difficult in personal experience, we are in danger of blaming God, but it is we who are in the wrong, not God, there is some perversity somewhere that we will not let go. Immediately we do, everything becomes as clear as daylight. As long as we try to serve two ends, ourselves and God, there is perplexity. The attitude must be one of complete reliance on God. When once we get there, there is nothing easier than living the saintly life; difficulty comes in when we want to usurp the authority of the Holy Spirit for our own ends.

Whenever you obey God, His seal is always that of peace, the witness of an unfathomable peace, which is not natural, but the peace of Jesus. Whenever peace does not come, tarry till it does or find out the reason why it does not. If you are acting on an impulse, or from a sense of the heroic, the peace of Jesus will not witness; there is no simplicity or confidence in God, because the spirit of simplicity is born of the Holy Ghost, not of your decisions. Every decision brings a reaction of simplicity.

My questions come whenever I cease to obey. When I have obeyed God, the problems never come between me and God, they come as probes to keep the mind going on with amazement at the revelation of God. Any problem that comes between God and myself springs out of disobedience; any problem, and there are many, that is alongside me while I obey God, increases my ecstatic delight, because I know that my Father knows, and I am going to watch and see how He unravels this thing.



## ***December 15: APPROVED UNTO GOD***

***"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15***

If you cannot express yourself on any subject, struggle until you can. If you do not, someone will be the poorer all the days of his life. Struggle to re-express some truth of God to your self, and God will use that expression to someone else. Go through the winepress of God where the grapes are crushed. You must struggle to get expression experimentally, then there will come a time when that expression will become the very wine of strengthening to someone else; but if you say lazily - "I am not going to struggle to express this thing for myself, I will borrow what I say," the expression will not only be of no use to you, but of no use to anyone. Try to state to yourself what you feel implicitly to be God's truth, and you give God a chance to pass it on to someone else through you.

Always make a practice of provoking your own mind to think out what it accepts easily. Our position is not ours until we make it ours by suffering. The author who benefits you most is not the one who tells you something you did not know before, but the one who gives expression to the truth that has been dumbly struggling in you for utterance.

## **December 16: WRESTLING BEFORE GOD**

***"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God . . . praying always . . .***

***" Ephesians 6:13, 18***

You have to wrestle *against* the things that prevent you from getting to God, and you wrestle in prayer *for* other souls; but never say that you wrestle *with* God in prayer, it is scripturally untrue. If you do wrestle with God, you will be crippled all the rest of your life. If, when God comes in some way you do not want, you take hold of Him as Jacob did and wrestle with Him, you compel Him to put you out of joint. Don't be a hirpler in God's ways, but be one who wrestles before God with things, becoming more than conqueror through Him. Wrestling before God tells in His Kingdom. If you ask me to pray for you and I am not complete in Christ, I may pray but it avails nothing; but if I am complete in Christ my prayer prevails all the time. Prayer is only effective when there is completeness - "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God."

Always distinguish between God's order and His permissive will, i.e., His providential purpose towards us. God's order is unchangeable; His permissive will is that with which we must wrestle before Him. It is our reaction to the permissive will of God that enables us to get at His order. "All things work together for good to them that love God" - to those who remain true to God's order, to His calling in Christ Jesus. God's permissive will is the means whereby His sons and daughters are to be manifested. We are not to be like jelly-fish saying, "It's the Lord's will." We have not to put up a fight before God, not to wrestle with God, but to wrestle before God *with things*. Beware of squatting lazily before God in stead of putting up a glorious fight so that you may lay hold of His strength.

## **December 17: REDEMPTION CREATES THE NEED IT SATISFIES**

***"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God:  
for they are foolishness unto him." 1 Corinthians 2:14***

The Gospel of God creates a sense of need of the Gospel. Paul says - "If our gospel be hid, it is hid" - to those who are blackguards? No, "to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." The majority of people have their morality well within their own grasp, they have no sense of need of the Gospel. It is God Who creates the need of which no human being is conscious until God manifests Himself. Jesus said - "Ask, and it shall be given you," but God cannot give until a man asks. It is not that He withholds, but that that is the way He has. constituted things on the basis of Redemption. By means of our asking, God gets processes into work whereby He creates the thing that is not in existence until we do ask. The inner reality of Redemption is that it creates all the time. As the Redemption creates the life of God in us, so it creates the things belonging to that life. Nothing can satisfy the need but that which created the need. This is the meaning of Redemption - it creates and it satisfies.

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." We preach our own experiences and people are interested, but no sense of need is awakened by it. If once Jesus Christ is lifted up, the Spirit of God will create a conscious need of Him. Behind the preaching of the Gospel is the creative Redemption of God at work in the souls of men. It is never personal testimony that saves men. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

## ***December 18: THE TEST OF LOYALTY***

***"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."***

**Romans 8:28**

It is only the loyal soul who believes that God engineers circumstances. We take such liberty with our circumstances, we do not believe God engineers them, although we say we do; we treat the things that happen as if they were engineered by men. To be faithful in every circumstance means that we have only one loyalty, and that is to our Lord. Suddenly God breaks up a particular set of circumstances, and the realization comes that we have been disloyal to Him by not recognizing that He had ordered them; we never saw what He was after, and that particular thing will never be repeated all the days of our life. The test of loyalty always comes just there. If we learn to worship God in the trying circumstances, He will alter them in two seconds when He chooses.

Loyalty to Jesus Christ is the thing that we "stick at" to-day. We will be loyal to work, to service, to anything, but do not ask us to be loyal to Jesus Christ. Many Christians are intensely impatient of talking about loyalty to Jesus. Our Lord is dethroned more emphatically by Christian workers than by the world. God is made a machine for blessing men, and Jesus Christ is made a Worker among workers.

The idea is not that we do work for God, but that we are so loyal to Him that He can do His work through us - "I reckon on you for extreme service, with no complaining on your part and no explanation on Mine." God wants to use us as He used His own Son.

## ***December 19: WHAT TO CONCENTRATE ON***

***"I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34***

Never be sympathetic with the soul whose case makes you come to the conclusion that God is hard. God is more tender than we can conceive, and every now and again He gives us the chance of being the rugged one that He may be the tender One. If a man cannot get through to God it is because there is a secret thing he does not intend to give up - I will admit I have done wrong, but I no more intend to give up that thing than fly. It is impossible to deal sympathetically with a case like that: we have to get right deep down to the root until there is antagonism and resentment against the message. People want the blessing of God, but they will not stand the thing that goes straight to the quick.

If God has had His way with you, your message as His servant is merciless insistence on the one line, cut down to the very root, otherwise there will be no healing. Drive home the message until there is no possible refuge from its application. Begin to get at people where they are until you get them to realize what they lack, and then erect the standard of Jesus Christ for their lives - "We never can be that." Then drive it home - "Jesus Christ says you must." "But how can we be?" "You cannot, unless you have a new Spirit." (Luke 11:13.)

There must be a sense of need before your message is of any use. Thousands of people are happy without God in this world. If I was happy and moral till Jesus came, why did He come? Because that kind of happiness and peace is on a wrong level; Jesus Christ came to send a sword through every peace that is not based on a personal relationship to Himself.

## ***December 20: THE RIGHT LINES OF WORK***

***"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." John 12:32***

Very few of us have any understanding of the reason why Jesus Christ died. If sympathy is all that human beings need, then the Cross of Christ is a farce, there was no need for it. What the world needs is not "a little bit of love," but a surgical operation.

When you are face to face with a soul in difficulty spiritually, remind yourself of Jesus Christ on the Cross. If that soul can get to God on any other line, then the Cross of Jesus Christ is unnecessary. If you can help others by your sympathy or understanding, you are a traitor to Jesus Christ. You have to keep your soul rightly related to God and pour out for others on His line, not pour out on the human line and ignore God. The great note to-day is amiable religiosity.

The one thing we have to do is to exhibit Jesus Christ crucified, to lift Him up all the time. Every doctrine that is not imbedded in the Cross of Jesus will lead astray. If the worker himself believes in Jesus Christ and is banking on the Reality of Redemption, the people he talks to must be concerned. The thing that remains and deepens is the worker's simple relationship to Jesus Christ; his usefulness to God depends on that and that alone.

The calling of a New Testament worker is to uncover sin and to reveal Jesus Christ as Saviour, consequently he cannot be poetical, he must be sternly surgical. We are sent by God to lift up Jesus Christ, not to give wonderfully beautiful discourses. We have to probe straight down as deeply as God has probed us, to be keen in sensing the Scriptures which bring the truth straight home and to apply them fearlessly.

## ***December 21: EXPERIENCE OR REVELATION***

***"We have received . . . the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." 1 Corinthians 2:12***

Reality is Redemption, not my experience of Redemption; but Redemption has no meaning for me until it speaks the language of my conscious life. When I am born again, the Spirit of God takes me right out of myself and my experiences, and identifies me with Jesus Christ. If I am left with my experiences, my experiences have not been produced by Redemption. The proof that they are produced by Redemption is that I am led out of myself all the time, I no longer pay any attention to my experiences as the ground of Reality, but only to the Reality which produced the experiences. My experiences are not worth anything unless they keep me at the Source, Jesus Christ.

If you try to dam up the Holy Spirit in you to produce subjective experiences, you will find that He will burst all bounds and take you back again to the historic Christ. Never nourish an experience which has not God as its Source and faith in God as its result. If you do, your experience is anti-Christian, no matter what visions you may have had. Is Jesus Christ Lord of your experiences, or do you try to lord it over Him? Is any experience dearer to you than your Lord? He must be Lord over you, and you must not pay attention to any experience over which He is not Lord. There comes a time when God will make you impatient with your own experience - I do not care what I experience; I am sure of Him.

Be ruthless with yourself if you are given to talking about the experiences you have had. Faith that is sure of itself is not faith; faith that is sure of God is the only faith there is.

## ***December 22: THE DRAWING OF THE FATHER***

***"No man can come to Me,***

***except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." John 6:44***

When God draws me, the issue of my will comes in at once - will I react on the revelation which God gives - will I come to Him? Discussion on spiritual matters is an impertinence. Never discuss with anyone when God speaks. Belief is not an intellectual act; belief is a moral act whereby I deliberately commit myself. Will I dump myself down absolutely on God and transact on what He says? If I will, I shall find I am based on Reality that is as sure as God's throne.

In preaching the gospel, always push an issue of will. Belief must be the *will* to believe. There must be a surrender of the will, not a surrender to persuasive power, a deliberate launching forth on God and on what He says until I am no longer confident in what I have done, I am confident only in God. The hindrance is that I will not trust God, but only my mental understanding. As far as feelings go, I must stake all blindly. I must *will* to believe, and this can never be done without a violent effort on my part to disassociate myself from my old ways of looking at things, and by putting myself right over on to Him.

Every man is made to reach out beyond his grasp. It is God who draws me, and my relationship to Him in the first place is a personal one, not an intellectual one. I am introduced into the relationship by the miracle of God and my own will to believe, then I begin to get an intelligent appreciation and understanding of the wonder of the transaction.



## ***December 23: HOW CAN I PERSONALLY PARTAKE IN THE ATONEMENT?***

***"But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ."***

**Galatians 6:14**

The Gospel of Jesus Christ always forces an issue of will. Do I accept God's verdict on sin in the Cross of Christ? Have I the slightest interest in the death of Jesus? Do I want to be identified with His death, to be killed right out to all interest in sin, in worldliness, in self - to be so identified with Jesus that I am spoilt for every thing else but Him? The great privilege of discipleship is that I can sign on under His Cross, and that means death to sin. Get alone with Jesus and either tell Him that you do not want sin to die out in you; or else tell Him that at all costs you want to be identified with His death. Immediately you transact in confident faith in what Our Lord did on the Cross, a supernatural identification with His death takes place, and you will know with a knowledge that passeth knowledge that your "old man" is crucified with Christ. The proof that your old man is crucified with Christ is the amazing ease with which the life of God in you enables you to obey the voice of Jesus Christ.

Every now and again, Our Lord lets us see what we would be like if it were not for Himself; it is a justification of what He said - "Without Me ye can do nothing." That is why the bedrock of Christianity is personal, passionate devotion to the Lord Jesus. We mistake the ecstasy of our first introduction into the Kingdom for the purpose of God in getting us there; His purpose in getting us there is that we may realize all that identification with Jesus Christ means.

## ***December 24: THE HIDDEN LIFE***

***"Your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:3***

The Spirit of God witnesses to the simple almighty security of the life hid with Christ in God and this is continually brought out in the Epistles. We talk as if it were the most precarious thing to live the sanctified life; it is the most secure thing, because it has Almighty God in and behind it. The most precarious thing is to try and live without God. If we are born again it is the easiest thing to live in right relationship to God and the most difficult thing to go wrong, if only we will heed God's warnings and keep in the light.

When we think of being delivered from sin, of being filled with the Spirit, and of walking in the light, we picture the peak of a great mountain, very high and wonderful, and we say - "Oh, but I could never live up there!" But when we do get there by God's grace, we find it is not a mountain peak, but a plateau where there is ample room to live and to grow. "Thou hast enlarged my steps under me."

When you really see Jesus, I defy you to doubt Him. When He says - "Let not your heart be troubled," if you see Him I defy you to trouble your mind, it is a moral impossibility to doubt when He is there. Every time you get into personal contact with Jesus, His words are real. "My peace I give unto you," it is a peace all over from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, an irrepressible confidence. "Your life is hid with Christ in God," and the imperturbable peace of Jesus Christ is imparted to you.

## ***December 25: HIS BIRTH AND OUR NEW BIRTH***

***"Behold, a virgin shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Isaiah 7:14 (R.V.)***

**His Birth in History.** "Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35.) Jesus Christ was born *into* this world, not *from* it. He did not evolve out of history; He came into history from the outside. Jesus Christ is not the best human being, He is a Being Who cannot be accounted for by the human race at all. He is not man becoming God, but God Incarnate, God coming into human flesh, coming into it from outside. His life is the Highest and the Holiest entering in at the Lowliest door. Our Lord's birth was an advent.

**His Birth in Me.** "Of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19.) Just as Our Lord came into human history from outside, so He must come into me from outside. Have I allowed my personal human life to become a "Bethlehem" for the Son of God? I cannot enter into the realm of the Kingdom of God unless I am born from above by a birth totally unlike natural birth. "Ye must be born again." This is not a command, it is a foundation fact. The characteristic of the new birth is that I yield myself so completely to God that Christ is formed in me. Immediately Christ is formed in me, His nature begins to work through me.

**God manifest in the flesh** - that is what is made profoundly possible for you and me by the Redemption.

## ***December 26: PLACED IN THE LIGHT***

***"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light the blood of Jesus Christ His Son  
cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7***

To mistake conscious freedom from sin for deliverance from sin by the Atonement is a great error. No man knows what sin is until he is born again. Sin is what Jesus Christ faced on Calvary. The evidence that I am delivered from sin is that I know the real nature of sin in me. It takes the last reach of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, that is, the impartation of His absolute perfection, to make a man know what sin is.

The Holy Spirit applies the Atonement to us in the unconscious realm as well as in the realm of which we are conscious, and it is only when we get a grasp of the unrivalled power of the Spirit in us that we understand the meaning of 1 John 1:7, *"the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."* This does not refer to conscious sin only, but to the tremendously profound understanding of sin which only the Holy Ghost in me realizes.

If I walk in the light as God is in the light, not in the light of my conscience, but in the light of God - if I walk there, with nothing folded up, then there comes the amazing revelation, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin so that God Almighty can see nothing to censure in me. In my consciousness it works with a keen poignant knowledge of what sin is. The love of God at work in me makes me hate with the hatred of the Holy Ghost all that is not in keeping with God's holiness. To walk in the light means that everything that is of the darkness drives me closer into the centre of the light.

## ***December 27: WHERE THE BATTLE'S LOST AND WON***

***"If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord. . . ." Jeremiah 4:1***

The battle is lost or won in the secret places of the will before God, never first in the external world. The Spirit of God apprehends me and I am obliged to get alone with God and fight the battle out before Him. Until this is done, I lose every time. The battle may take one minute or a year, that will depend on me, not on God; but it must be wrestled out alone before God, and I must resolutely go through the hell of a renunciation before God. Nothing has any power over the man who has fought out the battle before God and won there.

If I say, "I will wait till I get into the circumstances and then put God to the test," I shall find I cannot. I must get the thing settled between my self and God in the secret places of my soul where no stranger intermeddles, and then I can go forth with the certainty that the battle is won. Lose it there, and calamity and disaster and upset are as sure as God's decree. The reason the battle is not won is because I try to win it in the external world first. Get alone with God, fight it out before Him, settle the matter there once and for all.

In dealing with other people, the line to take is to push them to an issue of will. That is the way abandonment begins. Every now and again, not often, but sometimes, God brings us to a point of climax. That is the Great Divide in the life; from that point we either go towards a more and more dilatory and useless type of Christian life, or we become more and more ablaze for the glory of God - My Utmost for *His* Highest.

## **December 28: CONTINUOUS CONVERSION**

***"Except ye be converted, and become as little children. . . ." Matthew 18:3***

These words of Our Lord are true of our initial conversion, but we have to be continuously converted all the days of our lives, continually to turn to God as children. If we trust to our wits instead of to God, we produce consequences for which God will hold us responsible. Immediately our bodies are brought into new conditions by the providence of God, we have to see that our natural life obeys the dictates of the Spirit of God. Because we have done it once is no proof that we shall do it again. The relation of the natural to the spiritual is one of continuous conversion, and it is the one thing we object to. In every setting in which we are put, the Spirit of God remains unchanged and His salvation unaltered, but we have to "put on the new man." God holds us responsible every time we refuse to convert ourselves, our reason for refusing is wilful obstinacy. Our natural life must not rule, God must rule in us.

The hindrance in our spiritual life is that we will not be continually converted, there are wedges of obstinacy where our pride spits at the throne of God and says - I won't. We deify independence and wilfulness and call them by the wrong name. What God looks on as obstinate weakness, we call strength. There are whole tracts of our lives which have not yet been brought into subjection, and it can only be done by this continuous conversion. Slowly but surely we can claim the whole territory for the Spirit of God.

## ***December 29: DESERTER OR DISCIPLE?***

***"From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."***

**John 6:66**

When God gives a vision by His Spirit through His word of what He wants, and your mind and soul thrill to it, if you do not walk in the light of that vision, you will sink into servitude to a point of view which Our Lord never had. Disobedience in mind to the heavenly vision will make you a slave to points of view that are alien to Jesus Christ. Do not look at someone else and say - Well, if he can have those views and prosper, why cannot I? You have to walk in the light of the vision that has been given to you and not compare yourself with others or judge them, that is between them and God. When you find that a point of view in which you have been delighting clashes with the heavenly vision and you debate, certain things will begin to develop in you - a sense of property and a sense of personal right, things of which Jesus Christ made nothing. He was always against these things as being the root of everything alien to Himself. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." If we do not recognize this, it is because we are ignoring the undercurrent of Our Lord's teaching.

We are apt to lie back and bask in the memory of the wonderful experience we have had. If there is one standard in the New Testament revealed by the light of God and you do not come up to it, and do not feel inclined to come up to it, that is the beginning of backsliding, because it means your conscience does not answer to the truth. You can never be the same after the unveiling of a truth. That moment marks you for going on as a more true disciple of Jesus Christ or for going back as a deserter.

## **December 30: "AND EVERY VIRTUE WE POSSESS"**

***"All my fresh springs shall be in Thee." Psalm 87:7 (P.B.V.)***

Our Lord never patches up our natural virtues, He re-makes the whole man on the inside. "Put on the new man," i.e., see that your natural human life puts on the garb that is in keeping with the new life. The life God plants in us develops its own virtues, not the virtues of Adam but of Jesus Christ. Watch how God will wither up your confidence in natural virtues after sanctification, and in any power you have, until you learn to draw your life from the reservoir of the resurrection life of Jesus. Thank God if you are going through a drying-up experience!

The sign that God is at work in us is that He corrupts confidence in the natural virtues, because they are not promises of what we are going to be, but remnants of what God created man to be. We will cling to the natural virtues, while all the time God is trying to get us into contact with the life of Jesus Christ which can never be described in terms of the natural virtues. It is the saddest thing to see people in the service of God depending on that which the grace of God never gave them, depending on what they have by the accident of heredity. God does not build up our natural virtues and transfigure them, because our natural virtues can never come anywhere near what Jesus Christ wants. No natural love, no natural patience, no natural purity can ever come up to His demands. But as we bring every bit of our bodily life into harmony with the new life which God has put in us, He will exhibit in us the virtues that were characteristic of the Lord Jesus.

*"And every virtue we possess  
Is His alone."*



## ***December 31: YESTERDAY***

***"The God of Israel will be your rereward." Isaiah 52:12***

**Security from Yesterday.** "God requireth that which is past." At the end of the year we turn with eagerness to all that God has for the future, and yet anxiety is apt to arise from remembering the yesterdays. Our present enjoyment of God's grace is apt to be checked by the memory of yesterday's sins and blunders. But God is the God of our yesterdays, and He allows the memory of them in order to turn the past into a ministry of spiritual culture for the future. God reminds us of the past lest we get into a shallow security in the present.

**Security for To-morrow.** "For the Lord will go before you." This is a gracious revelation, that God will garrison where we have failed to. He will watch lest things trip us up again into like failure, as they assuredly would do if He were not our rereward. God's hand reaches back to the past and makes a clearing-house for conscience.

**Security for To-day.** "For ye shall not go out with haste." As we go forth into the coming year, let it not be in the haste of impetuous, unremembering delight, nor with the flight of impulsive thoughtlessness, but with the patient power of knowing that the God of Israel will go before us. Our yesterdays present irreparable things to us; it is true that we have lost opportunities which will never return, but God can transform this destructive anxiety into a constructive thoughtfulness for the future. Let the past sleep, but let it sleep on the bosom of Christ.

Leave the Irreparable Past in His hands, and step out into the Irresistible Future with Him.

**Days of Heaven Upon Earth**  
**A Year Book of**  
**Scripture Texts & Living Truths**  
**by Rev. A. B. Simpson**

**(366 DEVOTIONS)**

**Albert Benjamin Simpson** (1843-1919) was one of the most important Christian workers of his day. He was an ardent soul-winner and was active in raising up new believers and in training Christian workers. He began his service as a Presbyterian minister, but later resigned after realizing the inherent frustrations in trying to serve the Lord within the denominational framework. He wrote over 70 books on the Bible and the Christian life. His many hymns and poems are full of inspiration and truth. He was the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

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## **JANUARY 1: “Redeeming the time” (Eph. 5:16)**

Two little words are found in the Greek version here. They are translated “\_ton kairon\_” in the revised version, “Buying up for yourselves the opportunity.” The two words \_ton kairon\_ mean, literally, the opportunity.

They do not refer to time in general, but to a special point of time, a juncture, a crisis, a moment full of possibilities and quickly passing by, which we must seize and make the best of before it has passed away.

It is intimated that there are not many such moments of opportunity, because the days are evil; like a barren desert, in which, here and there, you find a flower, pluck it while you can; like a business opportunity which comes a few times in a life-time; buy it up while you have the chance. Be spiritually alert; be not unwise, but understanding what the will of God is. “Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, buying up for yourselves the opportunity.”

Sometimes it is a moment of time to be saved; sometimes a soul to be led to Christ; sometimes it is an occasion for love; sometimes for patience: sometimes for victory over temptation and sin. Let us redeem it.

## **JANUARY 2: “I will cause you to walk in My statutes” (Eze. 36:27)**

The highest spiritual condition is one where life is spontaneous and flows without effort, like the deep floods of Ezekiel’s river, where the struggles of the swimmer ceased, and he was borne by the current’s resistless force.

So God leads us into spiritual conditions and habits which become the spontaneous impulses of our being, and we live and move in the fullness of the divine life.

But these spiritual habits are not the outcome of some transitory impulse, but are often slowly acquired and established. They begin, like every true habit, in a definite act of will, and they are confirmed by the repetition of that act until it becomes a habit. The first stages always involve effort and choice. We have to take a stand and hold it steadily, and after we have done so a certain time, it becomes second nature, and carries us by its own force.

The Holy Spirit is willing to form such habits in every direction of our Christian life, and if we will but obey Him in the first steppings of faith, we will soon become established in the attitude of obedience, and duty will be delight. by its own force.

The Holy Spirit is willing to form such habits in every direction of our Christian life, and if we will but obey Him in the first steppings of faith, we will soon become established in the attitude of obedience, and duty will be delight.

### **JANUARY 3: “Watch and pray” (Matt. 26:41)**

We need to watch for prayers as well as for the answers to our prayers. It needs as much wisdom to pray rightly as it does faith to receive the answers to our prayers.

We met a friend the other day, who had been in years of darkness because God had failed to answer certain prayers, and the result had been a state bordering on infidelity.

A very few moments were sufficient to convince this friend that these prayers had been entirely unauthorized, and that God had never promised to answer such prayers, and they were for things which this friend should have accomplished himself, in the exercise of ordinary wisdom.

The result was deliverance from a cloud of unbelief which was almost wrecking a Christian life. There are some things about which we do not need to pray, as much as to take the light which God has already given.

Many persons are asking God to give them peculiar signs, tokens and supernatural intimations of His will. Our business is to use the light He has given, and then He will give whatever more we need.

## **JANUARY 4: “Blessed is the man that walketh not” (Ps. 1:1)**

Three things are notable about this man:

1. His company. “He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”
2. His reading and thinking. “His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night.”
3. His fruitfulness. “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

The river is the Holy Ghost; the planting, the deep, abiding life in which, not occasionally, but habitually, we absorb the Holy Spirit; and the fruit is not occasional, but continual, and appropriate to each changing season.

His life is also prosperous, and his spirit fresh, like the unfading leaf. Such a life must be happy. Indeed, happiness is a matter of spiritual conditions. Put a sunbeam in a cellar and it must be bright. Put a nightingale in the darkest midnight, and it must sing.

## **JANUARY 5: “I know him that he will do the law” (Gen. 38:19)**

God wants people that He can depend upon. He could say of Abraham, “I know him, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham all that He hath spoken.” God can be depended upon; He wants us to be just as decided, as reliable, as stable. This is just what faith means. God is looking for men on whom He can put the weight of all His love, and power, and faithful promises. When God finds such a soul there is nothing He will not do for him. God’s engines are strong enough to draw any weight we attach to them. Unfortunately the cable which we fasten to the engine is often too weak to hold the weight of our prayer, therefore God is drilling us, disciplining us, and training us to stability and certainty in the life of faith. Let us learn our lessons, and let us stand fast.

God has His best things for the few  
Who dare to stand the test;  
God has his second choice for those  
Who will not have His best.

Give me, O Lord, Thy highest choice,  
Let others take the rest.  
Their good things have no charm for me,  
For I have got Thy best.



## **JANUARY 6: “The body is not one member, but many” (I. Cor. 12:14)**

We have a friend who has a phonograph for his correspondence. It consists of two parts. One is a simple and wonderful apparatus, whose sensitive cylinders receive the tones and then give them out again, word for word, through the hearing tube. The other part is a common little box that stands under the table, and does nothing but supply the power through connecting wires.

Now, the little box might insist upon being the phonograph, and doing the talking; but if it should, it would not only waste its own life but destroy the life of its partner.

Its sole business is to supply power to the phonograph, while the latter is to do the talking. So some of us are called to be voices to speak for God to our fellow-men, others are forces to sustain them, by our holy sympathy and silent prayer. (Some of us are little dynamos under the table, while others are phonographs that speak aloud the messages of heaven.)

Let each of us be true to our God-given ministry, and when the day comes our work will be weighed and the rewards distributed.

## **JANUARY 7: “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from stumbling” (Jude 24)**

This is a most precious promise. The revised translation is both accurate and suggestive. It is not merely from falling that He wants to keep us, but from even the slightest stumbling.

We are told of Abraham that he staggered not at the promise. God wants us to walk so steadily that there will not even be a quiver in the line of His regiments as they face the foe. It is the little stumblings of life that most discourage and hinder us, and most of these stumblings are over trifles. Satan would much rather knock us down with a feather than with an Armstrong gun. It is much more to his honor and keen delight to defeat a child of God by some flimsy trifle than by some great temptation.

Beloved, let us watch, in these days, against the orange peels that trip us on our pathway, the little foxes that destroy the vines, and the dead flies that mar, sometimes, a whole vessel of precious ointment. “Trifles make perfection,” and as we get farther on, in our Christian life, God will hold us much more closely to obedience in things that seem insignificant.

## **JANUARY 8: “It is I, be not afraid” (Mark 6:50)**

Someone tells of a little child with some big story of sorrow upon its little heart, flying to its mother’s arms for comfort, and intending to tell her the story of its trouble; but as that mother presses it to her bosom and pours out her love, it soon becomes so occupied with her and the sweetness of her affection that it forgets to tell its story, and in a little while even the memory of the trouble is forgotten. It has just been loved away, and she has taken its place in the heart of the little one.

This is the way God comforts us Himself. “It is I, be not afraid,” is His reassuring word. The circumstances are not altered, but He Himself comes in their place, and satisfies every need of our being, and we forget all things in His sweet presence, as He becomes our all in all.

I am breathing out my sorrow  
On Thy kind and loving breast;  
Breathing in Thy joy and comfort,  
Breathing in Thy peace and rest.

I am breathing out my longings  
In Thy listening, loving ear;  
I am breathing in Thy answer,  
Stilling every doubt and fear.

**JANUARY 9: “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39)  
“To will and do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13)**

There are two attitudes in which our will should be given to God.

First. We should have the surrendered will. This is where we must all begin, by yielding up to God our natural will, and having Him possess it.

But next, He wants us to have the victorious will. As soon as He receives our will in honest surrender, He wants to put His will into it and make it stronger than ever for Him. It is henceforth no longer our will, but His will. And having yielded to His choice and placed itself under His direction, He wants to put into it all the strength and intensity of His own great will and make us positive, forceful, victorious and unmovable, even as Himself. “Not My will, but Thine be done.” That is the first step. “Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me.” That is the second attitude. Both are divine; both are right; both are necessary to our right living and successful working for God.

## **JANUARY 10: “Charity doth not behave itself unseemly” (I. Cor. 8:5)**

In the dress of a Hindu woman, her graceful robe is fastened upon her person entirely by means of a single knot. The long strip of cloth is wound around her person so as to fall in graceful folds like a made garment, and the end is fastened by a little knot, and the whole thing hangs by that single fastening. If that were loosed the robe would fall. And so in the spiritual life, our habits of grace are likened unto garments; and it is also true that the garment of love, which is the beautiful adorning of the child of God, is entirely fastened by little \_nots\_.

If you will read with care the thirteenth chapter of I. Corinthians, you will find that most of the qualities of love are purely negative. “Love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave herself rudely, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil.” Here are “\_nots\_” enough to hold on our spiritual wardrobe. Here are reasons enough to explain the failure of so many, and the reason why they walk naked, or with rent garments, and others see their shame. Let us look after the \_nots\_.

## **JANUARY 11: “Hold fast till I come” (Rev. 2:25)**

The other day we asked a Hebrew friend how it was that his countrymen were so successful in acquiring wealth. “Ah,” said he, “we do not make more money than other people, but we keep more.” Beloved, let us look out this day for spiritual pickpockets and spiritual leakage. Let us “lose nothing of what we have wrought, but receive a full reward”; and, as each day comes and goes, let us put away in the savings bank of eternity its treasures of grace and victory, and so be conscious from day to day that something real and everlasting is being added to our eternal fortune.

It may be but a little, but if we only economize all that God gives us, and pass it on to His keeping, when the close shall come we shall be amazed to see how much the accumulated treasures of a well spent life have laid up on high, and how much more He has added to them by His glorious investment of the life committed to His keeping.

Oh, how the days are telling! Oh, how precious these golden hours will seem sometime! God help us to make the most of them now.

## **JANUARY 12: “Ask and it shall be given you” (Matt. 7:7)**

We must receive, as well as ask. We must take the place of believing, and recognize ourselves as in it. A friend was saying, “I want to get into the will of God,” and this was the answer: “Will you step into the will of God? And now, are you in the will of God?” The question aroused a thought that had not come before.

The gentleman saw that he had been straining after, but not receiving the blessing he sought.

Jesus has said, “Ask and ye shall receive.” The very strain keeps back the blessing. The intense tension of all your spiritual nature so binds you that you are not open to the blessing which God is waiting to give you.

“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

He tells me there is cleansing  
From every secret sin,  
And a great and full salvation  
To keep the heart within.

And I take Him in His fulness,  
With all His glorious grace,  
For He says it is mine by taking,  
And I take just what He says.

## **JANUARY 13: “Thou shalt be to him instead of God” (Ex. 4:16)**

Such was God’s promise to Moses, and such the high character that Moses was to assume toward Aaron, his brother. May it not suggest a high and glorious place that each of us may occupy toward all whom we meet, instead of God?

What a dignity and glory it would give our lives, could we uniformly realize this high calling! How it would lead us to act toward our fellow-men! God can always be depended upon. God is without variableness or shadow of turning. God’s word is unchangeable, and we can trust Him without reserve or question. Oh, that we might so live that men can trust us, even as God!

Again, God has no needs or wants to be supplied. He is always giving. “Rich unto all that call upon Him.” The glory of His nature is love, unselfish love, and beneficence toward all His creatures. The Divine life is a self-forgetting life, a life that has nothing to do but love and bless.

Let us so live, representing our Master here,  
while He represents us before the Throne on high.



## **JANUARY 14: “Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:3)**

God loves us so well that He will not suffer us to take less than His highest will. Some day we shall bless our faithful teacher, who kept the standard inflexibly rigid, and then gave us the strength and grace to reach it, and would not excuse us until we had accomplished all His glorious will.

Let us be inexorable with ourselves. Let us mean exactly what God means, and have no discounts upon His promises or commandments. Let us keep the standard up, and never rest until we reach it. “Let God be true and every man a liar.” If we fail a hundred times don’t let us accommodate God’s ideal to our realization, but like the brave ensign who stood in front of his company waving the banner, and when the soldiers called him back he only waved it higher, and cried, “Don’t bring the standard back to the regiment, but bring the regiment up to the colors.”

Forward, forward, leave the past behind thee, Reaching forth unto the things before; All the Land of Promise lies before thee, God has greater blessings yet in store.

**JANUARY 15: “As ye have received Christ Jesus so walk in Him” (Col. 2:6)**

It is much easier to keep the fire burning than to rekindle it after it has gone out. Let us abide in Him. Let us not have to remove the cinders and ashes from our hearthstones every day and kindle a new flame; but let us keep it burning and never let it expire. Among the ancient Greeks the sacred fire was never allowed to go out; so, in a higher sense, let us keep the heavenly flame aglow upon the altar of the heart.

It takes very much less effort to maintain a good habit than to form it. A true spiritual habit once formed becomes a spontaneous tendency of our being, and we grow into delightful freedom in following it. “Let us not be ever laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, but let us go on unto perfection; and whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.”

Every spiritual habit begins with difficulty and effort and watchfulness, but if we will only let it get thoroughly established, it will become a channel along which currents of life will flow with divine spontaneousness and freedom.

**JANUARY 16: “Prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2)**

There are three conditions in which the water in that engine may be.

First, the boiler may be full and the water clean and clear; or, secondly, the boiler may not only be full but the water may be hot, very hot, hot enough to scald you, almost boiling; thirdly, it may be just one degree hotter and at the boiling point, giving forth its vapor in clouds of steam, pressing through the valves and driving the mighty piston which turns the wheels and propels the train of cars across the country.

So there are three kinds of Christians.

The first we will call cold water Christians, or, perhaps better, clean water Christians.

Secondly, there are hot water Christians. They are almost at the boiling point.

One degree more, we come to the third class of Christians, the boiling water Christians.

The difference is a very slight one; it simply takes one reservation out, drops one “if,” eliminates a single touch, and yet it is all the difference in the world. That one degree changes that engine into a motive power, not now a thing to be looked at, but a thing to go.

## **JANUARY 17: “It is God which worketh in you” (Phil. 2:13)**

God has not two ways for any of us; but one; not two things for us to do which we may choose between; but one best and highest choice. It is a blessed thing to find and fill the perfect will of God. It is a blessed thing to have our life laid out and our Christian work adjusted to God’s plan. Much strength is lost by working at a venture. Much spiritual force is expended in wasted effort, and scattered, indefinite and inconstant attempts at doing good. There is spiritual force and financial strength enough in the hands and hearts of the consecrated Christians of to-day to bring the coming of Christ, to bring about the evangelization of the world in a generation, if it were only wisely directed and utilized according to God’s plan.

Christ has laid down a definite plan of work for His Church, and He expects us to understand it, and to work up to it; and as we catch His thought, and obediently, loyally fulfil it, we shall work to purpose, and please Him far better than by our thoughtless, reckless, and indiscriminate attempts to carry out our ideas, and compel God to bless our work.

## **JANUARY 18: “That take and give for Me and thee” (Matt. 27:27)**

There is a beautiful touch of loving thoughtfulness in the account of Christ’s miracle at Capernaum in providing the tribute money. After the reference to Peter’s interview with the tax collector, it is added, “When he came into the house Jesus prevented him,” that is, anticipated him, as the old Saxon word means, by arranging for the need before Peter needed to speak about it at all, and He sent Peter down to the sea to find the piece of gold in the mouth of the fish.

So our dear Lord is always thinking in advance of our needs, and He loves to save us from embarrassment, and anticipate our anxieties and cares by laying up His loving acts and providing before the emergency comes. Then with exquisite tenderness the Master adds: “That take and give for Me and thee.” He puts Himself first in the embarrassing need and bears the heavy end of the burden for His distressed and suffering child. He makes our cares His cares, our sorrows His sorrows, our shame His shame, and “He is able to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.”

## **JANUARY 19: “Prove me now herewith” (Mal. 3:10)**

We once heard a simple old colored man say something that we have never forgotten. “When God tests You it is a good time for you to test Him by putting His promises to the proof, and claiming from Him just as much as your trials have rendered necessary.”

There are two ways of getting out of a trial. One is to simply try to get rid of the trial, and be thankful when it is over. The other is to recognize the trial as a challenge from God to claim a larger blessing than we have ever had, and to hail it with delight as an opportunity of obtaining a larger measure of Divine grace.

Thus even the adversary becomes an auxiliary, and the things that seem to be against us turn out to be for the furtherance of our way. Surely, this is to be more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Blessed Rose of Sharon

Breathe upon our heart,  
Fill us with Thy fragrance,  
Keep us as Thou art.

Then Thy life will make us

Holy and complete;  
In Thy grace triumphant,  
In Thy sweetness, sweet.

## **JANUARY 20: “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of” (Luke 9:55)**

Some one has said that the most spiritual people are the easiest to get along with. When one has a little of the Holy Ghost it is like “a little learning, a dangerous thing”; but a full baptism of the Holy Spirit, and a really disciplined, stablished and tested spiritual life, makes one simple, tender, tolerant, considerate of others, and like a little child.

James and John, in their early zeal, wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans. But John, the aged, allowed Demetrius to exclude him from the church, and suffered in Patmos for the kingdom and with the patience of Jesus. And aged Paul was willing to take back even Mark, whom he had refused as a companion in his early ministry, and to acknowledge that he was profitable to him for the ministry.

I want the love that cannot help but love;  
Loving, like God, for very sake of love.  
A spring so full that it must overflow,  
A fountain flowing from the throne above.

“Now abideth faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love.”

## **JANUARY 21: “Pray without ceasing” (I. Thess. 5:17)**

An important help in the life of prayer is the habit of bringing everything to God, moment by moment, as it comes to us in life. This may be established as a habit on the principle on which all habits are formed, of repeated and constant attention, moment by moment, until that which is at first an act of will, becomes spontaneous and second nature.

If we will watch our lives we shall find that God meets the things that we commit to Him in prayer with special blessing, and often allows the best things that we have not committed to Him to be ineffectual, simply to remind us of our dependence upon Him for everything. It is very gracious and mindful of Him thus gently to compel us to remember Him and to hold us so close to Him that we cannot get away even the length of a single minute from His all-sustaining arm. “In everything ... let our requests be made known unto God.”

Let us bring our least petitions,  
Like the incense beaten small,  
All our cares, complaints, conditions  
Jesus loves to bear them all.



## **JANUARY 22: “His wife hath made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7)**

There is danger in becoming morbid even in preparing for the Lord’s coming. We remember a time in our life when we had devoted ourselves to spend a month in waiting upon the Lord for a baptism of the Holy Ghost, and before the end of the month, the Lord shook us out of our seclusion and compelled us to go out and carry His message to others; and as we went, He met us in the service.

There is a musty, monkish way of seeking a blessing, and there is a wholesome, practical holiness which finds us in the company of the Lord Himself not only in the closet and on the mountain-top of prayer, but among publicans and sinners, and in the practical duties of life.

It seems to us that the practical preparation for the Lord’s coming consists, first, of a very full entering into fellowship with Him in our own spiritual life, and letting Him not only cleanse us, but perfect us in all the finer touches of the Spirit’s deeper work, and then, secondly, getting out of ourselves and living for the help of others and the preparation of the world for His appearing.

## **JANUARY 23: “I know a man in Christ” (II. Cor. 12:2)**

It is a great deliverance to lose one's self. There is no heavier millstone that one can be compelled to carry than self-consciousness. It is so easy to get introverted and coiled round one's self in our spiritual consciousness. There is nothing that is so easy to fasten on as our misery; there is nothing that is more apt to produce self-consciousness than suffering, until it becomes almost a settled habit to hold on to our burden, and pray it unceasingly into the very face of God, until our very prayer saturates us with our own misery, instead of asking for power to drop ourselves altogether, and leave ourselves in His loving hands and know that we are free, and then rise into the blessed liberty of His higher thoughts and will, and His love and care for others.

The very act of letting go of ourselves really lifts us into a higher plane, and relieves us from the thing that is hurting. This habit of prayer for others, and especially for the world, brings its own recompense, and leaves upon our hearts a blessing like the fertility which the Nile deposits upon the soil of Egypt, as it flows through to its distant goal.

## **JANUARY 24: “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8)**

When God does anything marked and special for our souls, or bodies, He intends it as a sacred trust for us to communicate to others. “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

It has pleased the Master in these closing days of the dispensation to reveal Himself in peculiar blessing to the hearts of His chosen disciples in all parts of the Christian Church; but this is intended to be communicated to a still wider circle, and every one of us who has been brought into these intimate relations with God, becomes a trustee, or witness for these higher truths to every one we can influence.

If God has revealed Himself to us as our Sanctifier, it is that we may help others to know Him as a Sanctifier.

If He has become our Healer, it is because there are sick and suffering lives to whom we can bring some blessing.

In like manner, if the hope of the Lord’s coming has become precious to us, it would be worse than ingratitude for us to hide our testimony to this truth, and hold it only for our own personal comfort.

## **JANUARY 25: “Hold fast that which is good” (I. Thess. 5:21)**

It is a great thing to be able to receive new truth and blessing without sacrificing the truths already proved, and abandoning foundations already laid.

Some persons are always laying the foundations, and they present at last, the appearance of a lot of abandoned sites and half constructed buildings, and nothing is ever brought to completion.

The fact that you are abandoning to-day for some new truth the things that a year ago you counted most precious and believed to be divinely true, should be sufficient evidence that you will probably a year from to-day abandon your present convictions for the next new light that comes to you.

God is ever wanting to add to us, to develop us, to enlarge us, to teach us more and more, but it is ever in the line of things which He has already taught us, and in which we have been established.

While we are to “prove all things,” let us “hold fast that which is good,” and “whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

## **JANUARY 26: “I called him alone and blessed him” (Isa. 51:2)**

When we were in the East we noticed the beautiful process of raising rice. The rice is sown on a morass of mud and water, ploughed up by great buffaloes, and after a few weeks it springs up and appears above the water with its beautiful pale green shoots. The seed has been sown very thickly and the plants are clustered together in great numbers, so that you can pull up a score at a single handful. But now comes the process of transplanting.

He first plants us and lets us grow very close to some of His children, and in great clusters in the nursery or the hothouse, but when we reach a certain stage we must be transplanted, or come to nothing. He calls us out by His Spirit and Providence into situations where we have to lean directly on Him, where He puts upon us a weight of responsibility and service so great that we have an opportunity of developing and are thrown upon the great resources of His grace.

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be like a tree planted by the waters and that spreadeth out her roots by the rivers.”

## **JANUARY 27: “This one thing I do” (Phil. 3:13)**

One of Satan’s favorite employees is the switchman. He likes nothing better than to side-track one of God’s express trains, sent on some blessed mission and filled with the fire of a holy purpose.

Something will come up in the pathway of the earnest soul, to attract its attention and occupy its strength and thought. Sometimes it is a little irritation and provocation. Sometimes it is some petty grievance we stop to pursue or adjust. Sometimes it is somebody else’s business in which we become interested, and which we feel bound to rectify, and before we know, we are absorbed in a lot of distracting cares and interests that quite turn us aside from the great purpose of our life.

Perhaps we do not do much harm, but we have missed our connection. We have got off the main line.

Let all these things alone. Let grievances come and go, but press forward steadily and irresistibly, crying, as you haste to the goal, “This one thing I do.”

**JANUARY 28: “That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:11)**

There is a joy that springs spontaneously in the heart without external or even rational cause. It is an artesian fountain. It rejoices because it cannot help it. It is the glory of God; it is the heart of Christ, it is the joy divine of which He says, “These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” And your joy no man taketh from you. He who possesses this fountain is not discouraged by surrounding circumstances, but is often surprised at the deep, sweet gladness that comes without any apparent cause, and even comes most strongly when everything in our condition and circumstances is fitted to fill us with sorrow and depression.

It is the nightingale in the heart, which sings at night, and sings because it is its nature to sing.

It is the glorified and incorruptible joy which belongs to heaven, and anticipates already the everlasting song. Lord, give me Thy joy under all circumstances this day, and let my full heart overflow in blessing to others.

**JANUARY 29: “Send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared” (Neh. 8:10)**

That was a fine picture in the days of Nehemiah, when they were celebrating their glorious Feast of Tabernacles. “Neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength. Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared.”

How many there are on every side for whom nothing is prepared! Let us find out some sad and needy heart for whom there is no one else to think or care. Let us pray for some one that has none to pray for him. Let us be like Him who, one Christmas Day, gave His life and His all, and came to those who would not appreciate His holy gift, but rejected His blessed Babe, and murdered His only Son.

Let us not be afraid to know something even of the love that is unrequited and is thrown away on the unworthy. That is the love of Christ, and God has for such love a rich recompense.

How Christ must almost weep over the selfishness that meets Him from those for whom He died.



## **JANUARY 30: “Cast down but not destroyed” (2 Cor. 4:9)**

How did God bring about the miracle of the Red Sea? By shutting His people in on every side, so that there was no way out but the divine way. The Egyptians were behind them, the sea was in front of them, the mountains were on every side of them. There was no escape but from above.

Some one has said that the devil can wall us in, but he cannot roof us over. We can always get out at the top. Our difficulties are but God’s challenges, and He makes them so hard, often, that we must go under or get above them.

In such an hour, if there is a divine element, it brings out the highest possibilities of faith and we are pushed by the very emergency into God’s best.

Beloved, this is God’s hour. If you will rise to meet it you will get such a hold upon Him that you will never be in extremities again, or if you are, you will learn to call them not extremities, but opportunities, and like Jacob, you will go forth from that night at Peniel, no longer Jacob, but victorious Israel. Let us bring to Him our need and prove Him true.

**JANUARY 31: “Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (I. Cor. 1:30)**

More and more we are coming to see the supreme importance of getting the right conception of sanctification, not as a blessing, but as a personal union with the personal Saviour and the indwelling Holy Spirit. Thousands of people get stranded after they have embarked on the great voyage of holiness.

They find themselves failing and falling, and are astonished and perplexed, and they conclude that they must have been mistaken in their experience, and so they make a new attempt at the same thing and again fall, until at last, worn out with the experiment, they conclude that the experience is a delusion, or, at least, that it was never intended for them, and so they fall back into the old way, and their last state is worse than their first.

What people need to-day to satisfy their deep hunger and to give them a permanent and Divine experience is to know, not sanctification as a state, but Christ as a living Person, who is waiting to enter the heart that is willing to receive Him.

## **FEBRUARY 1: “A well of water springing up” (John 4:14)**

In the life overflowing in service for others, we find the deep fountain of life running over the spring and finding vent in rivers of living water that go out to bless and save the world around us. It is beautiful to notice that as the blessing grows unselfish it grows larger. The water in the heart is only a well, but when reaching out to the needs of others it is not only a river, but a delta of many rivers overflowing in majestic blessing. This overflowing love is connected with the Person and work of the Holy Spirit which was to be poured out upon the disciples after Jesus was glorified.

This is the true secret of power for service, the heart filled and satisfied with Jesus, and so baptized with the Holy Ghost that it is impelled by the fulness of its joy and love to impart to others what it has so abundantly received; and yet each new ministry only makes room for a new filling and a deeper receiving of the life which grows by giving.

Letting go is twice possessing,  
Would you double every blessing,  
    Pass it on.

**FEBRUARY 2: “And whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matt. 20:26-27)**

Slave is the literal meaning of the word, *\_doulos\_*.

The first word used for service is *\_diakanos\_*, which means a minister to others in any usual way or work: but the word *\_doulos\_* means a bond slave, and the Lord here plainly teaches us that the highest service is that of a bond slave.

He Himself made Himself the servant of all, **and** he who would come nearest to Him and stand closest to Him at last, must likewise learn the spirit of the ministry that has utterly renounced selfish rights and claims forever.

It is quite possible to be entirely loyal to the Lord Jesus, and yet for Jesus' sake, a servant ourselves, and under the authority of those who are over us in the Lord.

The *\_doulos\_* spirit is the spirit of self-renunciation and glad submission to proper authority, service utterly disinterested, yielding our own preferences and interests unreservedly for the glory of the Master and the sake of our brethren. Lord, clothe us with humility and make us wholly Thine.

### **FEBRUARY 3: “He went out, not knowing whither He went” (Heb. 11:8)**

It is faith without sight. When we can see, it is not faith but reasoning. In crossing the Atlantic we observed this very principle of faith. We saw no path upon the sea nor sign of the shore. And yet day by day we were marking our path upon the chart as exactly as if there had followed us a great chalk line upon the sea; and when we came within twenty miles of land we knew where we were as exactly as if we had seen it all three thousand miles ahead.

How had we measured and marked our course? Day by day our captain had taken his instruments, and looking up to the sky had fixed his course by the sun. He was sailing by the heavenly, not the earthly lights. So faith looks up and sails on, by God’s great Sun, not seeing one shore line or earthly lighthouse or path upon the way. Often its steps seem to lead into utter uncertainty, and even darkness and disaster. But He opens the way, and often makes such midnight hours the very gates of day. Let us go forth this day, not knowing but trusting.

## **FEBRUARY 5: “Rest in the Lord” (Ps. 37)**

In the old creation the week began with work and ended with Sabbath rest. The resurrection week begins with the first day—first rest, then labor.

So we must first cease from our own works as God did from His, and enter into His rest, and then we will work, with rested hearts, His works with effectual power.

But why “labor to enter into rest”? See that ship—how restfully she sails over the waters, her sails swelling with the gale; and borne without an effort! And yet, look at that man at the helm. See how firmly he holds the rudder, bearing against the wind, and holding her steady to her position. Let him for a moment relax his steady hold and the ship will fall listlessly along the wind. The sails will flap, the waves will toss the vessel at their will, and all rest and power will have gone. It is the fixed helm that brings the steadying power of the wind. And so He has said, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.” The steady will and stayed heart are ours. The keeping is the Lord’s. So let us labor to enter and abide in His rest.

## **FEBRUARY 6: “Praying always for all saints” (Eph. 6:18)**

One good counsel will suffice just now. Stop praying so much for yourself; begin to ask unselfish things, and see if God won't give you faith. See how much easier it will be to believe for another than for your own petty self. Try the effect of praying for the world, for definite things, for difficult things, for glorious things, for things that will honor Christ and save mankind, and after you have received a few wonderful answers to prayer in this direction, see if you won't feel stronger to touch your own little burden with a Divine faith, and then go back again to the high place of unselfish prayer for others.

Have you ever learned the beautiful art of letting God take care of you, and giving all your thought and strength to pray for others and for the kingdom of God? It will relieve you of a thousand cares. It will lift you up into a noble and lofty sphere, and teach you to live and love like God. Lord save us from our selfish prayers and give us the faith that worketh by love, and the heart of Christ for a perishing world.

## **FEBRUARY 7: “Faithful in that which is least” (Luke 16:10)**

The man that missed his opportunity and met the doom of the faithless servant was not the man with five talents, or the man with two, but the man who had only one. The people who are in danger of missing life’s great meaning are the people of ordinary capacity and opportunity, and who say to themselves, “There is so little I can do that I will not try to do anything.” One of the finest windows in Europe was made from the remnants an apprentice boy collected from the cuttings of his master’s great work. The sweepings of the British mint are worth millions. The little pivots on which the works of your watch turn are so important that they are actually made of jewels. And so God places a solemn value and responsibility on the humble workers, the people that try to hide behind their insignificance the trifling opportunities and the single talents; and our littleness will not excuse us in the reckoning day.

“Talk not of talents, what hast thou to do?

Thou hast sufficient, whether five or two.

Talk not of talents; is thy duty done?

This brings the blessing whether ten or one.”



**FEBRUARY 8: “We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves”  
(2 Cor. 3:5)**

Insufficient, “All sufficient.” These two words form the complement of each other and together give the key to an efficient Christian life. The discovery and full conviction of our utter helplessness is the constant condition of spiritual supply. The aim of the Old Testament, therefore, is ever to show man’s failure; that of the New, to reveal Christ’s sufficiency. He has all things for us, but we cannot receive them till we know that we have nothing.

The very essence, therefore, of Christian perfection is the constant renunciation of our own perfection, and the continual acceptance of Christ’s righteousness. And as we receive deeper views of our nothingness and evil, it is but a call to claim more of His rich grace. But it is possible fully to know our insufficiency and yet not take firmly hold of His “all things.” This, too, must be done with a faith that will not accept less than ALL. The prophet was angry because the king of Israel had only smitten thrice upon the ground. He should have done it five or six times. He might have had all. So let us meet His greatness and grace.

## **FEBRUARY 9: “None of these things move me” (Acts 20:24)**

The best evidence of God’s presence is the devil’s growl. So wrote good Mr. Spurgeon once in “The Sword and the Trowel,” and that little sentence has helped many a tried and tired child Of God to stand fast and even rejoice under the fiercest attacks of the foe.

We read in the book of Samuel that the moment that David was crowned at Hebron, “All the Philistines came up to seek David.” And the moment we get anything from the Lord worth contending for, then the devil comes to seek us.

When the enemy meets us at the threshold of any great work for God let us accept it as “a token of salvation,” and claim double blessing, victory and power. Power is developed by resistance. The cannon carries twice as far because the exploding power has to find its way through resistance. The way electricity is produced in the power-house yonder is by the sharp friction of the revolving wheels. And so we shall find some day that even Satan has been one of God’s agencies of blessing.

## **FEBRUARY 10: “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live” (Gal. 2:20)**

Christ life is in harmony with our nature. A lady asked me the other day—a thoughtful, intelligent woman who was not a Christian, but who had the deepest hunger for that which is right: “How can this be so, and we not lose our individuality! This will destroy our personality, and it violates our responsibility as individuals.”

I said: “Dear sister, your personality is only half without Christ. Christ was made for you, and you were made for Christ, and until you meet you are not complete, and He needs you as you need Him.” I said: “Suppose that gas-jet should say, ‘If I take this fire in, the gas will lose its individuality.’ Oh, no; it is only when the fire comes in that the gas fulfils its very purpose of being. Suppose the snowflake should say, ‘What shall I do? If I drop on the ground I shall lose my individuality.’ But it falls and is absorbed by the soil, and the snowflakes are seen by-and-by in the primroses and daisies. Let us lose ourselves and rise to a new life in Christ.”

## **FEBRUARY 11: “Strengthened with all might unto all patience” (Col. 1:11)**

The apostle prays for the Colossians, that they may be “strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” It is one thing to endure and show the strain on every muscle of your face, and seem to say with every wrinkle, “Why does not somebody sympathize with me?” It is another to endure the cross, “despising the shame” for the joy set before us.

There are some trees in the garden of the Lord which “shall not see when heat cometh”; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, nor cease from yielding fruit. Let us set our faces toward the sunrising and use the clouds that come, to make rainbows. Not much longer shall we have the glorious opportunity to rejoice in tribulation, and learn patience. In heaven we shall have nothing to teach long-suffering. If we do not learn it here, we shall be without our brightest crown forever, and wish ourselves back for a little while, in the very circumstances of which we are now trying so hard to get rid.

**FEBRUARY 12: “But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33)**

For every heart that is seeking anything from the Lord this is a good watchword. That very thing, or the desire for it, may unconsciously separate you from the Lord, or at least from the singleness of your purpose unto Him. The thing we desire may be a right thing, but we may desire it in a distrusting and selfish spirit. Let us commit it to Him, and not cease to believe for it, but let us, at the same time, keep our purpose fixed on His will and glory, and claim even His promised blessings, not for themselves or ourselves, but for Him. Then shall it be true, “Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” All other things but Himself God will “\_add\_.” But they must be ever \_added\_, never \_first\_.

Then shall we be able to believe for them without doubt, when we claim them for Him and not for ourselves. It is only when “we are Christ’s” that “all things are ours.”

Lord, help me this day to seek Thee first, and be more desirous to please Thee and have Thy will than to possess any other blessing.

## **FEBRUARY 13: “Thy prayers are come up for a memorial before God” (Acts 10:4)**

What a beautiful expression the angel used to Cornelius, “Thy prayers are come up for a memorial.” It would almost seem as if supplications of years had accumulated before the Throne, and at last the answer broke in blessings on the head of Cornelius, even as the accumulated evaporation of months at last bursts in floods of rain upon the parched ground. So God is represented as treasuring the prayers of His saints in vials; they are described as sweet odors. They are placed like fragrant flowers in the chambers of the King. And kept in sweet remembrance before Him. And later they are represented as poured out upon the earth; and lo, there are voices and thunderings and great providential movements fulfilling God’s purposes for His kingdom. We are called “the Lord’s remembrancers,” and are commanded to give Him no rest, day nor night, but crowd the heavens with our petitions and in due time the answer will come with its accumulated blessings.

No breath of true prayer is lost. The longer it waits, the larger it becomes.

## **FEBRUARY 14: “He shall baptize you with fire” (Matt. 3:11)**

Fire is strangely intense and intrinsic. It goes into the very substance of things. It somehow blends with every particle of the thing it touches.

There are the severe trials that come to minds more sensitive, to the minds that have more points of contact with what hurts; so that the higher the nature the higher the joy, and the greater the avenues of pain that come.

And then there are deeper trials that come as we pass into the hands of God, as we pass from the physical and intellectual into the spiritual nature.

When they first come, we shrink back from their unnatural and fearful breath, and we say: “Oh, this cannot be from the hand of a loving Father! This cannot be necessary to me.”

And then come the pains and sufferings from God’s own hand, when He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver, when He lets it burn, until it seems that we must be burned to ashes, and we are, indeed, at last burned to ashes.

But we must get the victory through faith. The moment you cease to fear it, that moment it ceases to harm you. He says, “The flames shall not kindle upon you.”

## **FEBRUARY 15: “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:1)**

How to enjoy this day. This will never come by trying to be happy and yet we are responsible for the conditions of real joy.

1. Be right with God; for “Gladness is sown for the upright in heart.” “It is His joy that remains in us that makes our joy to be full.”
2. Forget yourself and live for others; for “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
3. When you cannot rejoice in feelings, circumstances and states, “rejoice in the Lord,” and “count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations.”

Finally, obey the Lord and be faithful to your trust; and again and again will His blessed Spirit whisper to your heart, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.”

“Not enjoyment and not sorrow  
Is our destined end or way,  
But to act that each to-morrow  
Finds us farther than to-day.

“Let us then be up and doing  
With a heart for any fate,  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.”



**FEBRUARY 16: “We will give ourselves continually to prayer” (Acts 6:4)**

In the consecrated believer the Holy Spirit is pre-eminently a Spirit of prayer. If our whole being is committed to Him, and our thoughts are at His bidding, He will occupy every moment in communion and we shall bring every thing to Him as it comes, and pray it out in our spiritual consciousness before we act it out in our lives. We shall, therefore, find ourselves taking up the burdens of life and praying them out in a wordless prayer which we ourselves often cannot understand, but which is simply the unfolding of His thought and will within us, and which will be followed by the unfolding of His providence concerning us.

Want of faithfulness and obedience to the faintest whisper of His will will often hinder some blessing which He meant for us until after a while we may get so dull and negligent that He will not be able to trust us with His whispers and we shall thus stumble on in the darkness and miss His highest thoughts.

Lord, teach us to pray in the Spirit, to pray without ceasing and to lose nothing of Thy will.

## **FEBRUARY 17: “Your life is hid” (Col. 3:3)**

Some Christians loom up in larger proportion than is becoming. They can tell, and others can tell, how many souls they bring to Christ. Their labor seems to crystallize and become its own memorial. Others again seem to blend so wholly with other workers that their own individuality can scarcely be traced. And yet, after all, this is the most Christ-like ministry of all, for the Master Himself does not even appear in the work of the church except as her hidden Life and ascended Head, and even the Holy Spirit is lost in the vessels that He uses. The vine does not bear the fruit, and even the sap is unseen in its ceaseless flow, and it is the little branches which bear all the clusters and seem to have all the honor of the vintage. And so the nearer we come to Christ the more we are willing to be lost sight of in our fruit, and let others be more prominent, while we are the glad and willing witnesses of our testimony and hold up their hands by the silent ministry of love and prayer. Lord, let me be like the veiled seraphim before the throne, who cover their faces and their feet, and hide themselves and their service while they fly to obey Thee.

## **FEBRUARY 18: “Christ in you” (Col. 1:27)**

How great the difference between the old and the new way of deliverance! One touch of Christ is worth a lifetime of struggling. A sufferer in one of our hospitals was in danger of losing his sight from a small piece of broken needle that had entered his eye.

Operation after operation had only irritated it, and driven the foreign substance farther still into the delicate nerves of the sensitive organ. At length a skilful young physician thought of a new expedient. He came one day without lancet and probes, and holding in his hand a small but powerful magnet, which he kept before the wounded eye, as close as it could bear. Immediately the piece of steel began to move toward the powerful attraction, and soon flew up to meet it and left the suffering eye completely relieved, without an effort or a laceration. It was as simple as it was wonderful. By a single touch of power the organ was saved and a dangerous trouble completely cured.

It is thus that God delivers us, by the simple attraction of Christ’s life and power.

## **FEBRUARY 19: “As much as in me is I am ready” (Rom. 1:15)**

Be earnest. Intense earnestness, a whole heart for Christ, the passion sign of the cross, the enthusiasm of our whole being for our Master and humanity—this is what the Lord expects, this is what His cross deserves, this is what the world needs, this is what the age has a right to look for. Everything around us is intensely alive. Life is earnest, death is earnest, sin is earnest, men are earnest, business is earnest, knowledge is earnest, the age is earnest; God forgive us if we alone are trifling in the white heat of this crisis time. Oh, for the baptism of fire! Oh, for the living coal upon the burning lips of love! Oh, for men God-possessed and self-surrendered grasping God’s great idea and pressing forward “for the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

All the world for Jesus

My prayer shall be,  
And my watchword ever,  
Himself for me.

All the world for Jesus,

Lord, quickly come,  
Bring Thy promised kingdom,  
And take us home.

## **FEBRUARY 20: “Fear thou not, for I am with thee” (Isa. 41:10)**

Satan is always trying to weaken our faith by fear. He is a great metaphysician and knows the paralyzing effect of fear, that it is the great enemy of faith, and that faith is the great secret of help. If he can get us fearing he will stop our trusting and hinder the very blessing we need. Job found the peril of fear and gives us the sorrowful testimony, “I feared a fear and it came upon me.”

Fear is born of Satan, and if we would only take time to think a moment we would see that everything Satan says is founded upon a falsehood. He is the father of lies. Even his fears are falsehoods and his terrors ought rather be to us encouragements.

When Satan tells you, therefore, that some ill is going to come, you may quietly look in his face and tell him he is a liar, that instead of ill, goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and then turn to your blessed Lord and say, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.” Every fear is distrust and trust is the remedy for fear. “What time I am afraid I will \_trust\_ in thee.”

## **FEBRUARY 21: “Be not dismayed, for I am thy God” (Isa. 41:10)**

How tenderly God is always comforting our fears! How sweetly He says in Isaiah xli. 10, “Fear not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” And yet again with still tenderer thoughtfulness, “I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee.” Not only does He say it once, but He keeps holding our right hand and repeating such promises.

The blessed Lord has condensed it all into one sweet monogram of eternal comfort in His message to the disciples on the sea of Galilee, “It is I; be not afraid.” He does not say, “It is over,” or “It is morning,” or “It is fine weather,” or “It is smooth water,” but He says, “It is I, be not afraid.” He is the antidote to fear; He is the remedy for trouble; He is the substance and the sum of deliverance. Therefore, we should rise above fear. Let us keep our eyes fastened upon Him; let us abide continually in Him; let us be content with Him; let us cling closely to Him and cry, “We will not fear though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”

**FEBRUARY 22: “He that hath entered into His rest hath ceased from his own works even as God did from His” (Heb. 4:10)**

What a rest it would be to many of us if we could but exchange burdens with Christ, and so utterly and forever transfer to Him all our cares and needs that we would not feel henceforth responsible for our burdens, but know that He has undertaken all the care, and that our faith is simply to carry His burdens, and that He prays, labors, and suffers only for us and our interests. This is what He truly invites us to do. “Come unto Me,” He says, “all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will rest you,” and then He adds, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.” He takes our yoke and we take His and we find it a thousand times easier to carry one of His burdens than to carry our own. How much more delightful it is to spend an hour in supplication for another than five minutes in pleading for ourselves. Are we not weary of carrying our wretched loads?

’Twas for this His mercy sought you,  
And to all His fulness brought you,  
By the precious blood that bought you,  
    Pass it on.

**FEBRUARY 23: “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21)**

The secret of a sound body is a sound heart, and the prayer of the Holy Ghost for us is, that we “may be in health and prosper even as our soul prospers.”

We find Paul in the Epistles to the Philippians expressing a sublime and holy indifference to the question of life or death. Indeed he is in a real strait, whether he would prefer “to depart and be with Christ,” or to remain still in the flesh.

The former would indeed be his sweetest preference, but the latter would be at the same time a joyful service. His only object in wanting to live is to be a blessing. “To abide in the flesh is more needful to you.”

Having reached this state of heart, it is beautiful to notice how quickly he rises to the victorious faith necessary to claim perfect strength and health. Because it is more needful to you that I abide in the flesh, he adds, “I know that I shall continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.” Lord, help me to-day to “count not my life dear unto myself that I may finish my course with joy and the ministry that I have received of Jesus.”



**FEBRUARY 24: “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14)**

The secret of Moses’ failures was this: “The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did.” And this was why his life work also came short of full realization. He saw but entered not the Promised Land. The founder of the law had to be its victim, and his life and death might demonstrate the inability of the law to lead any man into the Promised Land. The very fact, that it was for so slight a fault that Moses lost his inheritance, makes all the more emphatic the solemn sentence of the law. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.”

But to the glory of the grace of God we can add that what the law could not do for Moses the Gospel did; and he who could not pass over the Jordan under the old dispensation is seen on the very heights of Hermon with the Son of Man, sharing His Transfiguration glory, and talking of that death on Calvary to which he owed his glorious destiny.

That grace we have inherited under the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **FEBRUARY 25: “I am the vine, ye are the branches” (John 15:5)**

How can I take Christ as my Sanctifier, or Healer? is a question that we are constantly asked. It is necessary first of all that we get into the posture of faith. This has to be done by a definite and voluntary act, and then maintained by a uniform habit. It is just the same as the planting of a tree. You must put it in the soil by a definite act, and then you must let it stay put and remain settled in the ground until the little roots have time to fix themselves and begin to draw the sustenance from the soil. There are two stages, the definite planting and then the habitual absorbing of moisture and nourishment from the ground. The root fibers must rest until they reach out their spongy pores and drink in the nutriment of the earth. After the habit is established, then by a certain uniform law, the plant draws its life from the ground without an effort, and it is just as natural for it to grow as it is for us to breathe.

Lord, help me this day to abide in Thee, and to grow into the habit of drawing all my life from Thine so that it shall be true for me, “In Him I live and move and have my being.”

## **FEBRUARY 26: “Make you perfect in every good work” (Heb. 13:21)**

In that beautiful prayer at the close of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will,” the phrase, “make you perfect in every good work,” literally means, it is said, “adjust you in every good work.” It is a great thing to be adjusted, adjusted to our surroundings and circumstances rather than trying to have them adjusted to us, adjusted to the people we are thrown with, adjusted to the work God has for us, and not trying to get God to help us to do our work; adjusted to do the very will and plan of God for us in our whole life. This is the secret of rest, power and freedom in our life-work.

“Oh, fill me with Thy fulness, Lord.  
Until my very heart o’erflow  
In kindling thought and glowing word,  
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

Oh, use me, Lord, use even me,  
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where;  
Until Thy blessed face I see,  
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.”

## **FEBRUARY 27: “Stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10)**

In taking Christ in any new relationship, we must first have sufficient intellectual light to satisfy our mind that we are entitled to stand in this relationship. The shadow of a question here will wreck our confidence. Then, having seen this, we must make the venture, the committal, the choice, and take the place just as definitely as the tree is planted in the soil, or the bride gives herself away at the marriage altar. It must be once for all, without reserve, without recall.

Then there is a season of establishing, settling and testing, during which we must stay put until the new relationship gets so fixed as to become a permanent habit. It is just the same as when the surgeon sets the broken arm. He puts it in splints to keep it from vibration. So God has His spiritual splints that He wants to put upon His children and keep them quiet and unmoved until they pass the first stage of faith.

It is not always easy work for us, “but the God of all grace who hath called you unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus after you have suffered awhile, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

## **FEBRUARY 28: “Count it all joy” (James 1:2)**

We do not always feel joyful, but we are to count it all joy. The word “reckon” is one of the key-words of Scripture. It is the same word used about our being dead. We do not feel dead. We are painfully conscious of something that would gladly return to life. But we are to treat ourselves as dead, and neither fear nor obey the old nature.

So we are to reckon the thing that comes as a blessing. We are determined to rejoice, to say, “My heart is fixed, O God, I will sing and give praise.” This rejoicing, by faith, will soon become a habit, and will ever bring speedily the spirit of gladness and the spontaneous overflow of praise.

Then, “although the fig-tree may wither and no fruit appear in the vines, the labor of the olive fail and the fields yield no increase, the herd be cut off from the stall, and the cattle from the field, yet we will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation.”

“Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round, On Jesus’ bosom naught but calm is found;  
Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown, Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.”

## **FEBRUARY 29: THE DAYS OF HEAVEN**

The days of heaven are peaceful days,  
Still as yon glassy sea;  
So calm, so still in God, our days,  
As the days of heaven would be.

The days of heaven are holy days,  
From sin forever free;  
So cleansed and kept our days, O Lord,  
As the days of heaven would be.

The days of heaven are happy days.  
Sorrow they never see;  
So full of gladness all our days,  
As the days of heaven would be.

The days of heaven are healthful days,  
They feed on life's fair tree;  
So feeding on Thy strength, O Christ,  
Our days as heaven may be.

Walk with us, Lord, thro' all the days,  
And let us walk with Thee;  
Till as Thy will is done in heaven,  
On earth so shall it be.

## **MARCH 1: “Wait on the Lord” (Ps. 27:14)**

How often this is said in the Bible, how little understood! It is what the old monk calls the “practice of the presence of God.” It is the habit of prayer. It is the continued communion that not only asks, but receives. People often ask us to pray for them and we have to say, “Why, God has answered our prayer for you, and you must now take the answer. It is awaiting you, and you must take it by waiting on the Lord.”

This it is that renews the strength, until we mount up with wings as eagles, run and are not weary, walk and are not faint. Our hearts are too vast to take in His fulness at a single breath. We must live in the atmosphere of His presence till we absorb His very life. This is the secret of spiritual depth and rest, of power and fulness, of love and prayer, of hope and holy usefulness. “Wait, I say, on the Lord.”

I am waiting in communion at the blessed mercy seat,  
I am waiting, sweetly waiting, on the Lord;  
I am drinking, of His fulness; I am sitting at His feet;  
I am hearkening to the whispers of His word.

**MARCH 2: “That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost”  
(2 Tim. 1:14)**

God gives to us a power within which will hold our hearts in victory and purity. “That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” It is the Holy Ghost; and when any thought or suggestion of evil arises in our breast, the quick conscience can instantly call upon the Holy Ghost to drive it out, and He will expel it at the command of faith or prayer, and keep us as pure as we are willing to be kept. But when the will surrenders and consents to evil, the Holy Ghost will not expel it. God, then, requires us to stand in holy vigilance, and He will do exceeding abundantly for us as we hold fast that which is good, and He will also be in us a spirit of vigilance, showing us the evil and enabling us to detect it, and to bring it to Him for expulsion and destruction.

“O Spirit of Jesus fill us until we shall have room only for Thee!”

O, come as the heart-searching fire,  
O, come as the sin-cleansing flood;  
Consume us with holy desire,  
And fill with the fulness of God.



**MARCH 3: “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterward” (Heb. 12: 11)**

God seems to love to work by paradoxes and contraries. In the transformations of grace, the bitter is the base of the sweet, night is the mother of day, and death is the gate of life.

Many people are wanting power. Now, how is power produced? The other day we passed the great works where the trolley engines are supplied with electricity. We heard the hum and roar of countless wheels, and we asked our friend, “How do they make the power?” “Why,” he said, “just by the revolution of those wheels and the friction they produce. The rubbing creates the electric current.”

It is very simple, and a trifling experiment will prove it to any one.

And so when God wants to bring more power into your life, He brings more pressure. He is generating spiritual force by hard rubbing. Some of us don't like it. Some of us don't understand, and we try to run away from the pressure, instead of getting the power and using it to rise above the painful cause.

## **MARCH 4: “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:4)**

Blessed secret of spiritual purity, victory and joy, of physical life and healing, and all power for service. Filled with the Spirit there is no room for self or sin, for fret or care. Filled with the Spirit we repel the elements of disease that are in the air as the red-hot iron repels the water that touches it. Filled with the Spirit we are always ready for service, and Satan turns away when he finds the Holy Ghost enrobing us in His garments of holy flame. Not half-filled, but filled with the Spirit is the place of victory and power.

This is not only a privilege; it is a command, and He who gave it will enable us to fulfill it if we bring it to Him with an empty, honest, trusting heart, and claim our privilege in the name of Jesus and for the glory of God.

Holy Ghost, I bid Thee welcome;  
Come and be my Holy Guest;  
Heavenly Dove within my bosom,  
Make Thy home and build Thy nest;  
Lead me on to all Thy fulness,  
Bring me to Thy Promised Rest,  
Holy Ghost, I bid Thee welcome,  
Come and be my Holy Guest.

## **MARCH 5: “I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)**

Christ has overcome for us every one of our four terrible foes—Sin, Sickness, Sorrow, Satan. He has borne our Sin, and we may lay all, even down to our sinfulness itself, on Him. “I have overcome for thee.” He has borne our sickness, and we may detach ourselves from our old infirmities and rise into His glorious life and strength. He has borne our sorrows, and we must not even carry a care, but rejoice evermore, and even glory in tribulations also. And He has conquered Satan for us, too, and left him nailed to the cross, spoiled and dishonored and but a shadow of himself. And now we have but to claim His full atonement and assert our victory, and so “overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.”

Beloved, are we overcoming sin? Are we overcoming sickness? Are we overcoming sorrow?  
Are we overcoming Satan?

Fear not, though the strife be long;  
Faint not, though the foe be strong;  
Trust thy glorious Captain’s power;  
Watch with Him one little hour,  
Hear Him calling, “Follow me.  
“I have overcome for thee.”

## **MARCH 6: “Lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:5)**

Faith is hindered by reliance upon human wisdom, whether our own or the wisdom of others. The devil’s first bait to Eve was an offer of wisdom, and for this she sold her faith. “Ye shall be as gods,” he said, “knowing good and evil,” and from the hour she began to know she ceased to trust. It was the spies that lost the Land of Promise to Israel of old. It was their foolish proposition to search out the land, and find out by investigation whether God had told the truth or not, that led to the awful outbreak of unbelief that shut the doors of Canaan to a whole generation. It is very significant that the names of these spies are nearly all suggestive of human wisdom, greatness and fame.

So in the days of Christ, it was the bondage of the Jews to the traditions of their fathers and the opinions of men, that kept them back from receiving Him. “How can ye believe,” He asked, “which receive honor from men, and seek not that which cometh from God only?”

Let us trust Him with all our heart and lean not to our own understanding.

## **MARCH 7: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35)**

How shall we know the difference between the earthly and the heavenly love? The one terminates on ourselves and is partly ourself seeking its own gratification. The other reaches out to God and others, and finds its joy in glorifying Him and blessing them. Love is unselfishness, and the love that is not unselfish is not divine. How much do we pray for others, and how much for ourselves? What is the center of our being? Ourselves, or our Lord and His people and work? The Lord help us to know more fully the meaning of that great truth, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” “He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake and the Gospel, shall keep it unto life eternal.”

Have you found some precious treasure,  
Pass it on.

Have You found some holy pleasure,  
Pass it on.

Giving out is twice possessing,  
Love will double every blessing,  
On to higher service pressing,  
Pass it on.

## **MARCH 8: “Pray Ye therefore” (Luke 10:2)**

Prayer is the mighty engine that is to move the missionary work. “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.”

We are asking God to touch the hearts of men every day by the Holy Ghost, so that they shall be compelled to go abroad and preach the Gospel. We are asking Him to wake them up at night with the solemn conviction that the heathen are perishing, and that their blood will be upon their souls, and God is answering the prayer by sending persons to us every day who “feel that the King’s business requireth haste.”

Beloved, pray, pray, pray; and as the incense rises to the heavens, “there will be silence in heaven” by the space of more than half an hour, and the coals of fire will be emptied out upon the earth, and the coming of the Lord will begin to draw nearer. Pray till the Lord of the harvest shall thrust forth laborers into His harvest.

Send the coals of heavenly fire,  
From the altar of the skies;  
Fill our hearts with strong desire,  
Till our pray’rs like incense rise.

## **MARCH 9: “How ye ought to walk and please God” (1 Thess. 4:1)**

How many dear Christians are in the place that the Lord has appointed them, and yet the devil is harassing their lives with a vague sense of not quite pleasing the Lord. Could they just settle down in the place that God has assigned them and fill it sweetly and lovingly for Him there would be more joy in their hearts and more power in their lives. God wants us all in various places, and the secret of accomplishing the most for Him is to recognize our places from Him and our service in it as pleasing Him. In the great factory and machine there is a place for the smallest screw and rivet as well as the great driving wheel and piston, and so God has His little screws whose business is simply to stay where He puts them and to believe that He wants them there and is making the most of their lives in the little spaces that they fill for Him.

There is something all can do,  
Tho' you're neither wise nor strong;  
You can be a helper true,  
You can stand when friends are few,  
Some lone heart has need of you,  
You can help along.

**MARCH 10: “The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds” (Phil. 4:7)**

It is not peace with God, but the peace of God. “The peace that passes all understanding” is the very breath of God in the soul. He alone is able to keep it, and He can so keep it that “nothing shall offend us.” Beloved, are you there?

God’s rest did not come till after His work was over, and ours will not. We begin our Christian life by working, trying and struggling in the energy of the flesh to save ourselves. At last, when we are able to cease from our own work, God comes in with His blessed rest, and works His own Divine works in us.

Oh! have you heard the glorious word  
Of hope and holy cheer;  
From heav’n above its tones of love  
Are lingering on my ear;  
The blessed Comforter has come,  
And Christ will soon be here.

Oh, hearts that sigh there’s succor nigh,  
The Comforter is near;  
He comes to bring us to our King,  
And fit us to appear.  
I’m glad the Comforter has come,  
And Christ will soon be here.



## **MARCH 11: “But ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9)**

We have been thinking lately very much of the strange way in which God is calling a people out of a people already called. The word *\_ecclesia\_*, or church, means called out, but God is calling out a still more select body from the church to be His bride—the specially prepared ones for His coming.

We see a fine type of this in the story of Gideon. When first he sounded the trumpet of Abiezer there resorted to him more than thirty thousand men; but these had to be picked, so a first test was applied, appealing to their courage, and all but ten thousand went back; but there must be an election out of the election, and so a second test was applied, appealing to their prudence, caution and singleness of purpose, and all but three hundred were refused; and, with this little picked band, he raised the standard against the Midianites, and through the power of God won his glorious victory. So, again, in our days, the Master is choosing His three hundred, and by them He will yet win the world for Himself. Let us be sure that we belong to the “out and out” people.

## **MARCH 12: “They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way” (Ps. 107:4)**

All who fight the Lord’s battles must be content to die to all the favorable opinions of men and all the flattery of human praise. You cannot make an exception in favor of the good opinions of the children of God. It is all right when God sends us the approval of our fellow men, but we must never make it a motive in our life, but be content with the “solitary way” and the lonely “wilderness.”

All such motives are poison and a taking away from you of the strength with which you are to give glory to God. It is not the fact that all that see the face of the Lord do see each other.

The man of God must walk alone with God. He must be contented that the Lord knoweth that God knows. It is such a relief to the natural man within us to fall back upon human countenances and human thoughts and sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves and think it “brotherly love,” when we are just resting in the earthly sympathy of some fellow worm!

## **MARCH 13: “Keep yourselves in the love of God” (Jude 21)**

Some time ago, we were enjoying a surpassingly beautiful sunset. The western skies seemed like a great archipelago of golden islands, the masses in the distance rising up into vast mountains of glory. The hue of the sky was so gorgeous that it seemed to reflect itself upon the whole atmosphere, as we looked back from the west to the eastern horizon. The whole earth was radiant with glory. The fields had changed to strange, red richness, and the earth seemed bathed with the dews of heaven.

And so it is, when the love of God shines through all our celestial sky, it covers everything below, and life becomes radiant with its light. Things that were hard become easy. Things that were sharp become sweet. Labor loses its burden, and sorrow becomes silver-lined with hope and gladness.

There are two ways of living in His love. One is constant trust, and the other is constant obedience, and His own Word gives the message for both. “If ye keep My commandments ye shall live in My love, even as I keep My Father’s, and live in His love.”

## **MARCH 14: “We are His workmanship” (Eph. 2:10)**

Christ sends us to serve Him, not in our own strength, but in His resources and might. “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them.” We do not have to prepare them; but to wear them as garments, made to order for every occasion of our life.

We must receive them by faith and go forth in His work, believing that He is with us, and in us, as our all sufficiency for wisdom, faith, love, prayer, power, and every grace and gift that our work requires. In this work of faith we shall have to feel weak and helpless, and even have little consciousness of power. But if we believe and go forward, He will be the power and send the fruits.

The most useful services we render are those which, like the sweet fruits of the wilderness, spring from hours of barrenness. “I will bring her into the wilderness and I will give her vineyards from thence.” Let us learn to work by faith as well as walk by faith, then we shall receive even the end of our faith, the salvation of precious souls, and our lives will bear fruit which shall be manifest throughout all eternity.

## **MARCH 15: “Continue ye in My love” (John 15:9)**

Many atmospheres there are in which we may live. Some people live in an atmosphere of thought. Their faces are thoughtful, minds intellectual. They live in their ideas, their conceptions of truth, their tastes, and esthetic nature. Some people, again, live in their animal nature, in the lusts of the flesh and eye, the coarse, low atmosphere of a sensuous life, or something worse. Some, again, live in a world of duty. The predominating feature of their life is conscience, and it carries with it a certain shadowy fear that takes away the simple freedom and gladness of life, but there is a rectitude, and uprightness, a strictness of purpose, and of conduct which cannot be gainsaid or questioned.

But Christ bids us live in an atmosphere of love. “As My Father has loved Me, so have I loved you; continue ye in My love.” In the original it is, “Live in My love.” Love is the atmosphere that He would have us ever live in, that is, believing that He ever loves us, and claiming His sweet approval and tender regard. This is a life of love.

## **MARCH 16: “The Lord will give grace and glory” (Ps. 134:11)**

The Lord will give grace and glory. This word \_glory\_ is very difficult to translate, define and explain; but there is something in the spiritual consciousness of the quickened Christian that interprets it. It is the overflow of grace; it is the wine of life; it is the foretaste of heaven; it is a flash from the Throne and an inspiration from the heart of God which we may have and in which we may live. “The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them,” the Master prayed for us. Let us take it and live in it. David used to say, “Wake up my glory.” Ask God to wake up your glory and enable you to mount up with wings as eagles, to dwell on high and sit with Christ in the heavenly places.

Mounting up with wings as eagles,  
Waiting on the Lord we rise,  
Strength exchanging, life renewing,  
How our spirit heavenward flies.  
Then our springing feet returning,  
Tread the pathway of the saint,  
We shall run and not be weary,  
We shall walk and never faint.

## **MARCH 17: “He hath remembered His covenant forever” (Ps. 55:8)**

So long as you struggle under law, that is by your own effort, sin shall have dominion over you: but the moment you step from under the shadow of Sinai, throw yourself upon the simple grace of Christ and His free and absolute gift of righteousness, and take Him to be to you what He has pledged Himself to be, your righteousness of thought and feeling, and to keep you in spite of everything, that ever can be against you, in His perfect will and peace, the struggle is practically over. Beloved, do you really know and believe that this is the very promise of the Gospel, the very essence of the new covenant, that Christ pledges Himself to put His law in your heart, and to cause you to walk in His statutes, and to keep His judgments and do them? Do you know that this is the oath which He swore unto Abraham, that He would grant unto us. “That we being delivered from the hands of our enemies, and from all that hate us, might serve Him without fear, in righteousness and holiness before Him all the days of our life.” He has sworn to do this for you, and He is faithful, that promised. Trust Him ever.

## **MARCH 18: “Neither shall any plague come near thy dwelling” (Ps. 41:10)**

We know what it is to be fireproof, to be waterproof: but it is a greater thing to be proof against sin. It is possible to be so filled with the Spirit and presence of Jesus that all the shafts of the enemy glance off our heavenly armor; that all the burrs and thistles which grow on the wayside fail to stick to our heavenly robes; that all the noxious vapors of the pit disappear before the warm breath of the Holy Ghost, and we walk with a charmed life even through the valley of the shadow of death. The red hot iron repels the water that touches it, and the fingers that would trifle with it: and, if we are on fire with the Holy Ghost, Satan will keep his fingers off us, and the cold water that he pours over us will roll off and leave us unharmed: “for He that was begotten of God keepeth us, and that wicked one toucheth us not.”

It is said that before going into a malarious region, it is well to fortify the system with nourishing food. So we should be fed and filled by the life of Christ in such a way that the evil does not really touch our life.



## **MARCH 19: “Launch out into the deep” (Luke 5:4)**

Many difficulties and perplexities in connection with our Christian life might be best settled by a simple and bold decision of our will to go forward with the light we have and leave the speculations and theories that we cannot decide for further settlement. What we need is to act, and to act with the best light we have, and as we step out into the present duty and full obedience, many things will be made plain which it is no use waiting to decide.

Beloved, cut the Gordian knot, like Alexander, with the sword of decision. Launch out into the deep with a bold plunge, and Christ will settle for you all the questions that you are now debating, and more probably show you their insignificance, and let you see that the only way to settle them is to overleap them. They are Satan’s petty snares to waste your time and keep you halting when you should be marching on.

The mercy of God is an ocean divine,  
A boundless and fathomless flood;  
Launch out in the deep, cut away the shore line,  
And be lost in the fulness of God.

**MARCH 20: “They which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life” (Rom. 5:17)**

Precious souls sometimes fight tremendous battles in order to attain to righteousness in trying places. Perhaps the heart has become wrong in some matter where temptation has been allowed to overcome, or at least to turn it aside from its singleness unto God; and the conflict is a terrible one as it seeks to adjust itself and be right with God, and finds itself baffled by its own spiritual foes, and its own helplessness, perplexity and perversity. How dark and dreary the struggle, and how helpless and ineffectual it often seems at such times! It is almost sure to strive in the spirit of the law, and the result always is, and must ever be, condemnation and failure. Every disobedience is met by a blow of wrath, and discouragement, and it well nigh sinks to despair. Oh, if the tempted and struggling one could only understand or remember what perhaps he has learned before, that Christ is our righteousness, and that it is not by law but by grace alone, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” That is the secret of the whole battle.

## **MARCH 21: “Casting all your care upon Him” (1 Peter 5:7)**

Some things there are that God will not tolerate in us. We must leave them. Nehemiah would not talk with Sanballat about his charges and fears, but simply refused to have anything to do with the matter—even to go into the temple and pray about it. How very few things we really have to do with in life. If we would only drop all the needless things and simply do the things that absolutely touch and require our attention from morning till night, we would find what a small slender thread life was; but we string upon it a thousand imaginary beads that never come, and burden ourselves with cares and flurries that if we had trusted more, would never have needed to preoccupy our attention. Wise indeed was the testimony of the dear old saint who said, in review of her past life, “I have had a great many troubles in my life, especially those that never came.”

Trust and rest with heart abiding,  
Like a birdling in its nest,  
Underneath His feathers hiding,  
Fold thy wings and trust and rest.  
Trust and rest, trust and rest,  
God is working for the best.

**MARCH 22: “Hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end”  
(Heb. 3:6)**

The attitude of faith is simple trust. It is Elijah saying to Ahab, “There is a sound of abundance of rain.” But then there comes usually a deeper experience in which the prayer is inwrought; it is Elijah on the mount, with his face between his knees, travailing, as it were, in birth for the promised blessing. He has believed for it—and now he must take. The first is Joash shooting the arrow out of the windows, but the second is Joash smiting on the ground and following up his faith by perseverance and victorious testing.

It is in this latter place that many of us come short. We ask much from God, and when God proceeds to give it to us we are not found equal to His expectation. We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, and trust Him through it all.

Fainting soldier of the Lord,  
Hear His sweet inspiring word,  
“I have conquered all thy foes.  
I have suffered all thy woes;  
Struggling soldier, trust in Me,  
I have overcome for thee.”

## **MARCH 23: “He is a new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17)**

Resurrected, not raised. There is so much in this distinction. The teaching of human philosophy is that we are to raise humanity to a higher plane. This is not the Gospel. On the contrary, the teaching of the cross is that humanity must die and sink out of sight and then be resurrected, not raised. Resurrection is not improvement. It is not elevation, but it is a new supernatural life lifting us from nothingness into God and making us partakers of the Divine nature. It is a new creation. It is an infinite elevation above the highest plane. Let us not take less than resurrection life.

I am crucified with Jesus,  
And the cross has set me free;  
I have ris'n again with Jesus,  
And He lives and reigns in me.

This the story of the Master,  
Through the cross He reached the throne,  
And like Him our path to glory,  
Ever leads through death alone.

Lord, teach me the death-born life. Lord, let me live in the power of Thy resurrection!

## **MARCH 24: “And again I say, rejoice” (Phil. 4:4)**

It is a good thing to rejoice in the Lord. Perhaps you found the first dose ineffectual. Keep on with your medicine, and when you cannot feel any joy, when there is no spring, and no seeming comfort and encouragement, still rejoice, and count it all joy. Even when you fall into divers temptations, reckon it joy, and delight, and God will make your reckoning good. Do you suppose your Father will let you carry the banner of His victory and His gladness on to the front of the battle, and then coolly stand back and see you captured or beaten back by the enemy? Never! The Holy Spirit will sustain you in your bold advance, and fill your heart with gladness and praise, and you will find your heart all exhilarated and refreshed by the fulness of the heart within.

Lord, teach me to rejoice in Thee, and to rejoice evermore.

The joy of the Lord is the strength of His people.

The sunshine that scatters their sadness and gloom;  
The fountain that bursts in the desert of sorrow,  
And sheds o'er the wilderness, gladness and bloom.

## **MARCH 25: “The beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:2)**

Some one remarked once that he did not know more disagreeable people than sanctified Christians. He probably meant people that only profess sanctification. There is an angular, hard, unlovely type of Christian character that is not true holiness; at least, not the highest type of it. It is the skeleton without the flesh covering; it is the naked rock without the vines and foliage that cushion its rugged sides. Jesus was not only virtuous and pure, but He was also beautiful and full of the sweet attractiveness of love.

We read of two kinds of graces: First, “Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely and of good report.” There are a thousand little graces in Christian life that we cannot afford to ignore. In fact, the last stages in any work of art are always the finishing touches; and so let us not wonder if God shall spend a great deal of time in teaching us the little things that many might consider trifles.

God would have His Bride without a spot or even a wrinkle.

## **MARCH 26: “Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2)**

Add to your faith—do not add to yourself. This is where we make the mistake. We must not only enter by faith, but we must advance by faith each step of the way. At every new stage we shall find ourselves as incompetent and unequal for the pressure as before, and we must take the grace and the victory simply by faith. Is it courage? We shall find ourselves lacking in the needed courage; we must claim it by faith. Is it love? Our own love will be inadequate; but we must take His love, and we shall find it given. Is it faith itself? We must have the faith of God, and Christ in us will be the spirit of faith, as well as the blessing that faith claims. So our whole life from beginning to end, is but Christ in us—in the exceeding riches of His grace; and our everlasting song will be: Not I; but Christ who liveth in me.

'Tis so sweet to walk with Jesus,  
Step by step and day by day;  
Stepping in His very footprints,  
Walking with Him all the way.



## **MARCH 27: “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee” (Ps. 56:3)**

We shall never forget a remark Mr. George Mueller once made in answer to a gentleman who asked him the best way to have strong faith. “The only way,” replied the patriarch of faith, “to learn strong faith is to endure great trials. I have learned my faith by standing firm amid severe testings.” This is very true. The time to trust is when all else fails. Dear one, if you scarcely realize the value of your present opportunity, if you are passing through great afflictions, you are in the very soul of the strongest faith, and if you will only let go, He will teach you in these hours the mightiest hold upon this throne which you can ever know. “Be not afraid, only believe”; and if you are afraid, just look up and say, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee,” and you will yet thank God for the school of sorrow which was to you the school of faith.

O brother, give heed to the warning,  
And obey His voice to-day.  
The Spirit to thee is calling,  
O do not grieve Him away.

## **MARCH 28: “The fruit of the Spirit is all goodness” (Gal. 5:22)**

Goodness is a fruit of the Spirit. Goodness is just “Godness.” It is to be like God. And God-like goodness has special reference to the active benevolence of God. The apostle gives us the difference between goodness and righteousness in this passage in Romans, “Scarcely for a righteous man would one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.” The righteous man is the man of stiff, inflexible uprightness; but he may be as hard as a granite mountain side. The good man is that mountain side all covered with velvet moss and flowers, and flowing with cascades and springs. Goodness respects “whatsoever things are lovely.” It is kindness, affectionateness, benevolence, sympathy, rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and weeping with them that weep. Lord, fill us with Thyself, and let us be God-men and good men, and so represent Thy goodness.

There are lonely hearts to cherish,  
While the days are going by;  
There are weary souls who perish,  
While the days are going by.

## **MARCH 29:; “He will keep the feet of His saints” (1 Sam. 2:9)**

Perils as well as privileges attend the higher Christian life. The nearer we come to God, the thicker the hosts of darkness in heavenly places. The safe place lies in obedience to God’s Word, singleness of heart, and holy vigilance.

When Christians speak of standing in a place where they do not need to watch, they are in great danger. Let us walk in sweet and holy confidence, and yet with holy, humble watchfulness, and “He will keep the feet of His saints.” And “now unto Him who is able to keep us from stumbling, and present us faultless before the presence of His glory, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”

What to do we often wonder,  
As we seek some watchword true,  
Lo, the answer God has given,  
What would Jesus do?

When the shafts of fierce temptation,  
With their fiery darts pursue,  
This will be your heavenly armor,  
What would Jesus do?

**MARCH 30: “I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 2)**

In the way of righteousness is life and in the pathway thereof is no death. That is the secret of healing. Be right with God. Keep so. Live in the consciousness of it, and nothing can hurt you. Off from the breastplate of righteousness will glance all of the fiery darts of the devil, and faith be stronger for every fierce assault. How true it is, “Who is he that shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?” And how true also, “Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith, have made shipwreck.”

And yet again, “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt keep all His statutes and commandments, I will put none of these diseases upon thee that I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee.”

There’s a question God is asking  
Every conscience in His sight,  
Let it search thine inmost being,  
Is it right with God, all right?

**MARCH 31: “What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:24)**

Faith is not working up by will power a sort of certainty that something is coming to pass, but it is seeing as an actual fact that God has said that this thing shall come to pass, and that it is true, and then rejoicing to know that it is true, and just resting and entering into it because God has said it. Faith turns the promise into a prophecy. While it is merely a promise it is contingent upon our co-operation; it may or may not be. But when faith claims it, it becomes a prophecy and we go forth feeling that it is something that must be done because God cannot lie.

Faith is the answer from the throne saying, “It is done.” Faith is the echo of God’s voice. Let us catch it from on high. Let us repeat it, and go out to triumph in its glorious power.

Hear the answer from the throne,  
Claim the promise, doubting one,  
God hath spoken, “It is done.”  
Faith hath answered, “It is done”;  
Prayer is over, praise begun,  
Hallelujah! It is done.

## **APRIL 1: “Vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory” (Rom. 9:23)**

Our Father is fitting us for eternity. A vessel fitted for the kitchen will find itself in the kitchen. A vessel for the art gallery or the reception room will generally find itself there at last.

What are you getting fitted for? To be a slop-pail to hold all the stuff that people pour into your ears, or a vase to hold sweet fragrance and flowers for the King’s palace and a harp of many strings that sounds the melodies and harmonies of His love and praise? Each one of us is going to his own place. Let us get fitted now.

The days of heaven are Christly days,  
The Light of Heaven is He;  
So walking at His side, our days  
As the days of heaven would be.

The days of heaven are endless days—  
Days of eternity;  
So may our lives and works endure  
While the days of heaven shall be.

Walk with us, Lord, through all the days,  
And let us walk with Thee;  
'Til as Thy will is done in heaven,  
On earth so shall it be.

## **APRIL 2: “He shall dwell on high” (Isa. 33:16)**

It is easier for a consecrated Christian to live an out and out life for God than to live a mixed life. A soul redeemed and sanctified by Christ is too large for the shoals and sands of a selfish, worldly, sinful life. The great steamship, St. Paul, could sail in deep water without an effort, but she could make no progress in the shallow pool, or on the Long Branch sands; the smallest tugboat is worth a dozen of her there; but out in mid-ocean she could distance them in an hour.

Beloved, your life is too large, too glorious, too divine for the small place that you are trying to live in. Your purpose is too petty; arise and dwell on high in the resurrection life of Jesus, and the inspiring hope of His blessed coming.

Rise with thy risen Lord,  
Ascend with Christ above,  
And in the heavenlies walk with Him,  
Whom seeing not, you love.

Walk as a heavenly race,  
Princes of royal blood;  
Walk as the children of the light,  
The sons and heirs of God.

### **APRIL 3: “My expectation is from Him” (Ps. 62:5)**

When we believe for a blessing, we must take the attitude of faith, and begin to act and pray as if we had our blessing. We must treat God as if He had given us our request. We must lean our weight over upon Him for the thing that we have claimed, and just take it for granted that He gives it, and is going to continue to give it. This is the attitude of trust. When the wife is married, she at once falls into a new attitude, and acts in accordance with the fact, and so when we take Christ as a Saviour, as a Sanctifier, as a Healer, or as a Deliverer, He expects us to fall into the attitude of recognizing Him in the capacity that we have claimed, and expect Him to be to us all that we have trusted Him for.

You may bring Him ev'ry care and burden,  
You may tell Him ev'ry need in pray'r,  
You may trust Him for the darkest moment,  
He is caring, wherefore need you care?

Faith can never reach its consummation,  
'Til the victor's thankful song we raise:  
In the glorious city of salvation,  
God has told us all the gates are praise.



## **APRIL 4: “Resist the devil and he will flee” (James 4:7)**

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. This is a promise, and God will keep it to us. If we resist the adversary, He will compel him to flee, and will give us the victory. We can, at all times, fearlessly stand up in defiance, in resistance to the enemy, and claim the protection of our heavenly King just as a citizen would claim the protection of the government against an outrage or injustice on the part of violent men. At the same time we are not to stand on the adversary’s ground anywhere by any attitude or disobedience, or we give him a terrible power over us, which, while God will restrain in great mercy and kindness, He will not fully remove until we get fully on holy ground. Therefore, we must be armed with the breastplate of righteousness, as well as the shield of faith, if we would successfully resist the prince of darkness and the principalities in heavenly places.

Your full redemption rights

With holy boldness claim,

And to the utmost fulness prove

The power of Jesus’ name.

**APRIL 5: “Many shall be purified and made white and tried” (Dan. 12:10)**

This is the promise for the Lord’s coming. It is more than purity. It is to be made white, lustrous, or bright. To be purified is to have the sin burned out; to be made white is to have the glory of the Lord burned in. The one is cleansing, the other is illumination and glorification. The Lord has both for us, but in order for us to have both, we must be put into the fire to be tried, and to be led into difficult and peculiar places where Christ shall be more to us because of the very extremity of the situation. We are approaching these days. Indeed, they are already around us, and they are the precursors of the Lord’s coming.

Blessed is he that keepeth his garments lest he walk naked.

There are voices in the air, filling men with hope and fear;  
There are signals everywhere that the end is drawing near,  
There are warnings to prepare, for the King will soon be here;  
O it must be the coming of the Lord!

**APRIL 6: “As we have many members in one body, so we being many are one body in Christ”  
(Rom. 12:4-5)**

Sometimes our communion with God is cut off, or interrupted because of something wrong with a brother, or some lack of unity in the body of Christ. We try to get at the Lord, but we cannot, because we are separated from some member of the Lord’s body, or because there is not the freedom of His love flowing through every organic part. It does not need a blow upon the head to paralyze the brain; a blow upon some nerve may do it; or a wound in some artery at the extremities may be fatal to the heart. Therefore we must stand right with all His children, and meet in the body of Christ in the sweetest, fullest fellowship, if we would keep our perfect communion with Christ Himself. Sometimes we will find that an altered attitude to one Christian will bring us into the flood-tides of the Holy Ghost. It seems impossible to have faith without love, or to have Christ alone without the fulness of fellowship with all His dear saints; and if one member suffer, all suffer together, and if one rejoice, all are blessed in common.

## **APRIL 7: “In Him we live and move” (Acts 17:28)**

The hand of Gehazi, and even the staff of Elisha could not heal the lifeless boy. It needed the living touch of the prophet’s own divinely quickened flesh to infuse vitality into the cold clay. Lip to lip, hand to hand, heart to heart, he must touch the child ere life could thrill his pulseless veins.

We must come into personal contact with the risen Saviour, and have His very life quicken our mortal flesh before we can know the fulness and reality of His healing. This is the most frequent cause of failure. People are often trusting to something that has been done to them, to something that they have done, or something that they have believed intellectually; but their spirit has not felt its way to the heart of Christ, and they have not drawn His love into their being by the hunger and thirst of love and faith, and so they are not quickened. The greatest need of our souls and bodies is to know Jesus personally, to touch Him constantly, to abide in Him continually.

May we this day lay aside all things that could hinder our near approach to Him, and walk hand in hand, heart to heart, with Jesus.

## **APRIL 8: “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Prov. 17:22)**

King Solomon left among his wise sayings a prescription for sick and sad hearts, and it is one that we can safely take. “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.” Joy is the great restorer and healer. Gladness of spirit will bring health to the bones and vitality to the nerves when all other tonics fail, and all other sedatives cease to quiet. Sick one, begin to rejoice in the Lord, and your bones will flourish like an herb, and your cheeks will glow with the bloom of health and freshness. Worry, fear, distrust, care, are all poison drops; joy is balm and healing; and if you will but rejoice, God will give power. He has commanded you to be glad and rejoice; and He never fails to sustain His children in keeping His commandments. Rejoice in the Lord always, He says; which means no matter how sad, how tempted, how sick, how suffering you are, rejoice in the Lord just where you are, and begin this moment.

The joy of the Lord is the strength of our body,  
The gladness of Jesus, the balm for our pain,  
His life and His fulness, our fountain of healing,  
His joy, our elixir for body and brain.

## **APRIL 9: “I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29)**

It is a good thing to keep short accounts with God. We were very much struck some years ago with an interpretation of this verse: “So every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.” The thought conveyed to our mind was, that of accounting to God every day of our lives, so that our accounts were settled daily, and for us judgment was passed, as we lay down on our pillows every night.

This is surely the true way to live. It is the secret of great peace, and it will be a delightful comfort when life is closing, or the Master coming, to know that our account is settled, and our judgment over, and for us there is only waiting the glad “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Step by step I'll walk with Jesus,  
Just a moment at a time,  
Heights I have not wings to soar to,  
Step by step my feet can climb.

Jesus, keep me closer—closer,  
Step by step and day by day  
Stepping in Thy very foot-prints,  
Walking with Thee all the way.

## **APRIL 10: “Hold fast the confidence” (Heb. 3:6)**

Seldom have we seen a sadder wreck of even the highest, noblest Christian character than when the enemy has succeeded in undermining the simple trust of a child of God, and got him into self-accusing and condemnation. It is a fearful place when the soul allows Satan to take the throne and act as God, sitting in judgment on its every thought and act; and keeping it in the darkness of ceaseless condemnation. Well indeed has the apostle told us to hold firmly the shield of faith!

This is Satan’s objective point in all his attacks upon you, to destroy your trust. If he can get you to lose your simple confidence in God, he knows that he will soon have you at his feet.

It is enough to wreck both the reason and the life for the soul that has known the sweetness of His love to lose its perfect trust in God. “Beloved, hold fast your confidence and the rejoicing of your hope firm unto the end.”

Fear not to take your place

With Jesus on the throne,

And bid the powers of earth and hell,

His sovereign sceptre own.

## **APRIL 11: “Commit thy way unto the Lord” (Ps. 37:5)**

Seldom have we heard a better definition of faith than was given once in one of our meetings by a dear old colored woman, as she answered the question of a young man how to take the Lord for needed help.

In her characteristic way, pointing her finger toward him, she said with great emphasis: “You’ve just got to believe that He’s done it, and it’s done.” The great danger with most of us is, that after we ask Him to do it, we do not believe that it’s done, but we keep on helping Him, and getting others to help Him; superintending God and waiting to see how He is going to do it.

Faith adds its amen to God’s yea, and then takes its hands off, and leaves God to finish His work. Its language is, “Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him; and He worketh.”

Lord, I give up the struggle,  
To Thee commit my way,  
I trust Thy word forever,  
And settle it all to-day.



## **APRIL 12: “They were as it were, complainers” (Num. 11:1)**

There is a very remarkable phrase in the book of Numbers, in the account of the murmuring of the children of Israel in the wilderness. It reads like this: “When the people, as it were, murmured.” Like most marginal readings it is better than the text, and a great world of suggestive truth lies back of that little sentence.

In the distance we may see many a vivid picture rise before our imagination of people who do not dare to sin openly and unequivocally, but manage to do it “as it were” only. They do not lie straight, but they evade or equivocate, or imply enough falsehood to escape a real conviction of conscience. They do not openly accuse God of unkindness or unfaithfulness, but they strike at Him through somebody else. They find fault with circumstances and people and things that God has permitted to come into their lives, and, “As it were,” murmur. They do not perhaps go any farther. They feel like doing it if they dared to “charge God foolishly.”

These things were written for our warning.

## **APRIL 13: “Rejoice evermore” (1 Thess. 5:16)**

Do not lose your joy whatever else you lose. Keep the spirit of spring. “Rejoice evermore,” and “Again I say, rejoice.”

The loss of Canaan began in the spirit of murmurings, “When the people, as it were, murmured, it displeased the Lord.” The first break in their fellowship, the first falter in their advance, came when they began to doubt, and grieve, and fret.

Oh, keep the heart from the perforations of depression, discouragement, distrust and gloom, for Satan cannot crush a rejoicing and praiseful soul.

Look out for the beginning of sin. Don’t let the first touch of evil be harbored. It is the first step that loses all. Oh, to keep so encased in the Holy Ghost and in the very life of Jesus that the evil cannot reach us!

The little fly on the inside of the window-pane may be attacked by the little bird on the outside, and it may seem to him that he is lost, but the crystal pane between keeps him safely from all danger as certainly as if it were a mighty wall of iron.

**APRIL 14: “I if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me” (John 12:32)**

A true and pure Christian life attracts the world. There are hundreds of men and women who find no inducements whatever in the lives of ordinary Christians to interest them in practical religion, but who are won at once by a true and victorious example. We believe that more men of the world step at a bound right into a life of entire consecration than into the intermediate state which is usually presented to them at the first stage.

In an audience once there was a man who for half a century or more had lived without Christ, and who was a very prominent citizen, a man in public life, of irreproachable character, lofty intellect, and a most winning spirit and manners, but utterly out of sympathy with the Christian life.

At the close of a service for the promotion of deeper spiritual life he rose to ask the prayers of the congregation, and before the end of the week he was himself a true and acknowledged follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, as he went home that night, “If that is the religion of Jesus Christ, I want it.”

## **APRIL 15: “Rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17)**

There is a very singular shrub, which grows abundantly in the west, and is to be found in all parts of Texas. It is no less than the “mosquito tree.” It is a very slim, and willowy looking shrub, and would seem to be of little use for any industrial purposes; but it has extraordinary roots growing like great timbers underground, and possessing such qualities of endurance in all situations that it is used and very highly valued for good pavements. The city of San Antonio is said to be paved with these roots. It reminds one of those Christians who make little show externally, but their growth is chiefly underground—out of sight, in the depth of God. These are the men and women that God uses for the foundation of things, and for the pavements of that city of God which will stand when all earthly things have crumbled into ruin and dissolved into oblivion.

Deeper, deeper let the living waters flow;  
Blessed Holy Spirit! River of Salvation!  
All Thy fulness let me know.

## **APRIL 16: “Quit you like men” (1 Cor. 16:13)**

Be brave. Cowards always get hurt. Brave men generally come out unharmed. Jeremiah was a hero. He shrank from nothing. He faced his king and countrymen with dauntless bravery, and the result was he suffered no harm, but came through the siege of Jerusalem without a hair being injured. Zedekiah, the cowardly king, was always afraid to obey God and be true, and the result was that he at last met the most cruel punishment that was ever inflicted on human heart.

The men and women that stand from the beginning true to their convictions have the fewest tests. When God gives to you a good trial, if you can stand the strain, He is not always repeating it. When Abraham offered up his son Isaac at Mount Moriah, it was a final testing for the rest of his life. Do not let Satan see that you are afraid of him, for he will pursue to the death if he thinks that he has a chance of getting you.

Be true, be true,  
Whether friends be false or few,  
Whatsoe'er betide, ever at His side,  
Let Him always find you true.

**APRIL 17: “He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city” (Prov. 16:32)**

Temperance is true self-government. It involves the grace of self-denial and the spirit of a sound mind. It is that poise of spirit that holds us quiet, self-possessed, recollected, deliberate, and subject ever to the voice of God and the conviction of duty in every step we take. Many persons have not that poise and recollected spirit. They are drifting at the impulse of their own impressions, moods, the influence of others, or the circumstances around them. No desire should ever control us. No purpose, however right, should have such mastery over us that we are not perfectly free. The pure affection may be an inordinate affection. Our work itself may be a selfish passion. That thing that we began to do because it was God’s will, we may cling to and persist in ultimately, because it is our own will. Lord, give us the spirit ever controlled by Thy Spirit and will, and the eye that looks to Thee every moment as the eyes of a servant to the hands of her mistress. So shall Thy service be our perfect freedom, and our subjection divinest liberty.

## **APRIL 18: “They shall mount up with wings” (Isa. 40:31)**

“They shall mount up with wings as eagles,” is God’s preliminary; for the next promise is, “They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.” Hours of holy exultation are necessary for hours of patient plodding, waiting and working. Nature has its springs, and so has grace.

Let us rejoice in the Lord evermore, and again we say, rejoice. And let us take Him to be our continual joy, whose heart is a fountain of blessedness, and who is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. We must not be disappointed if the tides are not always equally high. Even at low tide the ocean is just as full. Human nature could not stand perpetual excitement, even of a happy kind, and God often rests in His love. Let us live as self-unconsciously as possible, filling up each moment with faithful service, and trusting Him to stir the springs at His will, and as we go on in faithful service we shall hear, again and again, His glad whisper: “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

## **APRIL 19: “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him” (Ps. 37:7)**

It is a very suggestive thought that it is in the Gospel of Mark, which is the Gospel of service, we hear the Master saying to His disciples, “Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest awhile.” God wants rested workers. There is an energy that may be tireless and ceaseless, and yet still as the ocean’s depth, with the peace of God, which passes all understanding. The two deepest secrets of rest are, first, to be in harmony with the will of God, and, secondly, to trust. “Great peace have they that love Thy law,” expresses the first. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee,” describes the second. There is a good deal in learning to “stay.” Sometimes we forget that it literally means to stop. It is a great blessing even to stop all thought, and this is frequently the only way to answer the devil’s whirlwind of irritating questions and thoughts, to be absolutely still and refuse to even think, and meet his evil voice with a simple and everlasting “No!” If we will be still God will give us peace.



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## **APRIL 21: “The anointing which ye have received” (1 John 2:27)**

This is the secret of the deeper life, but “That ye may be rooted and grounded in love,” is the substance of it, and the sweetness of it. The fulness of the divine love in the heart will make everything easy. It is very easy to do things that we love to do, and it is very easy to trust one whom we love, and the more we realize their love the more we will trust them for it. It is the source of healing. The tide of love flowing through our bodies will strangely strengthen our very frame, and the love of our Lord will become a continual spring of youth and freshness in our physical being. The secret of love is very simple. It is to take the heart of Jesus for our love and claim its love for every need of life, whether it be toward God or toward others. It is very sweet to think of persons in this way, “I will take the heart of Jesus toward them, to let me love them as He loves them.” Then we can love even the unworthy in some measure, if we shall see them in the light of His love and hope, as they shall be, and not as they now are, unworthy of our love.

## **APRIL 22: “Christ is the head” (Eph. 5:23)**

Often we want people to pray for us and help us, but always defeat our object when we look too much to them and lean upon them. The true secret of union is for both to look upon God, and in the act of looking past themselves to Him they are unconsciously united. The sailor was right when he saw the little boy fall overboard and waited a minute before he plunged to his rescue. When the distracted mother asked him in agony why he had waited so long, he sensibly replied: “I knew that if I went in before he would clutch and drag me down. I waited until his struggles were over, and then I was able to help him when he did not grasp me too strongly.”

When people grasp us too strongly, either with their love or with their dependence, we are intuitively conscious that they are not looking to God, and we become paralyzed in our efforts to help them. United prayer, therefore, requires that the one for whom we pray be looking away from us to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we together look to Him alone.

**APRIL 23: “An high priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15)**

Some time ago we were talking with a greatly suffering sister about healing, who was much burdened physically and desirous of being able to trust the Lord for deliverance. After a little conversation we prayed with her, committing her case to the Lord for absolute trust and deliverance as she was prepared to claim. As soon as we closed our prayer she grasped our hand, and asked us to unite with her in the burden that was most upon her heart, and then, without a word of reference to her own healing, or the burden under which she was being crushed to death, she burst into such a prayer for a poor orphan boy, of whom she had just heard that day, as we have never heard surpassed for sympathy and love, imploring God to help him and save him, and sobbing in spasmodic agony of love many times during her prayer, and then she ceased without even referring to her own need. We were deeply touched by the spectacle of love, and we thought how the Father’s heart must be touched for her own need.

## **APRIL 24: “Fret not thyself in any wise” (Ps. 37:8)**

A life was lost in Israel because a pair of human hands were laid unbidden upon the ark of God. They were placed upon it with the best intent to steady it when trembling and shaking as the oxen drew it along the rough way, but they touched God’s work presumptuously, and they fell paralyzed and lifeless. Much of the life of faith consists in letting things alone. If we wholly trust an interest to God we can keep our hands off it, and He will guard it for us better than we can help Him. “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Fret not thyself in any wise because of him that prospereth in the way, because of the man that bringeth wicked devices to pass.”

Things may seem to be going all wrong, but He knows as well as we; and He will arise in the right moment if we are really trusting Him so fully as to let Him work in His own way and time.

There is nothing so masterly as inactivity in some things, and there is nothing so hurtful as restless working, for God has undertaken to work His sovereign will.

**APRIL 25: “The very God of Peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Thess. 5:23)**

A great tidal wave is bearing up the stranded ship, until she floats above the bar without a straining timber or struggling seaman, instead of the ineffectual and toilsome efforts of the struggling crew and the strain of the engines, which had tried in vain to move her an inch until that heavenly impulse lifted her by its own attraction.

It is God’s great law of gravitation lifting up, by the warm sunbeams, the mighty iceberg which a million men could not raise a single inch, but melts away before the rays and the warmth of the sunshine, and rises in clouds of evaporation to meet its embrace until that cold and heavy mass is floating in fleecy clouds of glory in the blue ocean of the sky.

How easy all this! How mighty! How simple! How divine! Beloved, have you come into the divine way of holiness! If you have, how your heart must swell with gratitude! If you have not, do you not long for it, and will you not unite in the prayer of the text that the very God of peace will sanctify you wholly?

## **APRIL 26: “Strangers and pilgrims” (Heb. 11:13)**

If you have ever tried to plough a straight furrow in the country—we are sorry for the man that does not know how to plough and more sorry for the man that is too proud to want to know—you have found it necessary to have two stakes in a line and to drive your horses by these stakes. If you have only one stake before you, you will have no steadying point for your vision, but you can wiggle about without knowing it and make your furrows as crooked as a serpent’s coil; but if you have two stakes and ever keep them in line, you cannot deviate an inch from a straight line, and your furrow will be an arrow speeding to its course.

This has been a great lesson to us in our Christian life. If we would run a straight course, we find that we must have two stakes, the near and the distant. It is not enough to be living in the present, but it is a great and glorious thing to have a distant goal, a definite object, a clear purpose before us for which we are living, and unto which we are shaping our present.

## **APRIL 27: “The sweetness of the lips” (Prov. 16:21)**

Spiritual conditions are inseparably connected with our physical life. The flow of the divine life-currents may be interrupted by a little clot of blood; the vital current may leak out through a very trifling wound.

If you want to keep the health of Christ, keep from all spiritual sores, from all heart wounds and irritations. One hour of fretting will wear out more vitality than a week of work; and one minute of malignity, or rankling jealousy or envy will hurt more than a drink of poison. Sweetness of spirit and joyousness of heart are essential to full health. Quietness of spirit, gentleness, tranquility, and the peace of God that passes all understanding, are worth all the sleeping draughts in the country.

We do not wonder that some people have poor health when we hear them talk for half an hour. They have enough dislikes, prejudices, doubts, and fears to exhaust the strongest constitution.

Beloved, if you would keep God’s life and strength, keep out the things that kill it; keep it for Him, and for His work, and you will find enough and to spare.



**APRIL 28: “For it is God which worketh in you” (Phil. 2:13)**

Sanctification is the gift of the Holy Ghost, the fruit of the Spirit, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the prepared inheritance of all who enter in, the greatest obtainment of faith, not the attainment of works. It is divine holiness, not human self-improvement, nor perfection. It is the inflow into man’s being of the life and purity of the infinite, eternal and Holy One, bringing His own perfection and working out His own will. How easy, how spontaneous, how delightful this heavenly way of holiness! Surely it is a “highway” and not the low way of man’s vain and fruitless mortification.

It is God’s great elevated railway, sweeping over the heads of the struggling throngs who toil along the lower pavement when they might be borne along on His ascension pathway, by His own almighty impulse. It is God’s great elevator carrying us up to the higher chambers of His palace, without over-laborious efforts, while others struggle up the winding stairs and faint by the way.

Let us to-day so fully take Him that He can “cause us to walk in His statutes.”

## **APRIL 29: “Love never faileth” (1 Cor. 13:8)**

In our work for God it is a great thing to find the key to men’s hearts, and recognize something good as a point of contact for our spiritual influence. When Jesus met the woman at Samaria He immediately seized hold of the best things in her, and by this He reached her heart, and drew from her a willing confession of her salvation. A Scotchman once said that his salvation was all due to the fact that a good man (Lord Shaftsbury, we believe) once put his arms around him and said, “John, by the grace of God we will make a man of you yet.”

The old legend tells the story of a poor, dead dog lying on the street in the midst of the crowd, every one of whom was having something to say, until Jesus came along, and immediately began to admire its beautiful teeth. He had something kind to say even of him.

There is but One can live and love like this;

The Christ-love from the living Christ must spring.

O! Jesus! come and live Thy life in me,

And all Thy heaven of love and blessing bring.

## **APRIL 30: “Love believeth all things” (1 Cor. 13:7)**

Beautiful is the expression in the Book of Isaiah which reflects with exceeding sweetness the love of our dear Lord. He said, “They are My people, children that will not lie; so He was their Saviour.” They did lie, but He would not believe it. At least He speaks as if He would not believe it in the greatness of His love, because they were His people. He has not seen iniquity in Jacob nor perversity in Israel. There is plenty of it to see, and the devil sees it all, and a good many people are only too glad to see it; but the dear Father will not see it. He covers it with His love and the precious blood of His dear atoning Son. Such a wonderful love ought surely to make us gentler to others, and more anxious to cause our Father less need to hide His loving eyes from our imperfections and faults.

If we have the mind and heart of Christ, we shall clothe even the world with those graces which faith can claim for them, and try our best to count them as if they were real, and by love and prayer we shall at length make them real. “Love believeth all things.”

## **MAY 1: “The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness” (Gal. 5:22)**

Nature’s harshness has melted away and she is now beaming with the smile of spring, and everything around us whispers of the gentleness of God. This beautiful fruit is in lovely harmony with the gentle month of which it is the keynote. May the Holy Spirit lead us, beloved, these days, into His sweetness, quietness, and gentleness, subduing every coarse, rude, harsh, and unholy habit, and making us like Him, of whom it is said, “He shall not strive, nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets.”

The man who is truly filled with Jesus will always be a gentleman. The woman who is baptized of the Holy Ghost, will have the instincts of a perfect lady, although low born and little bred in the schools of earthly refinement. Beloved, let us receive and reflect the gentleness of Christ, the spirit of the holy babe, until the world will say of us, as the polished and infidel Chesterfield once said of the saintly Fenelon, “If I had remained in his house another day, I should have had to become a Christian.”

Lord, help us to-day, to so yield to the gentle Dove-Spirit, that our lives shall be as His life.

## **MAY 2: “Always causeth us to triumph” (1 Cor. 2:14)**

How these words help us. Think of them when the people rasp you, when the devil pricks you with his fiery darts, when your sensitive, self-willed spirit chafes or frets; let a gentle voice be heard above the strife, whispering, “Keep sweet, keep sweet!” And, if you will but heed it quickly, you will be saved from a thousand falls and kept in perfect peace.

True, you cannot keep yourself sweet, but God will keep you if He sees that it is your fixed, determined purpose to be kept sweet, and to refuse to fret or grudge or retaliate. The trouble is, you rather enjoy a little irritation and morbidness. You want to cherish the little grudge, and sympathize with your hurt feelings, and nurse your little grievance.

Dear friends, God will give you all the love you really want and honestly choose. You can have your grievance or you can have the peace that passeth all understanding; but you cannot have both.

There is a balm for a thousand heartaches, and a heaven of peace and power in these two little words—KEEP SWEET.

### **MAY 3: “My peace I give unto you” (John 14:27)**

Here lies the secret of abiding peace—God’s peace. We give ourselves to God and the Holy Spirit takes possession of our breast. It is indeed “Peace, Peace.” But it is just then that the devil begins to turn us away, and he does it through our thoughts, diverting or distracting them as occasion requires. This is the time to prove the sincerity of our consecration and the singleness of our heart. If we truly desire His Presence more than all else, we will turn away from every conflicting thought and look steadily up to Jesus. But if we desire the gratification of our impulse more than His Presence, we will yield to the passionate word or the frivolous thought or the sinful diversion, and when we come back our Shepherd has gone, and we wonder why our peace has departed. Failure occurs often in some trifling thing, and the soul failure has occurred in some trifling thing, usually a thought or word, and the soul which would not have feared to climb a mountain has really stumbled over a straw.

The real secret of perfect rest is to be jealously, habitually occupied with Jesus.

## **MAY 4: “Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4)**

Satan loves to trip us over little things. The reason of this is because it is generally a greater victory for him, and shows that he can upset us by a shaving and knock us down with a straw. It is the old boast of the Jebusite, when they told David they could defend Jerusalem by a garrison of the blind and lame. Most of us get on better in our great struggles than we do in our little ones. It was over a little apple that Adam fell, but all the world was wrecked. Look out, beloved, for the little stumbling blocks, and do not let Satan laugh at you, and tell his myrmidons how he tripped you over an orange peel. And, too, when the devil wants to stop some great blessing in our lives, he generally throws some ugly shadow over it and makes it look distasteful to us. How many of us have been keeping back from truths, places and persons in which God has reappeared, the greatest blessing of our lives, and the devil has succeeded in keeping us away from them by some false or foolish prejudice!

## **MAY 5: “If ye then be risen” (Col. 3:1)**

God is waiting this morning to mark the opening hours for every ready and willing heart with a touch of life and power that will lift our lives to higher pleasures and offer to our vision grander horizons of hope and holy service.

We shall not need to seek far to discover our risen Lord. He was in advance even of the earliest seeker that Easter morning, and He will be waiting for us before the break of day with His glad “All Hail,” if we have only eyes to see and hearts to welcome and obey Him.

What is His message to us this spring time? “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

It is not risen with Christ, but resurrected. It is not rising a little higher in the old life, but it is rising from the dead. The resurrection will mean no more than the death has meant. Only so far as we are really dead shall we live with Him.



**MAY 6: “Reckon ye also yourselves to be alive unto God” (Rom. 6:11)**

Death is but for a moment. Life is forevermore. Live, then, ye children of the resurrection, on His glorious life, more and more abundantly, and the fulness of your life will repel the intrusion of self and sin, and overcome evil with good, and your existence will be, not the dreary repression of your own struggling, but the springing tide of Christ’s spontaneous overcoming life.

Once in a religious meeting a dear brother gave us a most exhilarating talk on the risen life. Then another brother got up and talked for a long time on the necessity of self-crucifixion. A cold sweat fell over us all, and we could scarcely understand why. But after he had got through, a good sister clarified the whole situation by saying, that “Pastor S. had taken us all out of the grave by his address, and then Pastor P. has put us back again.”

Don’t go back into the grave again after you have got out, but live like Him, who “liveth and was dead, and lo! He is alive forevermore, and has the keys of hell and of death.” Keep out of the tomb, and keep the door locked, and the keys in His risen hands.

**MAY 7: “I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19)**

It is a blessed moment when we are born again and a new heart is created in us after the image of God. It is a more blessed moment when in this new heart Christ Himself is born and the Christmas time is reproduced in us as we, in some real sense, become incarnations of the living Christ. This is the deepest and holiest meaning of Christianity. It is expressed in Paul’s prayer for the Galatians. “My little children, for whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you.”

There will yet be a more glorious era when we, like Him, shall be transformed and transfigured into His glory, and in the resurrection shall be, in spirit, soul and body, even as He.

Let us live, under the power of the inspiring thought, incarnations of Christ; not living our life, but the Christ-life, and showing forth the excellencies, not of ourselves, but of Him who hath called us “out of darkness into His marvelous light”; so our life shall be to all the re-living in our position of the Christ life, as He would have lived it, had He been here.

**MAY 8: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die” (John 12:24)**

Death and resurrection are the central ideas of nature and Christianity. We see them in the transformation of the chrysalis, in the buried seed bursting into the bud and blossom of the spring, in the transformation of the winding sheet of winter to the many tinted robes of spring. We see it all through the Bible in the symbol of circumcision, with its significance of death and life, in the passage of the Red Sea and the Jordan leading out and leading in, and in the Cross of Calvary and the open grave of the Easter morning. We see it in every deep spiritual life. Every true life is death-born, and the deeper the dying the truer the living. We doubt not the months that have been passing have shown us all many a place where there ought to be a grave, and many a lingering shred of the natural and sinful which we would gladly lay down in a bottomless grave. God help us to pass the irrevocable sentence of death and to let the Holy Ghost, the great undertaker, make the interment eternal. Then our life shall be ever budding and blossoming and shedding fragrance over all.

## **MAY 9: “All hail” (Matt. 28:9)**

It was a stirring greeting which the Lord of Life spake to His first disciples on the morning of the resurrection. It is a bright and radiant word which in His name we would speak to His beloved children at the commencement of another day. It means a good deal more than appears on the surface. It is really a prayer for our health, but which none but those who believe in the healing of the body can fully understand. A thoughtful friend suggested once that the word “hail” really means health, and it is just the old Saxon form of the word. We all know that a hale person is a healthy person. Our Lord’s message, therefore, was substantially that greeting which from time immemorial we give to one another when we meet. “How is your health?” “How are you?” or, better still, “I wish you health.” Christ’s wish is tantamount to a promise and command. It is very similar to the Apostle John’s benediction to his dear friend Gaius, and we would re-echo it to our beloved friends according to the fulness of the Master’s will.

## **MAY 10: “I am alive forevermore” (Rev. 1:18)**

Here is the message of the Christ of the cross and the still more glorious and precious Christ of the resurrection. It is beautiful and inspiring to note the touch of light and glory with which these simple words invest the cross. It is not said I am He that was dead and liveth, but “I am He that liveth and was dead, but am alive forevermore.” Life is mentioned before the death. There are two ways of looking at the cross. One is from the death side and the other from the life side. One is the Ecce Homo and the other is the glorified Jesus with only the marks of the nails and the spear. It is thus we are to look at the cross. We are not to carry about with us the mould of the sepulchre, but the glory of the resurrection. It is not the Ecce Homo, but the Living Christ. And so our crucifixion is to be so complete that it shall be lost in our resurrection and we shall even forget our sorrow and carry with us the light and glory of the eternal morning. So let us live the death-born life, ever new and full of a life that can never die, because it is “dead and alive forevermore.”

**MAY 11: “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it” (Luke 9:24)**

First and foremost Christ teaches resurrection and life. The power of Christianity is life. It brings us not merely law, duty, example, with high and holy teaching and admonition. It brings us the power to follow the higher ideal and the life that spontaneously does the things commanded. But it is not only life, but resurrection life.

And it begins with a real crisis, a definite transaction, a point of time as clear as the morning dawn. It is not an everlasting dying and an eternal struggle to live. But it is all expressed in a tense that denotes definiteness, fixedness and finished action. We actually died at a certain point and as actually began to live the resurrection life.

Let us reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.

And death is only the pathway and portal,  
To the life that shall die nevermore;  
And the cross leadeth up to the crown everlasting,  
The Jordan to Canaan’s bright shore.

**MAY 12: “Tell me where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon” (Song of Solomon 1:7)**

Beloved, do you not long for God’s quiet, the inner chambers, the shadow of the Almighty, the secret of His presence? Your life has been, perhaps, all driving and doing, or perhaps straining, struggling, longing and not obtaining. Oh, for rest! to lie down upon His bosom and know that you have all in Him, that every question is answered, every doubt settled, every interest safe, every prayer answered, every desire satisfied. Lift up the cry, “Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon”!

Blessed be His name! He has this for us, His exclusive love—a love which each individual somehow feels is all for himself, in which he can lie alone upon His breast and have a place which none other can dispute; and yet His heart is so great that He can hold a thousand millions just as near, and each heart seem to possess Him just as exclusively for his own, even as the thousand little pools of water upon the beach can reflect the sun, and each little pool seems to have the whole sun embosomed in its beautiful depths. And Christ can teach us this secret of His inmost love.

## **MAY 13: “Abide in Me” (John 15:4)**

Christianity may mean nothing more than a religious system. Christian life may mean nothing more than an earnest and honest attempt to follow and imitate Christ.

Christ life is more than these, and expresses our actual union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is undoubtedly in us as the life and source of all our experience and work.

This conception of the highest Christian life is at once simpler and sublimer than any other. We do not teach in these pages, that the purpose of Christ’s redemption is to restore us to Adamic perfection, for if we had it we should lose it to-morrow; but rather to unite us with the Second Adam, and lift us up to a higher plane than our first parents ever knew.

This is the only thing that can reconcile the warring elements of diverse schools of teaching with respect to Christian life.

The Spirit of God will lead us to have no controversy respecting mere theories, but simply hold to the person and life of Jesus Christ Himself, and the privilege of being united to Him, and living in constant dependence upon His keeping power and grace.



## **MAY 14: “But God” (Luke 22:20)**

What else do we really need? What else is He trying to make us understand? The religion of the Bible is wholly supernatural. The one resource of faith has always been the living God, and Him alone. The children of Israel were utterly dependent upon Jehovah as they marched through the wilderness, and the one reason their foes feared them and hastened to submit themselves was that they recognized among them the shout of a King, and the presence of One compared with whom all their strength was vain.

“Wherein,” asked Moses, “shall we be separated from all other peoples of the earth, except it be in this that Thou goest before us.”

A church relying on human wisdom, wealth or resources, ceases to be the body of Christ and becomes an earthly society. When we dare to depend entirely upon God and without doubt, the humblest and feeblest agencies will become “mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.” May the Holy Spirit give to us at all times, His own conception of these two great words, “But God.”

**MAY 15: “I press toward the mark” (Phil. 3:14)**

We have thought much about what we have received. Let us think of the things we have not received, of some of the vessels that have not yet been filled, of some of the places in our life that the Holy Ghost has not yet possessed for God, and signaled by His glory and His presence.

Shall the coming months be marked by a diligent, heart-searching application of “the rest of the oil,” to the yet unoccupied possibilities of our life and service?

Have we known His fulness of grace in our spiritual life? Have we tasted a little of His glory? Have we believed His promise for the mind, the soul, the spirit? Have we known all His possibilities for the body? Have we tested Him in His power to control the events of providence, and to move the hearts of men and nations? Has He opened to us the treasure-house of God, and met our financial needs as He might? Have we even begun to understand the ministry of prayer, as God would have us exercise it? God give us “the rest of the oil”!

**MAY 16: “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23)**

United to Jesus Christ as your Redeemer, you are accepted in the Beloved. He does not merely take my place as a man and settle my debts. He does that and more. He comes to give a perfect ideal of what a man should be. He is the model man, not for us to copy, for that would only bring discouragement and utter failure; but He will come and copy Himself in us. If Christ lives in me, I am another Christ. I am not like Him, but I have the same mind. The very Christ is in me. This is the foundation of Christian holiness and Divine healing. Christ is developing a perfect life within us. Some say man can never be perfect. “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” We are all a lot of failures. This is true, but we should go further. We must take God’s provision for our failure and rise above it through His grace. We must take Jesus as a substitute for our miserable self. We must give up the good as well as the bad and take Him instead. It is hard for us to learn that the very good must go, but we must have Divine impulses instead of even our best attainments.

## **MAY 17: “To him that overcometh, will I give” (Rev. 2:17)**

A precious secret of Christian life is to have Jesus dwelling within the heart and conquering things that we never could overcome. It is the only secret of power in your life and mine, beloved. Men cannot understand it, nor will the world believe it; but it is true, that God will come to dwell within us, and be the power, and the purity, and the victory, and the joy of our life. It is no longer now, “What is the best that I can do?” but the question is, “What is the best that Christ can do?” It enables us to say, with Paul, in that beautiful passage in Philippians, “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.”

With this knowledge I go forth to meet my testings, and the secret stands me good. It keeps me pure and sweet, as I could never keep myself. Christ has met the adversary and defeated him for me. Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ.

## **MAY 18: “For ye are dead” (Col. 3:3)**

Now, this definite, absolute and final putting off of ourselves in an act of death, is something we cannot do ourselves. It is not self-mortifying, but it is dying with Christ. There is nothing can do it but the Cross of Christ and the Spirit of God. The church is full of half dead people who have been trying, like poor Nero, to slay themselves for years, and have not had the courage to strike the fatal blow. Oh, if they would just put themselves at Jesus’ feet, and let Him do it, there would be accomplishment and rest. On that cross He has provided for our death as well as our life, and our part is just to let His death be applied to our nature just as it has been to our old sins, and then leave it with Him, think no more about it, and count it dead, not recognizing it any longer as ourselves, but another, refusing to listen or fear it, to be identified with it, or even try to cleanse it, but counting it utterly in His hands, and dead to us forever, and for all our new life depending on Him at every breath, as a babe just born depends upon its mother’s life.

**MAY 19: “He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2)**

Recently we passed a garden. The gardener had just finished his pruning, and the wounds of the knife and saw were just beginning to heal, while the warm April sun was gently nourishing the stricken plant into fresh life and energy. We thought as we looked at that plant how cruel it would be to begin next week and cut it down. Now, the gardener’s business is to revive and nourish it into life. Its business is not to die, but to live. So, we thought, it is with the discipline of the soul. It, too, has its dying hour; but it must not be always dying: Rather reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Death is but a moment. Live, then, ye children of the resurrection, on His glorious life more and more abundantly, and the fulness of your life will repel the intrusion of self and sin, and overcome evil with good, and your existence will be, not the dreary repression of your own struggling, but the springing tide of Christ’s spontaneous overcoming and everlasting life.

## **MAY 20: “Ye are not your own” (1 Cor 6:19)**

What a privilege that we may consecrate ourselves. What a mercy that God will take us worthless worms. What rest and comfort lie hidden in those words, “Not my own.” Not responsible for my salvation, not burdened by my cares, not obliged to live for my interests, but altogether His; redeemed, owned, saved, loved, kept in the strong, unchanging arms of His everlasting love. Oh, the rest from sin and self and cankering care which true consecration brings! To be able to give Him our poor weak life, with its awful possibilities and its utter helplessness, and know that He will accept it, and take a joy and pride in making out of it the utmost possibilities of blessing, power and usefulness; to give all, and find in so doing we have gained all; to be so yielded to Him in entire self surrender, that He is bound to care for us as for Himself. We are putting ourselves in the hands of a loving Father, more solicitous for our good than we can be and only wanting us to be fully submitted to Him that He may be more free to bless us.

**MAY 21: “We will come unto Him and make our abode with Him” (John 14:23)**

The Bible has always held out two great promises respecting Christ. First, I will come to you; and, second, I will come into you. For four thousand years the world looked forward to the fulfilment of the first. The other is the secret which Paul says has been hid from ages and generations, but is now made manifest to His saints, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. This is just as great a revelation of God as the incarnation of Jesus, for it makes you like Christ, as free from sin as He is. If Christ is in you, what will be the consequences? Why, He will put you aside entirely. The I in you will go. You will say, “Not I, but Christ.” Christ undertakes your battles for you. Christ becomes purity and grace and strength in you. You do not try to attain unto these things, but you know you have obtained them in Him. It is glorious rest with the Master. Jesus does not say, “Now we must bring forth fruit, we must pray much, we must do this or that.” There is no constraint about it, except that we must abide in Him. That is the center of all joy and help.



## **MAY 22: “Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12)**

Oh, beloved, how must God feel about us after He has given us His heart’s blood, put so many advantages in our way, expended upon us so much grace and care, if we should disappoint Him. It makes the spirit cry, “Who is sufficient for these things?” Evermore I can see before me the time when you and I shall stand on yonder shore and look back upon the years that have been, these few short years of time. Oh, may we cast ourselves at Jesus’ feet and say: “Many a time have we faltered; many a hard fight has come, but Thou hast kept me and held me, thanks to God, who has given me the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ.” From the battlefields of the Peninsula, a little band of veterans came forth, and they gave each a medal with the names of all their battles on one side, and on the other side this little sentence, “I was there.” Oh, when that hour shall come, may it be a glad, glad thought to look back over the trials and sacrifices of these days and remember, “I was there, and by the help of God and the grace of Jesus, I am here.”

## **MAY 23: “The fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ” (Rom. 15:29)**

Many Christians fail to see these blessings as they are centered in Him. They want to get the blessing of salvation, but that is not the Christ. They want to get the blessing of His grace to help, but that is not Him. They want to get answered prayer from Him to work for Him. You might have all that and not have the blessing of Christ Himself. A great many people are attached rather to the system of doctrine. They say, “Yes, I have got the truth; I am orthodox.” That is not the Christ. It may be the cold statue in the fountain with the water passing from the cold hands and lips, but no life there. A great many other people want to get the blessing of joy, but it is not the blessing of Christ personally. A great many people are more attached to their church and pastor, or to dear Christians friends, but that is not the Christ. The blessing that will alone fill your heart when all else fails is the loving heart of Jesus united to you, the fountain of all your blessings and the unfailing one when they all wither and are exhausted—Jesus Christ Himself.

**MAY 24: “Where is the way where light dwelleth” (Job 38:19)**

Jewels, in themselves, are valueless, unless they are brought in contact with light. If they are put in certain positions they will reflect the beauty of the sun. There is no beauty in them otherwise. The diamond that is back in its dark gallery or down in the deep mine, displays no beauty whatever. What is it but a piece of charcoal, a bit of common carbon, unless it becomes a medium for reflecting light? And so it is also with the other precious gems. Their varied tints are nothing without light. If they are many-sided, they reflect more light, and display more beauty. If you put paste beside a diamond there is no brilliancy in it. In its crude state it does not reflect light at all. So we are in a crude state and are of no use at all until God comes and shines upon us. The light that is in a diamond is not its own possession; it is the beauty of the sun. What beauty is there in the child of God? Only the beauty of Jesus. We are His peculiar people, chosen to show forth His excellencies who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Let its reflect to-day His light and love.

## **MAY 25: “That I may know Him” (Phil.3:10)**

Better to know Jesus Himself than to know the truth about Him for the deep things of God as they are revealed by the Holy Ghost. It was Paul’s great desire, “That I may know Him,” not about Him, not the mysteries of the wonderful world, of the deeper and higher teachings of God, but to enter into the Holy of Holies, where Christ is, where the Shekinah is shining and making the place glorious with the holiness of God, and then to enter into the secret of the Lord Himself. It was what Jacob strove for at Peniel, when he pleaded with God, “Tell me Thy name.” He has told us His name, giving us “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” That is the secret. It is the Lord Himself, and nothing else; it is acquaintance with God; it is knowing Jesus Christ as we know no one else; it is being able to say, not only “I believe Him,” but “I know Him”; not about Him, but I know Him. That is the secret above all others that God wants us to have; it is His provision for glory and power, and it is given freely to the single-hearted seeker.

**MAY 26: “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6)**

Commit means to hand over, to trust wholly to another. So, if we give our trials to Him, He will carry them. If we walk in righteousness He will carry us through. “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.” There are two hands there—God’s hand pressing us down, humbling us, and then God’s hand lifting us up. Cast all your care on Him, then His hand will lift you up, exalt you in due time. There are two cares in this verse—your care and His care. They are different in the original. One means anxious care, the other means Almighty care. Cast your anxious care on Him and take His Almighty care instead. Make no account of trouble any more, but believe He is able to sustain you through it. The government is on His shoulder. Believe that, if you trust and obey Him, and meet His will, He will look after your interests. Simply exchange burdens. Take His yoke upon you, and let Him care for you.

## **MAY 27: “The government shall be upon His shoulder” (Isa. 9:6)**

You cannot make the heart restful by stopping its beating. Belladonna will do that, but that is not rest. Let the breath of life come—God’s life and strength—and there will be sweet rest. Home ties and family affection will not bring it. Deliverance from trouble will not bring it. Many a tried heart has said: “If this great trouble was only gone, I should have rest.” But as soon as one goes another comes. The poor, wounded deer on the mountain side, thinks if he could only bathe in the old mountain stream he would have rest. But the arrow is in its flesh and there is no rest for it till the wound is healed. It is as sore in the mountain lake as on the plain. We shall never have God’s rest and peace in the heart till we have given everything up to Christ—even our work—and believe He has taken it all, and we have only to keep still and trust. It is necessary to walk in holy obedience and let Him have the government on His shoulder. Paul said this: “This one thing I do.” There is one narrow path for us all—Christ’s will and work for us.

## **MAY 28: “He humbled Himself” (Phil. 2:8)**

One of the hardest things for a lofty and superior nature is to be under authority, to renounce his own will, and to take a place of subjection. But Christ took upon Him the form of a servant, gave up His independence, His right to please Himself, His liberty of choice, and after having from eternal ages known only to command, gave Himself up only to obey. I have seen occasionally the man who was once a wealthy employer a clerk in the same store. It was not an easy or graceful position, I assure you. But Jesus was such a perfect servant that His Father said: “Behold, My Servant in whom My soul delighteth.” All His life His watchword was, “The Son of Man came to minister.” “I am among you as He that doth serve.” “I can do nothing of Myself.” “Not My will, but Thine, be done.” Have you, beloved, learned the servant’s place?

And once more, “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” His life was all a dying, and at last He gave all up to death, and also shame, the death of crucifixion. This last was the consummation of His love.

**MAY 29: “The body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body” (1 Cor. 6:13)**

Now, just as it was Christ Himself who justified us, and Christ Himself who was made unto us sanctification, so it is only by personal union with Him that we can receive this physical life and redemption. It is, indeed, not a touch of power upon our body which restores and then leaves it to the mere resources of natural strength and life for the future; but it is the vital and actual union of our mortal body with the risen body of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that His own very life comes into our frame and He is Himself made unto us strength, health and full physical redemption.

He is alive forevermore and condescends to live in these houses of clay. They who thus receive Him may know Him as none ever can who exclude Him from the bodies which He has made for Himself. This is one of the deep and precious mysteries of the Gospel. “The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body, which is God’s.” (R. V.)



**MAY 30: “I will put My Spirit within you” (Ezekiel 36:27)**

“I will put My Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments.” “I will put My fear in your hearts, and ye shall not turn away from Me.” Oh, friend, would not that be blessed, would not that be such a rest for you, all worn out with this strife in your own strength? Do you not want a strong man to conquer the strong man of self and sin? Do you not want a leader? Do you not want God Himself to be with you, to be your occupant? Do you not want rest? Are you not conscious of this need? Oh, this sense of being beaten back, longing, wanting, but not accomplishing. That is what He comes to do; “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you.” Better than that, “Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.” That is the true version, and really it is immensely different from the other. You shall not receive power yourself, so that people shall say: “How much power that man has. You shall not have any power whatever, but you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, He having the power, that is all.”

**MAY 31: “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child” (Matt. 18:4)**

You will never get a humble heart until it is born from above, from the heart of Christ. For man has lost his own humanity and alas, too often has a demon heart. God wants us, as Christians, to be simple, human, approachable and childlike. The Christians that we know and love best, and that are nearest to the Lord, are the most simple. Whenever we grow stilted we are only fit for a picture gallery, and we are only good on a pedestal; but, if we are going to live among men and love and save them, we must be approachable and human. All stiffness is but another form of self-consciousness. Ask Christ for a human heart, for a smile that will be as natural as your little child’s in your presence. Oh, how much Christ did by little touches! He never would have got at the woman of Samaria if He had come to her as the prophet. He sat down, a tired man, and said: “Give me a drink of water.” And so, all through His life, it was His simple humanness and love that led Him to others, and led them to Him and to His great salvation.

## **JUNE 1: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us” (Rom. 8:4)**

Beloved friends, do you know the mistake some of you are making? Some of you say: “It is not possible for me to be good; no man ever was perfect, and it is no use for me to try.” That is the mistake many of you are making. I agree with the first sentence, “No man ever was perfect”; but I don’t agree with the second, “There is no use trying.” There is a divine righteousness that we may have. I don’t mean merely that which pardons your sins—I believe that, too—but I mean far more; I mean that which comes into your soul and unites itself with the fibers of your being; I mean Christ; your life, your purity, making you feel as Christ feels; think as Christ thinks, love as Christ loves, hate as Christ hates, and be “partakers of the divine nature.” That is God’s righteousness; “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,” not by us, but in us; not our hands and feet merely, but our very instincts, our very desires, our very nature springing up in harmony with His own. Have you got Him, dear friends? He will come and fulfil all right things in you if to-day you will open your heart.

## **JUNE 2: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk ye in Him” (Col. 2:6)**

Here is the very core of spiritual life. It is not a subjective state so much as a life in the heart. Christ for us is the ground of our salvation and the source of our justification; Christ in us of our sanctification. When this becomes real, “Ye are dead”; your own condition, states and resources are no longer counted upon any more than a dead man’s, but “your life is hid with Christ in God.” It is not even always manifest to you. It is hid and so wrapped up and enfolded in Him that only as you abide in Him does it appear and abide. Nay, “Christ who is your life,” must Himself ever maintain it, and be made unto you of God all you need. Therefore, Christian life is not to come to Christ to save you, and then go on and work out your sanctification yourself, but “as ye have received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so to walk in Him,” just as dependent and as simply trusting as for your pardon and salvation.

Ah friends, how much it would ease our tasks

For the day that’s just begun,  
To live our life a step at a time  
And our moments one by one.

### **JUNE 3: “Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 1:8)**

There is power for us if we have the Holy Ghost. God wants us to speak to men so that they will feel it, so that they will never forget it. God means every Christian to be effective, to count in the actual records and results of Christian work. Dear friends, God sent you here to be a power yourself. There is not one of you but is an essential wheel of the machinery, and can accomplish all that God calls you to. I solemnly believe that there is not a thing that God expects of man but that God will give the man power to do. There is not a claim God makes on you or me but God will stand up to, and will give what He commands. I believe when Christ Jesus lived and died and sent down the Holy Ghost, He sent resources for all our need, and that there is no place for failure in Christian life if we will take God’s resources. Jesus, the ascended One, and the Holy Ghost, the indwelling energy, life and efficiency of God, are sufficient for all possible emergencies. Do you believe this? If you believe it, let Him into your heart, without reserve and allow Him to control and work through you to-day by His power.

## **JUNE 4: “Looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12:2)**

There must be a constant looking unto Jesus, or, as the German Bible gives it, an off-looking upon Jesus; that is, looking off from the evil, refusing to see it, not letting the mind dwell upon it for a second. We should have mental eyelashes as well as physical ones, which can be used like shields, and let no evil thing in; or, like a stockade camp in the woods, which repels the first assault of the enemy. This is the use of the fringes to our eyes, and so it should be with the soul. Many do not seem to know that they have spiritual eyes. They go through the world as if somebody had cut off their eyelashes, and they stare away on the good and evil alike. The devil comes along with his evil pictures and bids them look. We cannot look upon evil without being defiled. Sometimes, in going down the street, the sight of some of the pictures on the way will cast their filth upon the soul so that we shall feel the need of being bathed in Jesus' blood for hours for cleansing. There has been no consent unto sin, but the sight of it has defiled. There is no help for it but in the resolute, steady, inner view of Christ.

## **JUNE 5: “My heart is fixed, O God” (Ps. 57:7)**

We do not always feel joyful, but we are always to count it joy. This word *\_reckon\_* is one of the keywords of Scripture. It is the same word used about our being dead. We are painfully conscious of something which would gladly return to life. But we are to treat ourselves as dead, and neither fear nor obey the old nature. So we are to reckon the thing that comes a blessing; we are determined to rejoice, to say, “My heart is fixed, Lord; I will sing and give praises.” This rejoicing by faith will soon become a habit, and will ever bring speedily the spirit of gladness and the spontaneous overflow of praise.

Then, although the fig tree may wither and no fruit appear in the vines, the labor of the olive fail, and the field yield no increase, the herd be cut off from the stall, and the cattle from the field, yet will we rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of our salvation.

Though the everlasting mountains  
And the earth itself remove,  
Naught can change His loving kindness  
Or His everlasting love.

## **JUNE 6: “He emptied Himself” (Phil. 2:8)**

The first step to the righteousness of the kingdom is “poor in spirit.” Then the next is a little deeper, “they that mourn.” Because now you must get plastic, you must get broken, you must get like the metal in the fire, which the Master can mould; and so, it is not enough to see your unrighteousness, but deeply to feel it, deeply to regret it, deeply to mourn over it, to own it not a little thing that sin has come into your life. And so God leads a soul unto His righteousness. He usually leads it through some testings and trials. This generally comes after conversion. I do not think it necessary for a soul to have deep and great suffering before it is saved. I think He will put it into the fire when He knows it is saved; when it realizes it is accepted; when it is not afraid of the discipline; when it is not the hand of wrath, but the hand of love. Oh, then, God, takes you down and makes you poor in spirit, and makes you mourn until you get to the third step, which is to be meek, broken, yielded, submissive, willing, surrendered, and laid low at His feet, crying: “What wilt Thou have me to do?”



## **JUNE 7: “When ye go; ye shall not go empty” (Ex. 3:21)**

When we are really emptied He would have us filled with Himself and the Holy Spirit. It is very precious to be conscious of nothing good in ourselves; but, oh, are we also conscious of His great goodness? We may be ready to admit our own disability, but are we as ready to admit His ability? There are many Christians who can say, “We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves”; but the number I fear is very small who can say, “Our sufficiency is of God.”

Are you sure that He is able to provide every want in you, or do you feel that you must supply it yourself? Are you believing that God does now supply every lack in your heart and your life, so that all stumbling is taken away, and you are endowed with power for His service, as Elisha took the empty vessels and filled them before they were set aside to be used? Our Saviour, at Cana, ordered the water-pots to be filled to the brim. Then the water was made into wine, but not until the vessels were full. God wants His children to have always a full heart.

## **JUNE 8: “Bread corn is bruised” (Isa. 8:28)**

The farmer does not gather timothy and blue grass, and break it with a heavy machine. But he takes great pains with the wheat. So God takes great pains with those who are to be of much use to Him. There is a nature in them that needs this discipline. Don't wonder if the bread corn is treated with the wise, discriminating care that will fit it for food. He knows the way He is taking, and there is infinite tenderness in the oversight He gives. He is watching the furnace you are in lest the heat should be too intense. He wants it great enough to purify, and then it is withdrawn. He knoweth our frame. He will not let any temptation take us but such as is common to man, and He will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Do you believe in this disciplining love of the Husbandman, and are you trusting Him with the leading and government of your life? Oh, that you would cease to envy or be disturbed by the people around you! Some day you will be glad for the training and blessing they have brought you.

## **JUNE 9: “Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14)**

We are called the lights of the world, light-bearers, reflectors, candle-sticks, lamps. We are to be kindled ourselves, and then we will burn and give light to others. We are the only light the world has. The Lord might come down Himself and give light to the world, but He has chosen differently. He wants to send it through us, and if we don't give it the world will not have it. We should be giving light all the time to our neighbors. God does not put a meteor in the sky to tell us when to shine. We are to be giving light all the time wherever we are, at home, or in the social circle, or in our place in the church. We should feel always we may never have another opportunity for it, and so we should always be burning and shining for Him. Let our lamps be trimmed and burning and full of the oil of the Spirit. Above all, let us be a steady light to the lost ones.

Let me dwell in Timnath Serah,  
Where the sun forever shines,  
Where the night and darkness come not,  
And the day no more declines.

## **JUNE 10: “Your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need” (Matt. 6:32)**

Christ makes no less of our trust for temporal things than He does for spiritual things. He places a good deal of emphasis upon it. Why? Simply because it is harder to trust God for them. In spiritual matters we can fool ourselves, and think that we are trusting when we are not; but we cannot do so about rent and food, and the needs of our body. They must come or our faith fails. It is easy to say that we trust Him in things that are a long way off, but there can be no trifling about it in things where the faith must bring practical answers. It is easy to have faith for our needs, and to trust Him when the sun is shining. But let some things arise which irritate and rasp and fret us, and we soon find whether we have real trust or not. And so the things of everyday life are tests of our real faith in God, and He often puts us where we have to trust for tangible matters—for money and rent, and food and clothes. If you are not trusting here wholly, when you are placed in such tests you will break down. Are you trusting God for everything through the six ordinary days of the week?

## **JUNE 11: “Thou hast the dew of thy youth” (Ps. 110:3)**

Oh, that you might get such a view of Him as would make it impossible for little things ever to fret you again! The petty cares and silly trifles that have troubled you so much ought rather to fill you with wonder that you can think so much about them. Oh, if you had the dew of His youth you should go forth as the morning and fulfil the promise of a glorious day! What a difference it has made in life since we have seen it was possible to do this! How easy it seems now when the little troubles come, to draw a little closer to Christ, to drink in a little more of that fountain of life, to get a little nearer to that loving heart, and to draw in great draughts of refreshing and strength from it. How clear it makes the brain for work! Coming to Him thus, heavy and dull and tired, how rested you become and able to spring forth ready for work. How inspiring to think that our living Head never grows weary. He is as fresh as He ever was; He is a glorious conqueror; He is ever the victorious Christ. Let Him take you to-day, and He will cause you to see in Him the invincible Leader!

## **JUNE 12: “We would see Jesus” (John 12:21)**

Glory to Him for all the things laid up for us in the days to come. Glory to Him for all the visions of service in the future; the opportunities of doing good that are far away as well as close at hand. Our Saviour was able to despise the cross for the joy that was before Him. Let us look up to Him, and rise up to Him till we get on high and are able to look out from the mount of vision over all the land of far distances. There shall not a single thing come to us in all the future in which we may not be able to see the King in His beauty. Let us be very sure that we do not see anything else. Our pupils will become impressed as they look at this vision, so that they will not be able to reflect anything else. My little child came to me once and said: “Papa, look at that golden sign across the street a good while; now look at that brick wall and tell me what you see.” “Why, I see the golden sign on the brick wall.” And he laughed merrily over it. So, if we look a long time upon Jesus we cannot look at anything else without seeing a reflection of Him. Everything which we behold will become a part of Him.

**JUNE 13: “The sweetness of the lips increaseth learning” (Prov. 16:21)**

Life is very largely made up of words. They are not so emphatic, perhaps, as deeds. Deeds are more deliberate expressions of thought. One of the most remarkable authors of the New Testament has said, “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.” It is very often a test of victory in Christian life. Our triumph in this often depends on what we say, or what we do not say. It is said by James of the tongue, “It is set on fire of hell.” The true Christian, therefore, is righteous in his ways and upright in his words. His deeds appeal to men; but in speech he is looking up, for God is listening. His words are sent upward and recorded for the judgment. I believe that this is an actual fact, and I can almost fancy that the skies above, which seem so transparent, the beautiful blue ether over our heads, is like a waxen tablet with a finely sensitive surface, and receives an impression of every word we speak, and that then these tablets are hardened and preserved for the eternal judgment. So we should speak, dear friends, with our eyes ever upward, never forgetting that we shall some day meet the words that we have spoken.

## **JUNE 14: “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him” (Ps. 25:14)**

There are secrets of Providence which God’s dear children may learn. His dealing with them often seems, to the outward eye, dark and terrible. Faith looks deeper and says, “This is God’s secret. You look only on the outside; I can look deeper and see the hidden meaning.” Sometimes diamonds are done up in rough packages, so that their value cannot be seen. When the tabernacle was built in the wilderness there was nothing rich in its outside appearance. The costly things were all within, and its outward covering of rough badger skin gave no hint of the valuable things which it contained. God may send you, dear friends, some costly packages. Do not worry if they are done up in rough wrappings. You may be sure there are treasures of love, and kindness and wisdom hidden within. Do not be so foolish as to throw away a nugget of gold because there is some quartz in it. If we take what He sends, and trust Him for the goodness in it, even in the dark, we shall learn the meaning of the secrets of His providence.



## **JUNE 15: “Grow up into Him in all things” (Eph. 4:15)**

Harvest is a time of ripeness. Then the fruit and grain are fully developed, both in size and weight. Time has tempered the acid of the green fruit. It has been mellowed and softened by the rains and the heat of summer. The sun has tinted it into rich colors, and at last it is ready and ripe to fall into the hand. So Christian life ought to be. There are many things in life that need to be mellowed and ripened. Many Christians have orchards full of fruit, but they are all green and sharp to the taste. There is a great deal in them that is good, but it is incomplete, and very sharp and sour. Perhaps something goes wrong in your domestic life, and you get flurried and cross and lose your confidence in God, and then, of course, your Christian joy. These things produce regret and all kinds of misery. There are many things day after day you are sorry for. You know you are not ripe and mellow and you cannot become so by trying. You cannot bring the sweetness in. It must be wrought out from within.

## **JUNE 16: “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon” (Matt. 6:24)**

He does not say ye cannot very well serve God and mammon, but ye cannot serve two masters at all. Ye shall be sure to end by serving one. The man who thinks he is serving God a little is deceived; he is not serving God. God will not have his service. The devil will monopolize him before he gets through. A divided heart loses both worlds. Saul tried it. Balaam tried it. Judas tried it, and they all made a desperate failure. Mary had but one choice. Paul said: “This one thing I do.” “For me to live is Christ.” Of such a life God says: “Because he hath set his love upon Me therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high because he hath known My name.” God takes a peculiar pride in showing His love to the heart that wholly chooses Him. Heaven and earth will fade away before its trust can be disappointed. Have we chosen Him only and given Him all our heart?

Say is it all for Jesus,

As you so often sing?

Is He your Royal Master?

Is He your heart’s dear King?

**JUNE 17: “The glory of the Lord shall be thy reward” (Isa. 58:8)**

He comes by our side as our helper; nay, more. He comes to dwell within us; to be the life in our blood, the fire in our thought, the faith within us, both in inception and consummation. Thus He becomes not only the recompense of the victor, but the resources of the victory. He is the Captain and the Overcomer in our lives. If we have caught any help that has relieved us of a troubled morning, it has been of Him. He lifts our eyes up unto Himself and delivers us from apathy, from discontent and from fears. He is always the helper in this heavenly competition, and will be the great reward in all the ages to come. If our life is hidden with Him we shall have to go through the same trials that He went through, but we shall not find them too hard. If once we take Him fully as the strength of our life, and our all in all, we shall be able to lay aside all the hindering things that press upon us day by day.

I have overcome, overcome,  
Overcome for thee,  
Thou shalt overcome, overcome,  
Overcome thro' Me.

**JUNE 18: “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down” (Neh. 6:3)**

When work is pressing there are many little things that will come and seem to need attention. Then it is a very blessed thing to be quiet and still, and work on, and trust the little things with God. He answers such trust in a wonderful way. If the soul has no time to fret and worry and harbor care, it has learned the secret of faith in God. A desperate desire to get some difficulty right takes the eye off of God and His glory. Some dear ones have been so anxious to get well, and have spent so much time in trying to claim it, that they have lost their spiritual blessing. God sometimes has to teach such souls that there must be a willingness to be sick before they are so thoroughly yielded as to receive His fullest blessing.

The enemy often keeps at this work. Sanballat came four times to Nehemiah and received always the same answer. It is best to stick to a good answer. How many fears we have stopped to fight which have proved to be nothing at last. Nehemiah recognized that fear was sin, and did not dare to yield to it.

**JUNE 19: “Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again”  
(Rom. 11:35)**

The Christian women of the world have it in their power, by a very little sacrifice, to add millions to the treasury of the Lord. Beloved sisters, have you found the joy of sacrifice for Jesus? Have you given up something that you might give it to Him? Are you giving your substance to Jesus? He will take it, and He will give you a thousandfold more. I should rather be connected with a work founded on great sacrifice than on enormous endowments. The reason God loved the place where His ancient temple rose in majesty was because there Abraham offered his son and David his treasure. The reason redemption is so dear to the Father and the heavenly world is because its foundation-stone is the Cross of Calvary. And the Christian life that is dearest to the heart of God, and will rise to the highest glory and usefulness, is the one whose foundation principle is sacrifice and self-renunciation. This is why the Master teaches us to give, because giving means loving, and love is but another name for life.

**JUNE 20: “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called” (1 Cor.7:20)**

O ye who complain about your calling or fret about the changes and trials of life, how do you know but that these very changes are the divine methods by which God’s purposes of blessing and usefulness concerning you be fulfilled? Had Aquila not been compelled to leave Rome and break up his home and business, he would probably have never met with Paul, and been called to the knowledge and service of Christ through this providential meeting. Had he not been a working man, and pursuing his ordinary avocation he would not have been brought into contact with the apostle. It was in the line of their calling, their common duties, and the providential changes of their life that God called them. And so He meets us. Do not try hard to run away from it, but, as the apostle has so finely put it, “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he is called, let him therein abide with God.” Make the most of your incidental opportunities.

## **JUNE 21: "God hath set some in the church ... helps" (I. Cor. 12:28)**

In the apostle's lists of officers in the church the "helps" are mentioned before the "governments." By the ministry of prayer, by the ministry of giving, by the ministry of encouragement, by the shining face and mute pressure of the hand, and a little word of cheer, and by the countless ways in which we can help, or at least can keep from hindering, we can all find still the footprints of Aquila and Priscilla, if we want to follow them. It is a great grace to be able to rejoice in another's work and pour our lives, like affluent rivers, into great streams. But God knows whence every drop has come, and in the greater day of recompense many of the helps shall have the chief reward. Beloved, are you helping? Are you helping your pastor, your brother, your husband, your mother, your fellow-worker, and when the harvest comes shall he that soweth and he that reapeth rejoice together?

You can help by holy prayer,  
Helpful love and joyful song,  
O, the burdens you may bear,  
O, the sorrows you may share,  
O, the crowns you yet may wear,  
If you help along.

## **JUNE 22: “This is that bread which came down from heaven” (John 6:58)**

We had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead; who delivereth us from so great a death, who doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us. This was the supernatural secret of Paul’s life; he drew continually in his body from the strength of Christ, his Risen Head. The body which rose from Joseph’s tomb was to him a physical reality and the inexhaustible fountain of his vital forces. More than any other he has imparted to us the secret of His strength; “We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones”; “The Lord is for the body and the body is for the Lord.” Marvelous truth! Divine Elixir of Life and Fountain of Perpetual Youth! Earnest of the Resurrection! Fulfilment of the ancient psalms and songs of faith! “The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? My flesh and my heart faint and fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” Beloved, have we learned this secret, and are we living the life of the Incarnate One in our flesh?



**JUNE 23: “Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be”  
(1 John 3:2)**

We are the sons of God. We are not merely called and even legally declared, but actually are sons of God by receiving the life and nature of God; and so we are the very brethren of our Lord; not only in His human nature, but still more in His divine relationship. “Therefore, He is not ashamed to call us brethren.” He gives us that which entitles us to that right, and makes us worthy of it. He does not introduce us into a position for which we are uneducated and unfitted, but He gives us a nature worthy of our glorious standing; and as He shall look upon us in our complete and glorious exaltation reflecting His own likeness and shining in His Father’s glory, He shall have no cause to be ashamed of us. Even now He is pleased to acknowledge us before the universe and call us brethren in the sight of all earth and heaven. Oh, how this dignifies the humblest saint of God! How little we need mind the misunderstanding of the world if He “is not ashamed to call us brethren.”

So let us go out to-day to represent His royal family.

## **JUNE 24: “I will clothe thee with change of raiment” (Zech. 3:4)**

For Paul every exercise of the Christian life was simply the grace of Jesus Christ imparted to him and lived out by him, so that holiness was to put on the Lord Jesus and all the robes of His perfect righteousness which he loves to describe so often in his beautiful epistles. “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved,” he says to the Colossians, “bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering”; and, “above all these things, put on love which is the bond of perfectness.” None of these things are regarded as intrinsic qualities in us, but as imparted graces from the hand of Jesus. And even in the later years of his life, and after the mature experience of a quarter of a century we find him exclaiming, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but refuse, that I might win Christ and be found in Him.”

Lord, enable us to-day to go out, clothed in Thy robes of perfect rightness and with our hearts in adjustment with Thy perfect love.

## **JUNE 25: “Who leadeth us in triumph” (2 Cor. 2:14)**

Every victor must first be a self-conqueror. But the method of Joshua’s victory was the uplifted arm of Moses on the Mount. As he held up his hands Joshua prevailed, as he lowered them Amalek prevailed. It was to be a battle of faith and not of human strength, and the banner that was to wave over the discomfited foe, “Jehovah-nissi.” This, too, is the secret of our spiritual triumph. “If we are led of the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace.”

Have we thus begun the battle and in the strength of Christ planted our feet on our own necks, and thus victorious over the enemy in the citadel of the heart been set at liberty for the battle of the Lord and the service of others? It was the lack of this that hindered the life of Saul and it has wrecked many a promising career. One enemy in the heart is stronger than ten thousand in the field. May the Lord lead us all into Joshua’s first triumph, and show us the secret of self-crucifixion through the greater Joshua, who alone can lead us on to holiness and victory!

## **JUNE 26: “When He saw the multitudes He was moved” (Matt. 9:36)**

He is able to be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” The word “touched” expresses a great deal. It means that our troubles are His troubles, and that in all our afflictions He is afflicted. It is not a sympathy of sentiment, but a sympathy of suffering.

There is much help in this for the tired heart. It is the foundation of His Priesthood, and God meant that it should be to us a source of unceasing consolation. Let us realize, more fully, our oneness with our Great High Priest, and cast all our burdens on His great heart of love. If we know what it is to ache in every nerve with the responsive pain of our suffering child, we can form some idea of how our sorrows touch His heart, and thrill His exalted frame. As the mother feels her babe’s pain, as the heart of friendship echoes every cry from another’s woe, so in heaven, our exalted Saviour, even amid the raptures of that happy world, is suffering in His Spirit and even in His flesh with all His children bear. “Seeing then we have such a great high Priest, let us come boldly to the throne of grace,” and let us come to our great High Priest.

## **JUNE 27: “Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18)**

Some of the effects of being filled with the Spirit are:

1. Holiness of heart and life. This is not the perfection of the human nature, but the holiness of the divine nature dwelling within.
2. Fulness of joy so that the heart is constantly radiant. This does not depend on circumstances, but fills the spirit with holy laughter in the midst of the most trying surroundings.
3. Fulness of wisdom, light and knowledge, causing us to see things as He sees them.
4. An elevation, improvement and quickening of the mind by an ability to receive the fulfilment of the promise, “We have the mind of Christ.”
5. An equal quickening of the physical life. The body was made for the Holy Ghost, as well as the mind and soul.
6. An ability to pray the prayer of the Holy Ghost. If He is in us there will be a strange accordance with God’s working in the world around us. There is a divine harmony between the Spirit and Providence.

## **JUNE 28: “Leaning upon her beloved” (Songs 8:5)**

Shall you make the claim most practical and real and lean like John your full weight on the Lord’s breast? That is the way He would have us prove our love. “If you love me lean hard,” said a heathen woman to her missionary, as she was timidly leaning her tired body upon her stalwart breast. She felt slighted by the timorous reserve, and asked the confidence that would lay all its weight upon the one she trusted. And He says to us, “Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you.” He would have us prove our love by a perfect trust that makes no reserve. He is able to carry all our care, to manage all our interests, to satisfy all our needs. Let us go forth leaning on His breast and feeding on His life. For John not only leaned but also fed. It was at supper that he leaned. This is the secret of feeding on Him, to rest upon His bosom. This is the need of the fevered heart of man. Let us cry to Him, “Tell me whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon.”

## **JUNE 29: “He dwelleth with you and shall be in you” (John 14:17)**

Do not fail to mark these two stages in Christian life. The one is the Spirit’s work in us, the other is the Spirit’s personal coming to abide within us. All true Christians know the first, but few, it is to be feared, understand and receive the second. There is a great difference between my building a house and my going to reside in that house and make it my home. And there is a great difference between the Holy Spirit’s work in regenerating a soul—the building of a house, and His coming to reside, abide and control in our innermost spirit and our whole life and being.

Have we received Him Himself not as our Guest, but as the Owner, Proprietor and Keeper of the temple He has built to be “an habitation of God through the Spirit”?

This is my wonderful story,  
Christ to my heart has come,  
Jesus the King of glory,  
Finds in my heart a home.

I am so glad I received Him,  
Jesus, my heart’s dear King,  
I, who so often have grieved Him,  
All to His feet would bring.

## **JUNE 30: “Therefore, choose” (Deut. 30:19)**

Men are choosing every day the spiritual or earthly. And as we choose we are taking our place unconsciously with the friends of Christ, or the world. It is not merely what ye say, it is what we prefer.

When Solomon made his great choice at Gibeon, God said to him, “Because this was in thine heart to ask wisdom, therefore will I give it unto thee, and all else besides that thou didst not choose.” It was not merely that he said it because it was right to say, and would please God if he said it. But it was the thing his heart preferred, and God saw it in his heart and gave it to him with all besides that he had not chosen. What are we choosing, beloved? It is our choice that settles our destiny. It is not how we feel, but how we purpose. Have we chosen the good part? Have we said, “Whatever else I am or have, let me be God’s child, let me have His favor and blessing, let me please Him?” Or have we said, “I must have this thing, and then I will see about religion.” Alas, God has seen what was in thine heart, and perhaps He has already said, “They have their reward.”



## **JULY 1: “After that ye have suffered awhile” (1 Peter 5:10)**

Beloved, are we learning love in the school of suffering? Are our hearts being mellowed and deepened by the summer heat of trial until the fruit of the Spirit, “which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, faith, is ripening for the harvest of His coming, and our sufferings are easily borne for His sake”? Oh, this is the school of love, and makes Him unutterably more dear to our hearts and us to His. And thus only can we ever learn with Him the heavenly charity which “suffers long, and is kind.”

We see the very first and the very last feature of the face of love, as delineated in St. Paul’s portrait (I. Cor. xiii.), are marks of pain and patient suffering, “suffers long,” “endureth all things.” So let us learn thus in the school of love to suffer and be kind, to endure all things.

Surely it will not be hard to love through all when it is the heart of Jesus within us which will love and continue to love to the very end.

I want the love that suffers and is kind,  
That envies not nor vaunts its pride or fame,  
Is not puffed up, does no discourteous act,  
Is not provoked, nor seeks its own to claim.

## **JULY 2: “And hath raised us up together” (Eph. 2:6)**

Ascension is more than resurrection. Much is said of it in the New Testament. Christ riseth above all things. We see Him in the very act of ascending as we do not in the actual resurrection, as, with hands and lips engaged in blessing, He gently parts from their side, so simply, so unostentatiously, with so little imposing ceremony as to make heaven so near to our common life that we can just whisper through. And we, too, must ascend, even here. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above.” We must learn to live on the heaven side and look at things from above. How it overcomes sin, defies Satan, dissolves perplexities, lifts us above trials, separates us from the world and conquers the fear of death to contemplate all things as God sees them, as Christ beholds them, as we shall one day look back upon them from His glory, and as if we were now really “Seated with Him,” as indeed we are, “in the heavenly places.” Let us arise with His resurrection and in fellowship with His glorious ascension learn henceforth to live above.

### **JULY 3: “Look from the top” (Songs 4:8)**

Yes, our perplexities would become plain if we kept on a spiritual elevation. How often when the traveler quite loses his way he can soon find it again from some tree top or some hill top where all the winding paths he has gone spread behind him, and the whole homeward road opens before. So, from the heights of prayer and faith, we too can see the plain path, and know that we are going home.

There is no other way in which we can gain the victory over the world. We must get above it. We must see it from the side of our great reward. Then it looks like earthly objects after we have gazed upon the sun for a while. We are blind to them. When the Italian fruit-seller finds that he is heir to a ducal palace you cannot tempt him any more with the paltry profits of his trade or the company of his old associates. He is above it all. They who know the hope of their calling and the riches of the glory of their inheritance can well despise the world. It is the poor starving ones who go hungering for the husks of earth. We are born from above and have a longing to go home. Let us go forth to-day with our hearts on the homestretch.

## **JULY 4: “Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not” (1 John 3:6)**

In sanctification what becomes of the old nature? Many people are somewhat unduly concerned to know if it can be killed outright, and seem to desire a sort of certificate of its death and burial. It is enough to know that it is without and Christ is within. It may show itself again, and even knock at the door and plead for admittance, but it is forever outside while we abide in Him. Should we step out of Him and into sin we might find the old corpse in the ghastly cemetery, and its foul aroma might yet revive and embrace us once more. But he that abideth in Him sinneth not and cannot sin while he so abides.

Therefore let us abide and let us not be anxious to escape the hold of eternal vigilance and ceaseless abiding. Our paths are made and the strength to pursue them; let us walk in them. God has provided for us a full sanctification. Is it strange that He should demand it of us, and require us to be holy, even as He is holy, seeing He has given us His own holiness. So let us put on our beautiful garments and prepare to walk in white with Him.

## **JULY 5: “A garden enclosed” (Songs 4:12)**

The figure here is a garden enclosed, not a wilderness. The garden soil is a cultivated soil, very different from the roadside or the wilderness. The idea of a garden is culture. The ground has to be prepared, to be broken up by ploughing, to be mellowed by harrowing, all the stones removed, the roots of all natural growth dug up, for the good things we are seeking are not natural growths and will not grow in our soil. We all start on the old basis and try to improve the old nature, but that is not God’s way. His way is to get self out of the way entirely, and let Him create anew out of nothing, so that all shall be of Him; and we must find Jesus the Alpha and Omega.

The thing you want to learn here is to die. There can be no real life till self dies, and don’t try to die yourself, but ask God to slay you, and He will make a thorough work of it.

This the secret nature hideth,  
Summer dies and lives again,  
Spring from winter’s grave ariseth,  
Harvest grows from buried grain.

## **JULY 6: “I am my beloved’s” (Songs 7:10)**

If you want power you must compress. It is the shutting in of the steam that moves the engine. The amount of powder on a flat surface that sends a ball to its destination when shut up in a gun only makes a flash. If you want to carry the electric current you must be insulated. Stand a man on a glass platform and turn a battery on him and he will be filled with electricity. Let him step off the glass, and the moment he touches earth he loses power.

We must be inclosed by His everlasting Covenant. That holds us and keeps us from falling. He will be a wall of fire round about us. He comes Himself and envelops us round about with the old Shekinah glory, and will be the glory in the midst. He wants us inclosed—by a distinct act of consecration dedicated wholly to Him. Are you inclosed by His fences, His commandments, His promises, His covenant? Is your heart really and only for the Lord?

If not, come to Him now and let Him separate you from all the things that take your life, and let Him separate you unto Himself, the Life Giver.

## **JULY 7: “And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Ex. 40:35)**

In the last chapter of Exodus we read all the Lord commanded Moses to do, and that as he fulfilled these commands the glory of the Lord descended and filled the tabernacle till there was no room for Moses, and from that time the pillar of cloud overshadowed them, their guide, their protection. And so we have been building as the Lord Himself commanded, and now the temple is to be handed over to Him to be possessed and filled. He will so fill you, if you will let Him that yourself and everything else will be taken out of the way, the glory of the Lord will fill the temple, encompassing, lifting up, guiding, keeping; and from this time your moon shall not withdraw its light, nor your sun go down.

Do you want power? You have God for it. Do you want holiness? You have God for it; and so of everything. And God is bending down from His throne to-day to lift you up to your true place in Him. From this time may the cloud of His glory so surround and fill us that we shall be lost sight of forever.

**JULY 8: “Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh” (Gal. 3:3)**

Grace literally means that which we do not have to earn. It has two great senses always; it comes for nothing and it comes when we are helpless; it doesn't merely help the man that helps himself—that is not the Gospel; the Gospel is that God helps the man who can't help himself. And then there is another thing; God helps the man to help himself, for everything the man does comes from God. Grace is given to the man who is so weak and helpless he cannot take the first step. That is the meaning of grace—a little of the meaning of it; we can never know the fulness it has. Now, this river is as free as it is full, but you know some people have an idea when they get a little farther on they have got to pay an admission, and reserved seats are very high, and they shrink back from the higher blessings of the Gospel; ordinary Christians scarcely dare to claim them. If I understand the meaning of this, God has not put the higher blessings apart for a separate class who somehow are nearer to Him. God is no respecter of persons.



## **JULY 9: “Cast thy burden on the Lord” (Ps. 55:22)**

Dear friends, sometimes we bring a burden to God, and we have such a groaning over it, and we seem to think God has a dreadful time, too, but in reality it does not burden Him at all. God says: It is a light thing for Me to do this for you. Your load, though heavy for you, is not heavy for Him. Christ carries the whole on one shoulder, not two shoulders. The government of the world is upon His shoulder. He is not struggling and groaning with it. His mighty arm is able to carry all your burdens. There is power in Christ for our sanctification. He is able to sanctify you. Yes, yes, the Lord can sanctify, the Lord can heal, the Lord can do anything. You must have faith in God. If you come to this river this morning, it will take you as your Niagara would take a little boat, and just bear you down—to a precipice? Oh, no, but to the bosom of love and blessing forever.

Oft there comes a wondrous message,  
When my hopes are growing dim,  
I can hear it thro' the darkness  
Like some sweet and far-off hymn.  
Nothing is too hard for Jesus,  
No man can work like Him.

**JULY 10: “That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2:12)**

The highest blessings of the Gospel are just as free as the lowest; and when you have served Him ten years you cannot sit down and say, “I have got an experience now and I count on that.” How often we do that; we say, “Now I know I am saved, I feel it.” And so we are building a different foundation—we are building on something in ourselves. Always take grace as something you don’t deserve, something that is freely bestowed. The long, deep, boundless river is free; it is as free at the mouth as it is at the little stream, and free all the way along, and anybody can come and drink, and anybody can come and bathe in its boundless waters. Are you going to believe it?

God has given us His Holy Spirit that we may “know the things that are freely given of us of God.” It is a hard thing for the poor child to look in through the window and see a fire, and the happy family sitting around the table when it is starving. What is the good of knowing that there is warmth, and love, and light, if it is not free? God has freely given all the goodness of His grace and love.

## **JULY 11: “For it is God which worketh in you” (Phil. 2:13)**

A day with Jesus. Let us seek its plan and direction from Him. Let us take His highest thought and will for us in it. Let us look to Him for our desires, ideals, expectations in it. Then shall it bring to us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Let Him be our Guide and Way. Let us not so much be thinking even of His plan and way as of Him as the Personal Guide of every moment, on whom we constantly depend to lead our every step.

Let Him also be the sufficiency and strength of all the day. Let us never forget the secret: “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.” Let us have Jesus Christ Himself in us to do the works, and let us every moment fall back on Him, both to will and do in us of His good pleasure. Let our holiness be “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Let our health be the “life of Jesus manifest in our mortal flesh.” Let our faith be “the faith of the Son of God who loved us.” Let our peace and joy be His peace and joy. And let our service be not our works, but the grace of Christ within us.

## **JULY 12: “When ye pray, believe that ye receive” (Mark 11:24)**

Consecration is entered by an act of faith. You are to take the gift from God, believe you have, and confess that you have it. Step out on it firmly, and let the devil know you have it as well as the Lord. When once you say to Him boldly, “I am Thine,” He answers back from the heavenly heights, “Thou art Mine,” and the echoes go ringing down through all your life, “Mine! Thine!” If you dare confess Christ as your Saviour and Sanctifier He has bound Himself to make it a reality, but you must stand behind His mighty Word. It is the essence of testimony to tell of what Jesus has promised to become to you. It is right to have glorious words of thanksgiving, but these are not exactly testimony. God would have us put our seal on the promises, and lift up our hands and acknowledge them as ours.

Then you are to ignore the old life and reckon it no longer yours if it should come up again. Every time it appears say, “This is from the under world. I am sitting in the heavenly places with Christ.”

## **JULY 13: “Even Christ pleased not Himself” (Rom. 15:3)**

Let this be a day of self-forgetting ministry for Christ and others. Let us not once think of being ministered unto, but say ever with Him: “I am among you as He that doth serve.” Let us not drag our burdens through the day, but drop all our loads of care and be free to carry His yoke and His burden. Let us make the happy exchange, giving ours and taking His. Let the covenant be: “Thou shalt abide for Me, I also for thee.” So shall we lose our heaviest load—ourselves—and so shall we find our highest joy, divine love, the more blessed “to give” than “to receive.” Let us do good to all men as we have opportunity. Let us lose no opportunity of blessing, and let us study ingenious ways of service and usefulness. Especially let us seek to win souls.

The Days of Heaven are busy days,  
They serve continually,  
So spent for Thee and Thine, our days,  
As the Days of Heaven would be.

The Days of Heaven are loving days,  
As one they all agree,  
So linked in loving unity  
May our days as Heaven be.

## **JULY 14: “Men ought always to pray” (Luke 18:1)**

Let this be a day of prayer. Let us see that our highest ministry and power is to deal with God for men. Let us be obedient to all the Holy Spirit’s voices of prayer in us. Let us count every pressure a call to prayer. Let us cherish the spirit of unceasing prayer and abiding communion. Let us learn the meaning of the ministry of prayer. Let us reach persons this day we cannot reach in person; let us expect results that we have never dared to claim before; let us count every difficulty only a greater occasion for prayer, and let us call on God, who will show us many great and mighty things which we know not.

And let it be a day of joy and praise. Let us live in the promises of God and the outlook of His deliverance and blessing. Let us never dwell on the trial but always on the victory just before. Let us not dwell in the tomb, but in the garden of Joseph and the light of the resurrection. Let us keep our faces toward the sun rising. Arise, shine. Rejoice evermore. In everything give thanks. Praise ye the Lord.

Lord, give us Thy joy in our hearts which shall lift us to lift others, and fill us so we may overflow to others.

## **JULY 15: “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine” (Songs 6:3)**

If I am the Lord’s then the Lord is mine. If Christ owns me I own Him. And so faith must reach out and claim its full inheritance and begin to use its great resources. Moment by moment we may now take Him as our grace and strength, our faith and love, our victory and joy, our all in all. And as we thus claim Him we will find His grace sufficient for us, and begin to learn that giving all is just receiving all. Yes, consecration is getting Him fully instead of our own miserable life. There are, indeed, two sides of it. There are two persons in the consecration. One of them is the dear Lord Himself. “And for their sakes,” He says, “I consecrate Myself that they also might be consecrated through the truth.” The moment we consecrate ourselves to Him He consecrates Himself to us, and henceforth, the whole strength of His life and love and everlasting power is dedicated to keep and complete our consecration, and to make the very best and most of our consecrated life. Who would not give himself to such a Saviour? Surely we will to-day, first give ourselves and then give Him each moment as it comes, to be filled and used.

**JULY 16: “As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God”  
(Ps. 42:1)**

First in order to a consecrated life there must be a sense of need, the need of purity, of power, and of a greater nearness to the Lord. There often comes in Christian life a second conviction. It is not now a sense of guilt and God’s wrath so much as of the power and evil of inward sin, and the unsatisfactoriness of the life the soul is living. It usually comes from the deeper revelation of God’s truth, from more spiritual teaching, from definite examples and testimonies of this life in others, and often from an experience of deep trial, conflict and temptation in which the soul has found its attainments and resources inadequate for the real issues and needs of life. The first result is often a deep discouragement and even despair, but the valley of Achor is the door of hope, and the seventh chapter of Romans with its bitter cry, “O wretched man that I am,” is the gateway to the eighth with its shout of triumph, “The Spirit of life in Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”



**JULY 17: “By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14)**

Are you missing what belongs to you? He has promised to sanctify you. He has promised sanctification for you by coming to you Himself and being made of God to you sanctification. Jesus is my sanctification. Having Him I have obedience, rest, patience and everything I need. He is alive forevermore. If you have Him nothing can be against you. Your temptations will not be against you; your bad temper will not be against you; your hard life, your circumstances, even the devil himself will not be against you. Every time he comes to attack you, he will only root you deeper in Christ. You will become a coward at the thought of being alone; you will be thrown on Jesus every time a trouble assails you. All things henceforth will work together for good to your own soul. Since God is for you nothing can be against you.

My heavenly Bridegroom sought me and called me one glad day,  
“Arise, my love, my fair one, arise and come away,”  
I listened to His pleading, I gave Him all my heart,  
And we are one forever and nevermore shall part.

## **JULY 18: “Ye are complete in Him” (Col. 2:10)**

In Him we are now complete. The perfect pattern of the life of holy service for which He has redeemed and called us, is now in Him in heaven, even as the architect’s model is planned and prepared and completed in his office. But now it must be wrought into us and transferred to our earthly life, and this is the Holy Spirit’s work. He takes the gifts and graces of Christ and brings them into our life, as we need and receive them day by day, just as the sections of the vessel are reproduced in the distant Continent, and thus we receive of His fulness, even grace for grace, His grace for our grace, His supply for our need, His strength for our strength, His body for our body, His Spirit for our spirit, and He just “made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.”

But it is much more than mere abstract help and grace, much more even than the Holy Spirit bringing us strength, and peace, and purity. It is personal companionship with Jesus Himself!

Lord, help us receive from Thee to-day, that grace in all trial that shall mean our perfecting in Thee.

**JULY 19: “Nevertheless, David took the castle of Zion” (1 Chron. 11:5)**

Many of you have so much fighting to do because you do not have one sharp, decisive battle to begin with. It is far easier to have one great battle than to keep on skirmishing all your life. I know men who spend forty years fighting what they call their besetting sin, and on which they waste strength enough to evangelize the world.

Dear friends, does it pay to throw away your lives? Have one battle, one victory and then praise God. So they had rest from their enemies round about. There is labor to enter in. The height is steep. The way of the cross is not an easy way. It is hard to enter in, but having entered in there is perfect rest. May God help us and give us His perfect rest.

O come and leave thy sinful self forever  
    Beneath the fountain of the Saviour’s blood;  
O come, and take Him as thy Sanctifier,  
    Come thou with us and we will do thee good.

Come to the land where all the foes are vanquished,  
    And sorrow, sin, disease and death subdued;  
O weary soul! by Satan bruised and baffled,  
    Come thou with us and we will do thee good.

## **JULY 20: “Forget also thine own” (Ps. 45:10)**

We, too, like the ancient Levites, must be “consecrated every one upon our son and upon our brother,” and “forget our kindred and our father’s house” in every sense in which they could hinder our full liberty and service for the Lord. We, too, must let our business go if it stands between us and the Lord, and in any case let it henceforth be His business and His alone, pursued for Him, controlled by Him, and its profits wholly dedicated to Him, and used as He shall direct. And, like James and John, you must be willing to give up “the hired servants” too. It will make a great difference in your way of living. It will be a change to give up your ease and luxury, your being waited upon and indulged in every wish, and have to do your own work, to give up the attentions of others, to put with privations, and inconveniences, and humiliations, but it will be easy to do it with Him. He never owned a foot of land. He never rode in a carriage. He never had a hired servant. He lay down at last in a borrowed grave. But He is rich enough now, and so will you be some day if you can only be willing to suffer and to wait.

## **JULY 21: “Look from the place where thou art” (Gen. 13:14)**

Let us now see the blessedness of faith. Our own littleness and nothingness sometimes becomes bondage. We are so small in our own eyes we dare not claim God’s mighty promises. We say: “If I could be sure I was in God’s way I could trust.” This is all wrong. Self-consciousness is a great barrier to faith. Get your eyes on Him and Him alone; not on your faith, but on the Author of your faith; not a half look, but a steadfast, prolonged look, with a true heart and fixedness of purpose, that knows no faltering, no parleying with the enemy without a shadow of fear. When you get afraid you are almost sure to fail.

Travelers who have crossed the Alps know how dangerous those mountain passes are, how narrow the foothold, how deep the rocky ravines and how necessary to safety it is that you should look up continually; one downward glance into the dizzy depths would be fatal; and so if we would surmount the heights of faith we must look up—look up. Get your eyes off yourself, off surrounding circumstances, off means, off gifts, to the Great Giver.

## **JULY 22: “He that ministereth let us wait on our ministering” (Rom. 12:7)**

Beloved, are you ministering to Christ? Are you doing it with your hands? Are you doing it with your substance and with what you have? Is He getting the best of what is most real to you? Has He a place at your table? And when He does not come to fill the chair, is it free to His representative, His poor and humble children? Your words and wishes are cheap if they do not find expression in your actual gifts. Even Mary did not put Him off with the incense of her heart, but laid her costliest gifts at His feet.

Ye busy women, who work so hard to dress your children and furnish your houses and tables, what have your hands earned for the Master, what have you done or sacrificed for Jesus? “Can you afford it?” was asked of a noble woman, as she promised a costly offering for the Master’s work. “No,” was her noble reply, “but I can sacrifice it.” Let us to-day look around us and see, what we do and give more to the loving Saviour, who gave up His whole life for us.

## **JULY 23: “Bring them hither to Me” (Matt. 14:18)**

Why have ye not received all the fulness of the Holy Spirit? And how may we be anointed with “the rest of the oil?” The greatest need is to make room when God makes it. Look around you at your situation. Are you not encompassed with needs at this very moment, and almost overwhelmed with difficulties, trials and emergencies? These are all divinely provided vessels for the Holy Spirit to fill, and if you would but rightly understand their meaning, they would become opportunities for receiving new blessings and deliverances which you can get in no other way.

Bring these vessels to God. Hold them steadily before Him in faith and prayer. Keep still, and stop your own restless working until He begins to work. Do nothing that He does not Himself command you to do. Give Him a chance to work, and He will surely do so, and the very trials that threatened to overcome you with discouragement and disaster, will become God’s opportunity for the revelation of His grace and glory in your life, as you have never known Him before. “Bring them (all needs) to Me.”

**JULY 24: “The righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us” (Rom. 7:4)**

In our earlier experiences we know the Holy Ghost only at a distance, in things that happen in a providential direction, or in the Word alone, but after awhile we receive Him as an inward Guest, and He dwells in our very midst, and He speaks to us in the innermost chambers of our being. But then the external working of His power does not cease, but it only increases, and seems the more glorious. The Power that dwells within us works without us, answering prayer, healing sickness, overruling providences, “Doing exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us.”

There is a double presence of the Lord for the consecrated believer. He is present in the heart, and is mightily present in the events of life. He is the Christ in us, the Christ of all the days, with all power in heaven and earth.

And so the Holy Ghost is our wonder-worker, our all sufficient God and Guardian, and He is waiting in these days to work as mightily in the affairs of men as in the days of Moses, of Daniel and of Paul.



**JULY 25: “He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God” (Rom. 14:18)**

God can only use us while we are right. Satan cared far less for Peter’s denial of his Master than for the use he made of it afterwards to destroy his faith. So Jesus said to him: “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.” It was Peter’s faith he attacked, and so it is our faith that Satan contests. “The trial of our faith is much more precious than gold that perisheth.”

Whatever else we let go let us hold steadfastly to our trust. “Cast not away, therefore, your confidence,” and “hold fast the rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end.” And if you would hold your trust, hold your sweetness, your rightness of spirit, your obedience to Christ, your victory in every way.

Whatever comes, regard it as of less consequence, than that you should triumph and stand fast, and accepting every circumstance as God is pleased to let occur, wave the banner of your victory in the face of every foe, and go on, shouting in His name, “Thanks be unto God that always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus.”

## **JULY 26: “Now mine eye seeth Thee” (Job 42:5)**

We must recognize the true character of our self-life and its real virulence and vileness. We must consent to its destruction, and we must take it ourselves, as Abraham did Isaac, and lay it at the feet of God in willing sacrifice.

This is a hard work for the natural heart, but the moment the will is yielded and the choice is made, that death is past, the agony is over, and we are astonished to find that the death is accomplished.

Usually the crisis of life in such cases hangs upon a single point. God does not need to strike us in a hundred places to inflict a death wound. There is one point that touches the heart, and that is the point God usually strikes, the dearest thing in our life, the decisive thing in our plans, the citadel of the will, the center of the heart, and when we yield there, there is little left to yield anywhere else, and when we refuse to yield at this point, a spirit of evasion and compromise enters into all the rest of our life. Lord, we take Thee to enable us to will Thy will to be done in all things in our life without and within.

## **JULY 27: “The building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:13)**

God is preparing His heroes, and when the opportunity comes He can fit them into their place in a moment and the world will wonder where they came from. Let the Holy Ghost prepare you, dear friend, by all the discipline of life; and when the last finishing touch has been given to the marble, it will be easy for God to put it on the pedestal, and fit it into its niche.

There is a day coming, when, like Othniel, we, too, shall judge the nations, and rule and reign with Christ on the millennial earth; but ere that glorious day can be, we must let God prepare us as He did Othniel at Kirjathsepher, amid the trials of our present life, and in the little victories, the significance of which, perhaps, we little dream. At least, let us be sure of this, that if the Holy Ghost has got an Othniel ready, the Lord of heaven and earth has a throne prepared for him.

Is it for me to be used by His grace,  
Helping His kingdom to bring,  
Is it for me to inherit a place,  
E'en on the throne of my King?

## **JULY 28: “Not my will, but Thine” (Luke 22:42)**

He who once suffered in Gethsemane will be our strength and our victory, too. We may fear, we may also sink, but let us not be dismayed, and we shall yet praise Him, and look back from a finished course, and say, “Not one word hath failed of all that the Lord hath spoken.”

But in order to do this, we must, like Him, meet the conflict, not with a defiant, but with a submissive spirit. He had to say, “Not My will, but Thine be done”; but in saying it, He gained the very thing He surrendered. So the submission of Gethsemane is not a blind and dead submission of a heart that abandons all its hope; but it is the free submission that bows the head, in order to get double strength through the faith and prayer.

We let go, in order that we may take a firmer hold. We give up, in order that we may more fully receive. We lay our Isaac on Mount Moriah, and we ask him back, no longer our Isaac, but God’s Isaac, and infinitely more secure, because given back in the resurrection life.

## **JULY 29: “My helpers in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 16:3)**

Christ’s Church is overrun with captains. She is in great need of a few more privates. A few rivers run into the sea, but a larger number run into other rivers. We cannot all be pioneers, but we can all be helpers, and no man is fitted to go in the front until he has learned well how to go second.

A spirit of self-importance is fatal to all work for Christ. The biggest enemy of true spiritual power is spiritual self-consciousness. Joshua must die before Jericho can fall.

God often has to test His chosen servants by putting them in a subordinate place before He can bring them to the front. Joseph must learn to serve in the kitchen and to suffer in prison before he can rise to the throne, and as soon as Joseph is ready for the throne, the throne is always waiting for Joseph. God has more places than accepted candidates. Let us not be afraid to go into the training class, and even take the lowest place, for we shall soon go up, if we really deserve to. Lord, use me so that Thou shalt be glorified and I shall be hid from myself and others.

**JULY 30: “If thou wilt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God and wilt keep all His statutes” (Ex. 15:26)**

Sometimes people fail because they have not confidence in the Physician. The very first requirement of this Doctor is, that you trust Him, and trust Him implicitly, so implicitly that you go forward on His bare word, and act as if you had received His healing the moment you claimed His promise. But no one would expect to be healed by an earthly doctor as soon as they obeyed his directions.

You must do what the Great Physician tells you, if you expect Him to make you whole.

You cannot expect to be healed if you are living in sin, any more than you could expect the best physician to cure you while you lived in a malarial climate and inhaled poison with every breath. So you must get up into the pure air of trust and obedience before Christ can make you whole. And then, if you will trust Him, and attend to His directions, you will find that there is balm in Gilead, and that there is a Great Physician there.

## **JULY 31: “We were troubled on every side” (2 Cor. 7:5)**

Why should God have to lead us thus, and allow the pressure to be so hard and constant?

Well, in the first place, it shows His all-sufficient strength and grace much better than if we were exempt from pressure and trial. “The treasure is in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

It make us more conscious of our dependence upon Him. God is constantly trying to teach us our dependence, and to hold us absolutely in His hand and hanging upon His care.

This was the place where Jesus Himself stood and where He wants us to stand, not with a self-constituted strength, but with a hand ever leaning upon His, and a trust that dare not take one step alone.

It teaches us trust. There is no way of learning faith except by trial. It is God’s school of faith, and it is far better for us to learn to trust God than to enjoy life.

The lesson of faith, once learned, is an everlasting acquisition and an eternal fortune made; and without trust even riches will leave us poor.

**AUGUST 1: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done” (2 Cor. 5:10)**

It will not always be the day of toil and trial. Some day, we shall hear our names announced before the universe, and the record read of things that we had long forgotten. How our hearts will thrill, and our heads will bow, as we shall hear our own names called, and then the Master shall recount the triumph and the services which we had ourselves forgotten! And, perhaps, from the ranks of the saved He shall call forward the souls that we have won for Christ and the souls that they in turn had won, and as we see the issue of things that have, perhaps, seemed but trifling at the time, we shall fall before the throne, and say, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory!”

Beloved, the pages are going up every day, for the record of our life. We are setting the type ourselves, by every moment’s action. Hands unseen are stereotyping the plates, and soon the record will be registered, and read before the audience of the universe. and amid the issues of eternity.



## **AUGUST 2: “Thy gentleness hath made me great” (Ps. 18:35)**

The blessed Comforter is gentle, tender, and full of patience and love. How gentle are God’s dealings even with sinners! How patient His forbearance! How tender His discipline, with His own erring children! How He led Jacob, Joseph, Israel, David, Elijah, and all His ancient servants, until they could truly say, “Thy gentleness hath made me great.”

The heart in which the Holy Spirit dwells will always be characterized by gentleness, lowliness, quietness, meekness, and forbearance. The rude, sarcastic spirit, the brusque manner, the sharp retort, the unkind cut—all these belong to the flesh, but they have nothing in common with the gentle teaching of the Comforter.

The Holy Dove shrinks from the noisy, tumultuous, excited, and vindictive spirit, and finds His home in the lowly breast of the peaceful soul. “The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness, meekness.”

Lord, make me gentle. Hush my spirit. Refine my manner. Let me have Christ in my bearing and my very tones as well as in my heart.

### **AUGUST 3: “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God” (1 Peter 5:6)**

The pressure of hard places makes us value life. Every time our life is given back to us from such a trial, it is like a new beginning, and we learn better how much it is worth, and make more of it for God and man.

The pressure helps us to understand the trials of others, and fits us to help and sympathize with them.

There is a shallow, superficial nature, that gets hold of a theory or a promise lightly, and talks very glibly about the distrust of those who shrink from every trial; but the man or woman who has suffered much never does this, but is very tender and gentle, and knows what suffering really means.

This is what Paul meant when he said, “Death worketh in us, but life in you.” Trials and hard places are needed to press us forward; even as the furnace fires in the hold of that mighty ship give the force that moves the piston, drives the engine, and propels that great vessel across the sea, in the face of the winds and waves.

**AUGUST 4: “Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His” (Rom. 8:9)**

A spiritual man is not so much a man possessing a strong spiritual character as a man filled with the Holy Spirit. So the apostle said: “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.”

The glory of the new creation, then, is not only that it recreates the human spirit, but that it fits it for the abode of God Himself, and makes it dependent upon the sun, as the child upon the mother. The highest spirituality, therefore, is the most utter helplessness, the most entire dependence and the most complete possession of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the beautiful act of Christ in breathing upon His disciples, and imparting to them from His own lips the very Spirit that was already in Him, expressed in the most vivid manner the crowning glory of the new creation. And when the Holy Spirit thus possesses us, He fills every part of our being.

**AUGUST 5: “If any man hear My voice and open the door I will come into him and will sup with him and he with Me” (Rev. 3:20)**

Some of us are starving, and wondering why the Holy Spirit does not fill us. We have plenty coming in, but we do not give it out. Give out the blessing you have, start larger plans for service and blessing, and you will soon find that the Holy Ghost is before you, and He will “prevent you with the blessings of goodness,” and give you all that He can trust you to give away to others.

There is a beautiful fact in nature which has its spiritual parallels. There is no music so heavenly as an Aeolian harp, and the Aeolian harp is nothing but a set of musical cords arranged in harmony, and then left to be touched by the unseen fingers of the wandering winds. And as the breath of heaven floats over the chords, it is said that notes almost divine float out upon the air, as if a choir of angels were wandering around and touching the strings.

And so it is possible to keep our hearts so open to the touch of the Holy Spirit that He can play upon them at will, as we quietly wait in the pathway of His service.

## **AUGUST 6: “As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14)**

The blessed Holy Spirit is our Guide, our Leader, and our Resting-place. There are times when He presses us forward into prayer, into service, into suffering, into new experiences, new duties, new claims of faith, and hope, and love, but there are times when He arrests us in our activity, and rests us under His overshadowing wing, and quiets us in the secret place of the Most High, teaching us some new lessons, breathing into us some deeper strength or fulness, and then leading us on again, at His bidding alone. He is the true Guide of the saint, and the true Leader of the Church, our wonderful Counsellor, our unerring Friend; and he who would deny the personal guidance of the Holy Ghost in order that he might honor the Word of God as our only guide, must dishonor that other word of promise, that His sheep shall know His voice, and that His hearkening and obedient children shall hear a voice behind them saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

## **AUGUST 7: “Knowing this that our old man is crucified” (Rom. 6:6)**

It is purely a matter of faith, and faith and sight always differ, so that to your senses it does not seem to be so, but your faith must still reckon it so. This is a very difficult attitude to hold, and only as we thoroughly believe God can we thus reckon upon His Word and His working, but as we do so, faith will convert it into fact, and it will be even so.

These two words, “yield” and “reckon,” are passwords into the resurrection life. They are like the two edges of the “Sword of the Spirit” through which we enter into crucifixion with Christ.

This act of surrender and this reckoning of faith are recognized in the New Testament as marking a very definite crisis in the spiritual life. It does not mean that we are expected to be going through a continual dying, but that there should be one very definite act of dying, and then a constant habit of reckoning ourselves as dead, and meeting everything from this standpoint.

“Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ.”

## **AUGUST 8: “Be like the dove” (Jer. 48:28)**

Harmless as a dove, is Christ’s interpretation of the beautiful emblem. And so the Spirit of God is purity itself. He cannot dwell in an unclean heart. He cannot abide in the natural mind. It was said of the anointing of old, “On man’s flesh it shall not be poured.”

The purity which the Holy Spirit brings is like the white and spotless little plant which grows up out of the heap of manure, or the black soil, without one grain of impurity adhering to its crystalline surface, spotless as an angel’s wing.

So the Holy Spirit gives a purity of heart which gives its own protection, for it is essentially unlike the evil things which grow around it. It may be surrounded on every side with evil, but it is uncontaminated and pure because its very nature is essentially holy and divine. Like the plumage of the dove, it cannot be soiled, but comes forth from the miry pool unstained and unsullied by the dark waters, because it is protected by the oily covering which sheds off every defilement and makes it proof against the touch of every stain.

“Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ.”

**AUGUST 9: “He shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel; transgressions and sins” (Lev. 16:21)**

As any evil comes up, and the consciousness of any unholy thing touches our inner senses, it is our privilege at once to hand it over to the Holy Ghost and to lay it upon Jesus, as something already crucified with Him, and as of old, in the case of the sin offering, it will be carried without the camp and burned to ashes.

There may be deep suffering, there may be protracted pain, it may be intensely real; but throughout all there will be a very sweet and sacred sense of God’s presence, and intense purity in our whole spirit, and our separation from the evil which is being consumed. Truly, it will be borne without the camp, and even without the smell of the flames upon our garments.

It is so blessed to have the Holy Spirit slay things. No swords but His can pass so perfectly between us and the evil, so that it consumes the sin without touching the spirit.

Lord Jesus, my Sin Offering, I lay my sin, my self, my whole nature, upon Thy Cross. Consume me by Thy holy fire, and let me die to all but Thee!



## **AUGUST 10: “There is no spot in thee” (Songs 4:7)**

The blessed Holy Spirit who possesses the consecrated heart is intensely concerned for our highest life, and watches us with a sensitive, and even a jealous love. Very beautiful is the true translation of that ordinary passage in the Epistle of James, “The Spirit that dwelleth in us loveth us to jealousy.”

The heart of the Holy Ghost is intensely concerned in preserving us from every stain and blemish, and bringing us into the very highest possibilities of the will of God.

The Heavenly Bridegroom would have His Church not only free from every spot, but also from “every wrinkle, or any such thing.” The spot is the mark of sin, but the wrinkle is the sign of weakness, age, and decay, and He wants no such defacing touch upon the holy features of His Beloved; and so the Holy Ghost, who is the Executor of His will, and the Divine Messenger whom He sends to call, separate, and bring home His Bride, is jealously concerned in fulfilling in us all the Master’s will.

Lord, take from me every blemish and mark of weakness and decay, and make me Thy spotless Bride.

## **AUGUST 11: “All the land which thou seest” (Gen. 13:15)**

The actual provisions of His grace come from the inner vision.

He who puts the instinct in the bosom of yonder bird to cross the continent in search of summer sunshine in yonder Southern clime is too good to deceive it, and just as surely as He has put the instinct in its breast, so has He also put the balmy breezes and the vernal sunshine yonder to meet it when it arrives.

He who gave to Abraham the vision of the Land of Promise, also said in infinite truth and love: “All the land that thou seest will I give thee.” He who breathes into our hearts the heavenly hope, will not deceive or fail us when we press forward to its realization. There is nothing unfaithful in Him who has said: “If it were not so, I would have told you,” and we may know that He never will deceive us nor fail us, but all that He reveals by His Holy Spirit He will make our own, as we press forward and enter into its realization.

Lord, give me first the vision and then the victory. Show me all my inheritance, and then give it all to me in Christ Jesus.

## **AUGUST 12: “Not ourselves, but Christ Jesus” (2 Cor. 4:5)**

Your Christian influence, your reputation as a worker for God, and your standing among your brethren, may be an idol to which you must die, before you can be free to live for Him alone.

If you have ever noticed the type on a printed page, you must have seen that the little “\_i\_” has always a dot over it, and it is that dot that elevates it above the other letters in the line.

Now, each of us is a little \_i\_, and over every one of us there is a little dot of self-importance, self-will, self-interest, self-confidence, self-complacency, or something to which we cling and for which we contend, which just as surely reveals self-life as if it were a mountain of real importance.

This \_i\_ is a rival of Jesus Christ, and the enemy of the Holy Ghost, and of our peace and life, and therefore God has decreed its death, and the Holy Spirit, with His flaming sword is waiting to destroy it, that we may be able to enter through the gates and come to the Tree of Life. Lord, crowd me out by Thy fulness even as the glory of the Lord left no room for Moses in the Tabernacle.

## **AUGUST 13: “Clouds and darkness are round about Him” (Ps. 97:2)**

The presence of clouds upon your sky, and trials in your path, is the very best evidence that you are following the pillar of cloud, and walking in the presence of God. They had to enter the cloud before they could behold the glory of the transfiguration, and a little later that same cloud became the chariot to receive the ascending Lord, and it is still waiting as the chariot that will bring His glorious appearing.

Still it is true that white “clouds and darkness are round about His throne, mercy and truth” are ever in their midst, and “shall go before His face.”

Perhaps the most beautiful and gracious use of the cloud was to shelter them from the fiery sun. Like a great umbrella, that majestic pillar spread its canopy above the camp, and became a shielding shadow from the burning heat in the treeless desert. No one who has never felt an Oriental sun can fully appreciate how much this means—a shadow from the heat.

So the Holy Spirit comes between us and the fiery, scorching rays of sorrow and temptation.

**AUGUST 14: “Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm” (Ps. 105:15)**

I would rather play with the forked lightning, or take in my hands living wires, with their fiery current, than speak a reckless word against any servant of Christ, or idly repeat the slanderous darts which thousands of Christians are hurling on others, to the hurt of their own souls and bodies.

You may often wonder, perhaps, why your sickness is not healed, your spirit filled with the joy of the Holy Ghost, or your life blessed and prosperous. It may be that some dart which you have flung with angry voice, or in an idle hour of thoughtless gossip, is pursuing you on its way, as it describes the circle which always bring back to the source from which it came every shaft of bitterness, and every idle and evil word.

Let us remember that when we persecute or hurt the children of God, we are but persecuting Him, and hurting ourselves far more.

Lord, make me as sensitive to the feelings and rights of others as I have often been to my own, and let me live and love like Thee.

## **AUGUST 15: “He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13)**

The Holy Ghost does not come to give us extraordinary manifestations, but to give its life and light, and the nearer we come to Him, the more simple will His illumination and leading be. He comes to “guide us into all truth.” He comes to shed light upon our own hearts, and to show us ourselves. He comes to reveal Christ, to give, and then to illumine, the Holy Scriptures, and to make Divine realities vivid and clear to our spiritual apprehension. He comes as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, to “enlighten the eyes of our understanding, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.”

Spirit of Power! with heavenly fire,  
Our souls endue, our tongues inspire;  
Stretch forth Thy mighty Hand,  
Thy Pentecostal gifts restore,  
The wonders of Thy power once more  
Display in every land.

## **AUGUST 16: “I am with you always” (Matt. 28:20)**

Oh, how it helps and comforts us in the plod of life to know that we have with us the Christ who spent the first thirty years of His life in the carpenter shop at Nazareth, swinging the hammer, covered with sweat and grimy dust, physically weary as we often are, and able to understand all our experiences of drudgery and labor! and One who still loves to share our common tasks and equip us for our difficult undertakings of hand and brain!

Yes, humble sister, He will help you at the washboard and the kitchen-sink as gladly as at the hour of prayer. Yes, busy mechanic, He will go with you and help you to swing the hammer, or handle the saw, or hold the plow in the toil of life, and you shall be a better mechanic, a more skilled workman, and a more successful man, because you take His wisdom for the common affairs of life. There is no place or time where He is not able and willing to walk by our side, to work through our hands and brains, and to unite Himself in loving and all-sufficient partnership with all our needs and tasks and trials, and prove our all-sufficiency for all things.

## **AUGUST 17: “Speak ye unto the Rock” (Num. 20:8)**

The Holy Ghost is very sensitive, as love always is. You can conquer a wild beast by blows and chains, but you cannot conquer a woman’s heart that way, or win the love of a sensitive nature; that must be wooed by the delicate touches of trust and affection. So the Holy Ghost has to be taken by a faith as delicate and sensitive as the gentle heart with whom it is coming in touch. One thought of unbelief, one expression of impatient distrust or fear, will instantly check the perfect freedom of His operations as much as a breath of frost would wither the petals of the most sensitive rose or lily.

Speak to the Rock, do not strike it. Believe in the Holy Ghost and treat Him with the tenderest confidence and the most unwavering trust, and He will meet you with instant response and confidence.

Beloved, have you come to the rock in Kadesh? Have you opened all your being to the fulness of the Spirit, and then, with the confidence of the child to the mother, the bride to the husband, the flower to the sunshine, have you received by faith, and are you drinking of His blessed life?



## **AUGUST 18: “The three hundred blew the trumpets” (Judges 7:22)**

We little dream, sometimes, what a hasty word, a thoughtless speech, an imprudent act, or a confession of unbelief and fear may do to hinder our highest usefulness, or turn it aside from some great opportunity which God has been preparing for us.

Although the Holy Ghost uses weak men, He does not want them to be weak after He chooses and calls them. Although He uses the foolish things to confound the wise, He does not want us to be foolish after He comes to give us His wisdom and grace. He uses the foolishness of preaching, but, not necessarily, the foolishness of preachers. Like the electric current, which can supply the strength of a thousand men, it is necessary that it should have a proper conductor, and a very small wire is better than a very big rope.

God wants fit instruments for His power—wills surrendered, hearts trusting, lives consistent, and lips obedient to His will; and then He can use the weakest weapons, and make them mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

## **AUGUST 19: “Have faith in God” (Mark 11:22)**

He requires of us a perfect faith, and He tells us that if we believe and doubt not, we shall have whatsoever we ask. The faintest touch of unbelief will neutralize our trust.

But how shall we have such perfect faith? Is it possible for human nature? Nay, but it is possible to the Divine nature, it is possible to the Christ within us. It is possible for God to give it; and God does give it. But Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith, and He bids us have the faith of God, and as we have it through the imparting of the Spirit of Christ, we believe even as He.

We pray in His name, and in His very nature, and we live by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. The love that He requires of us is not mere human love, nor even the standard of love required in the Old Testament, but something far higher. The new commandment is, Love one another, not as yourselves, but as I have loved you.

How shall such love be made possible? Herein is our love made perfect, because as He is so are we also in this world. Our love is simply His love wrought in us, and imparted to us through the Spirit.

## **AUGUST 20: “Herein is My Father glorified” (John 15:8)**

The true way to glorify God is, for God to show His glory through us, to shine through us as empty vessels reflecting His fulness of grace and power.

The sun is glorified when he has a chance to show his light through the crystal window, or reflect it from the spotless mirror or the glassy sea.

There is nothing that glorifies God so much as for a weak and helpless man or woman to be able to triumph, through His strength, in places where the highest human qualities will fail us, and carry in Divine power through every form of toil and suffering, a spirit naturally weak, irresolute, selfish, and sinful, transformed into sweetness, purity, power and standing victorious amid circumstances from which its natural qualities must utterly unfit it. A mind not naturally wise or strong, directed by a Divine wisdom, and carried along the line of a great and mighty plan, and used to accomplish stupendous results for God and man—this is what glorifies God.

So let me glorify my Lord this day and adorn the doctrine of God in all things.

## **AUGUST 21: “The battle is not yours” (2 Chron. 20:15)**

The thing is to count the battle God’s. “The battle is not yours, but God’s.” Ye shall not need to fight in this battle. As long as we count the dangers and responsibilities ours, we shall be distracted with fear, but when we realize He is bound to take care of us, as His property and His representatives, we shall feel infinite relief and security.

If I send my servant on a long journey I am responsible for his expenses and protection, and if God sends me anywhere, He is responsible. If we belong to God, and put our life, our family, and our all in His hands, we may know He will take care of us.

If our body belongs to Him, it is His interest to keep us well, just as much as it is for the interest of the shepherd to have his sheep well fed and well cared for, and a credit to him.

“Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph.”

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
Stand in His strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you,  
Ye dare not trust your own.

## **AUGUST 22: “I the Lord, the first and with the last” (Isa. 41:4)**

Thousands of people get stranded after they have embarked on the great voyage of holiness, because they have depended upon the experience rather than on the Author of it. They had supposed that they were thoroughly and permanently delivered from all sin, and in the ecstasy of their first experience they imagine that they shall never again be tried and tempted as before, and when they step out into the actual facts of Christian life and find themselves failing and falling, they are astonished and perplexed, and they conclude that they must have been mistaken in their experience, and so they make a new attempt at the same thing, and again fall, until at last, worn out, with the experiment, they conclude that the experience is a delusion, or, at least, that it was never intended for them, and so they fall back into the old way, and their last state is worse than the first.

What men and women need to-day is to know, not sanctification as a state, but Christ as a living Person.

Lord Jesus, give me Thy heart, Thy faith, Thy life, Thyself.

## **AUGUST 23: “Even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3)**

God is now aiming to reproduce in us the pattern which has already appeared in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Christian life is not an imitation of Christ, but a direct new creation in Christ, and the union with Christ is so complete that He imparts His own nature to us and lives His own life in us and then it is not an imitation, but simply the outgrowth of the nature implanted within.

We live Christ-like because we have the Christ-life. God is not satisfied with anything less than perfection. He required that from His Son. He requires it from us, and He does not, in the process of grace, reduce the standard, but He brings us up to it. He does not let down the righteousness of the law, but He requires of us a righteousness that far exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and then He imparts it to us. He counts us righteous in sanctification, and He says of the new creation, “He that doeth righteousness is righteous even as He is righteous.”

Lord, live out thy very life in me.

## **24: “Let your moderation be known unto all men” (Phil. 4:5)**

The very test of consecration is our willingness not only to surrender the things that are wrong, but to surrender our rights, to be willing to be subject. When God begins to subdue a soul, He often requires us to yield the things that are of little importance in themselves, and thus break our neck and subdue our spirit.

No Christian worker can ever be used of God until the proud self-will is broken, and the heart is ready to yield to God’s every touch, no matter through whom it may come.

Many people want God to lead them in their way and they will brook no authority or restraint. They will give their money, but they want to dictate how it shall be spent. They will work as long as you let them please themselves, but let any pressure come and you immediately run up against, not the grace of resignation, but a letter of resignation, withdrawing from some important trust, and arousing a whole community of criticising friends, equally disposed to have their own opinions and their own will about it. It is destructive of all real power.

**AUGUST 25: “And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them” (Ezek. 36:27)**

This is a great deal more than a new heart. This a heart filled with the Holy Ghost, the Divine Spirit, the power that causes us to walk in God’s commandments.

This is the greatest crisis that comes to a Christian’s life, when into the spirit that was renewed in conversion, God Himself comes to dwell and make it His abiding place, and hold it by His mighty power in holiness and righteousness.

Now, after this occurs, one would suppose that we would be lifted into a much more hopeful and exuberant spirit, but the prophet gives a very different picture. He says when this comes to pass we shall loathe ourselves in our own eyes.

The revelation of God gives a profound sense of our own nothingness and worthlessness, and lays us on our face in the dust in self-abnegation.

The incoming of the Holy Ghost displaces self and disgraces self forever, and the highest holiness is to walk in self-renunciation.



**AUGUST 26: “Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil” (2 Kings 4:2)**

He asked her, “What hast thou in the house?” And she said, “Nothing but a pot of oil.” But that pot of oil was adequate for all her wants, if she had only known how to use it.

In truth it represented the Holy Spirit, and the great lesson of the parable is that the Holy Ghost is adequate for all our wants, if we only know how to use Him.

All that she needed was to get sufficient vessels to hold the overflow, and then to pour out until all were filled.

And so the Holy Spirit is limited only by our capacity to receive Him, and when God wants us to have a larger fulness, He has to make room for it by creating greater needs.

God sends us new vessels to be filled with His Holy Spirit in the needs that come to us, and the trials that meet us. These are God’s opportunities for God to give us more of Himself, and as we meet them He comes to us in larger fulness for each new necessity.

Lord, help me to see Thee in all my trying situations and to make them vessels to hold more of Thy grace.

## **AUGUST 27: “Take no thought for your life” (Matt. 6:25)**

Still the Lord is using the things that are despised. The very names of Nazarene and Christian were once epithets of contempt. No man can have God’s highest thought and be popular with his immediate generation. The most abused men are often most used.

There are far greater calamities than to be unpopular and misunderstood. There are far worse things than to be found in the minority. Many of God’s greatest blessings are lying behind the devil’s scarecrows of prejudice and misrepresentation. The Holy Ghost is not ashamed to use unpopular people. And if He uses them, what need they care for men?

Oh, let us but have His recognition and man’s notice will count for little, and He will give us all we need of human help and praise. Let us only seek His will, His glory, His approval. Let us go for Him on the hardest errands and do the most menial tasks. Honor enough that He uses us and sends us. Let us not fear in this day to follow Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach, and by-and-by He will own our worthless name before the myriads of earth and sky.

## **AUGUST 28: “According to the power that worketh in us” (Eph. 3:20)**

When we reach the place of union with God, through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, we come into the inheritance of external blessing & enter upon the land of our possession. Then our physical health & strength come to us through the power of our interior life; then the prayer is fulfilled, that we shall be in health and prosper, as our soul prospereth. Then, with the kingdom of God and His righteousness within us, all things are added unto us.

God’s external working always keeps pace with the power that worketh in us. When God is enthroned in a human soul, then the devil and the world soon find it out. We do not need to advertise our power. Jesus could not be hid, & a soul filled with Divine power & purity should become the center of attraction to hungry hearts & suffering lives.

Let us receive Him and recognize Him in His indwelling glory, and then will we appropriate all that it means for our life in all its fulness. Lord, give me the “hiding of Thy power,” and let Christ be glorified in me.

## **AUGUST 29: “To obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22)**

Our healing is thus represented as a special recompense for obedience. If, therefore, we would please the Lord and have the reward of those who please Him, there is no service so acceptable to Him as our praise.

Let us ever meet Him with a glad and thankful heart and He will reflect it back in the health of our countenance and the buoyant life and springing health, which is but the echo of a joyful heart.

Further, thankfulness is the best preparation for faith. Trust grows spontaneously in the praiseful heart. Thankfulness takes the sunny side of the street and looks at the bright side of God, and it is only thus that we can ever trust Him. Unbelief looks at our troubles and, of course, they seem like mountains, and faith is discouraged by the prospect. A thankful disposition will always find some cause for cheer, and gloomy one will find a cloud in the brightest sky and a fly in the sweetest ointment. Let us cultivate a spirit of cheerfulness, and we shall find so much in God and in our lives to encourage us that we shall have no room for doubt or fear.

## **AUGUST 30: “Happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17)**

You little know the rest that comes from the yielded will, the surrendered choice, the abandoned world, the meek and lowly heart that lets the world go by, and knows that it shall inherit the earth which it has refused! You little know the relish that it gives to the blessing to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and to be filled with a satisfaction that worldly delight cannot afford, and then to rise to the higher blessedness of the merciful, the forgiving, the hearts that have learned that it is “more blessed to give than to receive,” and the lives that find that “letting go is twice possessing,” and blessing others is to be doubly blessed!

Nay, there is yet one jewel brighter than all the rest in this crown of beatitudes. It is the tear-drop crystallized into the diamond, the blood-drop transfigured into the ruby of heaven’s eternal crown. It is the joy of suffering with Jesus, and then forgetting all the sorrow in the overflowing joy, until with the heavenly Pascal we know not which to say first, and so we say them both together, “Tears upon tears, joy upon joy”.

## **AUGUST 31: “Lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 134:24)**

There is often apparently but little difference in two distinct lives between constant victory and frequent victory. But that one little difference constitutes a world of success or failure. The one is the Divine, the other is the human; the one is the everlasting way, the other the transient and the imperfect. God wants to lead us to the way everlasting, and to establish us and make us immovable as He. We little know the seriousness of the slightest surrender. It is but the first step in a downward progression, and God only knows where it shall end.

Let us be “not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving our the soul.”

Your victory to-day is but preparing the way for a greater victory to-morrow, and your surrender to-day is opening the door for a more terrible defeat in the days to come. Let us, therefore, whatever we have claimed from our blessed Master, commit it to His keeping, and take Him to establish us and hold us fast in the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

## **SEPTEMBER 1: “Afterward that which is spiritual” (1 Cor. 15:46)**

God has often to bring us not only into the place of suffering, & the bed of sickness and pain, but also into the place where our righteousness breaks down & our character falls to pieces, in order to humble us in the dust & show us the need of entire crucifixion to all our natural life. Then, at the feet of Jesus we are ready to receive Him, to abide in Him & depend upon Him alone & draw all our life and strength each moment from Him, our Living Head. It was thus that Peter was saved by his very fall, and had to die to Peter that he might live more perfectly to Christ. Have we thus died, and have we thus renounced the strength of our own self-confidence?

We begin life with the natural, next we come into the spiritual; but then, when we have truly received the kingdom of God and His righteousness, the natural is added to the spiritual, and we are able to receive the gifts of His providence and the blessings of life without becoming centered in them or allowing them to separate us from Him.

## **SEPTEMBER 2: “Who hath despised the day of small things” (Zech. 4:10)**

The oak comes out of the acorn, the eagle out of that little egg in the nest, the harvest comes out of the seed; and so the glory of the coming age is all coming out of the Christ life now, even as the majesty of His kingdom was all wrapped up that night in the babe of Bethlehem.

Oh, let us take Him for all our life. Let us be united to His person and His risen body. Let us know what it is to say, “The Lord is for the body and the body is for the Lord”! We are members of His body and His flesh and His bones.

He that gave that little infant, His own blessed babe and His only begotten Son, on that dark winter night to the arms of a cruel and ungrateful world, will not refuse to give Him in all His fulness to your heart if you will but open your heart and give Him right of way and full ownership and possession. Then shall you know in your measure His quickening life, even in this earthly life, and by-and-by your hope shall reach its full fruition when you shall sit with Him on His throne with every fiber of your immortal being even as He.



### **SEPTEMBER 3: “The God of Israel hath separated you” (Num. 16:9)**

The little plant may grow out of a manure heap, and be surrounded by filth, and covered very often with the floating dust that is borne upon the breeze, but its white roots are separated from the unclean soil, and its leaves and flowers have no affinity with the dust that settles upon them; and after a shower of summer rain they throw off every particle of defilement, and look up, as fresh and spotless as before, for their intrinsic nature cannot have any part with these defiling things.

This is the separation which Christ requires and which He gives. There is no merit in my staying from the theater if I want to go. There is no value in my abstaining from the foolish novel or the intoxicating cup, if I am all the time wishing I could have them. My heart is there, and my soul is defiled by the desire for evil things. It is not the world that stains us, but the love of the world. The true Levite is separated from the desire for earthly things, and even if he could, he would not have the forbidden pleasures which others prize.

## **SEPTEMBER 4: “Come ye yourselves apart” (Mark 6:31)**

One of the greatest hindrances to spirituality is the lack of waiting upon God. You cannot go through twenty-four hours with two or three breaths of air, in the morning, as you sip your coffee. But you must live in the atmosphere, and you must breathe it all day long. Christians do not wait upon God enough. It needs hours and hours daily of spiritual communion with the Holy Spirit to keep your vitality healthful and full. Every moment should find you breathing out yourself into Christ, and breathing afresh His life, and love and power.

God is waiting to send us the Holy Spirit. He is longing to bless us. His one business is to quicken and sustain our spiritual life. He has nothing else to do with His infinite and great resources. Let us receive Him. Let us live in Him. Let us give to Him the joy of knowing that His infinite grace has not been bestowed in vain, but that we appreciate and improve the blessings which He oft has so freely bestowed.

Lord, help me this day to dwell in Thee as the flower in the sunshine, as the fish in the sea, living in Thy love as the atmosphere and element of my being.

## **SEPTEMBER 5: “He breathed on them” (John 20:22)**

The beautiful figure suggested by this passage is full of simple instruction. It is as easy to receive the Holy Ghost as it is to breathe. It almost seems as if the Lord had given them the very impression of breathing, and had said, “Now, this is the way to receive the Holy Ghost.”

It is not necessary for you to go to a smallpox hospital to have your lungs contaminated with impure air. It is enough for you to keep in your lungs the air you inhaled a minute ago and it will kill you. All the pure elements have been absorbed from it, and there is nothing left but carbon and other deadly gases and fluids.

Therefore, if you are to be filled with the Holy Spirit, you must first get emptied not only of your old sinful life, but of your old spiritual life. You must get a new breath every moment, or you will die. God wants you to empty out all your being into Him, and then you will take Him in, without needing to try too hard. A vacuum always gets filled, an empty pair of lungs unavoidably breathes in the pure air. If you are only in the true attitude, there will be no trouble about receiving the Holy Ghost.

## **SEPTEMBER 6: “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord” (Phil. 3:1)**

There is no spiritual value in depression. One bright and thankful look at the cross is worth a thousand morbid, self-condemning reflections. The longer you look at evil the more it mesmerizes and defiles you into its own likeness. Lay it down at the cross, accept the cleansing blood, reckon yourself dead to the thing that was wrong, and then rise up and count yourself as if you were another man and no longer the same person; and then, identifying yourself with the Lord Jesus, accept your standing in Him and look in your Father’s face as blameless as Jesus. Then out of your every fault will come some lesson of watchfulness or some secret of victory which will enable you some day to thank Him, even for your painful experience.

But praise is a sacrifice, for “it is acceptable to God.” It goes up to heaven sweeter than the songs of angels, “a sweet smelling savor to your Lord and King.” It should be unintermittent—“the sacrifice of praise continually.” One drop of poison will neutralize a whole cup of wine, and make it a cup of death, and one moment of gloom will defile a whole day of sunshine and gladness. Let us “rejoice evermore.”

## **SEPTEMBER 7: “I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3:18)**

The secret of joy is not to wait until you feel happy, but to rise, by an act of faith, out of the depression which is dragging you down, and begin to praise God as an act of choice. This is the meaning of such passages as these: “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice”; “I do rejoice; yes, and I will rejoice.” “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” In all these cases there is an evident struggle with sadness and then the triumphs of faith and praise.

Now, this is what is meant—in part, at least—by the sacrifice of praise. A sacrifice is that which costs us something. And when a man or woman has some cherished grudge or wrong and is harboring it, nursing it, dwelling on it, rolling it as a sweet morsel under the tongue, and quite determined to enjoy a miserable time in selfish morbidness and grumbling, it costs us no little sacrifice to throw off the morbid spell, to refuse the suggestions of injury, neglect and the remembrance of unkindness, to rise out of the mood of self-commiseration in wholesome and holy determination, and say, “I will rejoice in the Lord”; I will “count it all joy.”

## **SEPTEMBER 8: “He that eateth Me, even He shall live by Me” (John 6:57)**

What the children of God need is not merely a lot of teaching, but the Living Bread. The best wheat is not good food. It needs to be ground and baked before it can be digested and assimilated so as to nourish the system. The purest and the highest truth cannot sanctify or satisfy a living soul.

He breathes the New Testament message from His mouth with a kiss of love and a breath of quickening power. It is as we abide in Him, lying upon His bosom and drinking in His very life that we are nourished, quickened, comforted and healed.

This is the secret of Divine healing. It is not believing a doctrine, it is not performing a ceremony, it is not wringing a petition from the heavens by the logic of faith and the force of your will; but it is the inbreathing of the life of God; it is the living touch which none can understand except those whose senses are exercised to know the realities of the world unseen. Often, therefore, a very little truth will bring us much more help and blessing than a great amount of instruction.

## **SEPTEMBER 9: “All things are lawful for Me” (1 Cor. 10:23)**

I may be perfectly free myself to do many things, the doing of which might hurt my brother and wound his conscience, and love will gladly surrender the little indulgence, that she may save her brother from temptation. There are many questions which are easily settled by this principle.

So there are many forms of recreation which, in themselves might be harmless, and, under certain circumstances, unobjectionable, but they have become associated with worldliness and godlessness, and have proved snares and temptations to many a young heart and life; and, therefore, the law of love would lead you to avoid them, discountenance them, and in no way give encouragement to others to participate in them.

It is just in these things that are not required of us by absolute rules, but are the impulses of a thoughtful love, that the highest qualities of Christian character show themselves, and the most delicate shades of Christian love are manifested.

**SEPTEMBER 10: “Wherefore, receive ye one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God” (Rom. 15:7)**

This is a sublime principle, and it will give sublimity to life. It is stated elsewhere in similar language, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

This is our high calling, to represent Christ, and act in His behalf, and in His character and spirit, under all circumstances and toward all men. “What would Jesus do?” is a simple question which will settle every difficulty, and always settle it on the side of love.

But we cannot answer this question rightly without having Jesus Himself in our hearts. We cannot act Christ. This is too grave a matter for acting. We must have Christ, and simply be natural and true to the life within us, and that life will act itself out.

Oh, how easy it is to love every one, and see nothing but loveliness when our heart is filled with Christ, and how every difficulty melts away and every one we meet seems clothed with the Spirit within us when we are filled with the Holy Ghost!



**SEPTEMBER 11: “Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20)**

It is “all the days,” not “always.” He comes to you each day with a new blessing. Every morning, day by day, He walks with us, with a love that never tires and a blessing that never grows old. And He is with us “all the days”; it is a ceaseless abiding. There is no day so dark, so commonplace, so uninteresting, but you find Him there. Often, no doubt, He is unrecognized, as He was on the way to Emmaus, until you realize how your heart has been warmed, your love stirred, your Bible so strangely vivified, and every promise seems to speak to you with heavenly reality and power. It is the Lord! God grant that His living presence may be made more real to us all henceforth, and whether we have the consciousness and evidence, as they had a few glorious times in those forty days, or whether we go forth into the coming days, as they did most of their days, to walk by simple faith and in simple duty, let us know at least that the fact is true forevermore, THAT HE IS WITH US, a Presence all unseen, but real, and ready if we needed Him any moment to manifest Himself for our relief.

**SEPTEMBER 12: “The furnace for gold; but the Lord trieth the hearts” (Prov. 17:3)**

Remember that temptation is not sin unless it be accompanied with the consent of your will. There may seem to be even the inclination, and yet the real choice of your spirit is fixed immovably against it, and God regards it simply as a sollicitation and credits you with an obedience all the more pleasing to Him, because the temptation was so strong.

We little know how evil can find access to a pure nature and seem to incorporate itself with our thoughts and feelings, while at the same time we resist and overcome it, and remain as pure as the sea-fowl that emerges from the water without a single drop remaining upon its burnished wing, or as the harp string, which may be struck by a rude or clumsy hand and gives forth a discordant sound, not from any defect of the harp, but because of the hand that touches it. But let the Master hand play upon it, and it is a chord of melody and a note of exquisite delight.

“In nothing terrified by your adversaries which is to you an evident token of salvation and that of God.”

**SEPTEMBER 13: “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you”  
(1 Peter 12:16)**

Most persons after a step of faith are looking for sunny skies and unruffled seas, and when they meet a storm and tempest they are filled with astonishment and perplexity. But this is just what we must expect to meet if we have received anything of the Lord. The best token of His presence is the adversary’s defiance, and the more real our blessing, the more certainly it will be challenged. It is a good thing to go out looking for the worst, and if it comes we are not surprised; while if our path be smooth and our way be unopposed, it is all the more delightful, because it comes as a glad surprise.

But let us quite understand what we mean by temptation. You, especially, who have stepped out with the assurance that you have died to self and sin, may be greatly amazed to find yourself assailed with a tempest of thoughts and feelings that seem to come wholly from within and you will be impelled to say, “Why, I thought I was dead, but I seem to be alive.” This, beloved, is the time to remember that temptation, the instigation, is not sin, but only of the evil one.

**SEPTEMBER 14: “For the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore, have I set my face like a flint, and I know I shall not be ashamed” (Isa. 50:7)**

This is the language of trust and victory, and it was through this faith, as we are told in a passage in Hebrews, that in His last agony, “Jesus, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame.” His life was a life of faith, His death was a victory of faith, His resurrection was a triumph of faith, His mediatorial reign is all one long victory of faith, “From henceforth expecting till all His enemies be made His footstool.”

And so, for us He has become the pattern of faith, and in every situation of difficulty, temptation and distress has gone before us waving the banner of trust and triumph, and bidding us to follow in His victorious footsteps.

He is the great Pattern Believer. While we must claim our salvation by faith, the Great Forerunner also claimed the world’s salvation by the same faith.

Let us therefore consider this glorious Leader our perfect example, and as we follow close behind Him, let us remember where He has triumphed we may triumph, too.

**SEPTEMBER 15: “Though it tarry, wait for it, for it will surely come, and will not tarry”  
(Hab. 2:3)**

Some things have their cycle in an hour and some in a century; but His plans shall complete their cycle whether long or short. The tender annual which blossoms for a season and dies, and the Columbian aloe, which develops in a century, each is true to its normal principle. Many of us desire to pluck our fruit in June rather than wait until October, and so, of course, it is sour and immature; but God’s purposes ripen slowly and fully, and faith waits while it tarries, knowing it will surely come and will not tarry too long.

It is perfect rest to fully learn and wholly trust this glorious promise. We may know without a question that His purposes shall be accomplished when we have fully committed our ways to Him, and are walking in watchful obedience to His every prompting. This faith will give a calm and tranquil poise to the spirit and save us from the restless fret and trying to do too much ourselves.

Wait, and every wrong will righten,  
Wait, and every cloud will brighten,  
If you only wait.

## **SEPTEMBER 16: “I will never leave Thee nor forsake Thee” (Heb. 13:5)**

It is most cheering thus to know that although we err and bring upon ourselves many troubles that might have been easily averted, yet God does not forsake even His mistaken child, but on his humble repentance and supplication is ever really both to pardon and deliver. Let us not give up our faith because we have perhaps stepped out of the path in which He would have led us. The Israelites did not follow when He called them into the Land of Promise, yet God did not desert them; but during the forty years of their wandering He walked by their side bearing their backsliding with patient compassion, and waiting to be gracious unto them when another generation should have come. “In all their afflictions He was afflicted, but the Angel of His presence saved them; He bare them and carried them all the days of old.” And so yet, while our wanderings bring us many sorrows and lose us many blessings, to the heart which truly chooses His, He has graciously said: “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”

**SEPTEMBER 17: “Thy people shall be a freewill offering in the day of Thy power” (Ps. 110:3)**

This is what the term consecration properly means. It is the voluntary surrender or self-offering of the heart, by the constraint of love to be the Lord's. Its glad expression is, “I am my Beloved's.” It must spring, of course, from faith. There must be the full confidence that we are safe in this abandonment, that we are not falling over a precipice, or surrendering ourselves to the hands of a judge, but that we are sinking into a Father's arms and stepping into an infinite inheritance. Oh, it is an infinite inheritance. Oh, it is an infinite privilege to be permitted thus to give ourselves up to One who pledges Himself to make us all that we would love to be, nay, all that His infinite wisdom, power and love will delight to accomplish in us. It is the clay yielding itself to the potter's hands that it may be shaped into a vessel of honor, and meet for the Master's use. It is the poor street waif consenting to become the child of a prince that he may be educated and provided for, that he may be prepared to inherit all the wealth of his guardian.

## **SEPTEMBER 18: “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7)**

There are heavenly notes which have power to break down walls of adamant and dissolve mountains of difficulty. The song of Paul and Silas burst the fetters of the Philippian gaol; the choir of Jehoshaphat put to flight the armies of the Ammonites, and the song of faith will disperse our adversaries and lift our sinking hearts into strength and victory. Beloved, is it the dark hour with us? the winter of barrenness and gloom? Oh, let us remember that it is God’s chosen time for the education of faith and that He conceals beneath the surface, precious and untold harvests of unthought-of fruit! It will not be always winter, it will not be always night, and when the morning comes and spring spreads its verdant mantle over the barren fields then we shall be glad that we did not disappoint our Father in the hour of testing, but that faith had already claimed and seen in the distance the glad fruition which sight now beholds, with a rapture even less than the vision of naked faith.

Lord, help me to believe when I cannot see, and learn from my trials to trust Thee more.



**SEPTEMBER 19: “In due season we shall reap if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9)**

If the least of us could only anticipate the eternal issues that will probably spring from the humblest services of faith, we should only count our sacrifices and labors unspeakable heritages of honor and opportunity, and would cease to speak of trials and sacrifices for God.

The smallest grain of faith is a deathless and incorruptible germ, which will yet plant the heavens and cover the earth with harvests of imperishable glory. Lift up your head, beloved, the horizon is wider than the little circle that you can see. We are living, we are suffering, we are laboring, we are trusting, for the ages yet to come. “Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not,” and with tears of transport we shall cry some day, “Oh, how great is thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men.”

Help me to-day to live under the powers of the world to come, and to live as a man in heaven walking upon the earth.

## **SEPTEMBER 20: “They shall not be ashamed that wait” (Isa. 49:23)**

Often He calls us aside from our work for a season and bids us be still and learn ere we go forth again to minister. Especially is this so when there has been some serious break, some sudden failure and some radical defect in our work. There is no time lost in such waiting hours. Fleeing from his enemies the ancient knight found that his horse needed to be reshod. Prudence seemed to urge him without delay, but higher wisdom taught him to halt a few minutes at the blacksmith’s forge by the way to have the shoe replaced, and although he heard the feet of his pursuers galloping hard behind, yet he waited those minutes until his charger was refitted for his flight, and then, leaping into his saddle just as they appeared a hundred yards away, he dashed away from them with the fleetness of the wind, and knew that his halting had hastened his escape. So often God bids us tarry ere we go, and fully recover ourselves for the next great stage of the journey and work.

Lord, teach me to be still and know that Thou art God and all this day to walk with God.

## **SEPTEMBER 21: “Faint, yet pursuing” (Judges 8:4)**

It is a great thing thus to learn to depend upon God to work through our feeble resources, and yet, while so depending, to be absolutely faithful and diligent, and not allow our trust to deteriorate into supineness and indolence. We find no sloth or negligence in Gideon, or his three hundred; though they were weak and few, they were wholly true, and everything in them ready for God to use to the very last. “Faint yet pursuing” was their watchword as they followed and finished their glorious victory, and they rested not until the last of their enemies were destroyed, and even their false friends were punished for their treachery and unfaithfulness.

So God still calls the weakest instruments, but when He chooses and enables them they are no longer weak, but “mighty through God,” and faithful through His grace to every trust and opportunity; “trusting,” as Dr. Chalmers used to say, “as though all depended upon God, and working as though all depended upon themselves.”

Teach me, my blessed Master, to trust and obey.

**SEPTEMBER 22: “We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus” (Heb. 2:8-9)**

How true this is to us all! How many things there are that seem to be stronger than we are, but blessed be His name! they are all in subjection under Him, and we see Jesus crowned above them all; and Jesus is our Head, our representative, our other self, and where He is we shall surely be. Therefore when we fail to see anything that God has promised, and that we have claimed in our experience, let us look up and see it realized in Him, and claim it in Him for ourselves. Our side is only half the circle, the heaven side is already complete, and the rainbow of which we see not the upper half, shall one day be all around the throne and take in the other hemisphere of all our now unfinished life. By faith, then, let us enter into all our inheritance. Let us lift up our eyes to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, and hear Him say, “All the land that thou seest will I give thee.” Let us remember that the circle, is complete, that the inheritance is unlimited, and that all things are put under His feet.

## **SEPTEMBER 23: “I am the Lord that healeth thee” (Ex. 15:26)**

It is very reasonable that God should expect us to trust Him for our bodies as well as our souls, for if our faith is not practical enough to bring us temporal relief, how can we be educated for real dependence upon God for anything that involves serious risk? It is all very well to talk about trusting God for the distant and future prospect of salvation after death! There is scarcely a sinner in a Christian land that does not trust to be saved some day, but there is no grasp in faith like this. It is only when we come face to face with positive issues and overwhelming forces that we can prove the reality of Divine power in a supernatural life. Hence as an education to our very spirits as well as a gracious provision for our temporal life, God has trained His people from the beginning to recognize Him as the supply of all their needs, and to look to Him as the Physician of their bodies and Father of their spirits. Beloved, have you learned the meaning of Jehovah-rophi, and has it changed your Marah of trial into an Elim of blessing and praise?

## **SEPTEMBER 24: “He calleth things that are not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17)**

The Word of God creates what it commands. When Christ says to any of us “Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you,” We are clean. When He says “no condemnation” there is none, though there has been a lifetime of sin before. And when He says, “mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,” then the weak are strong. This is the part of faith, to take God at His Word, and then expect Him to make it real. A French commander thanked a common soldier who had saved his life and called him captain, although he was but a private, but the man took the commander at his word, accepted the new name and was thereby constituted indeed a captain.

Shall we thus take God’s creating word of justification, sanctification, power and deliverance and thus make real the mighty promise, “He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength; for they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.”

## **SEPTEMBER 25: “The faith of the Son of God” (Gal. 2:20)**

Let us learn the secret even of our faith. It is the faith of Christ, springing in our heart and trusting in our trials. So shall we always sing, “The life that I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Thus looking off unto Jesus, “the Author and Finisher of our faith,” we shall find that instead of struggling to reach the promises of God, we shall lie down upon them in blessed repose and be borne up by them with the faith which is no more our own than the promises upon which it rests. Each new need will find us leaning afresh on Him for the grace to trust and to overcome.

Further we see here the true spirit of prayer. It is the Spirit of Christ in us. “In the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee.” Christ still sings these praises in the trusting heart and lifts our prayers into songs of victory! This is the true spirit of prayer, like Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi, turning prayer into praise, night into day, the night of sorrow into the morning of joy, and when He is in us, the spirit of faith, He will also become the spirit of praise.

## **SEPTEMBER 26: “I will be with Him in trouble” (Ps. 91:15)**

The question often comes, “Why didn’t He help me sooner!” It is not His order. He must first adjust you to the situation and cause you to learn your lesson from it. His promise is, “I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.” He must be with you in the trouble first until you grow quiet. Then He will take you out of it. This will not come till you have stopped being restless and fretful about it and become calm and trustful. Then He will say, “It is enough.”

God uses trouble to teach His children precious lessons. They are intended to educate us. When their good work is done a glorious recompense will come to us through them. There is a sweet joy and opportunity in them. He does not regard them as difficulties but as opportunities. They have come to give God a greater interest in you, and to show how He can deliver you from them. We cannot have a mercy worth praising God for without difficulty. God is as deep, and long, and high, as our little world of circumstances.



## **SEPTEMBER 27: “The glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21)**

Are you above self and self-pleasing in every way? Have you got above circumstances so that you are not influenced by them? Are you above sickness and the evil forces around that would drag down your physical life into the quicksands? These forces are all around, and if yielded to would quickly swamp us. God does not destroy sickness, or its power to hurt, but He lifts us above it. Are you above your feelings, moods, emotions and states? Can you sail immovable as the stars through all sorts of weather? A harp will give out sweet music or discordant sounds as different fingers touch the strings. If the devil’s hand is on your harp strings what hideous sounds it will give. Let the fingers of the Lord sweep it, and it will breathe out celestial music. Are you lifted above people, so that you are not bound by or to any one except in the dear Lord, and are you standing free in His glorious life?

“I am risen with Christ, I am dwelling above;  
I am walking with Jesus below,  
I am shedding the light of His glory and love  
Around me wherever I go.”

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I am walking with Jesus below,  
I am shedding the light of His glory and love  
Around me wherever I go.”

## **SEPTEMBER 28: “The trial of your faith being much more precious than gold” (1 Peter 1:7)**

Our trials are great opportunities. Too often we look on them as great obstacles. It would be a heaven of rest and an inspiration of unspeakable power if each of us would henceforth recognize every difficult situation as one of God’s chosen ways of proving to us His love and power, and if instead of calculating upon defeat we should begin to look around for the messages of His glorious manifestations. Then indeed would every cloud become a rainbow, and every mountain a path of ascension and a scene of transfiguration. If we will look upon the past, many of us will find that the very time our heavenly Father has chosen to do the kindest things for us and give us the richest blessings has been the time when we were strained and shut in on every side. God’s jewels are often sent us in rough packages and by dark liveried servants, but within we find the very treasures of the King’s palace and the Bridegroom’s Love.

Fire of God, thy work begin,  
Burn up the dross of self and sin;  
Burn off my fetters, set me free,  
And through the furnace walk with me.

**SEPTEMBER 29: “Call not thou common” (Acts 10:15)**

**“There is nothing common of itself” (Rom. 14:14)**

We can bring Christ into common things as fully as into what we call religious services. Indeed, it is the highest and hardest application of Divine grace, to bring it down to the ordinary matters of life, and therefore God is far more honored in this than even in things that are more specially sacred.

Therefore, in the twelfth chapter of Romans, which is the manual of practical consecration, just after the passage that speaks of ministering in sacred things, the apostle comes at once to the common, social and secular affairs into which we are to bring our consecration principles. We read: “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.”

God wants the Levites scattered all over the cities of Israel. He wants your workshop, factory, kitchen, nursery, editor’s room and printing-office, as much as your pulpit and closet. He wants you to be just as holy at high noon on Monday or Wednesday, as in the sanctuary on Sabbath morning.

## **SEPTEMBER 30: “In the secret places of the stairs” (Song of Solomon 2:14)**

The dove is in the cleft of the rock—the riven side of our Lord. There is comfort and security there. It is also in the secret places of the stairs. It loves to build its nest in the high towers to which men mount the winding stairs for hundreds of feet above the ground. What a glorious vision is there obtained of the surrounding scenery. It is a picture of ascending life. To reach its highest altitudes we must find the secret places of the stairs. That is the only way to rise above the natural plane. Our life should be one of quiet mounting with occasional resting places; but we should be mounting higher step by step. Everybody does not find this way of secret ascent. It is for God’s chosen ones. The world may think you are going down. You may not have as much public work to do as formerly. “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” It is a secret, hidden life. We may be hardly aware that we are growing, till some day a test comes and we find we are established. Have you got above the power of sin so that Christ is keeping you from wilful disobedience? Does it give you a shudder to know the consciousness of sin? Are you lifted above the world?

**OCTOBER 1: “That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace”  
(Eph. 2:7)**

Christ’s great purpose for His people is to train them up to know the hope of their calling, and the riches of the glory of their inheritance and what the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Let us prove, in all our varied walks of life, and scenes of conflict, the fulness of His power and grace and thus shall we know “In the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Jesus Christ.”

Beloved, are you thus following your Teacher in the school of faith, and finishing the education which is by and by to fit you for “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”? This is only the School of Faith.

Little can we now dream what these lessons will mean for us some day, when sitting with Him on His throne and sharing with Him the power of God and the government of the universe. Let us be faithful scholars now and soon with Him, we too, will have “endured the cross despising the shame,” and shall “sit down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

**OCTOBER 2: “Moses gave not any inheritance; the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as He said unto them” (Josh. 13:33)**

This is very significant. God gave the land to the other tribes but He gave Himself to the Levites. There is such a thing in Christian life as an inheritance from the Lord, and there is such a thing as having the Lord Himself for our inheritance.

Some people get a sanctification from the Lord which is of much value, but which is variable, and often impermanent. Others have learned the higher lesson of taking the Lord Himself to be their keeper and their sanctity, and abiding in Him they are kept above the vicissitudes of their own states and feelings.

Some get from the Lord large measures of joy and blessing, and times of refreshing.

Others, again, learn to take the Lord Himself as their joy.

Some people are content to have peace with God, but others have taken “the peace of God that passeth all understanding.”

Some have faith in God, while others have the faith of God. Some have many touches of healing from God, others, again, have learned to live in the very health of God Himself.

### **OCTOBER 3: “The little foxes that spoil the vines” (Songs 2:15)**

There are some things good, without being perfect. You don't need to have a whole regiment cannonading outside your room to keep you awake. It is quite enough that your little alarm clock rings its little bell. It is not necessary to fret about everything; it is quite enough if the devil gets your mind rasped with one little worry, one little thought which destroys your perfect peace. It is like the polish on a mirror, or an exquisite toilet table, one scratch will destroy it; and the finer it is the smaller the scratch that will deface it. And so your rest can be destroyed by a very little thing. Perhaps you have trusted in God about your future salvation; but have you about your present business or earthly cares, your money and your family?

What is meant by the peace that passeth all understanding? It does not mean a peace no one can comprehend. It means a peace that no amount of reasoning will bring. You cannot get it by thinking. There may be perfect bewilderment and perplexity all round the horizon, but yet your heart can rest in perfect security because He knows, He loves, He leads.



## **OCTOBER 4: “Instead of the brier, the myrtle tree” (Isa. 55:13)**

God’s sweetest memorial is the transformed thorn and the thistle blooming with flowers of peace and sweetness, where once grew recriminations.

Beloved, God is waiting to make just such memorials in your life, out of the things that are hurting you most to-day. Take the grievances, the separations, the strained friendships and the broken ties which have been the sorrow and heartbreak of your life, and let God heal them, and give you grace to make you right with all with whom you may be wrong, and you will wonder at the joy and blessing that will come out of the things that have caused you nothing but regret and pain.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” The everlasting employment of our blessed Redeemer is to reconcile the guilty and the estranged from God, and the highest and most Christ-like work that we can do is, to be like Him.

Shall we go forth to dry the tears of a sorrowing world, to heal the broken-hearted, to bind up the wounds of human lives, and to unite heart to heart, and earth to heaven?

## **OCTOBER 5: “He hath triumphed gloriously” (Ex. 15:1)**

Beloved, God calls us to victory. Have any of you given up the conflict, have you surrendered? Have you said, “This thing is too much”? Have you said, “I can give up anything else but this”? If you have, you are not in the land of promise. God means you should accept every difficult thing that comes in your life. He has started with you, knowing every difficulty. And if you dare to let Him, He will carry you through not only to be conquerors, but “more than conquerors.” Are you looking for all the victory?

God gives His children strength for the battle and watches over them with a fond enthusiasm. He longs to fold you to His arms and say to you, “I have seen thy conflict, I have watched thy trials, I have rejoiced in thy victory; thou hast honored Me.” You know He told Joshua at the beginning, “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so shall I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” And again, He says to us, “Fear thou not, for I am with thee.”

## **OCTOBER 6: “Ephraim, he hath mixed himself” (Hos. 7:8)**

It is a great thing to learn to take God first, and then He can afford to give us everything else, without the fear of its hurting us.

As long as you want anything very much, especially more than you want God, it is an idol. But when you become satisfied with God, everything else so loses its charm that He can give it to you without harm, and then you can take just as much as you choose, and use it for His glory.

There is no harm whatever in having money, houses, lands, friends and dearest children, if you do not value these things for themselves.

If you have been separated from them in spirit, and become satisfied with God Himself, then they will become to you channels to be filled with God to bring Him nearer to you. Then every little lamb around your household will be a tender cord to bind you to the Shepherd’s heart. Then every affection will be a little golden cup filled with the wine of His love. Then every bank, stock and investment will be but a channel through which you can pour out His benevolence and extend His gifts.

## **OCTOBER 7: “He opened not His mouth” (Isa. 53:7)**

How much grace it requires to bear a misunderstanding rightly, and to receive an unkind judgment in holy sweetness! Nothing tests a Christian character more than to have some evil thing said about him. This is the file that soon proves whether we are electro-plate or solid gold. If we could only know the blessings that lie hidden in our lives, we would say, like David, when Shimei cursed him, “Let him curse; it may be the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.”

Some people get easily turned aside from the grandeur of their life-work by pursuing their own grievances and enemies, until their life gets turned into one little petty whirl of warfare. It is like a nest of hornets. You may disperse the hornets, but you will probably get terribly stung, and get nothing for your pains, for even their honey is not worth a search.

God give us more of His Spirit, who, when reviled, reviled not again; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.

Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.

**OCTOBER 8: “There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken”  
(Josh. 21:45)**

Some day, even you, trembling, faltering one, shall stand upon those heights and look back upon all you have passed through, all you have narrowly escaped, all the perils through which He guided you, the stumblings through which He guarded you, and the sins from which He saved you; and you shall shout, with a meaning you cannot understand now, “Salvation unto Him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

Some day He will sit down with us in that glorious home, and we shall have all the ages in which to understand the story of our lives. And He will read over again this old marked Bible with us, He will show us how He kept all these promises, He will explain to us the mysteries that we could not understand, He will recall to our memory the things we have long forgotten, He will go over again with us the book of life, He will recall all the finished story, and I am sure we will often cry: “Blessed Christ! you have been so true, you have been so good! Was there ever love like this?” And then the great chorus will be repeated once more—“There failed not aught of any good thing that He hath spoken; all came to pass.”

## **OCTOBER 9: “Peace be unto you” (John 20:19, 21)**

This is the type of His first appearing to our hearts when He comes to bring us His peace and to teach us to trust Him and love Him.

But there is a second peace which He has to give. Jesus said unto them again, “Peace be unto you.” There is a “peace,” and there is an “again peace.” There is a peace with God, and there is “the peace of God that passeth understanding.” It is the deeper peace that we need before we can serve Him or be used for His glory.

While we are burdened with our own cares, He cannot give us His. While we are occupied with ourselves, we cannot be at leisure to serve Him. Our minds will be so filled with our own anxieties that we would not be equal to the trust which He requires of us, and so, before He can entrust us with His work, He wants to deliver us from every burden and anxiety.

“Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin,  
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.  
Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed,  
To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.”

**OCTOBER 10: “If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live”  
(Rom. 8:13)**

The Holy Spirit is the only one who can kill us and keep us dead. Many Christians try to do this disagreeable work themselves, and they are going through a continual crucifixion, but they can never accomplish the work permanently. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, and when you really yield yourself to the death, it is delightful to find how sweetly He can slay you.

By the touch of the electric spark they tell us life is extinguished almost without a quiver of pain. But, however this may be in natural things, we know the Holy Spirit can touch with celestial fire the surrendered thing, and slay it in a moment, after it is really yielded up to the sentence of death. That is our business, and it is God’s business to execute that sentence, and to keep it constantly operative.

Don’t let us live in the pain of perpetual and ineffectual suicide, but reckoning ourselves dead indeed, let us leave ourselves in the hands of the blessed Holy Spirit, and He will slay whatever rises in opposition to His will, and keep us true to our heavenly reckoning, and filled with His resurrection life.

**OCTOBER 11: “And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:27)**

The Holy Spirit becomes to the consecrated heart the Spirit of intercession. We have two Advocates. We have an Advocate with the Father, who prays for us at God’s right hand; but the Holy Spirit is the Advocate within, who prays in us, inspiring our petitions and presenting them, through Christ, to God.

We need this Advocate. We know not what to pray for, and we know not how to pray as we ought, but He breathes in the holy heart the desires that we may not always understand, the groanings which we could not utter.

But God understands, and He, with a loving Father’s heart, is always searching our hearts to find the Spirit’s prayer, and to answer it. He finds many a prayer there that we have not discovered, and answers many a cry that we never understood. And when we reach our home and read the records of life, we shall better know and appreciate the infinite love of that Divine Friend, who has watched within as the Spirit of prayer, and breathed out our every need to the heart of God.



**OCTOBER 12: “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free” (Rom. 8:2)**

The life of Jesus Christ brought into our heart by the Holy Spirit, operates there as a new law of divine strength and vitality, and counteracts, overcomes and lifts us above the old law of sin and death.

Let us illustrate these two laws by a simple comparison. Look at my hand. By the law of gravitation it naturally falls upon the desk and lies there, attracted downward by that natural law which makes heavy bodies fall to the earth.

But there is a stronger law than the law of gravitation—my own life and will. And so through the operation of this higher law—the law of vitality—I defy the law of gravitation, and lift my hand and hold it above its former resting-place, and move it at my will. The law of vitality has made me free from the law of gravitation.

Precisely so the indwelling life of Christ Jesus, operating with the power of a law, lifts me above, and counteracts the power of sin in my fallen nature.

## **OCTOBER 13: “The carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7)**

The flesh is incurably bad. “It is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be.” It never can be any better. It is no use trying to improve the flesh. You may educate it all you please. You may train it by the most approved methods, you may set before it the brightest examples, you may pipe to it or mourn to it, treat it with encouragement or severity; its nature will always be incorrigibly the same.

Like the wild hawk which the little child captures in its infancy and tries to train in the habits of the dove, before you are aware it will fasten its cruel beak upon the gentle fingers that would caress it, and show the old wild spirit of fear and ferocity. It is a hawk by nature, and it can never be made a dove. “For the carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be.”

The only remedy for human nature is to destroy it, and receive instead the divine nature. God does not improve man. He crucifies the natural life with Christ, and creates the new man in Christ Jesus.

## **OCTOBER 14: “Get thee, behind me, Satan” (Matt. 16:23)**

When your old self comes back, if you listen to it, fear it, believe it, it will have the same influence upon you as if it were not dead; it will control you and destroy you. But if you will ignore it and say: “You are not I, but Satan trying to make me believe that the old self is not dead; I refuse you, I treat you as a demon power outside of me, I detach myself from you”; if you treat it as a wife would her divorced husband, saying: “You are nothing to me, you have no power over me, I have renounced you, in the name of Jesus I bid you hence,” —lo! the evil thing will disappear, the shadow will vanish, the wand of faith will lay the troubled spirit, and send it back to the abyss, and you will find that Christ is there instead, with His risen life, to back up your confidence and seal your victory.

Satan can stand anything better than neglect. If you ignore him he gets disgusted and disappears. Jesus used to turn His back upon him and say, “Get thee behind Me, Satan.” So let us refuse him, and we shall find that he will be compelled to act according to our faith.

## **OCTOBER 15: “Faith is the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1)**

True faith drops its letter in the post-office box, and lets it go. Distrust holds on to a corner of it, and wonders that the answer never comes.

I have some letters in my desk that have been written for weeks, but there was some slight uncertainty about the address or the contents, so they are yet unmailed. They have not done either me or anybody else any good yet. They will never accomplish anything until I let them go out of my hands and trust them to the postman and the mail.

This is the case with true faith. It hands its case over to God, and then He works.

That is a fine verse in the thirty-seventh Psalm: “Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He worketh.” But He never worketh until we commit.

Faith is a receiving, or still better, a taking of God’s proffered gifts. We may believe, and come, and commit, and rest, but we will not fully realize all our blessing until we begin to receive and come into the attitude of abiding and taking.

**OCTOBER 16: “Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, I will make thee a joy”  
(Isa. 60:15)**

God loves to take the most lost of men, and make them the most magnificent memorials of His redeeming love and power. He loves to take the victims of Satan’s hate, and the lives that have been the most fearful examples of his power to destroy, and to use them to illustrate and illuminate the possibilities of Divine mercy and the new creations of the Holy Spirit.

He loves to take the things in our own lives that have been the worst, the hardest and the most hostile to God, and to transform them so that we shall be the opposites of our former selves.

The sweetest spirits are made out of the most stormy and self-willed, the mightiest faith is created out of a wilderness of doubts and fears, and the Divinest love is transformed out of stony hearts of hate and selfishness.

The grace of God is equal to the most uncongenial temperaments, to the most unfavorable circumstances; and its glory is to transform a curse into blessing, and show to men and angels of ages yet to come, that “where sin abounded, there grace did much more abound.”

## **OCTOBER 17: “Abraham believed God” (Rom. 4:3)**

Abraham’s faith reposed on God Himself. He knew the God he was dealing with. It was a personal confidence in one whom he could utterly trust.

The real secret of Abraham’s whole life was that he was the friend of God, and knew God to be his great, good and faithful Friend, and, taking Him at His word, he had stepped out from all that he knew and loved, and gone forth upon an unknown pathway with none but God.

Beloved, are we trusting not only in the word of God, but have we learned to lean our whole weight upon Himself, the God of infinite love and power, our covenant God and everlasting Friend?

We are told that Abraham glorified God by this life of faith. The true way to glorify God is to let the world see what He is, and what He can do. God does not want us so much to do things, as to let people see what He can do. God is not looking for extraordinary characters as His instruments, but He is looking for humble instruments through whom He can be honored throughout the ages.

**OCTOBER 18: “All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13)**

The literal translation of this phrase is, all things are stripped and stunned. This is the force of the Greek words. The figure is that of an athlete in the Coliseum who has fought his best in the arena, and has at length fallen at the feet of his adversary, disarmed and broken down in helplessness. There he lies, unable to strike a blow, or lift his arm. He is stripped and stunned, disarmed and disabled, and there is nothing left for him but to lie at the feet of his adversary and throw up his arms for mercy.

Now this is the position that God wants to bring us to, where we shall cease our struggles and our attempts at self-defence or self-improvement, and throw ourselves helplessly upon the mercy of God. This is the sinner’s only hope, and when he thus lies at the feet of mercy, Jesus is ready to lift him up and give him that free salvation which is waiting for all.

This, too, is the greatest need of the Christian seeking a deeper and higher life, to come to a full realization of his nothingness and helplessness, and to lie down, stripped and stunned at the feet of Jesus.

## **OCTOBER 19: “Denying ungodliness” (Titus 2:12)**

Let us say, “No,” to the flesh, the world and the love of self, and learn that holy self-denial in which consists so much of the life of obedience. Make no provision for the flesh; give no recognition to your lower life. Say “No” to everything earthly and selfish. How very much of the life of faith consists in simply denying ourselves.

We begin with one great “Yes,” to God, and then we conclude with an eternal “No,” to ourselves, the world, the flesh and the devil.

If you look at the ten commandments of the Decalogue, you will find that nearly every one of them is a “Thou shalt not.” If you read the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, with its beautiful picture of love, you will find that most of the characteristics of love are in the negative, what love “does not, thinks not, says not, is not.” And so you will find that the largest part of the life of consecration is really saying, “No.”

I am not my own,  
I belong to Him.  
I am His alone,  
I belong to Him.



## **OCTOBER 20: “Let us not be weary in well-doing” (Gal. 6:9)**

If Paul could only know the consolation and hope that he has ministered to the countless generations who have marched along the pathway from the cross to the Kingdom above, he would be willing to go through a thousand lives and a thousand deaths such as he endured for the blessing that has followed since his noble head rolled in the dust by the Ostian gate of Rome.

And if the least of us could only anticipate the eternal issues that will probably spring from the humblest services of faith, we should only count our sacrifices and labors unspeakable heritages of honor and opportunity, and would cease to speak of trials and sacrifices made for God.

The smallest grain of faith is a deathless and incorruptible germ, which will yet plant the heavens and cover the earth with harvests of imperishable glory. Lift up your head, beloved, the horizon is wider than the little circle that you can see. We are living, we are suffering, we are laboring, we are trusting, for the ages yet to come!

## **OCTOBER 21: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom. 8:35)**

And then comes the triumphant answer, after all the possible obstacles and enemies have been mentioned one by one, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.” Our trials will be turned to helps; our enemies will be taken prisoners and made to fight our battles. Like the weights on yonder clock, which keep it going, our very difficulties will prove incentives to faith and prayer, and occasions for God becoming more real to us.

We shall get out of our troubles not only deliverance but triumph, and in all these things be even more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Our security depends not upon our unchanging love, but on the love of God in Christ Jesus toward us. It is not the clinging arms of the babe on the mother’s breast that keep it from falling, but the strong arms of the mother about it which will never let it go. He has loved us with an everlasting love, and although all else may change, yet He will never leave us nor forsake us.

## **OCTOBER 22: “Touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15)**

Some of us know a little what it is to be thrilled with a sense of the sufferings of others, and sometimes, the sins of others, and sins that seem to saturate us as they come in contact with us, and throw over us an awful sense of sin and need.

This is, perhaps, intended to give us some faint conception of the sympathy that Jesus felt when He had taken our sins, our sicknesses and our sorrows. Let us not hesitate to lay them on Him! It is far easier for Him to bear them off us than to bear them with us. He has already borne them for us, both in His life and in His death. Let us roll the burden upon Him, and let it roll away, and then, strong in His strength, and rested in His life and love, let us go forth to minister to others the sympathy and help which He has so richly given us.

The world is full of sorrow, and they that have known its bitterness and healing are God’s ministers of consolation to a weeping world.

O, the tears that flow around us,  
Let us wipe them while we may;  
Bring the broken hearts to Jesus,  
He will wipe their tears away.

## **OCTOBER 23: “How long halt ye between two opinions?” (1 Kings 18:21)**

It is strange that people will not get over the idea that a consecrated life is a difficult one. A simple illustration will answer this foolish impression. Suppose a street car driver were to say, “It is much easier to run with one wheel on the track and the other off,” his line would soon be dropped by the public, and they would prefer to walk. Of course, it is ever so much easier to run with both wheels on the track, and always on the track, and it is much easier to follow Christ fully than to follow with a half heart and halting step. The prophet was right in his pungent question, “How long halt ye between two opinions?” The undecided man is a halting man. The halting man is a lame man and a miserable man, and the out-and-out Christian is the admiration of men and angels, and a continual joy to himself.

Say, is it all for Jesus,  
As you so often sing;  
Is He your Royal Master,  
Is He your heart’s true King?

**OCTOBER 24: “First gave their ownelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God”  
(2 Cor. 8:5)**

It is essential, in order to be successful in Christian work, that you shall be loyal not only to God, but to the work with which you are associated. The more deeply one knows the Lord the easier it is to get along with Him.

Superficial Christians are apt to be crotchety. Mature Christians are so near the Lord that they are not afraid of missing His guidance, and not always trying to assert their loyalty to Him and independence of others.

The Corinthians, who had given themselves first to the Lord, had no difficulty in giving themselves to His Apostle by the will of God. It is delightful to work with true hearts on whom we can utterly depend.

God give us the spirit of a sound mind and the heart to “help along.”

You can help by holy prayer,  
Helpful love and joyful song;  
O, the burdens you may bear;  
O, the sorrows you may share;  
O, the crowns you may yet may wear,  
If you help along.

**OCTOBER 25: “Now it is high time to awake out of sleep. Let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:11-12)**

Let us wake out of sleep; let us be alert; let us be alive to the great necessities that really concern us.

Let us put off the garments of the night and the indulgences of the night; the loose robes of pleasure and flowing garments of repose; the festal pleasures of the hours of darkness are not for the children of the day. Let us cast off the works of darkness.

Let us arm ourselves for the day. Before we put on our clothes, let us put on our weapons, for we are stepping out into a land of enemies and a world of dangers; let us put on the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of faith and love, and the shield of faith, and stand armed and vigilant as the dangers of the last days gather around us.

Let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is our robe of day. Not our own works or righteousness, but the person and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave us His very life, and becomes to us our All-Sufficiency.

**OCTOBER 26: “Go out into the highways and compel them to come in” (Luke 14:23)**

In the great parable in the fourteenth chapter of Luke, giving an account of the great supper an ancient lord prepared for his friends and neighbors, and to which, when they asked to be excused, he invited the halt and the lame from the city slums and the lepers from outside the gate, there is a significant picture and object lesson of the program of Christianity in this age.

In the first place, it is obvious to every thoughtful mind that the Master is beginning to excuse the Gospel-hardened people of Christian countries. It is getting constantly more difficult to interest the unsaved of our own land, especially those that have been accustomed to hear the Gospel and the things of Christ. They have asked to be excused from the Gospel feast, and the Lord is excusing them.

At the same time, two remarkable movements indicated in the parable are becoming more and more manifest in our time. One is the Gospel for the slums and the neglected classes at home; the other is the Gospel for the heathen or the neglected classes abroad.

**OCTOBER 27: “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me?” (Jer. 32:27)**

Cyrus, the King, was compelled to fulfil the vision of Jeremiah, by making a decree, the instant the prophecy had foretold, declaring that Jehovah had bidden him rebuild Jerusalem and invite her captives to return to their native home. So Jeremiah’s faith was vindicated and Jehovah’s prophecy gloriously fulfilled, as faith ever will be honored. Oh, for the faith, that in the dark present and the darker future, shall dare to subscribe the evidences and seal up the documents if need be, for the time of waiting, and then begin to testify to the certainty of its hope like the prophet of Anathoth!

The word Anathoth has a beautiful meaning, “echoes.” So faith is the “echo” of God and God always gives the “echo” to faith, as He answers it back in glorious fulfilment. Oh, let our faith echo also the brave claim of the ancient prophet and take our full inheritance, with his glorious shout, “Oh, Lord, Thou art the God of all flesh, is there anything too hard for the Lord?” and back like an echo will come the heavenly answer to our heart, “I am the God of all flesh, is there anything too hard for Me?”



**OCTOBER 28: “Thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17)**

It is not our success in service that counts, but our fidelity. Caleb and Joshua were faithful and God remembered it when the day of visitation came. It was a very difficult and unpopular position, and all of us are called in the crisis of our lives to stand alone and in this very matter of trusting God for victory over sin and our full inheritance in Christ we have all to be tested as they.

Our brethren even in the church of God, while admitting in the abstract the loveliness and advantages of such an ideal life, tell us as they told Israel that it is impracticable and impossible, and many of us have to stand alone for years witnessing to the power of Christ to save His people to the uttermost and like Caleb following Him wholly, if alone. But this is the real victory of faith and the proof of our uncompromising fidelity.

Let us not therefore complain when we suffer reproach for our testimony or stand alone for God, but thank Him that He so honors us, and so stand the test that He can afterwards use us when the multitudes are glad to follow.

**OCTOBER 29: “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you”  
(John 16:23)**

Two men go to the bank cashier, both holding in their hands a piece of paper. One is dressed in expensive style, and presents a gloved and jeweled hand; the other is a rough, unwashed workman. The first is rejected with a polite sentence, and the second receives a thousand dollars over the counter. What is the difference? The one presented a worthless name; the other handed in a note endorsed by the president of the bank. And so the most virtuous moralist will be turned away from the gates of mercy, and the vilest sinner welcomed in if he presents the name of Jesus.

What shall we give to infinite purity and righteousness? Jesus! No other gift is worthy for God to receive. And He has given Him to us for this very end, to give back as our substitute and satisfaction. And He has “testified” of this gift what He has of no other, namely, that in Him He is well pleased and all who receive Him “are accepted in the Beloved.” Shall we accept the testimony that God is satisfied with His Son? Shall we be satisfied with Him?

## **OCTOBER 30: “Dwell deep” (Jer. 49:8)**

God’s presence blends with every other thought and consciousness, flowing sweetly and evenly through our business plans, our social converse our heart’s affections, our manual toil, our entire life, blending with all, consecrating all, and conscious through all, like the fragrance of a flower, or the presence of a friend consciously near, and yet not hindering in the least the most intense and constant preoccupation of the hands and brain. How beautiful the established habit of this unceasing communion and dependence, amid and above all thoughts and occupations! How lovely to see a dear old saint folding away his books at night and humbly saying, “Lord Jesus, things are still just the same between us,” and the falling asleep in His keeping.

So let us be stayed upon Him. Let us grow into Him with all the root and fibers of our being. He will not get tired of our friendship. He will not want to put us off sometimes. Beautiful the words of the suffering saint: “He never says good-bye.” He stays. So let us be stayed on Him.

**OCTOBER 31: “My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness”  
(2 Cor. 12:9)**

God allowed the crisis to close around Jacob on the night when he bowed at Peniel in supplication to bring him to the place where he could take hold of God as he never would have done; and from that narrow pass of peril Jacob came enlarged in his faith and knowledge of God, and in the power of a new and victorious life. He had to compel David, by a long and painful discipline of years, to learn the almighty power and faithfulness of his God, and to grow up into the established principles of faith and godliness, which were indispensable for his subsequent and glorious career as the king of Israel.

Nothing but the extremities in which Paul was constantly placed could ever have taught him, and taught the church through him, the full meaning of the great promise he so learned to claim, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” And nothing but our trials and perils would ever have led some of us to know Him as we do, to trust Him as we have, and to draw from Him the measures of grace which our very extremities made indispensable.

**NOVEMBER 1: “We will come unto him and make our abode with him” (John 14:23)**

This idea of trying to get a holiness of your own, and then have Christ reward you for it, is not His teaching. Oh, no; Christ is the holiness; He will bring the holiness, and come and dwell in the heart forever.

When one of our millionaires purchases a lot, with an old shanty on it, he does not fix up the old shanty, but he gets a second-hand man, if he will have it, to tear it down, and he puts a mansion in its place. It is not fixing up the house that you need, but to give Christ the vacant lot, and He will excavate below our old life and build a house where He will live forever.

Now that is what we mean when we say that Christ will be the preparation for the blessing, and make way for His own approach. It is as when a great Assyrian king used to set out on a march. He did not command the people to make a road, but he sent on his own men, and they cut down the trees and filled the broken places, and levelled the mountains. So He will, if we will let Him, be the Coming King, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

## **NOVEMBER 2: “Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5)**

If we would abide in Christ we must have no confidence in self. Self-repression must be ever the prime necessity of divine fulness and efficiency. Now you know how quickly you spring to the front when any emergency arises. When something in which you are interested comes up, you say what you think under some sudden impulse, and then perhaps you have weeks of taking back your thought and taking the Lord's instead. It is only when we get out of the way of the Lord that He can use us. So, be out of self, always suspending your will about everything until you have looked at it and said: “Lord, what is your will? What is your thought about it?”

Those who thus abide in Christ have the habit of reserve and quiet; they are not rattling and reckless talkers, they will not always have an opinion about everything, and they will not always know what they are going to do. There will be a deferential holding back of judgment, and walking softly with God. It is our headlong, impulsive spirit that keeps us so constantly from hearing and following the Lord.

## **NOVEMBER 3: “This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend” (Songs 5:16)**

He is our Friend. “Which of you shall have a friend at night?” This has deep significance through the experience of each one of us. Who has not had a friend, and more of a friend in some respects than even a father?

There are some intimacies not born of human blood that are the most intense and lasting bonds of earthly love. One by one let us count them over and recall each act and bond of love, and think of all that we may trust them for and all in which they stood by us, and then as we concentrate the whole weight of recollection and affection, let us put God in that place of confidence and think He is all that and infinitely more.

Our Friend! The one who is personally interested in us; who has set His heart upon us; who has come near to us in the tender and delicate intimacy of unspeakable fellowship; who gave us such invaluable pledges and promises; who has done so much for us, and who is ever ready to take any trouble or go to any expense to aid us—to Him we are coming in prayer, our Heavenly Friend.

**NOVEMBER 4: “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings as in obeying the voice of the Lord?” (1 Sam. 15:22)**

Many a soul prays for sanctification, but fails to enter into the blessing because he does not intelligently understand and believingly accept God’s appointed means by Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit. Many a prayer for the salvation of others is hindered because the very friend takes the wrong course to bring about the answer, and resorts to means which are wholly fitted to defeat his worthy object.

We know many a wife who is pleading for her husband’s soul, and hoping to win him by avoiding anything that may offend him, and yielding to all his worldly tastes in the vain hope of attracting him to Christ. Far more effective would be an attitude of fidelity to God and fearless testimony to Him, such as God could bless.

Many a congregation wonders why it is so poor and struggling. It may be found that its financial methods are wholly unscriptural and often unworthy of ordinary self-respect.

When we ask God for any blessing, we must allow Him to direct the steps which are to bring the answer.



## **NOVEMBER 5: “I in them, and Thou in Me” (John 17:23)**

If we would be enlarged to the full measure of God’s purpose, let us endeavor to realize something of our own capacities for His filling.

We little know the size of a human soul and spirit. Never, until He renews, cleanses and enters the heart can we have any adequate conception of the possibilities of the being whom God made in His very image, and whom He now renews after the pattern of the Lord Jesus Himself.

We know, however, that God has made the human soul to be His temple and abode, and that He knows how to make the house that can hold His infinite fulness. We know something of this as all our nature quickens into spring tide life at the coming of the Holy Spirit, and as from time to time new baptisms awaken the dormant powers and susceptibilities that we did not know we possessed.

Oh, let us give Him the right to make the best of us, and, with wonder filled, we shall some day behold the glorious temple which He has reared, and shall say, “Lord, what is man that Thou hast set Thine heart upon Him?”

## **NOVEMBER 6: “Bless the Lord, O, my soul” (Ps. 103:1)**

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me be stirred up to magnify His holy name. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Who so well can sing this thanksgiving song as we, rejoicing as most of us do, we trust, in this full salvation, and praising God for the glorious health of a risen Lord and a continual youth?

This psalm and its opening verses is in the very center of the Scriptures by an exact count of letters and verses. So let it stand in our lives, as we look backward and forward and upward in grateful thanksgiving as we sing in its closing strains, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” Lord, center my heart in Thee and in the spirit of love and praise.

**NOVEMBER 7: “I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee”  
(Isa. 41:10)**

God has three ways of helping us: First, He says, “I will strengthen thee”; that is, I will make you a little stronger yourself. And secondly, “I will help thee”; that is, I will add My strength to your strength, but you shall lead and I will help you. But thirdly, when you are ready, “I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness”; that is, I will lift you up bodily and carry you altogether, and it will neither be your strength or My help, but My complete upholding. Hence it must be quite true, that when we come to the end of our strength, we come to the beginning of His, and that in Him the weakest are the strongest, and the most helpless the most helped. “He giveth power to the faint,” but to “them that have no might” at all “He gives more strength,” and His word forever is, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” The answer is a paradox of contradictions, and yet the most practical truths, “Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

**NOVEMBER 8: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free” (Rom. 8:2)**

There is a natural law of sin and sickness, and if we just let ourselves go and sink into the trend of circumstances we shall go down and sink under the power of the tempter. But there is another law of spiritual life and of physical life in Christ Jesus to which we can rise and through which we can counterpoise and overcome the other law that bears us down. But to do this requires real spiritual energy and fixed purpose and a settled posture and habit of faith. It is just the same when we bind the power in our factory. We must turn the belt on and keep it on. The power is there, but we must keep the connection and while we do so the law of this higher power will work and all the machinery will be in operation. There is a spiritual law of choosing, believing, abiding and holding steady in our walk with God which is essential to the working of the Holy Ghost either in our sanctification or healing.

There is a word that saves the soul,

“I will trust”;

It makes the sick and suffering whole.

“I will trust.”

## **NOVEMBER 9: “Because I live ye shall live also” (John 14:19)**

After having become adjusted to our Living Head and the source of our life, now our business is to abide, absorb and grow, leaning on His strength, drinking in His life, feeding on Him as the Living Bread, and drawing all of our resources from Him in continual dependence and communion. The Holy Spirit will be the great Teacher and Minister in this blessed process. He will take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, and He will impart them through all the channels and functions of our spiritual organism. As we yield ourselves to Him He will breathe His own prayer of communion, drawing out our hearts in longings and hungerings, which are the pledge of their own fulfilment, calling us apart in silent and wordless prayer and opening every pore, organ, sense and sensibility of our spiritual being to take in His life. As the lungs absorb the oxygen of the atmosphere, as the senses breathe in the sweet odors of the garden, so the heart instinctively receives and rejoices in the affection and fellowship of the beloved One by our side. Thus we become like a tree planted by the rivers of waters.

**NOVEMBER 10: “But prayer was made without ceasing, of the church unto God for him”  
(Acts 12:5)**

But prayer is the link that connects us with God. This is the bridge that spans every gulf and bears us over every abyss of danger or of need. How significant the picture of the apostolic church: Peter in prison, the Jews triumphant, Herod supreme, the arena of martyrdom awaiting the dawning of the morning to drink up the apostle’s blood,—everything else against it. “But prayer was made unto God without ceasing.” And what the sequel? The prison open,—the apostle free,—the Jews baffled,—the wicked king eaten of worms, a spectacle of hideous retribution, and the Word of God rolling on in greater victory.

Do we know the power of our supernatural weapon? Do we dare to use it with the authority of a faith that commands as well as asks? God baptize us with holy audacity and Divine confidence. He is not wanting great men, but He is wanting men that will dare to prove the greatness of their God.

But God! But prayer!

## **NOVEMBER 11: “Reckon yourselves dead, indeed” (Rom. 6:11)**

Our life from the dead is to be followed up by the habit and attitude henceforth which is the logical outcome of all this. “Reckon yourselves dead indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, and yield yourselves unto God,” not to die over again every day, “but, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

Further His resurrection life is given to fit us for “the fellowship of His sufferings and to be made conformable unto His death.” It is intended to enable us to toil and suffer with rejoicing and victory. We “mount up with wings as eagles,” that we may come back to “run and not be weary, to walk and not faint.”

But let us not mistake the sufferings. They do not mean our sufferings, but His. They are not our struggles after holiness, our sicknesses and pains, but those higher sufferings which, with Him, we bear for others, and for a suffering church and a dying world. May God help us, henceforth, never to have another sorrow for ourselves, and put us at leisure, in the power of His resurrection, to bear His burdens and drink His cup.

## **NOVEMBER 12: “The earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor. 1:22)**

Life in earnest. What a rare, what a glorious spectacle! We see it in the Son of God, we see it in His apostle, we see it in every noble, consecrated and truly successful life. Without it there may be a thousand good things, but they lack the golden thread that binds them all into a chain of power and permanence. They are like a lot of costly and beautiful beads on a broken string, that fall into confusion, and are lost in the end for want of the bond that alone could bind them into a life of consistent and lasting power. O for the baptism of fire! O for “THE EARNEST, THE SPIRIT!” O for lives that have but one thing to do or care for! O for the depth and everlasting strength of the heart of Christ within our breast, to love, to sacrifice, to realize, to persevere, to live and die like Him!

We are going forth with a trust so sacred,  
And a truth so divine and deep,  
With a message clear and a work so glorious,  
And a charge—such a charge—to keep.  
Let it be your greatest joy, my brother,  
That the Lord can count on you;  
And if all besides should fail and falter,  
To your trust be always true.



## **NOVEMBER 13: “Delight thyself in the Lord” (Ps. 37:4)**

Daniel’s heart was filled with God’s love for His work and kingdom and his prayers were the mightiest forces of his time, through which God gave to him the restoration of Israel to their own land, and the acknowledgment by the rulers of the world of the God of whom he testified and for whom he lived.

There is a beautiful promise in the thirty-seventh Psalm, “Delight thyself in the Lord, and He will give thee the desires of thine heart,” which it is, perhaps, legitimate to translate, that not only does it mean the fulfilment of our desires, but even the inspiration of our desires, the inbreathing of His thoughts into us, so that our prayers shall be in accord with His will and so shall bring back to us the unfailing answer of His mighty providence.

Teach me Thy thoughts, O God!  
Think Thou, Thyself, in me,  
Then shall I only always think  
Thine own thoughts after Thee.

Teach me Thy thoughts, O God!  
Show me Thy plan divine:  
Save me from all my plans and works,  
And lead me into Thine.

## **NOVEMBER 14: “The things which are seen are temporal” (2 Cor. 4:18)**

How strong is the snare of the things that are seen, and how necessary for God to keep us in the things that are unseen! If Peter is to walk on the water, he must walk; if he is going to swim, he must swim, but he cannot do both. If the bird is going to fly it must keep away from the fences and the trees, and trust to its buoyant wings. But if it tries to keep within easy reach of the ground, it will make poor work of flying.

God had to bring Abraham to the end of his own strength, and to let him see that in his own body he could do nothing. He had to consider his own body as good as dead, and then take God for the whole work, and when he looked away from himself, and trusted God alone, then He became fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

This is what God is teaching us, and He has to keep away encouraging results until we learn to trust without them, and then He loves to make His word real in fact as well as faith.

Let us look only to Him to-day to do all things as He shall choose and in the way He shall choose.

## **NOVEMBER 15: “Oh, man of desires” (Dan. 10:11)**

This was the divine character given to Daniel of old. It is translated in our version, “O man, greatly beloved.” But it literally means “O man of desires!” This is a necessary element in all spiritual forces. It is one of the secrets of effectual prayer, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them.” The element of strong desire gives momentum to our purposes and prayers. Indifference is an unwholesome condition; indolence and apathy are offensive both to God and nature.

And so in our spiritual life, God often has to wake us up by the presence of trying circumstances, and push us into new places of trust by forces that we must subdue, or sink beneath their power. There is no factor in prayer more effectual than love. If we are intensely interested in an object, or an individual, our petitions become like living forces, and not only convey their wants to God, but in some sense convey God’s help back to them.

May God fill us to-day with the heart of Christ that we may glow with the Divine fire of holy desire.

**NOVEMBER 16: “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day” (Matt. 25:13)**

Jesus illustrates the unexpectedness of His coming by the figure of a thief entering a house when the master was not there. Life, like the old Jewish night, may be divided into three watches, youth, maturity, old age. The summons to meet God may come to us in either of these watches. A writer tells us of his experience with a camping party, of which he was a member, and which, he tells us, always arranged to have watches at night. “We became especially careful after what I am about to narrate happened. During the first night, from sunset to sunrise, we had in turn carefully guarded our camp. But when the next night came, so impressed were we with the orderly character of the neighborhood, that we concluded that no guard was needed until bedtime. Within our main tent the evening was spent in storytelling, singing and general amusement. When the hour to retire arrived, it was discovered that our other tents had been robbed and everything of value stolen. The work was done before we thought a guard necessary.” It is never too soon to begin watching against sin.

**NOVEMBER 17: “The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them” (Num. 10:33)**

God does give us impressions but not that we should act on them as impressions. If the impression be from God, He will Himself give sufficient evidence to establish it beyond the possibility of a doubt.

How beautifully we read, in the story of Jeremiah, of the impression that came to him respecting the purchase of the field of Anathoth, but Jeremiah did not act upon this impression until after the following day, when his uncle’s son came to him and brought him external evidence by making a proposal for the purchase. Then Jeremiah said: “I knew this was the word of the Lord.”

He waited until God seconded the impression by a providence, and then he acted in full view of the open facts, which could bring conviction unto others as well as himself.

God wants us to act according to His mind.

We are not to ignore the Shepherd’s personal voice, but like Paul and his companions at Troas, we are to listen to all the voices that speak, and “gather” from all the circumstances, as they did, the full mind of the Lord.

**NOVEMBER 18: “And He that sat upon the throne said, It is done” (Rev. 21:5-6)**

Great is the difference between action and transaction. We may be constantly acting without accomplishing anything, but a transaction is action that passes beyond the point of return, and becomes a permanent committal. Salvation is a transaction between the soul and Christ in which the matter passes beyond recall. Sanctification is a great transaction in which we are utterly surrendered, irrevocably consecrated and wholly committed to the Holy Ghost, and then He comes and seals the transaction and undertakes the work. Our covenant for our Lord’s healing should be just as explicit, definite and irrevocable. And so of the covenants to which God is leading His children from time to time in regard to other matters of obedience and service. God grant that during this hallowed day many a consecrated life may be able to say with new significance and permanence, “’Tis done, the great transaction’s done.”

For the living Vine is Jesus,  
In whose fulness we may hide;  
And find our life and fruitfulness  
As we in Him abide.

## **NOVEMBER 19: “We would see Jesus” (John 12:21)**

When any great blessing is awaiting us, the devil is sure to try and make it so disagreeable to us that we shall miss it. It is a good thing to know him as a liar, and remember, when he is trying to prejudice us strongly against any cause, that very likely the greatest blessing of our life lies there. Spurgeon once said that the best evidence that God was on our side is the devil's growl, and we are generally pretty safe in following a thing according to Satan's dislike for it. Beloved, take care, lest in the very line where your prejudices are setting you off from God's people and God's truth, you are missing the treasures of your life. Take the treasures of heaven no matter how they come to you, even if it be as earthly treasures generally are, like the kernel inside the rough shell, or the gem in the bosom of the hard rock.

I have seen Jesus and my heart is dead to all beside,  
I have seen Jesus, and my wants are all, in Him, supplied.  
I have seen Jesus, and my heart, at last, is satisfied,  
    Since I've seen Jesus.

## **NOVEMBER 20: “The disciple whom Jesus loved leaned on His breast” (John 21:20)**

An American gentleman once visited the saintly Albert Bengel. He was very desirous to hear him pray. So one night he lingered at his door, hoping to overhear his closing devotions. The rooms were adjoining and the doors ajar. The good man finished his studies, closed his books, knelt down for a moment and simply said: “Dear Lord Jesus, things are still the same between us,” and then sweetly fell asleep. So close was his communion with his Lord that labor did not interrupt it, and prayer was not necessary to renew it. It was a ceaseless, almost unconscious presence, like the fragrance of the summer garden, or the presence of some dear one by our side whose presence we somehow feel, even though the busy hours pass by and not a word is exchanged.

“O blessed fellowship, divine,  
O joy, supremely sweet,  
Companionship with Jesus here,  
Makes life with joy replete;  
O wondrous grace, O joy sublime,  
I’ve Jesus with me all the time.”



## **NOVEMBER 21: “Consider the lilies how they grow” (Matt. 6:28)**

It is said that a little fellow was found one day by his mother, standing by a tall sunflower, with his feet stuck in the ground. When asked by her, “What in the world are you doing there?” he naively answered, “Why, I am trying to grow to be a man.”

His mother laughed heartily at the idea of his getting planted in the ground in order to grow, like the sunflower, and then, patting him gently on the head, “Why, Harry, that is not the way to grow. You can never grow bigger by trying. Just come right in, and eat lots of good food, and have plenty of play, and you will soon grow to be a man without trying so hard.”

Well, Harry’s mother was right. Mrs. H. W. Smith never said a sweeter thing than when she answered the question—“How do the lilies grow?” by simply adding, “They grow without trying.”

Our sweetest spiritual life is the life of self-unconsciousness through which we become so united to Christ, and live continually on His life, nourished, fed and constantly filled with His Spirit and presence and all the fulness of His imparted life.

## **NOVEMBER 22: “Cast the beam out of thine own eye” (Matt. 7:5)**

Greater than the fault you condemn and criticise is the sin of criticism and condemnation. There is no place we need such grace as in dealing with an erring one. A lady once called on us on her way to give an erring sister a piece of her mind. We advised her to wait until she could love her a little more. Only He who loved sinners well enough to die for them can deal with the erring. We never see all the heart. He does, and He can convict without condemning, and reprove without discouraging. Oh, for more of the heart of Christ! Take care, brother, how you speak of another’s fault. Ere you know, you may be in the same or deeper condemnation. Very significantly does the Master say that the man that sees a mote in his brother’s eye, usually has a rafter in his own eye! One of the two unpardonable sins of the Bible is unforgiving lovelessness.

“Give me a heart like Thine,  
Give me a heart like Thine,  
By Thy wonderful power,  
By Thy grace every hour,  
Give me a heart like Thine.”

## **NOVEMBER 23: “It is high time to awake out of sleep” (Rom. 13:11)**

One of the greatest enemies to faith is indolence. It is much easier to lie and suffer than to rise and overcome; much easier to go to sleep on a snowbank and never wake again, than to rouse one’s self and shake off the lethargy and overcome the stupor. Faith is an energetic art; prayer is intense labor; the effectual working prayer of the righteous man availeth much.

Satan tries to put us to sleep, as he did the disciples in the garden; but let us not sleep as do others, but let us wake and be sober, continuing in prayer and watching therein with all perseverance, stirring up ourselves to take hold of His strength, “not slothful, but followers of them, who, through patience, inherit the promise.” It is the wind that carries the ship across the waves; but the wind is powerless unless the hand of the boatman is held firmly upon the rudder, and that rudder is set hard against the wind. In like manner we hold the rudder, God fills the sails. It is not the rudder that carries the ship; but it is the rudder which catches the wind that carries the ship, so God keeps us in perfect peace while we are stayed upon Him.

## **NOVEMBER 24: “I can do all things through Christ” (Phil. 4:13)**

A dear sister said one day: “I have so much work to do that I have not time to get strength to do it by waiting on the Lord.” Surely that was making bricks without straw, and even if it was the name of the Lord and the church, it was the devil’s bondage. God sends not His servants on their own charges; but “He is able to make all grace abound towards us, that we, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work.” The old story of the chieftain, fleeing from his foes and almost overtaken, but stopping in the midst of his flight to get a shoe upon his horse that he might fly more successfully is a true type and lesson for Christian workers.

The old Latin motto *\_festina lente\_*, “make haste slowly,” has a great lesson for us. The more work we have to do, the more frequently we have to drop our head upon our desk and wait a little for heavenly aid and love, and then press on with new strength. One hour baptized in the love of the Holy Ghost is worth ten battling against wind and tide without the heavenly life.

**NOVEMBER 25: “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come” (2 Cor. 4:5)**

Nothing will more effectually arrest the working of the Spirit in the heart than the spirit of criticism. At the end of a meeting a young minister came forward and told us of the great blessing he had received that afternoon, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit that had come into his heart and being, setting him free from the bondage of years. And then he added, “It all came through your answer to that question, ‘Will a criticizing spirit hinder the Holy Ghost from filling the heart?’ ”

As the question was asked and answered, he said, “I was sitting in the church criticizing a good deal that was going on, objecting to this thing and to that thing, finding fault with the expressions, and praises and testimonies, and feeling thoroughly unhappy. The Lord brought the answer home to my heart and convicted me of my sin, and there and then I laid it down and began to see the good instead of the evil. Blessing fell upon me and my soul was filled with joy and praise, and I saw where my error lay, that for years I had been trying to see the truth with my head instead of my heart.”

## **NOVEMBER 26: “He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2)**

One day we passed a garden. The gardener had finished his pruning, and the wounds of the knife and saw were beginning to heal, while the warm April sun was gently nourishing the stricken plant into fresh life and energy. We thought as we looked at that plant how cruel it would be to begin next week and cut it down again. It would bleed to death. Now, the gardener’s business is to revive and nourish into life. Its business is not to die, but to live. So, we thought, it is with the discipline of the soul. It, too, has its dying hour; but it must not be always dying. Rather reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord Everlasting.

Breathe Thine own breath through all my mortal frame, Help me Thy resurrection life to claim,  
Which, ’mid all changes, still abides the same, And lead me in the way Everlasting.

Give me the heavenly foretaste here, I pray; Let faith foredate the everlasting day,  
And walking in its glory all the way, O, lead me in the way Everlasting!

**NOVEMBER 27: “And the remnant of the oil ... shall pour upon the head” (Lev. 14:18)**

In the account of the healing of the Hebrew leper there is a beautiful picture of the touching of his ears, hands and feet, with the redeeming blood and the consecrating oil, as a sign that his powers of understanding, service, and conduct were set apart to God, and divinely endued for the Master’s work and will.

But after all this, we are significantly told that “the rest of the oil” was to be poured upon his head.

The former anointing was from the oil in the hand of the priest, but the latter was to be from the log, or vessel of oil itself. It was to be literally emptied over him, until he was bathed with all its contents.

It is a figure of the large and boundless baptism of the Holy Ghost. It speaks of something more even than the ordinary experiences of the consecrated Christian. It tells of the abundant and redundant supply which God has for us out of His illimitable fulness.

Have we received “the rest oil”? Are we filled with the Spirit, and letting the overflow bless others?

## **NOVEMBER 28: “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5)**

How much can I do for Christ? We are accustomed to say.—As much as I can. Have we ever thought we can do more than we can?

This thought was lately suggested by the remarks of a Christian friend, who told how God had laid it upon her heart to do something for His cause which was beyond her power, and when she dared to obey Him, He gave her the assurance of His power and resources, and so marvelously met her faith that she was enabled to do more than she could otherwise, and accomplish her heart’s desire, and see a work fulfilled to which her resources were unequal.

The apostle says, “I can do all things through Christ, who is my strength,” and yet He says we are not able to think anything, as of ourselves.

Oh, blessed insufficiency! Oh, blessed All-Sufficiency!

Oh, blessed nothingness, which brings us all things!

Oh, blessed faith, whose rich dowry is, “All things are possible to him that believeth”!

O to be found of Him in peace, Spotless and free from blame.



**NOVEMBER 29: “Could ye not watch with Me one hour?” (Matt. 26:40)**

A young lady whose parents had died while she was an infant, had been kindly cared for by a dear friend of the family. Before she was old enough to know him, he went to Europe. Regularly he wrote to her through all his years of absence, and never failed to send her money for all her wants. Finally word came that during a certain week he would return and visit her. He did not fix the day or the hour. She received several invitations to take pleasant trips with her friends during that week. One of these was of so pleasant a nature that she could not resist accepting it. During her trip, he came, inquired as to her absence, and left. Returning she found this note: “My life has been a struggle for you, might you not have waited one week for me?” More she never heard, and her life of plenty became one of want. Jesus has not fixed the day or hour of His return, but He has said, “Watch,” and should He come to-day, would He find us absorbed in thoughtless dissipation? May we be found each day, in the expectant attitude of those watching for a loved one.

**NOVEMBER 30: “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves”  
(Phil. 2:3)**

When the apostle speaks of “the deep things of God,” he means more than deep spiritual truth. There must be something before this. There must be a deep soil and a thorough foundation.

Very much of our spiritual teaching fails, because the people to whom we give it are so shallow. Their deeper nature has never been stirred.

The beatitudes begin at the bottom of things, the poor in spirit, the mourners, and the hungry hearts. Suffering is essential to profound spiritual life. We need not go to a monastery or a leper hospital to find it. The first real opportunity for unselfishness will bring into your life the anguish of crucifixion, unless you are born of some different race from Adam’s.

It is because men and women have not faced this that they know so little of suffering and death. We must have deep convictions. Truth must be to us a necessity, and principle a part of our very being. Lord, make me poor in spirit. Lord help me to be even as Thou wert when on earth, always the lowest, and therefore “highly exalted.”

## **DECEMBER 1: “As He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17)**

Jesus will come into the surrendered heart and unite Himself with it, impart to it His own life and being and become anew from day to day, the supply of its spiritual needs and the substitute for its helplessness.

Our part is simply to yield ourselves fully recognizing our own worthlessness and then take Jesus Himself to live in us and be, moment by moment, our strength, purity and victory.

One in His death on the tree,    One as He rose from the dead;  
I from the curse am as free    E’en as my glorious Head.

One in His merits I stand,    One as I Pray in His name,  
All that His worth can demand    I may with confidence claim.

One on the Throne by His side,    One in His Sonship divine,  
One as the Bridegroom and Bride,    One as the Branch and the Vine.

All that He has shall be mine,    All that He is I shall be;  
Robed in His glory divine,    I shall be even as He.

## **DECEMBER 2: “Looking diligently lest any man fail” (Heb. 12:15)**

It is not losing all, but coming short we are to fear. We may not lose our souls, but we may lose something more precious than life—His full approval, His highest choice, and our incorruptible and star-gemmed crown. It is the one degree more that counts, and makes all the difference between hot water—powerless in the boiler—and steam—all alive with power, and bearing its precious freight across the continent.

I want, in this short life of mine,  
As much as can be pressed  
Of service true for God and man,  
Help me to be my best.

I want to stand when Christ appears  
And hear my name confessed  
Numbered among the hidden ones,  
His holiest and best.

I want, among the victor throng,  
To have my name confessed;  
And hear my Master say at last,  
Well done, you did your best.

Give me, O Lord, Thy highest choice;  
Let others take the rest:  
Their good things have no charm for me,  
For I have got Thy best.

### **DECEMBER 3: Thy thoughts are very deep (Ps. 92:5)**

When a Roman soldier was told by his guide that if he insisted on taking a certain journey it would probably be fatal he answered, "It is necessary for me to go, it is not necessary for me to live." That was depth. When we are convicted like that we shall come to something.

The shallow nature lives in its impulses, its impressions, its intuitions, its instincts, and very largely in its surroundings. The profound character looks beyond all these and moves steadily on, sailing past all the storms and clouds into the clear sunshine which is always on the other side, and waiting for the afterwards which always brings the reversion of sorrow and seeming defeat and failure.

When God has deepened us, then He can give us His deeper truths, His profoundest secrets, and His mightier trusts.

Lord, lead me into the depths of Thy life and save me from a shallow experience.

On to broader fields of holy vision;  
On to loftier heights of faith and love;  
Onward, upward, apprehending wholly,  
All for which He calls thee from above.

## **DECEMBER 4: “From me is thy fruit found” (Hos. 14:8)**

Nothing keeps us from advancement more than ruts and drifts, and wheel-tracks into which our chariots roll and then move on in the narrow line with unchanging monotony, currents in life’s stream on which we are borne in the old direction until the law of habit almost makes advance impossible. The true remedy for this is to commence at nothing; taking Christ afresh to be the Alpha and Omega for a deeper, higher, Divine experience, waiting even for His conception of thought, desire, prayer, and afraid lest our highest thought should be below His great plan of wisdom and love.

O Comforter gentle and tender,  
O holy and heavenly Dove,  
We’re yielding our heart in surrender,  
We’re waiting Thy fulness to prove.

O come as the heart-searching fire,  
O come as the sin-cleansing flood;  
Consume us with holy desire,  
And fill with the fulness of God.

Anoint us with gladness and healing;  
Baptize us with power from on high;  
O come with filling and sealing  
While low at the Thy footstool we lie.

## **DECEMBER 5: “With a perfect heart to make David King” (1 Chron. 12:38)**

“What is the supreme purpose of our life? They were all of one heart to make David king.” Is this our purpose, to prepare the Bride, to prepare the world, to prepare His way? Does it dwarf and dim all other ambitions, all other cares? Does it fill and satisfy every capacity, every power, every desire? Does it absorb every moment, every energy, every resource? Does it give direction and tone to every plan and work of life? Does it decide for us the education of our children, the investment of our means, the friendships and associations of life, the whole activity, interest and outlook of our being? Are we in it, spirit, soul and body, all we are, all we do, all we hope for—OF ONE HEART TO MAKE JESUS KING?

We’re going forth united  
With loyal heart and hand,  
To bear His royal banner  
Aboard o’er every land.

From every tribe and nation  
We’ll haste His Bride to bring.  
And Oh, with what glad welcome  
We’ll make our Jesus King.

**DECEMBER 6: “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you” (1 Peter 5:6)**

Opposition is essential to a true equilibrium of forces. The centripetal and centrifugal forces acting in opposition to each other keep our planet in her orbit. The one propelling, and the other repelling, so act and react, that instead of sweeping off into space in a pathway of desolation and destruction, she pursues her even orbit around her solar center.

So God guides our lives. It is not enough to have an impelling force—we need just as much a repelling force, and so He holds us back by the testing ordeals of life, by the pressure of temptation and trial, by the things that seem to be against us, but really are furthering our way and stablishing our goings. Let us thank Him for both, let us take the weights as well as the wings, and thus divinely impelled, let us press on with faith and patience in our high and heavenly calling.

Lord, help me to learn from all that comes to me this day Thy highest will.

Lord, help me to-day to sink under Thy blessed hand, that Thou mayest have Thy way and will with me.



## **DECEMBER 7: “Abide with us; for it is toward evening” (Luke 24:29)**

In His last messages to the disciples in the 14th and 15th chapters of John, the Lord Jesus clearly teaches us that the very essence of the highest holiness is, “Abide in Me, and I in you, for without Me ye can do nothing.”

The very purpose of the Holy Ghost whom He promised was to reveal Him, that at “that day, ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you,” and the closing echo of His intercessory prayer was embraced in these three small but infinite words, “I in them.”

Is it for me to be cleansed by His power  
From the pollution of sin?  
Is it for me to be kept every hour  
By His abiding within?

Is it for me to be perfectly whole  
Thro’ His anointing divine;  
Claiming in body, and spirit, and soul,  
All of His fulness as mine?

Wonderful promise so full and so free,  
Wonderful Saviour, Oh, how can it be,  
Cleansing and pardon and mercy for me?  
Yes, it’s for me, for me.

**DECEMBER 8: “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?” (Jer. 8:22)**

Divine healing is just divine life. It is the headship of Christ over the body. It is the life of Christ in the frame. It is the union of our members with the very body of Christ and the inflowing life of Christ in our living members. It is as real as His risen and glorified body. It is as reasonable as the fact that He was raised from the dead and is a living man with a true body and a rational soul to-day, at God’s right hand. That living Christ belongs to us in all His attributes and powers. We are members of His body, His flesh and His bones, and if we can only believe and receive it, we may live upon the very life of the Son of God.

Lord, help me to know the “Lord for the body and the body for the Lord.”

There is healing in the promise,  
There is healing in the blood,  
There is strength for all our weakness  
In the risen Son of God.

And the feeblest of His children,  
All His glorious life may share;  
He has healing balm in Gilead,  
He’s the Great Physician there.

## **DECEMBER 9: “Launch out into the deep” (Luke 5:4)**

One of the special marks of the Holy Ghost in the Apostolic Church was the spirit Of boldness. One of the most essential qualities of the faith that is to attempt great things for God and expect great things from God, is holy audacity. Where we are dealing with a supernatural Being, and taking from Him things that are humanly impossible, it is easier to take much than little; it is easier to stand in a place of audacious trust than in a place of cautious, timid clinging to the shore. Like wise seamen in the life of faith, let us launch out into the deep, and find that all things are possible with God, and all things are possible unto him that believeth.

Let us to-day attempt great things for God, take His faith and believe for them and His strength to accomplish them.

The mercy of God is an ocean divine,  
A boundless and fathomless flood;  
Launch out in the deep, cut away the shore-line,  
And be lost in the fulness of God.

Oh, let us launch out in this ocean so broad,  
Where the floods of salvation o’erflow,  
Oh, let us be lost in the mercy of God,  
Till the depth of His fulness we know.

**DECEMBER 10: “According to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed”  
(2 Cor. 10:13)**

According to thy faith be it unto thee was Christ’s great law of healing and blessing in His earthly ministry. This was what He meant when He said, “With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.” These mighty measures are limited by the the measures that we bring. God deals out His heavenly treasures to us in these glorious vessels, but each of us must bring our drinking cup, and according to its measure we shall be filled.

But even the measure of our faith may be a Divine one. Thank God, the little cup has become enlarged through the grace of Jesus, until from its bottom there flows a pipe into the great ocean, and if that connection is kept open we shall find that our cup is as large as the ocean and never can be drained to the bottom. For He has said to us, “Have the faith of God,” and surely this is an illimitable measure.

Let us claim the mighty promise,  
Let us light the torches dim;  
Let us join the glorious chorus,  
Nothing is too hard for Him.

## **DECEMBER 11: “I pray not for the world, but for them” (John 17:9)**

How often we say we would like to get some strong spirit to pray for us, and feel so helped when we think they are carrying us in their faith. But there is One whose prayers never fail to be fulfilled and who is more willing to give them to us than any human friend. His one business at God’s right hand is to make intercession for His people, and we are simply coming in the line of His own appointment and His own definite promise and provision, when we lay our burdens upon Him and claim His advocacy without doubt or fear. “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may find help in time of need.”

Like a golden censer glowing,  
Filled with burning odors rare,  
All my heart is upward flowing,  
In a cloud of ceaseless prayer.

O’er the heavenly altar bending,  
Jesus interceding stands,  
All our prayers to heaven ascending,  
Reach the Father through His hands.

**DECEMBER 12: “To abide in the flesh is more needful for you, and having this confidence, I know that I shall abide” (Phil. 1:24-25)**

One of the most blessed things about divine healing is that the strength it brings is holy strength, and finds its natural and congenial outflow in holy acts and exercises.

Mere natural strength seeks its gratification in natural pleasures and activities, but the strength of Christ leads us to do as Christ would do, and to seek our congenial employment in His holy service.

The life of Christ in a human body saves it from a thousand temptations to self-indulgence and sin, and not only gives us strength for higher service, but also a desire for it, and puts into it a zest and spring which gives it double power.

Lord, help us to-day to claim Thy life and then give it for the help of others.

Have you found the branch of healing? Pass it on.

Have you felt the Spirit’s sealing, Pass it on.

’Twas for this His mercy sought you, And to all His fulness brought you,

By the precious blood that bought you, Pass it on.

**DECEMBER 13: “He that abideth in Me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit for apart from Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5)**

So familiar are the vine and the branches, it is not necessary to explain; only the branches and the vine are one. The vine does not say, I am the central trunk running up and you are the little branches; but I am the whole thing, and you are the whole thing. He counts us partakers of His nature. “Apart from Me ye can do nothing.” The husband and the wife, and many more figures contribute to this marvelous Christ teaching, which has no parallel, no precedent in any other teaching under the sun; that Christ is the life of His people, and that we are absolutely linked with and dependent upon Him. All other systems teach how much man is and may become. Christianity shows how a man must lose all he is if he would come into full unity with Christ in His life.

Lord, help me this day to abide in Thee.

Oh! what a wonderful place  
Jesus has given to me!  
Saved by His glorious grace,  
I may be even as He.

## **DECEMBER 14: “Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree” (Isa. 55:13)**

Difficulties and obstacles are God’s challenges to faith. When hindrances confront us in the path of duty we are to recognize them as vessels for faith to fill with the fulness and all-sufficiency of Jesus, and as we go forward, simply and fully trusting Him, we may be tested, we may have to wait and let patience have her perfect work, but we shall surely find at last the stone rolled away, and the Lord waiting to render unto us double for our time of testing, and fulfil the promise, “Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, instead of the brier the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

Oft there comes a wondrous message  
When my hopes are growing dim;  
I can hear it through the darkness,  
Like some sweet and far-off hymn.  
Nothing is too hard for Jesus,  
No man can work like Him.

When my way is closed in darkness  
And my foes are fierce and grim,  
Still it sings above the conflict  
Like some glad, victorious hymn:  
Nothing is too hard for Jesus,  
No man can work like Him.



**DECEMBER 15: “When my heart is overwhelmed lead me to the Rock that is higher than I”  
(Ps. 61:2)**

The end of self is the beginning of God. “When the tale of bricks is doubled then comes Moses.” That is the old Hebrew way of putting it. “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.” That is the proverbial expression of it. “When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” That is David’s way of expressing it. “We have no might against this company, neither know we what to do.” No might, no light—“but our eyes are upon Thee,” that was Jehoshaphat’s experience of it. “Mine eyes fail with looking upward. I am oppressed, Lord, undertake for me.”

“When I had great trouble I always went to God and was wondrously carried through; but in my little trials I used to try to manage them myself, and often most signally failed.” So Miss Havergal has expressed the experience of many a Christian. God wants us “at our wit’s end,” and then He will show His wisdom, love and power. How often we ask God to help, and then begin to count up the human probabilities! God’s very blessings become a hindrance to us if we look from Him to them.

**DECEMBER 16: “I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the canker worm and the caterpillar and the palmer worm, my great army, which I sent among you” (Joel 2:25)**

A friend said to me once: “I have got to reap what I sowed, for God has said: ‘Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.’ Then why don’t you apply this in the spiritual world, and compel the sinner to pay the penalty of his sins?”

Christ has borne this penalty, and the same Christ has borne the natural penalties, too, and delivered us out of condemnation in every sense. Physical sufferings come to us, but not under the law of retribution, but only as a Divine discipline. Every penalty has been fulfilled by Christ and every law satisfied, and so far as we can have risen with Him into the plane of spiritual and eternal life, we are lifted above the mere realm of law, and we enter into the full effects of His complete satisfaction of every claim against us. So it is true that even the wreck that sin has brought upon our physical and temporal life is removed by His great atonement, and the promise is made real to us, “I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten.”

## **DECEMBER 17: “Be careful for nothing” (Phil. 4:6)**

What is the way to lay your burden down? “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” That is the way to take His burden up. You will find that His burden is always light. Yours is a very heavy one. Happy day if you have exchanged burdens and laid down your loads at His blessed feet to take up His own instead. God wants to rest His workers, and He is too kind to put His burden on hearts that are already bowed down with their own weight of cares.

Are you fearing, fretting or repining?  
You can never know God’s perfect peace.  
On His bosom all your weight reclining.  
All your anxious doubts and cares must cease.  
Would you know the peace that God has given?  
Would you find the very joy of heaven?  
Be careful for nothing,  
Be prayerful for everything,  
Be thankful for anything,  
And the peace of God that passeth understanding  
Shall keep your mind and heart.

## **DECEMBER 18: “The faith of the Son of God” (Gal. 2:20)**

Faith is hindered most of all by what we call “our faith,” and fruitless struggles to work out a faith which is but a make-believe and a desperate trying to trust God, which must ever come short of His vast and glorious promises. The truth is that the only faith that is equal to the stupendous promises of God and the measureless needs of our life, is “the faith of God” Himself, the very trust which He will breathe into the heart which intelligently expects Him as its power to believe, as well as its power to love, obey, or perform any other exercise of the new life.

Blessed be His name! He has not given us a chain which reaches within a single link of our poor helpless heart, but that one last link is fatal to all the chain. Nay, the last link, the one that fastens on the human side is as Divine as the link that binds the chain of promise in the heavens. “Have the faith of God,” is His great command. “I live by the faith of the Son of God” is the victorious testimony of one who had proved it true.

Lord, teach me to have the faith of the Son of God.

## **DECEMBER 19: “God giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6)**

One of the marks of highest worth is deep lowliness. The shallow nature, conscious of its weakness and insufficiency, is always trying to advertise itself and make sure of its being appreciated. The strong nature, conscious of its strength, is willing to wait and let its work be made manifest in due time. Indeed, the truest natures are so free from all self-consciousness and self-consideration that their object is not to be appreciated, understood or recompensed, but to accomplish their true mission and fulfil the real work of life.

One of the most suggestive expressions used respecting the Lord Jesus is given by the evangelist John in the thirteenth chapter of His Gospel, where we read, “Jesus, knowing that He came from God, and went to God, riseth from supper and began to wash the disciples’ feet.” It was because He knew His high dignity and His high destiny that He could stoop to the lowest place and that place could not degrade Him.

God give to us the Divine insignia of heavenly rank, a bowed head, a meek and lowly spirit.

**DECEMBER 20: “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God” (Rom. 15:16)**

This is a very beautiful and practical conception of missionary work. There is a great difference in being consecrated to our God. We may be consecrated to our work and consecrated to our God. We may be consecrated and fitted to do missionary work, and utterly fail, if He should call us to do something different. But when we are consecrated to Him, we shall be ready for anything He may require of us, and be as well qualified to serve Him by the sick bed of a brother, or even in the secular duties of home, as in standing in the pulpit or leading a soul to Christ.

Paul’s conception is holy work, or a special sacrifice, and directly unto Christ, and Christ alone; and he stood as one should stand at the altar of incense, lifting up with holy hands the Gentile nations unto God, and laying all his work like fragrant incense before the throne, pleased only with what would please his Master, and stand the test of His inspection, and the seal of His approval in that glorious day.

This is the spirit of true service.

## **DECEMBER 21: “Give us day by day our daily bread” (Luke 11:3)**

It is very hard to live a lifetime at once, or even a year, but it is delightfully easy to live a day at a time. Day by day the manna fell, so day by day we may live upon the heavenly bread, and live out our life for Him. Let us, breath by breath, moment by moment, step by step, abide in Him, and, just as we take care of the days, He will take care of the years.

God has given two precious promises for the days. “As thy days so shall thy strength be,” is His ancient covenant, and the literal translation of our Master’s parting words to His disciples is, “Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age.”

Like the little water spider that goes down beneath the waters of the pool enclosed in a bubble of air, and there builds its nest and rears its young, and lives its little life in that bright sphere down beneath the slimy pool, so let us in this dark world shut ourselves in with Christ in the little circle of each returning day, and so abide in Him, breathing the air of heaven and living in His love.

**DECEMBER 22: “My tongue also shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day long” (Ps. 71:24)**

It is a simple law of nature, that air always comes in to fill a vacuum. You can produce a draught at any time, by heating the air until it ascends, and then the cold air rushes in to supply its place. And so we can always be filled with the Holy Spirit by providing a vacuum. This breath is dependent upon exhausting the previous breath before you can inhale a fresh one. And so we must empty our hearts of the last breath of the Holy Spirit that we have received, for it becomes exhausted the moment we have received it, and we need a new supply, to prevent spiritual asphyxia.

We must learn the secret of breathing out, as well as breathing in. Now, the breathing in will continue if the other part is rightly done. One of the best ways to make room for the Holy Spirit is to recognize the needs that come into the life as vacuums for Him to fill, and we shall find plenty of needs all around us to be filled, and as we pour out our lives in holy service, He will pour His in—in full measure.

Jesus, empty me and fill me  
With Thy fulness to the brim.



**DECEMBER 23: “Out of the spoils won in battles, did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord” (1 Chron. 26:27)**

Physical force is stored in the bowels of the earth, in the coal mines, which came from the fiery heat that burned up great forests in ancient ages. And so spiritual force is stored in the depths of our being, through the very sufferings which we cannot understand. Some day we shall find that the deliverance we have won from these trials were preparing us to become true “Great Hearts” in life’s Pilgrim’s Progress, and to lead our fellow pilgrims triumphantly through trial to the city of the King.

But let us never forget that the source of helping other people must be victorious suffering. The whining, murmuring pang never does anybody any good. Paul did not carry a cemetery with him, but a chorus choir of victorious praise, and the harder the trial, the more he trusted and rejoiced, shouting from the very altar of sacrifice, “Yea, and if I be offered upon the service and sacrifice of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.”

Lord, help me this day to draw strength from all that comes to me.

**DECEMBER 24: “And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not; for behold I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest” (Jer. 14:5)**

A promise given for hard places, and a promise of safety and life in the midst of tremendous pressure, a life for a prey.

It may well adjust itself to our own times, which are growing harder as we near the end of the age, and the tribulation times.

What is the meaning of “a life for a prey”? It means a life snatched out of the jaws of the destroyer, as David snatched the lamb from the lion. It means not a place of security, or of removal from the noise of the battle, and the presence of our foes, but it means a table in the midst of our enemies, a shelter from the storm, a fortress amid the foe, a life preserved in the face of continual pressure, Paul’s healing when pressed out of measure so that he despaired even of life, Paul’s Divine help when the thorn remained, but the power of Christ rested upon him and the grace of Christ was sufficient.

Lord, give me my life for a prey, and in the hardest places help me to-day to be victorious.

## **DECEMBER 25: “I bring you glad tidings” (Luke 2:10)**

A Christmas spirit should be a spirit of humanity. Beside that beautiful object lesson on the Manger, the Cradle, and the lowly little child, what Christian heart can ever wish to be proud? It is a spirit of joy. It is right that these should be glad tidings, for, “Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.”

It is a spirit of love. It should be the joy that comes from giving joy to others. The central fact of Christmas is the Christ who loved us, and came to live among us and die for us, and he or she has no right to share its joys who is living for himself or herself alone.

Love is always sacrificial, and so the Christmas spirit will call us to a glad and full surrender, first to God, and then the joyful sacrifice of what we call our own for His glory and the good of others.

The Christmas spirit is a spirit of worship. It finds the Magi at His feet with their gold and frankincense and myrrh. Let it find us there, too.

The Christmas spirit is a spirit of missions. Its glad tidings are for all people.

## **DECEMBER 26: “The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy” (James 4:5)**

This beautiful passage has been unhappily translated in our Revised Version: “The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.” It ought to be, “The Spirit that dwelleth in us loveth us to jealousy.” It is the figure of a love that suffers because of its intense regard for the loved object.

The Holy Ghost is so anxious to accomplish in us and for us the highest will of God, and to receive from us the truest love for Christ, our Divine Husband, that He becomes jealous when in any way we disappoint Him, or divide His love with others.

Therefore, it is said in the preceding passage, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?”

Oh, shall we grieve so kind a Friend? Shall we disappoint so loving a Husband? Shall we not meet the blessed Holy Spirit with the love He brings us, and give in return our undivided and unbounded affection?

Was there ever a Bridegroom so loving seeking our heart to gain?

## **DECEMBER 27: “He sent forth the dove which returned not again unto him” (Gen. 8:12)**

First, we have the dove going forth from the ark, and finding no rest upon the wild and drifting waste of sin and judgment. This represents the Old Testament period, perhaps, when the Holy Ghost visited this sinful world, but could find no resting-place, and went back to the bosom of God.

Next, we have the dove going forth and returning with the olive leaf in her mouth, the symbol and the pledge of peace and reconciliation, the sign that judgment was passed and peace was returning. Surely this may beautifully represent the next stage of the Holy Spirit’s manifestation, as going forth in the ministry and death of Jesus Christ, to proclaim reconciliation to a sinful world.

There is a third stage, when, at length, the dove goes forth from the ark and returns no more; but it makes the world its home, and builds its nest amid the habitations of men. This is the third and present stage of the Holy Spirit’s blessed work. Let us welcome the Dove to a nest in our hearts.

**DECEMBER 28: “The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him” (Acts 5:32)**

We can only know and prove the fulness of the Spirit as we step out into the larger purposes and plans of Christ for the world.

Perhaps the chief reason why the Holy Spirit has been so limited in His work in the hearts of Christians, is the shameful neglect of the unsaved and unevangelized world by the great majority of the professed followers of Christ. There are millions of professing Christians—and, perhaps, real Christians—in the world, who have never given one real, earnest thought to the evangelization of the heathen world.

God will not give the Holy Spirit in His fulness for the selfish enjoyment of any Christian. His power is a great trust, which we must use for the benefit of others and for the evangelization of the lost and sinful world. Not until the people of God awake to understand His real purpose for the salvation of men, will the Church ever know the fulness of her Pentecost. God’s promised power must lie along the line of duty, and as we obey the command, we shall receive His promise in his fulness.

Lord, help me to understand Thy plan.

**DECEMBER 29: “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27)**

It is probable that God lets every human being, that crosses our path, meet us, in order that we may have the opportunity of leaving some blessing in his path, and dropping into his heart and life some influence that will draw him nearer to God. It would be blessed, indeed, if we could meet every immortal soul, at last, that we have ever touched in the path of life, and truly say, “I am pure from the blood of all men.”

Beloved, is it so? The servant that works in your household; the man that sat beside you in the train; the laborer that wrought for you, and, above all, the members of your household and family, your fellow-laborer in the shop or factory, have you done your best to lead them to Christ?

The early Christians regarded every situation as an opportunity to witness for Christ. Even when brought before kings and governors, it never occurred to them that they were to try to get free, but the Master’s message to them was, “It shall turn to you for a testimony.” It was simply an occasion to preach to kings and rulers, whom otherwise they could not reach.

**DECEMBER 30: “That God would fulfil in you all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power” (2 Thess. 1:11)**

Our God is looking to-day for pattern men, and when He gets a true sample, it is very easy to reproduce it in a thousand editions, and multiply it in other lives without limitation.

All the experiences of life come to us as tests, and as we meet them, our loving Father is watching with intense and jealous love, to see us overcome, and if we fail He is deeply disappointed, and our adversary is filled with joy.

We are a gazing-stock continually for angels and principalities, and every step we take is critical and decisive for something in our eternal future.

When Abraham went forth that morning to Mount Moriah, it was an hour of solemn probation, and when he came back he was one of God’s tested men, with the stamp of His eternal approbation. God could say, “I know him, that he will do judgment and justice, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham all that He hath spoken.”

God is looking for such men to-day. Lord, help me to be such an one.



**DECEMBER 31: “I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil” (John 17:15)**

He wants us here for some higher purpose than mere existence. That purpose is nothing else than to represent Him to the world, to be the messengers of His Gospel and His will to men, and by our lives to exhibit to them the true life, and teach them how to live it themselves.

He is representing us yonder, and our one business is to represent Him here. We are just as truly sent into this world to represent Him as if we had gone to China as the ambassador of the American Government.

While engaged in the secular affairs of life, it is simply that we may represent Him there, carry on His business, and have means to use for His affairs. He came here from another realm, and with a special message, and when His work was done He was called to go home to His Father’s dwelling-place and His own.

Lord, help me to worthily represent Thee.

And carry music in our heart  
Through busy street and wrangling mart;  
Plying our daily task with busier feet,  
Because our souls a heavenly strain repeat.

# HIMSELF

**Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919)**

I wish to speak to you about Jesus, and Jesus only. I often hear people say, "I wish I could get hold of Divine Healing, but I cannot." Sometimes they say, "I have got it." If I ask them, "What have you got?" the answer is sometimes, "I have got the blessing", sometimes it is, "I have got the theory"; sometimes it is, "I have got the healing"; sometimes, "I have got the sanctification." But I thank God we have been taught that it is not the blessing, it is not the healing, it is not the sanctification, it is not the thing, it is not the it that you want, but it is something better. It is "the Christ"; it is Himself. How often that comes out in His Word - "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses", Himself "bare our sins in his own body on the tree"! It is the person of Jesus Christ we want. Plenty of people get the idea and do not get anything out of it. They get it into their head, and it into their conscience, and it into their will; but somehow they do not get Him into their life and spirit, because they have only that which is the outward expression and symbol of the spiritual reality. I once saw a picture of the Constitution of the United States, very skillfully engraved in copper plate, so that when you looked at it closely it was nothing more than a piece of writing, but when you looked at it at a distance, it was the face of George Washington. The face shone out in the shading of the letters at a little distance, and I saw the person, not the words, nor the ideas; and I thought, "That is the way to look at the Scriptures and understand the thoughts of God, to see in them the face of love, shining through and through; not ideas, nor doctrines, but Jesus Himself as the Life and Source and sustaining Presence of all our life."

I prayed a long time to get sanctified, and sometimes I thought I had it. On one occasion I felt something, and I held on with a desperate grip for fear I should lose it, and kept awake the whole night fearing it would go, and, of course, it went with the next sensation and the next mood. Of course, I lost it because I did not hold on to Him. I had been taking a little water from the reservoir, when I might have all the time received from Him fullness through the open channels. I went to meetings and heard people speak of joy. I even thought I had the joy, but I did not keep it because I had not Himself as my joy. At last He said to me - Oh so tenderly - "My child, just take Me, and let Me be in you the constant supply of all this, Myself." And when at last I got my eyes off my sanctification, and my experience of it, and just placed them on the Christ in me, I found, instead of an experience, the Christ larger than the moment's need, the Christ that had all that I should ever need who was given to me at once, and for ever! And when I thus saw Him, it was such rest; it was all right, and right for ever. For I had not only what I could hold that little hour, but also in Him, all that I should need the next and the next and so on, until sometimes I get a glimpse of what it will be a million years afterwards, when we shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father" (Matt. 13: 43), and have "all the fullness of God."

And so I thought the healing would be an it too, that the Lord would take me like the old run-down clock, wind me up, and set me going like a machine. It is not thus at all. I found it was Himself coming in instead and giving me what I needed at the moment. I wanted to have a great stock, so that I could feel rich; a great store laid up for many years, so that I would not be dependent upon Him the next day; but He never gave me such a store. I never had more holiness or healing at one time than I needed for that hour. He said: "My child, you must come to Me for the next breath because I love you so dearly I want you to come all the time. If I gave you a great supply, you would do without Me and would not come to Me so often; now you have to come to Me every second, and lie on My breast every moment." He gave me a great fortune, placed thousands and millions at credit, but He gave a cheque-book with this one condition, "You never can draw more than you need at the time." Every time a cheque was wanted, however, there was the name of Jesus upon it, and so it brought more glory to Him, kept His name before the heavenly world and God was glorified in His Son.

I had to learn to take from Him my spiritual life every second, to breathe Himself in as I breathed, and breathe myself out. So, moment by moment for the spirit, and moment by moment for the body, we must receive. You say, "Is not that a terrible bondage, to be always on the strain?" What, on the strain with one you love, your dearest Friend? Oh, no! It comes so naturally, so spontaneously, so like a fountain, without consciousness, without effort, for true life is always easy, and overflowing.

And now, thank God, I have Him, not only what I have room for, but that which I have not room for, but for which I shall have room, moment by moment, as I go on into the eternity before me. I am like the little bottle in the sea, as full as it will hold. The bottle is in the sea, and the sea is in the bottle; so I am in Christ, and Christ is in me. But, besides that bottleful in the sea, there is a whole ocean beyond; the difference is, that the bottle has to be filled over again, every day, evermore.

Now the question for each of us is not "What think you of Bethshan, and what think you of divine healing?" but "What think you of Christ?" There came a time when there was a little thing between me and Christ. I express it by a little conversation with a friend who said, "You were healed by faith." "Oh, no," I said, "I was healed by Christ." What is the difference? There is a great difference. There came a time when even faith seemed to come between me and Jesus. I thought I should have to work up the faith, so I labored to get the faith. At last I thought I had it; that if I put my whole weight upon it, it would hold. I said, when I thought I had got the faith, "Heal me." I was trusting in myself, in my own heart, in my own faith. I was asking the Lord to do something for me because of something in me, not because of something in Him. So the Lord allowed the devil to try my faith, and the devil devoured it like a roaring lion, and I found myself so broken down that I did not think I had any faith. God allowed it to be taken away until I felt I had none. And then God seemed to speak to me so sweetly, saying, "Never mind, my child, you have nothing. But I am perfect Power, I am perfect

Love, I am Faith, I am your Life, I am the preparation for the blessing, and then I am the Blessing, too. I am all within and all without, and all for ever." It is just having "Faith in God" (Mark 11: 22). "And the life I now live in the flesh, I live," not by faith on the Son of God, but "by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2 20). That is it. It is not your faith. You have no faith in you, any more than you have life or anything else in you. You have nothing but emptiness and vacuity, and you must be just openness and readiness to take Him to do all. You have to take His faith as well as His life and healing, and have simply to say, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." My faith is not worth anything. If I had to pray for anyone, I would not depend upon my faith at all. I would say, "Here, Lord, am I. If you want me to be the channel of blessing to this one just breathe into me all that I need." It is simply Christ, Christ alone.

Now, is your body yielded to Christ for Him thus to dwell and work in you? The Lord Jesus Christ has a body as well as you only it is perfect; it is the body, not of a man, but of the Son of man. Have you considered why He is called the Son of man? The Son of man means that Jesus Christ is the one typical, comprehensive, universal, all-inclusive Man. Jesus is the one man that contains in Himself all that man ought to be all that man needs to have. It is all in Christ. All the fullness of the Godhead and the fullness of a perfect manhood has been embodied in Christ, and He stands now as the summing-up of all that man needs. His spirit is all that your spirit needs, and He just gives us Himself. His body possesses all that your body needs. He has a heart beating with the strength that your heart needs. He has organs and functions redundant with life, not for Himself, but for humanity. He does not need strength for

Himself. The energy which enabled Him to rise and ascend from the tomb, above all the forces of nature, was not for Himself. That marvellous body belongs to your body. You are a member of His body. Your heart has a right to draw from His heart all that it needs. Your physical life has a right to draw from His physical life its support and strength, and so it is not you, but it is just the precious life of the Son of God. Will you take Him thus today, and then you will not be merely healed, but you will have a new life for all you need, a flood of life that will sweep disease away, and then remain a fountain of life for all your future need. Oh, take Him in His fullness.

It seems to me as if I might just bring you a little talisman today, as if God had given me a little secret for every one here and said to me, "Go and tell them, if they will take it, it will be a talisman of power wherever they go, and it will carry them through difficulty, danger, fear, life, death, eternity." If I could stand on this platform and say, "I have received from heaven a secret of wealth and success which God will give freely, through my hand, to everybody who will take it," I am sure you would need a larger hall for the people who would come. But, dear friends, I show you in His Word a truth which is more precious. The Apostle Paul tells us that there is a secret, a great secret which was hidden from ages and from generations (Col. 1: 26), which the world was seeking after in vain, which wise men from the East hoped they might find, and God says it "is now made manifest to his saints"; and Paul went through the world just to tell it to those that were able to receive it; and that simple secret is just this "Christ in you the hope of glory."

The word "mystery" means secret; this is the great secret. And I tell you today, nay, I can give you, if you will take it from Him, not from me-I can give you a secret which has been to me, oh, so wonderful! Years ago I came to Him burdened with guilt and fear; I tried that simple secret, and it took away all my fear and sin. Years passed on, and I found sin overcoming me and my temptations too strong for me. I came to Him a second time, and He whispered to me, "Christ in you," and I had victory, rest and blessing.

Then the body broke away in every sort of way. I had always worked hard, and from the age of fourteen I studied and labored and spared no strength. I took charge of a large congregation at the age of twenty-one; I broke down utterly half a dozen times and at my last constitution was worn out. Many times I feared I should drop dead in my pulpit. I could not ascend any height without a sense of suffocation, because of a broken-down heart and exhausted nervous system. I heard of the Lord's healing, but I struggled against it. I was afraid of it. I had been taught in theological seminaries that the age of the supernatural was past, and I could not go back from my early training. My head was in my way, but at last when I was brought to attend "the funeral of my dogmatics," as Mr. Schrenck says, "the Lord whispered to me the little secret, 'Christ in you'; and from that hour I received Him for my body as I had done for my soul. I was made so strong and well that work has been a perfect delight. For years I have spent my summer holiday in the hot city of New York, preaching and working amongst the masses, as I never did before; besides the work of our Home and College and an immense mass of library work and much besides. But the Lord did not merely remove my sufferings. It was more than simple healing. He so gave me Himself that I lost the painful consciousness of physical organs. That is the best of the health He gives. I thank the Lord that He keeps me from all morbid, physical consciousness and a body that is the object of anxious care, and gives a simple life that is a delight and a service for the Master, that is a rest and joy.



Then, again, I had a poor sort of a mind, heavy and cumbrous, that did not think or work quickly. I wanted to write and speak for Christ and to have a ready memory, so as to have the little knowledge I had gained always under command. I went to Christ about it, and asked if He had anything for me in this way. He replied, "Yes, my child, I am made unto you Wisdom." I was always making mistakes, which I regretted, and then thinking I would not make them again; but when He said that He would be my wisdom, that we may have the mind of Christ, that He could cast down imaginations and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, that He could make the brain and head right, then I took Him for all that. And since then I have been kept free from this mental disability, and work has been rest. I used to write two sermons a week, and it took me three days to complete one. But now, in connection with my literary work, I have numberless pages of matter to write constantly besides the conduct of very many meetings a week, and all is delightfully easy to me. The Lord has helped me mentally, and I know He is the Saviour of our mind as well as our spirit.

Well, then, I had an irresolute will. I asked, ' Cannot you be a will to me?' He said, "Yes, my child, it is God who worketh in you to will and to do." Then He made me to learn how and when to be firm, and how and when to yield. Many people have a decided will, but they do not know how to hold on just at the proper moment. So, too, I came to Him for power for His work and all the resources for His service, and He has not failed me.

And so I would say, if this precious little secret of "Christ in you," will help you, you may have it. May you make better use of it than I! I feel I have only begun to learn how well it works. Take it and go on working it out, through time and eternity-Christ for all, grace for grace, from strength to strength, from glory to glory, from this time forth and even for evermore.

# HIMSELF

by A. B. Simpson

Once it was the blessing, Now it is the Lord;  
Once it was the feeling, Now it is His Word.  
Once His gifts I wanted, Now the Giver own;  
Once I sought for healing, Now Himself alone.

Once 'twas painful trying, Now 'tis perfect trust;  
Once a half salvation, Now the uttermost.  
Once 'twas ceaseless holding, Now He holds me fast;  
Once 'twas constant drifting, Now my anchor's cast.

Once 'twas busy planning, Now 'tis trustful prayer;  
Once 'twas anxious caring, Now He has the care.  
Once 'twas what I wanted, Now what Jesus says;  
Once 'twas constant asking, Now 'tis ceaseless praise.

Once it was my working, His it hence shall be;  
Once I tried to use Him, Now He uses me.  
Once the power I wanted, Now the Mighty One;  
Once for self I labored, Now for Him alone.

Once I hoped in Jesus, Now I know He's mine;  
Once my lamps were dying, Now they brightly shine.  
Once for death I waited, Now His coming hail;  
And my hopes are anchored, Safe within the vail.

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