

*Boundless Horizons*

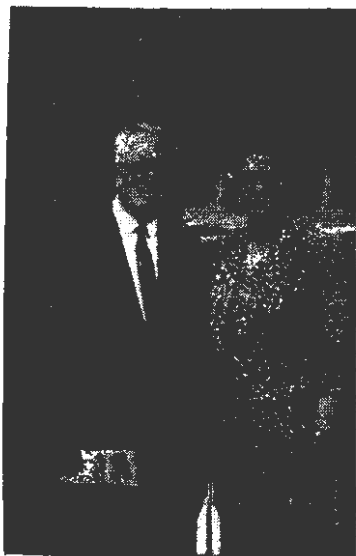
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**"One of Christianity's richest blessings is that a man never catches up with his horizons. There are aspirations not yet realized that pull him on to the hills of eternal life. Those lured by out-reaching horizons will some day reach the Land of Boundless Horizons."**

**O. G. W.**

## OUR LAST CLIMB TOGETHER

We climbed many a hill together in our forty-two years of joys and sorrows of married life, but none lingers so vividly in my memory as the last hill we climbed together to the tent on the athletic field on Houghton campus that beautiful Sabbath evening of General Conference. We chatted with friends as we climbed. We paused for a picture just before we parted with those familiar words, "I'll see you after service" — he to the little tent to meet his brethren of the Church and take his place on the platform in the evening service, and I up the long aisle of the big tent to share the company of friends during the service.

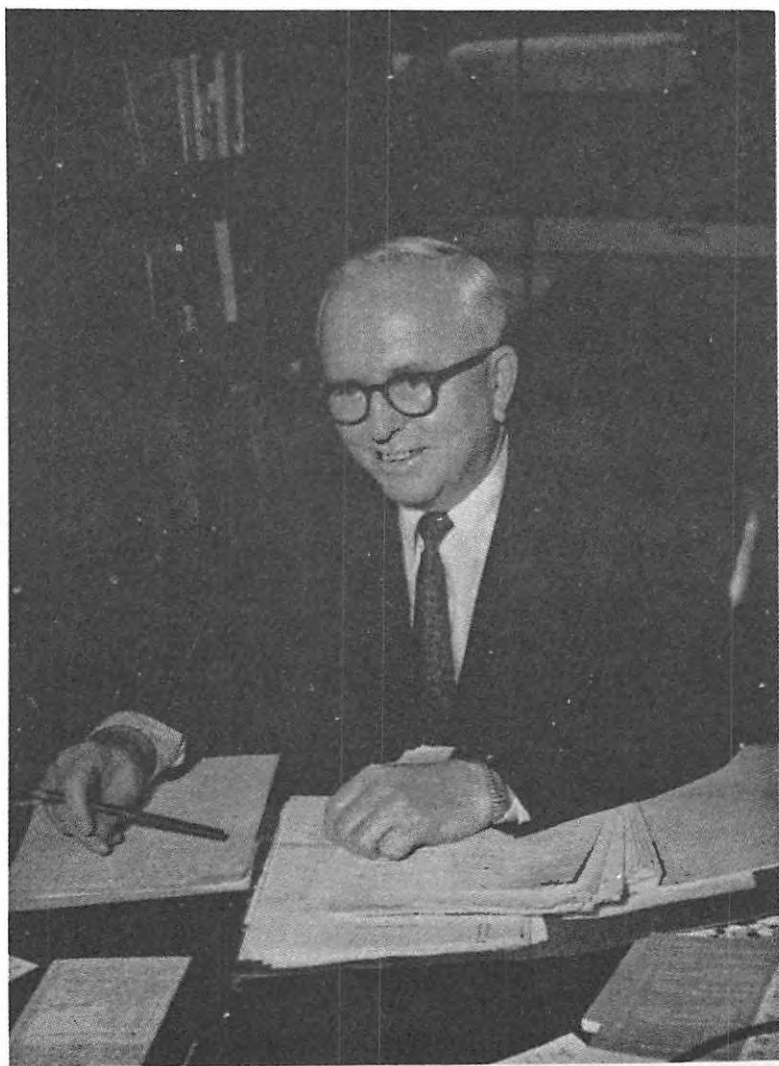


*Dr. and Mrs. Oliver G. Wilson  
taken at the top of the hill just  
moments before his death.*

In such a few minutes he had traveled on to the hills of glory and to the Saviour whom he loved and served so intensely, and I was left to continue my way up the aisle of life with my dear family and friends — alone, yes, yet not alone, for He who offered eternal life to as many as would receive Him is walking with me, just as He promised.

I have discovered that to those who hope in the mercy of God, death is the door to eternal life. It is not emptiness and loneliness. It is fullness and joy in the Spirit. My whole heart praises Him!

— MARIAN L. WILSON



DR. OLIVER G. WILSON

# *Boundless Horizons*

Meditations on the Christian Life

*by*

OLIVER G. WILSON, D.D.

W E S L E Y   P R E S S

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To

MARIAN L. WILSON

*Whose understanding love inspired  
the author of these devotional truths  
and whose life of faith sustains all  
of us who walk with her on life's way.*

## Tributes To Dr. Wilson's Writings

The quality and forcefulness of the editorial style of Oliver G. Wilson was recognized far beyond the circles of his church and will deserve a place in the best feature and devotional writings of the centuries. He was like a Gibraltar of moral and spiritual strength in the church of his choice to which he gave rare and singular devotion across nearly a half century.

—B. H. Phaup; Harold K. Sheets; Rufus Reisdorph  
*General Superintendents, The Wesleyan Methodist Church*

Dr. Wilson was on our Evangelical Press Association board for two years and did excellent work in his quiet, thoughtful, and measured way. He was a devoted writer and editor in evangelical journalism.

—Mel Larson, *President, Evangelical Press Association*

In Dr. Oliver G. Wilson, the Lord gave to us a concise and analytical thinker and teacher of young ministers, a faithful and prophetic pulpit witness, a trenchant yet healing pen, and above all a Christlike and loving heart.

—Stephen W. Paine, *President, Houghton College*

The writings of few editors of evangelical church magazines were more widely read than those of Dr. Oliver G. Wilson. Editors eagerly sought permission to share with their readers the deeply spiritual truths with which God quickened his mind and warmed his heart.

—James T. Gregory, *Editor, The Free Methodist*

It was not my privilege to know Dr. Oliver G. Wilson as personally as I would like to have . . . However, I learned enough about him to know that he was a Christian gentleman of the highest order. Also, he was a gifted writer, preacher, and leader. His influence . . . was outstanding.

—Stephen S. White, *Editor, Herald of Holiness*

Dr. Wilson made a great contribution . . . It can be said of him as was said of Abel, "He being dead yet speaketh."

—General Superintendents, *Pilgrim Holiness Church*

I have always enjoyed reading his writings. . . .

—Kenneth Geiger, *Gen. Sup't., United Missionary Church*

His editorials and articles attained a rare standard of excellence. His words became refreshing brooks in the path of the tired traveler, streams of water that will never cease to refresh . . .

—George E. Failing, *Editor, The Wesleyan Methodist Church*



## FOREWORD

One of the most accurate measurements of a man's worth is the nature and extent of his influence. Measured by this criterion, Oliver G. Wilson was a great man. In the daily hand-to-hand tussle with the practical realities of life he learned many valuable lessons. He transmitted these lessons to others by means of picturesque language in the class room, from the pulpit, and by the editor's pen.

His pious parents bequeathed to him an appreciation for moral and spiritual values which made him a veritable pillar of orthodoxy. He ever reflected the rich heritage of his ancestral virtues. His sincere, personal experience of the transforming grace and power of God made him a winsome example of godly living. As a stalwart defender of the faith he refused to be shackled by provincial prejudices. As a worker together with his Lord he was ever alert for opportunities to serve his fellowmen in the name of the Lord.

For almost thirty years we were colleagues in church work. Three times he was chosen by the church to fill an office I had previously filled. The latest such succession-in-office was interrupted by his sudden "coronation" just moments before his public induction into the highest office of his church. As a co-worker, he was appreciated and admired. As a brother in the Lord, he was beloved. As a friend, he was trusted. As a counselor, he was dependable. As a Christian, he was exemplary. In any relationship he was loyal! The host of his former students who are filling places of leadership attest the effectiveness of his teaching and of his living the principles of his church and of his Christ.

As an editor, Dr. Wilson patterned words into a lacework of stimulating ideas which never ceased to thrill the steadily enlarging host of readers. The frequency with which he was quoted by other editors reflected the value they put upon his messages. His words, spoken or printed, reflected the whole spirit of a

man who was serious, but not somber; cheerful, but not flippant; courageous, but not reckless; one who was indeed a Christian prince. He was a man of God. He spoke for God. May our reading his messages in this Memorial Volume remind us that he "being dead, yet speaketh."

—ROY S. NICHOLSON

*Past President, General Conference  
of the Wesleyan Methodist Church*

## P R E F A C E

The humble boyhood of Oliver G. Wilson was surrounded by a ridge of low-lying Kansas hills. As an eager lad he often wondered what lay beyond the horizon. He dreamed of the day when he could see for himself. Later, in his pulpit ministry, he often referred to this aspiration. Little did he realize in his youth how great would be the field of service to which God would lead him. The call of God in his life and work was a call to an ever-widening horizon.

Dr. Wilson served as pastor, evangelist, teacher, editor of Sunday school materials, and for twelve years as editor of *The Wesleyan Methodist*. This book of selections from his work as a religious editor seeks to be representative of his writings. The structure of thirteen chapters, each containing seven meditations, makes possible the use of the book as a daily devotional for a period of three months. In any case the editors have sought to bring together selections on subjects which seem to have been of primary importance to the author.

The book is possible because of the initiative and interest of those who have been greatly influenced by Dr. Wilson. His wife was of eminent assistance to him in his writings. Through her kindness it was possible to select from his editorial writings the materials incorporated in this book. Immediately upon his demise there was organized the Wilson Memorial Committee composed of the following personnel: Paul L. Kindschi, chairman; Martin W. Cox and Charles R. Wilson, editorial committee; Kenneth Knapp and Robert W. McIntyre, publications committee; Orval C. Butcher and Archy L. Mudgett, promotional committee; Claire W. Dunbar and Wesley L. Knapp, finance committee.

Throughout his life O. G. Wilson believed that a man should aspire to the highest and best, that in God's kingdom there is always room for growth and development. As truly as in life he went far beyond the horizons of his boyhood, so even now, we believe his immortal spirit is exploring the sphere beyond the horizons of eternity.

—THE MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

## CONTENTS

Foreword .....	vii
Preface .....	ix
1. Boundless Horizons .....	1
2. God With Us .....	9
3. Days of Trouble .....	18
4. Paths of Peace .....	27
5. Consider Jesus Christ .....	35
6. Challenged to Commitment .....	44
7. They Were Called Christians .....	52
8. The Home Christian .....	61
9. The Christian's Social Concern .....	70
10. Quest for Holy Living .....	79
11. This Is the Victory .....	87
12. Day by Day .....	95
13. Lessons in Contrast .....	103

# *Boundless Horizons*

## CHAPTER 1

# BOUNDLESS HORIZONS

### THE LAND OF WIDENING HORIZONS

One of Christianity's richest blessings is that a man never catches up with his horizons. There is always something not yet attained, some goal not yet reached.

No greater tragedy can come to a soul than to have no more unreachd goals, no unattained ideals.

To a man filled with the Spirit, there are no dead-end streets. There is no such thing as having received a final blessing. Always there is more farther along.

The man filled with the Holy Spirit has discovered the "fountain of youth." Within his soul are songs never yet sung, music never yet penned, poems never yet written. There are aspirations not yet realized that pull him on to the hills of eternal life.

Our dreams are the golden ladder by which we climb to higher altitudes of living. They are the lanterns by whose light we pass safely through the dark valleys. They are the flames that give us drive and energy for the struggle.

To the man filled with the Holy Spirit come new visions of God, and new exploits are attempted in the outreach of faith.

"Your old men shall dream dreams," declared the ancient prophet, and a thousand men this day are ready to witness to the truth of his statement.

We follow not a lost cause. We are not enaged in a losing venture. The future is bright with the promises of God for those filled with the Spirit.

The brothers of Joseph said: "Here comes that dreamer." A dreamer is always a comer. Let it be remembered that those lured on by outreaching horizons will some day reach the Land of Boundless Horizons.

### "THAT I MAY KNOW HIM"

If you would find God, He is nigh.

If you would see God's work, look into the heavens which "declare the glory of God," and look into the face of the innocent child.

If you would know God, learn at the feet of Jesus. He came to reveal God: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

To know God is the soul's supreme quest.

Other knowledge, though pursued to its ultimate, leaves the soul unsatisfied. To know God, not just something about Him, but to know Him as a Person — gracious, righteous, kind, and concerned for the things that concern you, is to start the fountains of peace flowing in the soul.

The wider your horizon of the knowledge of God, the wider your fields of admiration and wonder.

He who knows God has a sound basis for all his science, for all his philosophy, for all his ethics.

He who knows God has mastered his fears and determined his destiny.

"That I might know Him," it will be necessary for me to matriculate in God's school. The tuition and fees sometimes are high and cut across my ease-loving self. Notice what Paul says:

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and 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 do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him . . ." (Philippians 3:7-10).

If your resolution is weak you will never know the riches

of the wealth of the knowledge of God reserved for those who are abandoned to Christ.

God makes no difference in His love to His children. He has no favorites: "There is no respect of persons with God." He will reveal the deep things of grace to you, even you.

### **THE POWER OF VISION**

The great men of the world have been men of vision, of imagination, of ideals, of courage.

Vision sees a flaming field of gladiolas in a handful of dull brown bulbs, and gives the courage to plow and plant and cultivate.

Vision sees a towering cathedral in a shapeless pile of brick, mortar and steel, and supplies the courage to lift and sweat and toil until the cathedral is silhouetted against the sky.

Vision sees a hall of Congress filled with noble statesmen in a group of rude, dirty, untamed street boys, and enables the man to courageously fight every force which would hinder the realization of the vision.

Solomon epitomized in eight words the history of the fall of the world's great civilizations: "Where there is no vision the people perish." Killed by drudgery — dead monotony. Only vision and imagination can add romance to life and radiance to the countenance.

What a man has is dependent largely upon others, but what he is springs from his inner ideals and vision.

What a man is, is never the measure of what he may become. What he may become depends upon the inner glow and the ceaseless fire of a great purpose. No one can tell the height to which a man may climb, and no one can measure the depth to which he may descend. The direction he takes and the path he follows will be bounded by the ideals he chooses.

A danger, a present peril that is fearful in its final conclusion, is that the soul may lose its vision, surrender life's poetry — the romance of living crowded out by the discordant whine of drab details.

Ideals are born of vision, and vision is gendered by dis-



content. Satisfaction with present attainments may bring restful complacency, but it never produced a leader of men. The men who have blessed humanity are men who were discontented with pettiness, with oppression, with selfishness and who courageously went in search of nobility and truth.

Man's conquest of the sea was first a vision, then an ideal, then a settled purpose, and, behold, the great ocean-going ships carrying the commerce of the world.

Man's conquest of the air was born of discontent. A vision, then an ideal, and, behold, the great planes, television, radar.

Man's triumph over the darkness and superstition of the Middle Ages was first a yearning heart, then a vision, then a holy zeal which burst the bonds of intellectual and moral slavery and pointed the way to liberty through faith in the Living Lord.

Vision is needed. A vision of God's power. A vision of the adequacy of His provision of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ the Lord. A vision which sees difficulties in their true light and which sees God's power — irresistible and all-conquering.

### NEW HORIZONS

An artist once drew a picture of a busy street filled with fast-moving vehicles and eager faced men and women all going toward the sunrising — all save one. One lone man, stooped in form and despairing in attitude, was going in the opposite direction. Under the picture of the lonely man were the words, "Looking for Yesterday."

This is the end of an era — the beginning of a new age. Around us are new horizons. But we fear not!

In Genesis we read, "In the beginning God." As He was in Genesis, bringing order out of chaos, light out of darkness, and life out of dead matter, so He is still almighty to quiet our fast beating hearts, banish our darkness, and bring liberty to the captives, and declare the acceptable year of the Lord.

Atheistic philosophy says:

"Mankind is like a group of shipwrecked sailors on a raft in a vast sea at night. The darkness is all around. One by one

they fall off the raft into the waters and disappear. When the last man has fallen off, the sea will roll on and the holes made by their bodies will be covered over."

Away with such annihilationism! We face the unexplored expanse of new horizons, not as shipwrecked sailors on a vast sea, without hope, but with our hands in the hand of the Almighty Christ. He knows what lies ahead. He will bring us safely through, or He will call us away to the Marriage Supper.

There are before us opportunities of achievement, of enlargement, of spiritual advance. As we look to the future the wrongs and falsehoods of the past should be acknowledged with grief and shame. Mistakes should be corrected with the firm resolve not to repeat them. But to wear yesterday's failures about the neck is a burden that no one should carry as he faces tomorrow.

We shall undertake the difficult, because God is with us. We shall crowd into our days all the service possible, for the sky is glorious red with signs of the approaching kingdom. This is the hour.

Live desperately but clean — so clean that your secret desires could be made the laws of the land.

### SOUL QUEST

*One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after.* Psalm 27:4

Bare your head and quiet all voices as we listen to this prayer of a saint. What is the burden of his supplication? What is the character of his secret desires?

*The nature of his quest.* It is "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." The devotional life of this saint of other days was not to occupy the fringe hours of living, nor the fag end of a day spent in secular pursuits. The whole life was to be pervaded by the atmosphere of worship, and worship was to be carried into all of life's experiences. When the body rises from kneeling, the soul is to continue in the spirit of devotion and worship.

Often humanity endeavors to divide life into two compart-

ments — sacred and secular. The one is to be sealed against the other. This has materialized the secular and made artificial the sacred.

Again, what is the nature of the quest? — “That I may dwell in the house of the Lord . . . to behold the beauty of the Lord.” As we behold the beauty of our Lord with quiet, steady, persistent contemplation we are made to see the grandeur of our Lord.

The solution of pressing problems must be sought on one’s knees. Do not ask your questions defiantly, but in humble devotion. When grief and adversity come, make your inquiries in His temple. It is here that you will learn.

*The fruits of the quest.* Restfulness — “In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavillion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.”

Security — “He shall set me up upon a rock.” This suggests solid footing: certainty in beliefs, assurance in relation to God.

Elevation — “Now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies.” Things that trouble shall be subdued and we shall be more than conquerors.

Praise — “Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy . . . praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Psalm 27:6; Hebrews 13:15).

#### THE SOUL’S HIGHEST PURSUIT

*My soul followeth hard after thee.* Psalm 63:8

The language of the sacred writer suggests an eager and earnest pursuit. There is to be no languid, inert inclination, but a quickened pace, a racing pulse, an eager, determined countenance. There is a purpose of heart to leave no distance between the soul and God; to allow no hardship, no obstacles, no suffering to slacken the pace.

The natural man follows hard after wealth, fame, honor, applause. The spiritual man has his affections set on God. God thus fills his vision, spurs on his noble desires, and ever creates a desire for more godlikeness.

Some of the rich blessings which come to the soul following hard after God are —

*A deliverance from the tyranny of things.* Often our lives are envired by things, gadgets, appliances until we have little time for God or friendships. We mortgage our future and deprive ourselves of peace of mind in order to gain the things which modern civilization dictates as essential to a full life.

The soul that is following hard after God will be content with such things as he has. He will be happy with meager supplies, for he has the Owner of all things for his God and the Sustainer of the universe for his roommate.

*A deliverance from the tyranny of treasures.* It is not so much a question as to where your treasures are, but what are your treasures? It is not how do you hold your treasures, but how do they hold you?

God is the treasure of the soul. All other treasures are phony substitutes that will melt and vanish. Follow hard after God; days of slavery and fear will be gone forever.

*A deliverance from the tyranny of trouble.* Troubles will drive us to God or they will embitter our whole nature. Affliction, where it is allowed to rule, is a terrible tyrant filling the soul with self-pity and hate. He who in affliction's valley follows hard after God, builds gold into his character and erects a moral lighthouse in a world of gloom.

Paul wrote, "Our light affliction . . . worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Affliction worketh glory for us. How is this? "I press toward the mark." I keep my eyes upon Jesus. He is the supreme desire of my soul.

#### WIDE HORIZONS

Some years ago the late Lord Northcliffe of England, editor and owner of the London Times, was threatened with complete blindness. His eyes were examined by specialists, and nothing essentially wrong with them could be found. It was concluded by the specialists that he needed the far look. He had been using his eyes too much for reading fine print and close observation.

He was advised to take days in the country away from the printed pages where he could look on the vast horizons of God's creation. The simple remedy corrected the great man's eye trouble.

In the Scriptures we read: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills"; "Behold your God"; "Looking unto Jesus."

Many of God's dear children are in serious danger of becoming spiritually blind by the continued viewing of the near — the problems close at hand, a narrowness of interests.

If our eyes are continually glued to the little things that concern us we are sure to suffer from a sort of spiritual astigmatism.

The Christ cried out from anguish of soul: "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are white already to harvest."

We need a world-wide look that will include the perishing sinners, young and old, who may be seen from our own doorstep.

We need to see the millions chained in error, blinded by prejudice, and antagonistic to all who would arouse them from their slumbering blindness.

We need to see the purpose of God for the far reaches of the earth. For souls in sin Christ went to Calvary. His great heart of compassion bleeds for the dupes of error, for the demon worshipers, for the polite but arrogant sinners on the avenue.

Let us all pray: "Lord open thou mine eyes that I may see. . . ." That we may see our opportunity of becoming millionaires of grace. That we may see the things of life in their true relation to eternity.

## CHAPTER 2

# GOD WITH US

### THE DIVINE PRESENCE

Dark days of affliction do not prove that God is not with us. Because sin is bold, defiant and popular is no sign that God has forsaken His trusting child.

When calamity overwhelms the nation and disaster threatens its very existence, this is not evidence that God no longer cares for those who are His.

"For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee" (Jeremiah 30:11).

Conditions could not have been much nearer utter disaster than they were in the days of Jeremiah. Of the nation the Lord said: "Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause" (Jeremiah 30:12, 13).

Despite the iniquity of Israel's leaders, and the wickedness of the established priesthood, God said to Jeremiah, "I am with thee to save thee."

God's presence means soul rest, security, companionship and guidance.

The sacred writer, meditating upon the presence of God, put his testimony in verse and cried out:

"In thy presence is fullness of joy, At thy right hand are pleasures forevermore."

The presence of God assures us of success. He knows the answers; He holds in His grasp the solution to all of life's problems.

What of the future? I do not know, and why should I care when it is my glorious privilege to live in the presence of the eternal God? "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned" (Isaiah 43:2). This promise does not tell us we shall not need to pass through deep waters, nor does it say we shall not cross turbulent rivers, nor walk in the furnace of affliction. What it does say is that those things may come to us, but we need not go through them alone. The Great I AM will go with us every step of the way. He measures the depth of the water, the swift-ness of the river's current, the intensity of the furnace heat. And His love will not allow the water to be one fraction of an inch deeper than we can pass through. His compassion will not allow the river's current to be one mite stronger than we can stand. His goodness will control the temperature of the furnace so that it will only refine our gold.

I will have faith  
That God is still in heaven;  
I will have faith that He is by my side;  
I will have faith, though every star is darkened,  
That He and Truth abide! —Anonymous

#### THE IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS

*Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. Isaiah 26:20*

Human history is made up of hopes and fears, of joys and sorrows, of victories and defeats, of realizations and frustrations. No matter what the experiences of life may be, there is a place of calm repose, of sure and certain strength. It is found in the place of communion with God.

"Hide thyself for a little moment." It may be that our difficulties arise from the fact that we live too much on the front porch. Perhaps our houses have too many picture windows. We may suffer from too much exposure. "Hide thyself" were the

words of the ancient prophet. Get into the inner chamber. God has a message of cheer and a grace that He would impart.

"Shut thy doors about thee." Shut the door of holy resolve. Despite losses, resolve to stand firm for Christ. Be not carried along with the popular demands. Live independently. Walk the path of purity and self-denial in spite of all the solicitations of Satan.

Shut the door against the winds of rationalism; against the chill of lukewarmness, against the frosts of bitterness; against the slime and filth of the world.

It is to be observed that "the indignation," or trials and darkness, are to continue for "a little moment." The clouds will break; the sun will return; the birds will again sing. The time of sorrow and trial is for only a "little moment," while gladness is for all our days.

Was it not Janet Erskin Stuart who schooled herself to say in every new trial or disappointment, "This too will pass"? The storm will wear itself out; the night will end; the winter will give place to spring. Soon the song of eternal deliverance will echo from the mountain tops of time.

If you will but resist the devil and quench not the Spirit, you will shut the door to doubt and give faith a chance to speak comfort and cheer to your soul.

It is behind the shut doors of the soul, in the presence of God, that man's impregnable fortress lies. Here the soul will find security.

From every stormy wind that blows, From every swelling  
tide of woes,

There is a calm, a sure retreat: 'Tis found beneath the  
mercy seat.

There is a place where Jesus sheds The oil of gladness  
on our heads;

A place than all besides more sweet; It is the blood-  
bought mercy seat.



## HE CARETH FOR YOU

*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

I Peter 5:7

*His is an individual care.* — He meets my need according to His full understanding of me. When a child is in need of shoes, the parent does not fill his dresser with shirts. When the believer is in need of guidance the Lord does not neglect that guidance while sending physical supplies of food or clothing. The care is not issued *en masse* according to the needs of the majority. It is not like the fake medicine which is advertised to cure everything from snakebites to tonsillitis. God knows the need of each believer and He supplies those innumerable individual needs.

*His is a loving care.* — No harsh hands ever deliver His discipline and no crude methods are ever employed to demonstrate His care. There is no neglect because of lack of interest, and the soul is made to feel the tenderness and compassion of a love beyond human wisdom.

I have no care, O blessed will!  
For all my cares are Thine;  
I live in triumph, Lord, for Thou  
Hast made Thy triumph mine. — FABER

*His is a ceaseless care.* — It is a gentle solicitude and in no wise does it imply stress or anguish or fear coupled with uncertainty on the part of the Father, but a careful thoughtfulness in supplying all your needs. "The world is mine, and the fulness thereof. . . . Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee" (Psalm 50:12, 15). You are not too young, and you are never too old to be the object of His ceaseless care. His mercies are "new every morning." As the days slip into weeks, the weeks into months and the months into years, His care never lessens. "Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; . . . I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isaiah 46:4).

*His is a wise care.* According to the need, so is the care. Chastisements and scourgings are administered that unwhole-

some attitudes may be relinquished and willfulness may be lost in prompt and loving obedience. God giveth according to His wisdom, not according to our wishes.

God will quiet your restless heart and bring to you the serenity of His own Spirit. He knows all the rebellion in the universe against His will, yet He is not wringing His hands in anxiety and fear. He knows how it is coming out. He knows right and loyalty and purity will win. "Rest the weight of your anxieties upon Him for you are always in His care" (1 Peter 5:7 — Phillips).

#### GOD IN MY GARAGE

The door of our garage was left partly open. A sick sparrow crept in and at one side, behind a bundle of newspapers, the sick little sparrow died alone — no, it was not alone, God was there.

"One of them [a sparrow] shall not fall on the ground without your Father" (Matthew 10:29). G. Campbell Morgan says of this passage: "Do not spoil this quotation by saying that Jesus meant that not one of them shall fall to the ground without the Father's knowledge. He did not say that. The King said that God is with the dying sparrow."

I felt a sense of awe as I carried the dead sparrow to a place of burial — God was present.

Jesus is showing that the smallest details of life are in God's knowledge and under His matchless care. He who feeds the sparrow will not starve the saint.

Nothing can come to the trusting child of God except as God permits it. From the dungeon comes a *Pilgrim's Progress* and from the hours of perpetual darkness comes the soul inspiring music of Fanny Crosby.

"Fear ye not, therefore."

Your very hairs are numbered; not counted but numbered.

Your standing in eternity is assured, for "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven."

We are inclined to think that Christ's confession means

that at some time, some place in the remote future, He will confess our name before the Father and the holy angels. Of course that will be true, but when we confess Christ now, present tense, before men, He then confesses our name before the Father.

It is one thing to have your name enrolled in God's record; it is quite another thing to have it cited for courage and loyalty.

In some manner this suggests identification with Christ; no greater privilege or honor could be given.

Bear in mind, the Master did not say we would have things easy; that we would be honored and loved by all. Quite the contrary. Do not expect to fare better than the Master. The Lord Jesus was slandered and rejected by those He came to save.

It was when the Christ tried to help men from their sinful ways that He was opposed and crucified. Just so, when we stand against the sins of our age opposition will come. But in the midst of your opposition, in the hour of your blackest trial, remember God is present. Since he is present at the funeral of the sparrow, He will be present at the suffering of His saints.

### WALKING WITH GOD

The Christian life is the easier life. Following the trend of the world leads to confusion and despair. Walking without God takes us through brackish swamps, into diabolical quicksand, and across bleak plains where terrifying storms rage.

Walking with God is an ascent, a gaining of altitude, a climb to purer atmosphere and enchanting views with each step we take.

Walking with God is to become a friend of God. It means we are going the same direction God is going, and are employed at the tasks that lie nearest God's heart.

Walking with God means belief in the God-man as our Substitute, our Sinbearer, our Security, our Lord and King.

Walking with God means surrender to God of our opinions, our self-security, our self-effort, our carnal ambitions, our ALL.

Walking with God is enlistment for God — service for Him anywhere, anytime, under any circumstances.

When change in social or business relationship is contem-

plated, he who walks with God will first of all determine how the proposed change will affect his connection with God.

Walking with God involves a persistent endeavor to hold the whole life open to God's inspection, and to make all words and deeds conform to His will. There is an inner urge which will cause the soul to "keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

Walking with God will sometimes carry us across the wishes of our friends and cause us to reject many of the world's accepted conventions. Our life will often be a reproof to the restless ambitions and vain pursuits of our generation.

Walking with God is committing to Him ourselves and our problems, knowing that He will take care of us even as He cares for the birds and the lilies. We are freed from anxiety, released from burdens, and life becomes joyous and victorious.

God is in every tomorrow,  
Therefore I live for today,  
Certain of finding at sunrise,  
Guidance and strength for the way;  
Power for each moment of weakness,  
Hope for each moment of pain,  
Comfort for every sorrow,  
Sunshine and joy after rain.

—Clipped

### THY WILL BE DONE

Why is it that God's will suggests a house of mourning rather than a temple of song? Why is it associated with deep privations, suffering, sorrow, loss rather than with blessings and rich rewards? "Thy will be done" was never meant to be wrung from the beaten soul, but it is the song of a restored soul.

There are those who look upon the will of God as something to be avoided as long as possible. It is like a man having an unpleasant duty to discharge — he delays its performance so long as it can be done with safety.

God's will is the soul's highest attainment. It means fullness. It means purpose. It means sanctuary and rest.

"I delight to do thy will."

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Within the circle of God's will may be found salvation, safety, satisfaction, security, and the home of eternal bliss.

Outside the circle of God's will is defeat, disappointment, degeneracy, death, damnation.

Within the circle of God's will you cannot fail. Outside that circle you cannot succeed.

The Master knew how willful we are, and in the prayer which He taught us to pray He placed well at the front of all the petitions the one, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." There it is performed spontaneously, joyously and promptly. Anything less is tinged with distrust and disobedience.

"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

"Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

Thus it is to be noted that doing the will of God is life's supreme objective. To refuse to do the will of God is supreme folly. Living day by day in the center of the will of God brings one into the very closest fellowship with the Infinite.

### OUR OWN GOD

The greatest theme with which the human mind can engage itself is "God." The belief that a man holds here will affect his whole philosophical thinking. It will determine the level of his ethical and moral living. The depth of his religious experience will depend largely on the conception he has of God.

The Apostle Paul was a great theologian but his greatness rested mainly upon his conception of God. Running through all his epistles, like a great stream, there is set forth an idea of God that is cheering and that lends courage to every undertaking.

In Romans 15 there are four phrases that picture God in four different aspects of being.

*He is the God of Patience*, verse 5. This means enduring perseverance. Having once started on the course of action, He will pursue it until its consummation. Thus, despite wickedness, God will persist in His plan to bring this world back into fellowship with Himself until the day of glorious consummation. He is the God of patience.

*He is the God of Consolation*, verse 5. This word might properly be translated comfort. God does not draw His consolation and comfort from the activities of man nor from any of His undertakings, but from His very own nature springs a well of comfort for every dark place in life. "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." Thus the very presence of God means comfort.

*He is the God of Hope*, verse 13. There can be no true, well-founded, far-reaching hope that is not fixed on God. When people have much leisure to think and a large knowledge of human life and history, they often cherish gloomy and hopeless forebodings. Not so with God. He is the God of hope. Man's dejection and despair arise from his want of faith in the God of hope. He who lives closest to God is the most hopeful for the future.

*He is the God of Peace*, verse 33. Peace is essentially a part of the divine character. No storm disturbs His rest. There is no sinfulness in all His being and therefore no conflict in His moral nature. Wars may rage around the world; discord and hate may rule in many homes; yet God is the God of peace and "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16:20). Paul writing in II Corinthians 13:11 says, ". . . live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

Our own God is a God of patience, consolation, hope and peace; and the Apostolic Prayer in Romans 15:13 is, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." This is our heritage in our God.

## CHAPTER 3

### DAYS OF TROUBLE

#### WHEN LIFE TUMBLES IN

*Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee,  
and thou shalt glorify me. Psalm 50:15*

New Testament teachings give no assurance that trouble will not overtake a Christian. Christ makes no promise that the believer shall be immune from disaster. In the Sermon on the Mount I remember that He promised His disciples three things — that they would be entirely fearless, absurdly happy, and would get into trouble. It came to pass as He said.

The day of trouble will come. Troubles will rage in upon you like a tropical hurricane; every star blacked out, your sense of direction gone. Life with all of its plans has tumbled in. What then?

Your troubles may be physical as was Paul's thorn in the flesh. Paul's deliverance did not remove the thorn but caused it to produce a harvest of comfort to multitudes who followed.

Your troubles may be mental as were Job's, when accused by his "comforters" and forsaken by his wife. Calling on God did not silence his miserable comforters nor reclaim his wife from her foolishness, but it gave strength that built Job into a world example of tested loyalty and faith.

Your troubles may be spiritual as were David's when the penetrating light of God's message revealed to him the hideousness of his crime and the depth of the depravity of his own heart. He called upon God and deliverance brought forgiveness, restoration and cleansing.

What are your troubles?

What are you going to do with them?

You may deny their existence.

You may endure them with silent lips.

You may fall upon your own sword as did King Saul.

You may call upon God as did the psalmist. His promise is unalterable — "I will deliver thee."

Should your "call" be the language of confession? Have you failed God and yourself? Have you brought disaster upon yourself by your willfulness or by your foolishness? Confess it; tell God just how it occurred.

Let your "call" be the language of utter submission — "Not my will but thine be done." Douglas Southall Freeman in his biography of Robert E. Lee gives the following: "A mother in Northern Virginia brought her baby to General Lee . . . he took the baby in his arms and slowly said, 'Teach him he must deny himself.' " This is the lesson of victory.

When life tumbles in take no time for moping. Deny yourself the luxury of self-pity. Get quiet before God until He whispers direction. Above the howling of the hurricane you will sense His gentle voice — then comes deliverance, and then comes great glory to God.

#### LET THE ILL WINDS BLOW

*Moreover, we know that to those who love God, who are called according to His plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good.* Romans 8:28—Phillips

God does not say that everything that comes to us is good. No, many, many things that come to us are not good. They break our hearts and cause scalding tears to stain our cheeks. But God works in that evil thing, and makes it contribute to the end for which we live.

"Things work together for good," it is said. And work implies time and lengthened process, trial and waiting until, like the harvest from the ground or the cloth from the loom, the long operation is perfected. To judge hastily of God's dealings



ere His purposes are wrought out, would be like threshing a half-grown wheat field and being disappointed at finding no grain. Things now may seem against us. Disaster may have met all our plans and they may lie in the dust, though we made them with prayer for divine guidance. But have we seen the end? When we wait for God, satisfying views will break upon our eyes as they are opened in the better world. Then we will see the reason for God's dealing with us and how He has made "all things work together for good."

Now note the sweep of "all things." The great writer of the Romans seems to undergird his statement with: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" With the brush of a master artist, he pictures tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, and then triumphantly declares, "In all these things we are more than conquerors." It is not merely getting through by the skin of your teeth, but victory with a plus.

To a believing soul there is something wonderfully sweet in viewing all of life's troubles, trials, afflictions, temptations, conflicts, ups and downs of every kind, as means to an end, and the end, godlikeness.

Then let the wild winds blow, however sore and grievous things may be to flesh and blood, however thwarting to our own wishes. He who orders our lives will order them aright as only Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Love and Infinite Power could unite in accomplishing the end.

### I COMPLAINED

All men have some measure of acquaintance with trouble.

The good man may be exposed to physical trials, bodily pains, and disease. He may suffer from social trials, losses in business, the inconsistency and duplicity of those whom he regarded as true. He is compelled to go through experiences of religious trials, dark and prolonged.

If on those dark days he turns to complaint and self-pity, faith and hope weep together while song is stabbed to death.

"I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed" (Psalm 77:3).

It is always so. If Satan is allowed to drive a little wedge of complaint into the soul, at once all the inner fortitude and strength leaks away.

Complaint soon changes into criticism. Criticism curdles into cynicism. Cynicism is a bomb which may at any time explode into hate. And hate is murder.

I complained because I had to walk four blocks from the parking lot to my office. Then I saw a man who was sick, hungry and unable to walk, yet whose smile was as cheery as the chirp of the first robin of spring.

I complained because the light was poor. Then I met a man radiantly happy from whose eyes all sight had been drained by an accident.

I complained of my income tax until I visited the almshouse where a penniless man was singing joyously the triumphant songs of grace.

Complaining discontent shows a lack of positive faith in Christ and a streak of selfish egoism in the soul.

There are days when the unexplainable happens. The dark sinister thing that doesn't make sense crowds in upon us. All that we have believed seems crushed, and Satan laughs and tells us our faith is a fraud. That is not the day to complain. That is the day to sing.

Our Lord never bribes His disciples by promising them ways of sunny ease. He does not buy them with illicit gold. He does not put the glittering crown upon the entrance gate and hide the cross in the shadows. No, on the very first stages of the sacred pilgrimage there falls the shadow of the Cross. "Let him take up his cross daily and follow me." How foolish then, O heart of mine, to avoid and evade the cross and refuse the burden and complain at the dark dismal experiences that may come.

Complain not, but commit. "Commit thy way unto the Lord . . . He will direct thy paths."

## GOOD OUT OF NAZARETH

Ancient Nazareth was famous for its beauty of surroundings, but it was proverbial for the wickedness of its citizens. If the beauty of nature could build holy character into lives, those who lived in Nazareth should have been distinguished for their saintliness. But this beauty spot was filled with men whose lives were vile, sordid and ugly. Yet from this town came the Son of God touching civilization and setting His stamp upon all following generations.

When at Nazareth doubtless Jesus longed for better associates and equipment advantages. As a youth He may have thought of the universities at Alexandria where Greek and Oriental culture were taught, and of Jerusalem where the rival schools of Hillel and Shammai were filled with eager students. But this ambitious pure-souled lad remained in Nazareth by divine appointment.

It is not the environment that makes the soul great. It is a great soul that compels good to come from unwholesome environments.

Jesus was poor. He knew the pinch of poverty. He knew the weariness, loneliness and sting of cruel insults. He was tempted as we are tempted. Out of His temptations came riches for all mankind.

Although Jesus was in Nazareth He was not of it. He was superior to it, and "as he is so are we in this present world."

Can any good thing come out of your Nazareth? Yes, Nazareth can be made to work for you. Adversity, suffering, affliction, bereavement, all found in your Nazareth, can be made to bring you riches of soul realized in no other manner.

Different people must contend with different testings, but hardship in one form or another knocks at every man's door. Life is a procession of men and women with heavy crosses on their shoulders. Some by their complaining and discontent make it doubly hard for other travelers to carry their crosses. From the cross the one thief asked to be taken down, while the other asked to be taken to the Kingdom of Christ.

If life's circumstances compel you to live in Nazareth, then make good come out of Nazareth.

### THE CRY OF PERPLEXITY

In the hour of sore trial Moses cried out: "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant?" (Numbers 11:11)

"Why?" has been forced from many lips from which every bit of color has been drained by loss and pain. No one can answer, directly and positively, this question, and often the soul is bewildered and distressed.

Affliction is never beautiful. It is rugged, grim, dreadful. It is avoided by all. No one would choose to walk through the valley of adversity. But what miserable weaklings we would be if everything in life were to flow as smoothly as a gentle brook. It was John Wesley who said, "Generally, prosperity is a sweet poison; and affliction, a healing, though bitter medicine."

Afflictive providences are divine monitors, speaking to us of God, duty, death, eternity.

Adversity detaches the soul from all earthly props and causes it to rest wholly on God. It teaches how frail is man, how little his accomplishments and how dependent he is upon God.

He who is tempted to question God's goodness must ever remember that God is no idle spectator, and that He is the embodiment of but one spirit — the spirit of holiness. All that is permitted to come to the trusting child is permitted by Infinite Wisdom as He works out a great pattern of moral beauty to be displayed in the land of eternal day.

"Extraordinary afflictions are not always the result of extraordinary sins, but the trial of extraordinary grace." — Matthew Henry

Some of the greatest revelations of God have come in the hours of affliction. Job in his hour of dark grief and pain was the first to see God as Redeemer. Stephen in his terrible hour of stoning saw further into heaven than any other living man. John banished to Patmos saw the New Jerusalem coming down

from God out of heaven, and heard the choir of heaven sing the "Hallelujah Chorus."

From the valley of perpetual darkness, Tennyson penned some of his greatest poems; and from the fierce afflictions in a Burmese jail, Judson produced an example of fortitude and faith which has inspired every missionary to this present hour. It takes trouble, suffering and grief to make possible some of the finest qualities of life.

The real healers of the wounds of mankind are those whose own peace has been wrested from the valley of sorrow.

What is our answer to affliction and suffering? Not an explanation — but a Presence. Christ stands with us in all our dark experiences, sharing the strokes of sorrow, and concerned that our faith fail not.

#### WHEN DAYS ARE DESPERATE

Days of adversity are not always evil days.

It is a remarkable fact that the Jews were always more pious and devoted to God in their afflictions and captivities than when in their own land living in ease and affluence.

From the period of Jewish captivity comes Psalm 61. It is a gem of devout trust.

"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

What soul has not been overwhelmed! The circumstances, too great for us, crowd in upon us; we are overwhelmed. Then we are to remember our God.

An old Hebrew expression runs thus: "When the tale of bricks is doubled, then comes Moses."

The writer of this beautiful Psalm had his faith anchored, not in unstable things of the moment, but in the God of all the eternities.

This soul recognized that there is a Power outside himself, superior to all his best strivings, and in that God he would trust.

Sometime ago there appeared a book entitled, *Why Not Try God*. No doubt many a straying soul found comfort from this book, but the man of the Psalm before us was in no such a

mood. To him it would have been as sacrilegious as to advise, "Try vitamin B complex tablets." When a soul knows God in the intimacy of personal relationship he does not try Him, he trusts Him. He does not turn to Him as a last resort, he announces Him to be his hiding place.

"For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy . . . I will trust in the covert of thy wings."

Do you think these are words of a sniveling weakling? Then you are wrong! They are the triumphant words of a great soul refined in the furnace of affliction, beaten, robbed, enslaved, but still trusting implicitly in a God who could hear a cry from the ends of the earth and sustain the soul when the last human prop had given away.

"So I will sing praises unto thy name forever, that I may daily perform my vows."

### COME SUNSHINE, COME RAIN

Sunshine alone makes barren fields. Rain alone makes disastrous floods. The proper mixture of the two makes fruitful fields, well-fed citizens, and prosperous industry.

One day Christ was preaching. Multitudes had come from all parts to sit at His feet and listen to the words of life. A despairing multitude faced the Master. Sickly old people, their faces sad from misery and deception, seemed to say, "What is to become of us?" Young people with old souls — old for lack of ideals and because of erroneous teachings — seemed to say, "Where is the good way?" The scene which this audience presented to Jesus was distressing in the extreme. Suddenly there burst pleadingly from His lips the glorious invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

The Master told His followers that there would be a yoke. But bear in mind that the yoke is easy, for His head is in the other bow of the yoke.

Again, the Master told His followers that they would suffer

much, that the way was narrow, that misunderstanding and keen opposition would torture them like the sting of a sharp goad. But He also promised that they would be filled with joy, and that He would leave them His peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

There will be long dark valleys of night, steep hills to climb, burdens to carry, cruel and relentless enemies to face, but the joy of His presence, the consciousness of His power, the reality of belonging to Him makes it possible for us to "rejoice in tribulation," "take joyfully the spoiling of our goods," and "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Out of the rain-drenched fields comes harvest, and out of the soul purified by adversity comes triumph and song for all generations that follow.

Then, come sunshine or come rain, we take the burden that the Master asks us to carry, we accept the yoke that He places upon us until the glorious day we look upon His face.

## CHAPTER 4

### PATHS OF PEACE

#### QUIET

*...in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*

Isaiah 30:15

*Be still, and know that I am God.* Psalm 46:10

Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our striving cease:  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of thy peace.

— JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Tension is the worst of all depressants of the spirit. It draws off energy needed for daily tasks. It places all social contacts in a distorted light and causes the soul to see slights where none were intended.

"Be still," that is, reduce your activity; stop your rushing about; be quiet; quit your talking. Agitation wears us out. Anger burns us up. Unquiet people burn out their life forces. Fussiness does not get us anywhere.

When you have slowed down your tempo of life and quit your efforts at self-vindication, then you are ready to hear the voice for which the soul is listening — "I am God."

Above the human scene hovers the divine order. We cannot derive satisfaction from our feelings, but we can gain deep springs of contentment from our faith in God.

Realize that you cannot run the universe. You are not arbiter of other men's lives. Leave those things to God.



When your tensions mount because of "the prosperity of the wicked," sit down and wait in patience upon God. Remember, He said, "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people," and that goes for individuals as well as nations.

Life is full of examples which show that implicit reliance on God is a sure way to victory. There grows within the soul the exultant feeling that here is reality — certainty. Here is balm for our aching hearts and troubled spirits.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Get out into God's light and the darkness that has frightened you will be dispelled. Lean upon Him. He knows the end, and He knows how to take you through to complete deliverance.

#### WHILE YOU WAIT

The sign was as plain as could be: "Shoes Repaired While You Wait." But I walked right by, even though a nail in my shoe was annoying me with persistence. "No time now for repairs." So I hobbled on.

My devotions were hurried and formal. The thought kept pressing upon me, "You must hurry. So much to do. Read but a verse and offer a short prayer."

In my frenzied haste, I opened my Bible at random for a short portion of Scripture. There it was standing out before me as plain as the flashing signals at the railroad crossing: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." "Repairs While You Wait." Not my old shoes, but my badly beaten spirit. This intrigued me to look a bit farther. "Be still and know that I am God." "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." You see, He will be there to meet us when we enter and shut the door.

"Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors" (Proverbs 8:34).

Fuss, noise, bustle, expert efficiency, time-clock precision, all shout: "Hastel!" We limp on, enduring, endeavoring, wearing ourselves to a frazzle. We need to wait for repairs.

I know the feverish motions of our time, the disturbing forebodings of anxiety, the busyness of Satan, the rush to be rich, the race to be happy, the craving for a thrill. I know the Word says, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," but I seem such a slow and dull scholar.

We look like men and women carrying loads too big for us, like workmen attempting tasks for which they are unprepared.

Waiting upon God fills man's poverty with God's riches. It transforms human feebleness into mountain-moving might. It changes earth-bound aspirations for eternal realities that center in the heart of God.

Our only triumph over the anxiety and feverish rush of life about us lies in prayer.

Wait upon the Lord. Wait until He speaks to you. Wait until His calm fills your soul with a flowing fountain of contentment and peace.

#### **PEACE FOR THE SOUL**

There is a world of meaning in the word peace. Sometimes it means that screaming missiles are hushed into silence and men return from battle fronts and enemy prisons. Sometimes it tells of surging passions calmed, fires of revenge and enmity smothered into cold cinders, despair giving place to joy, and turmoil to calm.

Peace is much desired and much talked about, elusive and difficult to find. However, God proposes for each individual a threefold peace—peace with himself, peace with his fellow men, peace with God.

There is a way of peace. It is a way of life and is a sacred privilege for all.

He who is at peace with himself is not defeated by his emotions—fear, anger, jealousy, worry or love. He takes disappointment in stride, can laugh at himself, neither underestimates nor overestimates himself. He has self-respect and self-confidence.

He who is at peace with his fellow men will be considerate of the welfare of others. He trusts readily, and is not bitter nor harsh. He does not impose upon others; neither does he allow

others to impose on him. He feels that he is a member of a society of equals, and recognizes a personal responsibility for the well-being of the whole group.

He who is at peace with God has centered his mind on God. "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusteth in thee." "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

God has become the ruling motive. His purpose for life is diligently sought; His way followed without compromise. On the walls of the soul will be the words, **GOD OVER ALL.**

The man who enters into right relation with God will find it comparably easy to sustain a right attitude toward his fellow men. He will be conscious of an inner calm despite outer conflicts. He who is in harmony with his God will come to know the great symphony of life and will find that he is in tune with eternity. Faith is not only intended to pacify the conscience and purify the heart but also to deliver the mind from anxious worry and care. Faith is the fountain of peace, while peace is the ballast to the soul amid all the hurricanes of time.

#### CHRIST'S LEGACY

There is in the human life much that would disturb the mind and rob the soul of peace. Christ's last legacy to His people was peace — a legacy and a gift. The world cannot give peace, for it has none. It is tense, restless and bankrupting itself preparing for war. The world may offer something — a truce, an armistice — but for whatever it gives it expects much in return. Christ offers peace as a gift, and demands no compensation whatsoever.

Seldom does Christ give ease and temporal prosperity to His children. These are questionable blessings, for they tend to clog the channel of faith and dry up the fountain of prayer. Christ offers peace — peace of the soul — with God, with self, with all mankind.

Christ offers peace when looking at the past, for it is covered by the blood; peace when looking into the future, for we have a

"Great High Priest, even Jesus Christ the righteous"; peace when looking at the present, for "he will give his angels charge over thee to keep thee."

It is a supernatural divine legacy — "My peace." It is unrelated to anything of time. It flows from the eternal springs of God. It is the same quietness, the same serenity with which God views the on moving of His purpose.

"He is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14). We do not make peace with God, we enter into peace. When we live in Christ and He lives within us we are at peace with God. He is our Reconciliation, He is our Peace-maker and Peace-bringer. The believer is entitled to peace as a daily portion. It is his to claim.

Troubled one, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). Cast your burdens upon Him "for he careth for you." Your name is engraven on the palms of His hands, and if a sparrow cannot fall without His notice, surely He has you on His heart. ". . . he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22).

Enter into peace. It depends not upon self, nor possessions, nor people, but wholly upon your relation to Christ. He left His peace with us; enter into peace now. Bid your troubled heart be quiet and rest.

#### BACK TO SOUL REST

Often the word "return" is used in the Old Testament. Usually it is the Lord speaking through His prophets to His erring people. In Psalm 116 the psalmist uses it in speaking to himself. He is engaged in a soliloquy. He asks "why," not of God, but of his soul. The psalmist is saying to himself: "Soul, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for mistrusting God. You can count on Him, He is sufficient."

"Return unto thy rest." Then rest was gone — or more accurately he had gone from his rest. The place of rest had not changed, but under life's tensions and pressures the psalmist had rushed out to settle things himself. He succeeded only in creating a tempest within his own soul. He lost confidence in

the goodness of God and became suspicious of his fellow man: "I said in my haste all men are liars."

A certain factory which weaves expensive cloth has a rule posted near the machine: "When you get into difficulty with the weaving, send for the overseer at once." This is good advice for every Christian.

Because God is a Person, loving, tender and gracious, He can be to the soul all that it needs. The moment we think of God as law or a great principle we are robbed of life's dearest treasure. One cannot worship law or bow down to the shrine of gravitation. But to God, our loving Heavenly Father, we may come with confidence and there find rest.

Look for a brief moment at the path the psalmist was traveling:

"The sorrows of death compassed me" — no greater sorrow.

"The pains of hell gat hold upon me" — most torturing pain.

"I found trouble and sorrow" — yet he directs his soul to God, the soul's everlasting rest.

A ritual of worship is offered for every troubled soul:

"I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living" — walk before the Lord obediently, joyously. The paths appointed may pass through the furnace but I will walk before the Lord, under His guiding eye, and supported by His presence.

"I will take the cup of salvation" — I will accept the portion which God allots me.

"I will pay my vows unto the Lord" — neglected covenants will be re-established.

"I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving" — I will move off grumble street forever.

This ancient formula for worship will work in our modern day. It will bring rest to the weary, calmness to the distressed, understanding to the confused, courage to the frightened and strength for the day's duties.

#### THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

An old Scottish woman who was alone much of her time was asked what she did during the day.

"Well," said she, "I get my hymn book and I have a little hymn of praise to the Lord. Then I get the Bible and let the Lord speak to me. When I am tired of reading and I cannot sing any more, I just sit still and let the Lord love me."

Many of God's choice saints find that as life's strength recedes they are troubled with nothing to occupy their time. Friends of the intense years are no longer near, many of them having answered the summons to be with the Lord. Home, with all that the word means, has been exchanged for a room with four walls which seem to crowd and smother the soul. Everything seems out of focus. Satan taunts and mercilessly accuses the soul of unfaithfulness.

What is to be done? Give way to self-pity, to criticism, to discontent, to longing for the things that can never be again? This is the sure road to utter misery, if not to hell itself. Learn a lesson from the old Scottish woman and "let the Lord love you."

The great Paul wrote from the terrible Roman prison: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content" (Philippians 4:11). Remember, he said it was a lesson he had learned, not a grace imparted. Note it well, the "*therewith*" is in italics; omit it and see how it reads. You are still in God's school. If you would be happy and a blessing to all who know you, learn the lesson of contentment which God is endeavoring to teach you.

A parable of the violet runs thus: "What is your ambition in life?" the oak tree asked the violet. "To live fragrantly and to die fragrantly," replied the lowly violet.

We are what God made us. We are where God placed us. May God give us strength to be what He planned, sweetness to live as He wishes, and courage to face triumphantly what He sends.

The secret of contentment is not in circumstances, for they are shifting and unreliable. It is in Christ, for He changes not. It is in the persuasion, begotten by God's Word, that He cannot fail, that He will unceasingly "supply all your need." Such knowledge is worth more, much more, than a million dollars.

## THE GREAT GIFT

Peace, which the natural heart knows, rests upon superficial things: financial security, good opinions and kind words of others, the success of business ventures.

It is readily seen that such unstable things can never bring an abiding peace to the heart. The soul cries out for a resting place, for peace that is constant and abiding, that is undisturbed by the fickleness of man or the fluctuations of financial ventures.

"My peace I give unto you." These are not the words of a dreamer nor the ravings of an unbalanced mind; they are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is a provision for peace — peace in the morning when the lark's song fills the air; peace at noontide amid the conflicts of tumultuous emotions and warring factions; peace at eventime when the sky is overcast and darkness comes on apace. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

Because it is His peace which fills the soul, it has its source above all things earthly, in the very heart of God. It is the same kind of peace which Christ had in the midst of sorrow, opposition and trial. They could break His body, even His heart, but they could not break His peace. He tells us the reason His peace was constant: "The Father hath not left me alone" (John 8:29). The presence of God brings peace; His absence means restlessness and strife.

The peace which is to fill the heart of God's people is not earned, but given freely with no strings attached. The normal experience of every believer is peace; not always joy, not always understanding God's ways, but always peace. Peace is Christ's gift to His followers — to all His followers.

Christ may or may not give wealth; He may or may not give health; but to all He gives peace. Secular and earthly gifts often clog the channel of trust, greatly hinder the spiritual life. But God's peace is the elixir of the soul in every climate and among all races.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:15).

## CHAPTER 5

### CONSIDER JESUS CHRIST

#### CHRIST'S EXALTED CLAIMS

*I am the way, the truth, and the life.* John 14:6

Christ makes the most exalted claims as to the nature of His Being. No other man has ever approached such claims, for Christ in the compass of one brief sentence declares that in Him the three great human needs find abundant satisfaction. "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

*I am the way.* Christ Jesus the Lord is the way to God. It is not that He has prepared a way — He is the way. This way is not the teaching of our Lord, it is not the unequaled example of His unique character; it is Christ Himself. He is the way, and there is none other. All who are in Christ are in the way of holiness, the way of happiness, the way to the Father's heart and to the Father's house.

*I am the truth.* What is truth? Where shall it be found? In the laboratory? In studies? In philosophies? The truth found there is but partial. Absolute truth is found only in Jesus Christ; He is truth. Outside of Him is falsehood, darkness, deception. He is the absolute truth about God's nature; the perfect revelation of God's ideal for humanity.

In Christ is the truth about sin, its pernicious badness, its inherent rebellion, its utter antagonism to God and holiness. In Christ is the truth about God's love and compassion. It is partially seen in nature with its abundance and beauty. But sacrificial love, pitying sympathy are seen alone in Christ.

In Christ is the truth of salvation — salvation for all, from all, to all. He is the end of doubt and the beginning of delight.



He is the end of dread and the foundation of hope. He is the end of slavery and the beginning of sonship.

*I am the life.* Such words are staggering in their importance. No one else has ever dared to announce, "I am the life." He is the foe of all death, the dispenser of all life, even eternal life. Outside of Him death reigns, in Him there is life and life more abundant.

Christ is the Tomb-opener. Christ is the Life-bringer. Christ is the Physician of dead souls. Through Jesus Christ the soul is born again and passes into the perennial freshness of eternal life.

He is the *Way*, the *Truth*, the *Life*. All that is needful for you to find the way to the Father's house is in Christ. All that you need to know about the Father is revealed in Christ. All that you need to lift you from the kingdom of death to the Kingdom of Life is in Christ. Trust Him fully, obey Him implicitly, follow Him always, and thus secure your soul for time and eternity.

#### THE DOOR OF SALVATION

*I am the door.* John 10:9

A wall, high and strong, was built by man's rebellion toward his Maker. This same active rebellion built a wall between man and his brother. The age-old question is, How may this wall between man and God be penetrated, and how may the wall between man and man be surmounted?

Almost every scheme or method of worship has been attempted in order that this wall may be penetrated and a door opened by which man may again come into the presence of God. Many have affirmed that good works open the door to God. Some have taught that the scourging and beating of the body would open the door to God. But the wall remains between the heart of man and God. Still another great group teaches that the church is the door to Christ. The church is not the door into Christ; rather Christ is the door into the church.

Many methods of battering down the wall between man and his fellow man have been tried. Intellectual training, filled with high-sounding phrases of the brotherhood of man and the

equality of all, has endeavored to build a ladder by which man may surmount this wall. There is only one door to fellowship with God and to the brotherhood of the race, and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. Men must enter through this door or forever be out of fellowship with their Maker, their hearts filled with enmity toward their fellow man.

When men enter through the door of Christ into the right relationship with God, they at the same time enter the fellowship of the Church. His love makes all men brothers.

The invitation is universal — "If any man." There is no discrimination because of financial limitations or racial barriers. It is an invitation as wide as the race and as continuous as time. Men living in the terrible night of pagan bondage may enter and be saved. Men dwarfed and crippled by intellectual arrogance and pride may enter and be saved. Men consumed with self-sufficiency and selfishness may enter and be saved. Note it well — "If any man enter he shall be saved." This means salvation from all, for all. Deliverance from bondage, deliverance from hate, and united to the great household of God and the brotherhood of the Christian Church.

Christ is the door of hope. Outside of Him is blank, barren despair. In Him there is hope gilded by every promise of God and fortified by the shouts of dying saints of all ages. Christ is the door of escape, Christ is the door of service, Christ is the door of hope. He is the door we need to enter today.

#### THE SHEPHERD'S CARE

*I am the good shepherd.* John 10:11

Twice over, our Lord used the expression, "I am the good shepherd." It is a saying rich in consolation and instruction.

Let it ever be remembered that Christ is our Good Shepherd because He laid down His life for the sheep. Not because of His spotless life nor because of His matchless teachings, but He is our Good Shepherd because of His vicarious sacrifice; He became sin for us. God laid on Him the iniquity of us all; His soul was made an offering for sin.

As a good shepherd knows his sheep, Christ knows His believing people — their names, their families, their residences, their circumstances, their weaknesses, their peculiarities, their temperaments. He bears patiently with their infirmities, nourishes them in their sickness, and does not cast them off when they are stubborn. He knows His sheep and, wonder of wonders, He does not despise them; rather He loves them with an everlasting love.

Like the good shepherd, Christ cares tenderly for all His believing people and, mark it well, not a single thing that pertains to the welfare of His sheep will He overlook. He provides for all their needs in the wilderness of this world, and He leads them by the right way to the city of habitation.

"He knows his sheep and is known by them." Here is a mutual recognition of Christ and His people. Believers may not fully know themselves, but the Shepherd knows the loyalty and love of the heart. He knows — "the Lord knoweth them that are his." The world may look upon them as of little consequence; may consider them subnormal, erratic and may despise them; the man himself may not be pleased with his likeness to Christ, but Christ knows him and recognizes him as His sheep.

There is nothing more beautiful in the English language than the twenty-third Psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd." All herein described is ours — mine — regardless of race, color, wealth, social standing. He is worthy of our implicit trust, and should have our full and prompt obedience on life's black days of despair as well as on the singing days of spring. He is our Shepherd today, and in all the tomorrows that may come. "I shall not want."

Are you rebellious? Then only loss and death can come to you. The wolves of sin will destroy you as surely as the false shepherds will forsake you. Say from the depth of your heart, "The Lord is my Shepherd — my saving Shepherd, my guiding Shepherd — I will trust Him and not be afraid." Accept cheerfully what He gives, relinquish readily what He takes, do promptly what He commands. The house of many mansions is at the end of that road.

**FOOD FOR THE SOUL**

*I am the bread of life. John 6:35*

The word bread as used here covers the whole field of essential food, every element of healthful existence. Jesus Christ is all that the human soul needs to bring peace amid the crash of all things earthy.

Christ would have us know that He alone is the appointed food of man's soul. Christ is given by God the Father to be the Satisfier, the Reliever of man's spiritual need. In Christ and His atoning death, in His eternal Priesthood, in His abounding grace, will man find the soul's desire.

Jesus Christ is the true Bread, the living Bread that came down from heaven — supernatural and divine. Such food is not subject to rationing laws or to human limitations. There is no spiritual need too great to be supplied.

Under the tensions of modern living complete breakdowns in health have become far too common. Whatever we have been feeding on as bread has been insufficient to keep us in health. Christ will bring strength to the whole man — physical, mental and spiritual.

Christ is not only the Author of life, He is the Sustainer of life. To be spiritually strong there must be a constant appropriation of Christ's provisions for the soul. As He gave His life for us we must give our life without reservation to Him. Many are weak spiritually because they refuse to surrender the idols of the soul. They fear to make an utter commitment to Christ. Thus they halt and limp spiritually; they remain babes when they should be spiritual stalwarts.

Christ is sufficient for every craving of the soul.

Are you sinful and want deliverance? Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Feed upon Him for forgiveness.

Are you lonely? Do you want companionship? Christ is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Feed upon Him for companionship.

Are you perplexed and confused about the course of action

you should follow? Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God.

What bread is to the body, Christ is to the soul. Man needs Christ as a necessity, not as a luxury. You may be delighted with flowers, but you must have bread. Christ is not an ornament for outward show, but food to give and sustain life. In Him alone will humanity find all its needs supplied.

Trust in Him, lean all your weight on Him. Christ will receive you graciously, pardon you freely, strengthen you efficiently and stand by you through all of life's dark days. He will feed your soul on the living Bread and give to you eternal life.

### JESUS — THE WORLD'S HOPE

A man saw a field filled with gullied clay banks where no profitable crop could be grown. He thought he saw possibilities in the field so he purchased it. Then he started a program of adding certain elements to the soil. Within a decade that worthless land was a prize-winning field of hybrid corn.

The world is a gullied field of worthless clay banks. Jesus Christ looked the ruins over and saw the possibility. He purchased the field, and through the power of redeeming love He will re-establish paradise on earth.

There is not a thing wrong with the world that Calvary cannot cure. There is not a man, however degraded, forlorn or despairing, who cannot be made into a new creation by the power of the Gospel.

The Gospel is the "power of God and the wisdom of God." It does what nothing else can do. It bridges the chasm of hate. It spans the gorges of slander. It scales the mountains of despair. It sails every sea where there is a human need. The Gospel can make the impure pure, the untruthful truthful, the thief an honest man.

When men despair it is because they have turned their eyes from Christ. Christ knows no defeat and is never perplexed or confused. He can "make a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert." He is the "bruiser" of Satan's head, and every demon must obey His command. On His armor is written:

"King of kings and Lord of lords," and He shall be called "Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge."

Men cannot be filled with gloom and despair as long as they keep their eyes focused on Jesus Christ.

He is the hope of the world. He is the inspiration of the toiler. He is the captain of the warrior. He is the guide for the traveler. He is comfort to the sufferer and a light in the "valley of the shadow of death." Believe in Him and be saved. Follow Him and be secure. Trust Him and sing.

It is only after we have gone forth to meet Him that we learn through Him that our waters can be walked upon and that it is His voice that stills the tempest.

#### BROKEN THINGS

There lived an old gentleman on one of my early pastorates who spent his time repairing broken, discarded things. He was considered eccentric by many, for his shop, and even his yard, was cluttered with old, broken articles. With a smiling face and in a tone that eloquently told of deep satisfaction, he said, "This is the kind of work that God did for me. He took the fragments of my life and has built them into a new life. You know, Preacher, I feel that I am working with God when I am able to restore to usefulness some of these broken things."

The old gentleman's theology may not pass for orthodoxy, but certainly God shows His concern for the fragments, for the broken parts. When the great multitude had finished the meal, the Master said, "Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost." The Lord of all harvests could have created additional bread, but His love for His creation would allow no part to be discarded as useless.

Our Lord cleansed, restored and commissioned the Samaritan woman whose whole life had been a tragedy, whose every romance had been shattered and broken. With the fragments of that life, He aroused a city to its need of God.

The great Mender of men, in His dying hour, reached out a hand of delivering salvation to the dying thief. It is true, the thief's life was spent; there could be but little returns upon

the investment. But Christ came to mend broken hearts, to salvage broken lives, and to restore dead souls.

The fragments of broken lives produce sweet music and glorious harmony when yielded to the Master's hand. He can take a halting Jacob and make him the progenitor of the Saviour of the world. He can take a cowardly Peter and startle a Jerusalem with a sermon unsurpassed in all the history of preaching, in downright courage and holy zeal. He can take a broken, disillusioned Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, and make of him the prince of missionaries and an illustrious confounder of the enemies of the Cross.

Gather up the fragments. Place them in the Master's hands; He will startle the world with the finished product.

#### THE LIFE OF BEGINNING AGAIN

Christianity begins where everything else ends — it begins with death. Life in Christ involves a death, a birth and a new beginning. "Dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God." Paul could write in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

The new birth is the very heart and core of Christianity. From the Fall to Calvary every movement of God was designed to carry out and consummate the provisions for the birth of the Spirit.

The new birth is the reason for Judaism with its feasts, sacrifices and chanting priests. "The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

The new birth is the reason for the prophets with flaming words and daring courage.

The new birth is the reason for Bethlehem's manger, for Gethsemane's bloody sweat, and Calvary's terrible agony.

The hope of the world is the new birth — resurrection with Christ — nothing less will do, and nothing more is necessary.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" (Colossians 3:1). Seek the high road of holiness; seek the clean road of purity; seek the glory road of communion with God.

This seeking will put a new center of interest in the life. It will give direction to the natural drives. It will enable the soul to discriminate sharply between the questionable and the things which will bring glory to God.

He who is on this divine quest will guard his mannerisms, repudiate self, "put on as the elect of God . . . mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering . . . love."

This adventure for the higher things will add nobility, serenity and assurance to the life. It will sift out all selfish aspirations and will repudiate as ignoble all bitterness and hate.

The soul can realize its highest aspirations only as it is risen with Christ and is ever alert to become more like Him in the details of life. The just shall *live* by faith. Any other manner of living is mere existence. He who seeks the high road, who walks in fellowship with the Christ, drinks of the deep set springs of joy and contentment.



## CHAPTER 6

### CHALLENGED TO COMMITMENT

#### THIS ONE THING I DO

Life is a tragedy when one has plenty to live on, but nothing to live for. To dawdle through life with no great driving purpose is to miss the goal of all living.

A certain man, seeking pleasure, spent all his time following the sports. One day while riding his horse in a fox hunt, he was thrown and killed. Someone said of him, "He had nothing to do, and killed himself doing it."

The true test of a country is not the size of the cities, nor the abundance of the crops, but the kind of men produced. The true measure of a man is not how much he knows, nor how much he possesses — not what he does, but what he is.

The molding principle of the life must be upward, not downward. He who lives solely to build his barns greater than they might hold his bumper crops is called a fool by Christ.

"This one thing I do" is a good motto only so far as the thing proposed is good. The test of the ruling motto of a life is the man it forms. If the philosophy held does not make the man pure in heart, gracious and benevolent in manner, kind in word and deed, it should be looked upon as a curse and discarded as of satanic origin.

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, is the author of those words, "This one thing I do." He also said, "For me to live is Christ." Thus, his "one thing" was bounded by the teachings of Christ. All things contrary to the revealed will of the Son of God had no place in Paul's high resolve.

The man Paul became great because he was controlled by a great objective. He gave himself to it. He yielded the last ounce of strength, and gave the last drop of blood in order that the cause of Christ would prosper.

If you would be great, identify yourself with the great cause of Christ.

### MAKE ME A CAPTIVE, LORD

From the old hymn of George Matheson comes a lesson of inestimable value to the soul that longs to know the deep secrets of God's grace and love. The first verse is:

Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free;  
Force me to render up my sword, and I shall conquer be.

The way to freedom is by the way of surrender; the way to triumph is by the way of yielding. He who casts away every shadow of hope on the human side as a positive hindrance to advancing in God will discover that the way of self-abnegation is the way into the holiest of holies with God.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). God abhors all sin, but against the sin of pride He professes open hostility. Pride is a sin against self, against our neighbor and against God. "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life" (Proverbs 22:4).

One of the last messages of G. Fred Bergin, Director of Ashley Down Orphan Homes, Bristol, England, was: "Tell the brethren that they may be too big for God to use, but they cannot be too small."

To be proud of our accomplishments, to delight in displaying our talents, to rely upon eloquence and logic to do God's work is sacrilegious parade. While this is going on souls are dying and the wrath of God is ripening for judgment.

Alexander Maclaren said: "The reason why so few people are anointed with the Holy Ghost for service is that so few are willing to be made invisible by the Divine investiture. It is only when we take the low place before God and are able to count ourselves as nothing, that the Holy Spirit is able to use us."

Utter death to self is the only door to the heights in God.

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

Cast out pride and all its evil children. Declare that in you dwelleth no good thing. As only God can reveal the true condition of the soul, so only God can cleanse the soul from the spirit of pride and self-worship. Then, and only then, will the soul be a channel through which God can pour His grace and power.

#### PROFITABLE OR UNPROFITABLE

Who has not felt as did the writer of the Psalm when he cried out: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" (Psalm 116:12) So much received, so little given, causes a sense of sadness to settle upon the heart.

Satan uses this as the time for special attack. He says that because you are who you are there is little or nothing that you can do. He will tell you that a blundering failure is a reproach to the cause of Christ; for you to attempt anything would be downright stupid because of your limitations and because of your former life.

Refuse to listen to him. He is the accuser, a liar, an enemy of all righteousness. Turn your attention to Christ and His grace. Through the mercy of God you are born again; you have escaped the pollution of the past, and gained liberty from enslaving sins.

Examine your talents. What can you do?

Are you a builder? Build character by a noble example of integrity and truth.

Are you a garage man? Do clean honest work with a smile.

Are you an electrician? Be a light bringer for God, lighting the way to security in Christ.

Are you a farmer? Sow the Word as you sow the grain, live according to God's plan; a harvest will surely follow.

Are you a file clerk? Keep the records straight for His sake. Someday you will hear the Master say, "Well done."

Do you have an insignificant part on an assembly line? Put each part in place, and on time. And let the sunshine of God's love be in your face and in your manners, too.

Are you a mother and housewife? Keep in mind you are molding, not plastic clay, but immortal souls. You are in partnership with God. Greatness stands at your doorstep.

Start each day with a settled purpose to correct your faults and improve yourself. Speak, move, work as if you could see Jesus at your side. Listen carefully to the leading of the Spirit and follow His directions carefully. You will thus be a success. You will have rendered unto the Lord acceptable service, and you will have returns to present to Him at the dawn of eternity.

#### A MASTER PURPOSE

"Master Race" is a term used by Hitler. He thought of Germany as a nation of supermen. It was a wild dream of a mad man. Wherever he and his hordes went the iron heel was felt. People who would not bend were brutally broken.

This strange madness is to a greater or lesser extent in the breast of every unregenerate man. It flares into family strife; it is the instigator of community feuds; it creates slander; it commits murder and suicide.

Now God, through the power of Calvary, creates a race with a master purpose — to glorify God in love, in service, in hope.

A race with a master passion — *Love*. This passion is delineated in I Corinthians, chapter 13, with poetic beauty and scientific accuracy. "Follow after love" are the words with which the next chapter opens. "Follow" is not for the parlor but for the field. It suggests strenuous effort, persistent vigil, a passionate devotion. Here the soul will find perfect mastery — the mastery of self.

A race with a master resolve — *Service*. The Samaritan in Luke 10 "was moved with compassion" (said of none other save the Son of God) when he saw the neglected sufferer. He showed himself superior to the men who allowed the road from Jerusalem to Jericho to be infested with robbers, and infinitely superior to the religious hypocrites who passed by on the other side. The race with the master resolve serves to the limit of

ability wherever there is a human need, with no thought of remuneration or applause.

A race with a master outlook — *Hope*. This present world order is hopeless. Hate and suspicion and selfish grasping may be glossed over by civilization, but basically they remain the same. Charters are signed, peace pacts formulated, but few have hope that the situation will be much changed.

The race with the master outlook hopes in God. We are not following a lost cause. We shall, by the grace of God, regain our lost Edenic paradise. We shall yet eat of the "tree of life." The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain," saith the Lord.

Give yourself to God and let Him fill your life with the master purpose — the consuming purpose — to glorify God in love, in service, in hope.

#### THE CULT OF THE COMFORTABLE

There is no modern cult doing more to thwart the work of the Church than the ancient "Cult of the Comfortable."

It is a numerous group that knows no theological boundaries and never heard of segregation. It will run with the majority or identify itself with the few — no matter, just so personal comfort is assured.

Man loves to be comfortable. He will pay dearly to maintain his sense of well-being, and will oppose with all his power anyone who would disturb him.

The church to which Christ addressed a stinging rebuke said: "We have need of nothing." Can you imagine anything more deadening? No more new horizons, no new aspirations, no new incentive!

The goal has been reached. The game is over. There is nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to see.

This church had joined the "Cult of the Comfortable." The spirit of complacency had crept in, making its members smug and self-satisfied.

By solemn warning and by rich promises Christ tried to disturb this complacent group.

After his transforming vision on the Damascus Road, Paul was ever consumed with a driving urge that never would let him settle down to a comfortable way of life. Hear him: "I labor"; "I strive"; "I suffer"; "I spend and am spent."

From city to city, from country to country, this man with holy restlessness pressed on. He abandoned every physical comfort: "Those things which were gain to me I counted loss." He was consumed with the desire to make men know the comfort of grace.

Orison Swett Marden said: "All men who have accomplished great things have been men of one unwavering aim, who have sacrificed all conflicting desires and ambitions to one aim."

Comfort and happiness are elusive goals that grow hard by the Cross. "Then had the churches rest . . . walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:31). It is here stated that rest and comfort come by walking, not by idleness; they are found in activity, not in indolence.

Repudiate all fellowship with the "Cult of the Comfortable." Shake yourself into activity. Know the satisfaction that comes from accomplishment and you will never again be satisfied to fold your hands in idleness.

#### ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

The philosophy of many today is given by A. W. Tozer in the *Alliance Weekly*:

"Men think of the world, not as a battleground but as a playground. . . . We are not getting ready to live, we are already living, and the best we can do is to rid ourselves of our inhibitions and our frustrations and live this life to the full."

In contrast to this philosophy the Christian must realize that the Church of Jesus Christ is engaged in a battle with the forces of evil. It is a fight every inch of the way.

To meet the challenge of the crisis hour Christians must gird for the battle. This will mean self-denial, hard sacrificial work, misunderstanding, disappointment, testing, humiliation,

and an utter dependence upon God through prevailing prayer. There must be the repudiation of place-seekers and time-servers who dare not speak out against wrong. There must be the development and training of aggressive leaders who fear only sin and obey only God; who expose every form of error and courageously stand for truth under all circumstances.

Men in shops, in factories, in offices, must be touched by a divine fire that will change dawdlers into dynamic witnesses, and social butterflies into angels of mercy who will carry the Good News to the neglected, the outcasts and the unfortunate.

A right view of the world to come will change our relation to the world in which we live. This is not a playground, but a battlefield; we are not in a fellowship, but a fight; we are not in a crusade for culture, but in a warfare for Christ.

O watch and fight and pray;  
The battle ne'er give o'er;  
Renew it boldly every day, and  
Strength divine implore.

#### GIVE IN THE LIGHT OF THE CROSS

The poster portrayed a challenging message. A lighted candle stood beside a cross. A collection plate filled with money was placed at the foot of the cross. Across the poster were the words: "Give in the Light of the Cross."

It has been some time since I have seen the picture, but I cannot get it out of my mind. Think of it, "Give in the Light of the Cross!" Surely this would impoverish all of us.

Thinking on the qualities of God's giving as revealed in the Cross, a number of thoughts suggest themselves.

*Giving in the Light of the Cross Would Be Sacrificial Giving.* The Cross was costly to God. It was costly to Christ, for He gave His life's blood. Isaiah says: "He is despised and rejected of men . . . we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

*Giving in the Light of the Cross Would Be Generous Giving.* The Cross does not provide grace with nothing to spare, but

grace abounding, for "where sin abounded grace did much more abound."

God in Christ provided, not only for the forgiveness of our sins and the cleansing of our nature, but for every man to become more Christlike day by day.

*Giving in the Light of the Cross Would Be Without Discrimination.* The sacrifice of Calvary was for every man and woman, boy and girl, regardless of race, color, station or standing.

There is one promise that is repeated three times in the Bible. It was repeated by the prophet Joel; by the spokesman apostle, Peter; and by the Apostle Paul. It should cause every pulse to beat with a song of joy. Listen to it: "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." In His giving He included all; He included me.

Our giving must be beyond our own families, further than our own community; it must comprehend the world.

*Giving in the Light of the Cross Must Be for the Honor of God.*

When Jesus faced the Cross with its agony and shame, when He faced the hour of being made sin for us, His holy soul revolted at the horror of it. Nevertheless, He, looking up through the bloody sweat, said, "Not my will but thine be done."

Our giving then should be for God's glory. It should advance His cause in the earth. It should cause men to reflect upon God, and turn them from selfishness and sin to holiness and service.

"Give in the Light of the Cross!" This grips me. This challenges me to examine carefully my gifts of money and my gifts of service.

The Master sat over against the treasury and beheld how they gave. He is still beholding. He is still taking notice. The motive that prompts our giving is of concern to Him.



## CHAPTER 7

### THEY WERE CALLED CHRISTIANS

#### CHRIST CROWNED WITHIN

*God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.*

II Corinthians 6:16

The individual has no holiness unless God is in the midst, unless God controls the total outgoing of the life.

Solomon built a palace for Jehovah as Moses' workmen had long before made a tent. But until God entered and dwelt in them, the one was a palace only, and not a temple; the other was a tent but not a tabernacle.

It is possible to have a Holy of Holies but no Shekinah glory. It is possible to have a life filled with good deeds, with strict conformity to the ritual, and yet not have God.

We read in a British publication about a young German doctor, now an earnest Christian, but once a member of Hitler Youth and a soldier in Hitler's army who, speaking in a British church, said: "I am concerned with the casual quality of the faith of youth. You do not give to Christ anything like the devotion which German youth once gave to Hitler."

When Christ is crowned within there is solid ground for enthusiasm and gladness.

When Christ is crowned within, you have beauty for ashes, and gnarled, twisted lives are made over new.

When Christ is crowned within, you have food, water, light, companionship, love.

When Christ is crowned within, you have a Comforter for dark days, a refuge for stormy days, a supply for every weary traveler seeking bread.

When Christ is crowned within, you have hope — hope that lights up the future with a rainbow of gladness, smooths the thorniest pillow and holds the soul steady on the course to the city that hath no need of the sun.

Not by our efficiency, but by our brokenness, we provide a channel for Christ.

Not by our benevolence, but by our brotherliness, we lift men nearer to Christ.

Not by our performance, but by our patience, we grow in the graces of perfect love.

"God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Such dignity and honor conferred upon us cause the soul to bow low in humiliation at the foot of the Cross. If we are the temple of the living God, we must be holy. We must submit our will to God's will. We must strive to live daily as pleases Him and as becomes holiness.

#### THE MARK OF A CHRISTIAN

*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another. John 13:35*

What is the unmistakable mark of a Christian? Such a mark would be the same on all continents and under all suns. It would be the same among the black and the white, among the learned and the ignorant, among the rich and the poor. What sort of mark has God stamped upon His people? It is the mark of love.

"Their lawgiver has persuaded them all to be brethren," so said Lucian, a heathen, contemptuously of the Christians.

Tertullian, a Church Father, said: "The heathen oft exclaimed in wonder, 'See how these Christians love one another, and how ready they are to die for one another.'"

The hallmark of a Christian is love, love for God and for God's people; a love that suffers when God's cause suffers; a love that sacrifices to bring men to God, and to lift them to a higher plane of living.

Clifton J. Allen wrote: "By the law of love, above every

other law, men ought to live. It provides a constraining dynamic for spiritual and moral achievement. God gave the law, and to live by it is to live on the highest level of human experience."

Love must serve. Love must sacrifice. Love ignores criticism. Love sits by the one who weeps, and weeps. Love stands with the one misunderstood, and understands. Love walks the long road of lonely hidden service and inspires every traveler.

In the world of hate, Christians are dominated by love.

In this age of selfish egotism, the Christian goes the second mile, speaks words of cheer and lifts burdens that belong to others.

Love suffers long and is kind — kind to the unthankful and the unholy.

Love pierces the hard armor of degrading sin and brings to the deluded soul a revelation of God.

God has set a mark on His people — that mark is love for others.

Satan has marked his people — that mark is love for self.

Does the world see God's mark or Satan's mark as day by day it evaluates your words and deeds? In the secret sanctuary of your soul, which mark do you recognize as the one most prominent?

God's hallmark is a mark of love. It is an inner assurance to you that you are God's. It is also convincing evidence to the world that you are God's.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples."

#### WHAT DID YOU SAY?

I have hanging on the wall of my office a little motto with these words: "Never allow yourself to say anything gloomy."

This little motto has challenged me many times, for often the soul says things to itself which are never heard by the world. And it is those inward gloomy thoughts and words that produce a reflex influence upon our speech.

Nothing causes so much misery or so much happiness as does our speech. What a world of genuine wealth has come

from noble speech. And how much sorrow, anguish and degradation from hateful and vile words.

It was Socrates, centuries ago, who said: "Such as thy words are, such will thine affections be esteemed; and such as thine affections will be thy deeds; and such as thy deeds will be thy life."

It was the psalmist who said: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

The words of the mouth are mockery if the heart does not speak the same language. It were far better for the words to be wrong and the meditation right; but, of course, it is best that both be right. The outward expression should be a true index of the inward condition.

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

We live in a din of speech. Words! Words! Words! And many of them are neither gold nor silver. Remember that words have weight to crush, force to drive, sharpness to pierce, brightness to illumine, beauty to delight, consolation to cheer.

There are angry words which sow discord and breed bitterness. There are frivolous words which tend to poverty of spirit. There are double-meaning words which are spawned in the atmosphere of hypocrisy. There are icy words which blight like a killing frost. The words which one should school himself to utter are words of refinement seasoned with grace, spoken courteously and in season — words that lift heavy burdens and remain to cheer like the memory of a sweet song.

Speak cheerfully and truthfully, and thus lift burdens, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Pure thoughts and kind words will carry you down the road to beautiful living.

#### THE FLOW OF GENTLENESS

When God conquers the soul and takes all the self-will out of us, gentleness flows in like the gentleness of a summer evening breeze.

Among the defections of man's nature caused by sin are

hardness, bitterness, bluntness, harshness, sourness, rudeness, curtness, and stinging, cutting words.

Personalities which are wonderful to meet, but seem to be as rare as whooping cranes, are those who are gentle all the way through and under all circumstances. To meet such a one is like meeting a breath of fresh air in the bottom of a coal mine; it is like coming upon a beautiful rose surrounded by desert sand and cacti.

It is amazing what lack of gentleness there is among the people of God. Too often it is looked upon as a weakness not to be found in strong characters.

The Word declares: "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (Psalm 18:35).

The gentle soul will outlive his generation. His influence will be preserved in the hearts and minds of men.

Humility, meekness, kindness grow lush in the soul where gentleness reigns. It is to be remembered that the surgeon most desired in life's critical hour is the one with a heart, with a gentle touch and with an understanding sympathy. So it is when grief and disaster overwhelm the soul; humanity turns instinctively to the gentle soul for solace and sympathy.

Gentleness is appropriate for anyone who is a follower of the Christ to whom little children flocked and to whom a mother, whose daughter was tormented by demons, turned for help.

"Let your gentleness be known to all men, the Lord is at hand [or near]." Yes, He is near. He hears the words we speak, whether they be harsh or gentle, whether they be cruel or kind. Temper your conversation with kindness. Speak as becomes one who is a follower of the Christ of God.

He who would be filled with the spirit of gentleness must be emptied of the spirit of self. Only the refining energy of the indwelling Christ can do this.

We try to conquer our harshness and soon give up in despair.

The power of the Holy Spirit transforms those inner urges so that gentleness flows naturally from the heart in an ever widening and deepening stream of increasing gentleness.

## CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY

*... all of you ... be clothed with humility. I Peter 5:5*

Slaves in Peter's day wore a peculiar garment. It was a sort of "coverall" and was a badge of menial servitude. Perhaps Peter here is making reference to Christ's act of girding Himself with a towel and washing the disciples' feet. Whatever the allusion, here is a plain statement which applies to all, high and low, rich and poor, old and young: ". . . all of you . . . be clothed with humility."

Whoever has seen himself as he really is will have no heart to boast of superior qualities. He who boasts of his own achievement or goodness has measured himself with broken yardsticks, and examined himself under false lights.

Whatever other Christian graces one may possess, he is to be distinguished by the slave's "coverall" of humility. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ . . . who humbled himself and became obedient unto death."

Humility is not merely self-depreciation, the recognition of our own weakness and failures, but it is also a recognition of our strength in Christ to minister, to serve, to lift burdens, to smooth highways, to place lights where it is dark, and build beauty where all is ugly.

To wear the servant's dress goes strongly against the grain of our natures. But in true Christianity each man learns that he is wretched and naked and poor and blind. How can one who has had his heart searched by the Holy Spirit, who has confessed his leprous condition before Christ, get up from his knees and go out to claim superiority among his fellow men?

If we are Christ's, we must wear the garment of the slave. The humble man thinks not of his claim upon others but of his duties to them.

To serve is angelic, Christlike, divine. Thus, if one would possess such qualities, let him serve humbly in the great drama of life.

The garment of humility may expose one to the contempt of the world, but it recommends one to the favor of God. It secures

the soul against many temptations, and preserves an inner quietness and assurance when all about is discord.

### THE RIGHT SPIRIT

Things had not gone well for the four-year-old that morning. It seemed that he was always in trouble. After being reprimanded by his mother a time or two, she finally said to him, "Son, you go to that chair and sit on it, now!"

The little lad went to the chair, sat down, then, with meaningful words, said, "Mummy, I'm sitting down on the outside but I'm standing up on the inside."

There are many who have taken this attitude toward life. The hard, disagreeable, disappointing things come, and the things they desire to do are denied them, and they say as did the little boy: "I'm sitting down on the outside but I'm standing on the inside."

It's the inside spirit that gives us our trouble. In the twelfth Psalm the writer speaks thus: "With a double heart do they speak."

From the double heart may flow insincerity or falsehoods or deceit, and someone has said: "A man without a heart is an impossibility but a man with two hearts is a monster."

It was Einstein who said: "The real problem is in the hearts and minds of men. It is not a problem in physics but in ethics. It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man."

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," are the words of a prophet of God.

The heart reveals the true man; the outer life is but the clothing and may be only a mask of the real man within. From the heart spring all the actions of life; the fountain determines the quality of the stream.

The root of the evil heart is self-will. There is only one remedy for this inner heart malady. It is the cleansing power of the blessed Holy Spirit. When He comes in He cleanses the heart. He renews a right spirit. The desire of the heart is Godward rather than selfward.

Are you having trouble responding to the demands of life? Are you standing up inside when you were told to sit? Turn with all your heart to Christ. He will heal the sickness of the soul. He will this very moment direct your affections until duty becomes a delight and the will of God becomes the ruling motive of the soul.

#### CHRIST LIVETH IN ME

Far too often the believer is inclined to think of his risen Lord as residing in the eternities at some distant point, superintending the work of the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit and angelic visitations. There may be some truth in this, and yet to accept it as a religious philosophy is to rob Christianity of its choicest treasure. "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Doing the things we ought to do and leaving undone the things we ought not to do may, on its negative side, signify merely submission to restraint, and on its positive side merely a more or less willing response to a command. Neither action nor inaction necessarily springs from character.

The ideal is: Christ lives in me. Christ looks out through my eyes. Christ speaks with my voice. Christ ministers with my hands. "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

In a work of fiction by Edith Ann Stewart a character speaks to his friend thus: "If you are a Christian, you are preaching more sermons than the pulpit can ever hold in each moment of your day. They all see it; the newsboys, servants, clerks, typewriters, waitresses that you meet every week. The very way you smile at them and wish them 'good morning' shows the stuff you are made of, and pulls them down toward hell or lifts them up nearer heaven."

The Christ-saturated life is one of heavenly-mindedness. It is one of cheerful submission to providential appointments, and it is one of eager, earnest usefulness.

"Christ liveth in me." All sin and impurity will be repugnant



and repulsive. Holiness in its beauty and lofty sweep will be the supreme aim and passion of my life.

Christ lives in me today and all of the tomorrows that shall come — not a tyrant, but a Father; not a slave-driver, but a Saviour; not a representative of a police state, but the Sovereign of the eternal state, my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

“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 . . . that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19).

## CHAPTER 8

### THE HOME CHRISTIAN

*Many years ago when I was standing at life's cross-roads, Mother stood there, too. With patient understanding and wise counsel she helped me make the decision to go with God despite the cost in personal ambition.*

*My mother never wrote a book, she lived "THE BOOK"; she never composed a song but she created a song in the hearts of many others; she never moved an audience with her eloquence but she, by daily devotion, convinced all who knew her of the genuineness of the Christian faith.*

#### HOME

Home — what tender memories the word arouses! What aspirations it inspires, what solemn resolve it creates!

Home — a word that reaches into the past and brings cheer and gladness. It is the cement which holds today's present together. It sweeps out into the future with inspiration and hope.

Home is founded on submission, not the submission of fear, but of love. "True gladness of heart springs from giving, not getting, of having made someone else happy." Home can only be built by sharing. Thus, there should be no secrets, no private accounts, no closed topics for discussion.

It is an old secret, but one that all should learn soon — the only way to get sunshine into your own heart is to bring sunshine into the hearts of others. Ninety per cent of the friction

of daily life is caused by the tone of voice. Hence, guard carefully that tone quality when speaking.

Marriage and family life are ordained by God. It is the Creator's wise provision to bring out the most noble qualities in both man and woman. It is the cradle of morality, the nursery of piety, and the university for training in all the essential qualities of manhood or womanhood.

The perfect home is a drawn curtain against mistrust and discontent. It is a magnet which draws those whose duties have taken them abroad back to the heart of contentment and rest.

Home is a field where there may be grown character, nobility and song, or where by neglect may grow the thorn tree of strife and the bramble bush of discontent.

Home is what you make it. Look well to your home. Place sentinels of purity at every gate; man every watchtower with truth and sobriety. As goes your home, so goes eternity for you and for your children.

#### GUARDIANS OF THE PORTALS

An old Hebrew law was, "Guard well the portals of your homes." This is an admonition which modern families need to heed.

The God of the Christian has instituted homes for the comfort of men and women, and for the proper gendering of children in a world that is cursed by sin. The home is the greatest force for righteousness. Without it, it is scarcely possible to build a social order founded on righteousness and truth. "The storm that wrecks the home also wrecks the ship of state."

The traditional home which built the world's highest form of civilization is fast going to pieces under the incessant hammering of evil. The divorce courts reveal a startling situation. It is to be remembered, however, that divorce does not break up a home, it merely makes legal what has already occurred.

Parents, guardians of the portals, must recognize the foes with which they must do battle, then plan an attack which will break all connections with the subtle forces of night.

The evil spirit of self-pity genders faultfinding which is

married to quarreling. This spirit will creep past the portal on busy days unless a guard is set against it.

The demons of strife, jealousy, worry, bitterness soon move in unless barriers of love and loyalty are constantly raised against them.

The Christ-centered home is a city of refuge, a citadel of defense, an armor of righteousness. Build such a home and you have built the thing nearest to heaven that is possible on earth.

Keepers of the door! Guardians of the portals! Keep Christ and the things of Christ within. If gleaming fixtures and expensive appliances make a home, then America has succeeded. But how sad it is when amid all the luxury of the modern home, the children hear the name of God only in blasphemy, and are schooled in duplicity and deception. Air conditioning is idle talk if the atmosphere is filled with hate. Radiant heating is mocking, if the fires of love smolder to ashes. Beautiful tapestry is farcical if the walls of the soul are hung with pictures of vice.

If you are to build your home beautiful the Divine Presence is an absolute necessity. In order to cultivate the reality of His presence there must be a time when the family worships. By this hour of communion the romance of your love will be kept alive; the doing of small duties will be lifted from drudgery to the level of a sacrament, and the slight misunderstanding will melt like fog on a summer morning. The children, seeing God here, will have no trouble believing in Him, and believing reverently in Him they will naturally surrender their lives into His control.

### HOME IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

A shrewd salesman stopped a couple of boys and, pointing down the hill, asked, "Which house do you live in, boys?" One of the boys replied: "We used to live in that house, but it's not a house any more, it's a home."

The salesman looked surprised and asked, "What made the difference?"

The boy beamed, "You see, there's love there now."

Four walls and a roof will make a house, but not a home.

The house is a mere shelter; the home is a shelter plus love and kindness, cooperation and trust.

Never forget that marital difficulty too often begins when one partner takes the other for granted. The little kindnesses are neglected, the little courtesies are overlooked, the scrupulous care of person and clothing is given up, and soon a wide chasm of misunderstanding separates those who once were knit together in a beautiful fellowship of love.

Living is an art to be learned and practiced as well as a responsibility to be used. Everyone who looks for it can find an alibi for a grouchy disposition and a tendency to find fault with others.

Reading through Ezekiel I came upon the words: "I sat where they sat." I meditated upon it as I thought of home.

Were I to sit where the children sit, would I be more appreciative and a little less exacting since they are compelled to live in a generation that has lost its way?

Were I to sit where the wife and mother sits with cooking and mending, sweeping and laundry, house cleaning and baby care, would I be more helpful, and kinder in speech and attitude?

Were I to sit where Grandma sits, with failing powers and sight, with the clutching fear of helplessness, and lonely for the days that are past, would I be more sympathetic, more careful to speak graciously and show greater interest in her concerns?

The home is what we make it. It is a shrine for worship or a den of hate. It is an oratorio of gladness or a dirge of self-pitying despair. It is an island where love reigns or a galley filled with insulting slaves.

Make your home and its maintenance an important part of your life. The dividends will be large in happiness and in character.

#### KEEP THE HOME CHRISTIAN

The chief concern of every husband and wife should be to maintain a Christian home — a home where love reigns, where sacrifice is recognized as essential, and where understanding helpfulness and wise discipline are the practice of daily living.

The doorsill of the home is the foundation of all proper society. He who would adopt an attitude or pursue a course of action that would destroy a home is an enemy of all righteousness, a foe to progress and a destroyer of good. He who holds lightly the vows upon which his home was built is shallow in his thinking and corrupt in his heart. He will soon drink the cup of bitter remorse and endure the shame of planned folly.

God urged men to build homes; as this command has been obeyed rich blessings have followed. "Home is a little hollow scooped out of the windy hill of the world, where we can be shielded from its cares and annoyances."

Take God into the home!

Build an altar of devotion and praise to the eternal Father.

Teach each child by precept and by example that God is good, loving and kind, and that because of His gracious kindness to us we owe Him our full allegiance and our prompt obedience.

One of the first lessons to be learned by the child is the lesson of obedience to constituted authority. It can never be successfully taught by the man who lives in defiance of God's law of the Sabbath, who repudiates the law of purity, and who spends all his time in the pursuit of worldly gain.

No parent is worthy to administer correction to a child if he himself violates law. If the home is kept Christian it will not be by accident. There must be bars erected against the wiles of Satan.

Were I asked to list the qualities of a Christian home they would be:

*Cooperation.* Cooperation in duties, in finance, discipline and worship.

*Confidence.* Confidence in the loyalty, ability and integrity of the other members of the partnership.

*Comradeship.* The family that works together and prays together and plays together generally stays together.

*Self-control.* Practice self-control, and modesty and chastity will grow tall and strong.

A home is a church within a church; a state within a state;

an empire within an empire; a world within a world — this is a home. Keep the home Christian!

#### FAMILY RELIGION

There is a teaching that is gaining in popularity: "Return to God." It does not make any difference what god, according to this philosophy, but turn and worship.

The Christian religion rests squarely on man's approach to the Infinite through Jesus Christ the Lord. To surrender this point is not only unchristian; it is antichristian. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. His declaration is clear: "I am the door. . . . No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Family religion must be Christ-centered. He must control the social and ethical life of the members of the family. He must be worshiped in a planned program in which all members participate.

There is a place for Christian training in the home despite the clamor and jargon of a civilization madly on its way to nowhere in particular, and seriously surveying the ashes of frustrated hopes which fill its hands.

Adults in all contacts of life are constantly seeking to maintain satisfactory relationships with other adults. We must, as parents, make amicable relationships with our teen-agers a matter of forethought and study. Tensions between parents and children may unconsciously foster resentment and antagonism which will result in complete alienation of the youth from Christ and the church.

In dealing with the adolescent, do not make an issue except when fundamentals are involved. Overlook a sulk, ignore an unkind word, swallow your sensitivity and avoid a clash over incidentals. Save your demands for the great moral principles on which there can be no compromise. These are: honor, honesty, chastity, reverence, accountability to God.

See that worship habits are maintained in the family group. A child may not consent to his quiet time alone. Let it pass, but make it clear that he observe the time of family devotions. He

may be surly, sour and disdainful. Do not let this destroy the atmosphere of worship in your own soul. You are to set the spiritual level of the worship time.

Keep in mind, your child lives in a generation different from yours — the ideals, the fashions, the language may all be different. You cannot fit him into the pattern of life of thirty-five years ago. Just as the models of cars have changed, so has life. Allow your child to live a modern but model life, by the grace of God, yielded to the Christ of God.

Family religion is not an accident, is not a mere form, is not a carry-over from the days when life was not so intense. It is God's church in the house. It is the greatest cohesive force in holding the home together. Allow nothing to destroy the family altar.

#### YOUR HOME AND ITS BATTLEMENTS

*When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine own house, if any man fall from thence.*

Deuteronomy 22:8

God is concerned about the kind of home we build. Safeguards are to be erected, great care taken that no one be injured by our thoughtlessness or carelessness. There must be more than a roof to keep out the rain, there must also be great principles to keep out selfishness. Further, there must be more than four walls to shut out the cold, there must be united effort to keep out wickedness and sin.

Home is more than a house, no matter how modern its structure and appointments. There must be the strength of noble manhood and the love of virtuous womanhood.

Home is more than a place to eat and sleep. It is a place of kindness, loyalty, cooperation, comradeship, trust, patience, forbearance, forgiveness.

Home is the place where strife is shut out and love shut in.

Home is a place where the unknown nobodies are well known and where the great of earth are but ordinary people.

The future security of nations depends more upon the purity



and goodness of mothers than it does upon the skill of scientists. We need highly trained mothers whose moral integrity is above question as much as we need highly trained scientists whose skills cannot be bought by the enemies of our country.

The home is a covenant with posterity.

The home is the pledge to mankind everywhere that the claims of the human race will be fostered. It is the guarantee to the generations yet unborn that they will have their chance unhandicapped by vicious habits of selfishness.

The home that is not genuinely Christian is not a true home, for the home is God's institution and the basis of honorable society. It is a citadel of truth and righteousness.

The battlements of home are honor, loyalty, faith, discipline and a firm trust in Jesus Christ the Lord. Build these battlements about your home if you would be free from blood guiltiness.

#### WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?

*Believe on the Lord . . . thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Acts 16:31

The salvation of our children is our first responsibility and our heaviest obligation. Whatever else we may do for them is in vain if we fail in this.

How are we to live and what great principles must we follow so as to bring our sons and daughters to Christ and thus have the circle unbroken in eternity?

We must, as parents, be sure of our own right relationships to Christ. In order to exert a holy influence we must live holy lives. There must never be a hint of murmuring against the providences of God or a complaint against our lot in life.

We must maintain a kind, unselfish, devotional atmosphere. Make conversation center around spiritual things at least once every day. Manifest the spirit of Christ in kind words, courteous acts, and in cheerfully cooperating to bring joy to others.

Parents must act together in the matter of child training. Many a child has been lost to the cause of Christ by the divided attitude of parents over the question of discipline and training.

Children must be taught to bear responsibility. To bring up children in idleness is to contribute to delinquency. Give the children some tasks. They may not be big but let the child know that they are tasks to be performed at the appointed time.

The habit of attending the worship services of the church must be formed in childhood. Never allow Sunday school to be a substitute for the worship service. The child will absorb much from the atmosphere of the service even though he does not fully understand all that is being said.

Give much attention to the reading and the companions of your children. Young people will read. Have plenty of attractive, wholesome Christian literature at hand. Make it possible for your children to attend Christian camps and youth conventions.

Above everything else, work and fast and pray for your children, for their salvation and for their preservation in the way of truth. It is not enough to be concerned for their spiritual welfare until they have set up homes of their own. Rather, all your life through be an intercessor for your children. You can thus build a wall about them, a protecting hedge, a guiding image that will be of great value to them as they meet the cold facts of an atheistic age.

## CHAPTER 9

# THE CHRISTIAN'S SOCIAL CONCERN

### IT IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

A bent old woman silently passed me in the gray of a short winter evening. She was small, not five feet tall, slight of build and showing the marks of a life of deprivation and want. Hanging over her shoulder was a cloth bag which came but a few inches from the sidewalk. The street was full of cars and busses; the sidewalk was crowded with homeward-bound workers, but the little old woman was no one's problem and no one's concern. It seemed she was one of those strange creatures of the city who make a meager living by collecting rags, begging and depending on charity.

The bus for which I was waiting came, and I was able to find standing room while being taken toward my comfortable home where warmth and cheer and love would greet me. But I could not dismiss the forlorn, shabbily-dressed, little old woman from my mind.

I reasoned with myself, "It is none of my business — she may be a professional beggar who is wealthy." But such a condition did not seem to square with my ideals. Am I to blame that such a condition should exist? Has the Church failed in some way?

Perhaps these questions cannot be answered fully, but it has occurred to me that most of us have a one-track mind, primarily a "Personal Religious Experience," or "A Social Gospel." We act as though these two were opposed, the one to the other. The Bible comprehends both principles. Jesus not only forgave men's sins, He bettered their social conditions. The story of the

Prodigal Son is the gospel of personal forgiveness, while the story of the Good Samaritan is one of the social gospel.

The New Testament church preached forgiveness for such as the Philippian jailer and appointed deacons to care for the widows who were charges of the church.

We conclude, therefore, that every church should preach a Gospel that regenerates the slaves of sin and, at the same time, seeks to improve the social order everywhere.

When conditions endangering the lives of the workmen exist in a coal mine, Christians should seek to help correct that condition and support the men who are laboring to that end. When children are compelled to play in the streets for lack of playgrounds, or when youth crowd into vulgar places of amusement because no wholesome place is provided, then the church should spearhead a movement to improve those conditions.

Christianity is more than singing psalms on Sunday and being religious during revival. It is a dynamic force that can change men and customs. It will work for the regeneration of the individual and constantly search for a system which will better convey justice, brotherhood and love. It exalts service to humanity as a primary expression of a genuine personal experience of grace.

#### CHRISTIAN LAW

*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2*

The law tells us what to do; love gives us the power to do it.

In helping to bear the burdens of others we fulfill the law of Christ — the law of love. This is the only law by which the Christian is bound. He is not bound by the law of ritual, ceremony, or stated formulas, but by the law of love. Wherever and whenever there is a burden to lift, it becomes his duty to put his shoulder under it and lift to the limit of his ability.

The lifting of the world's burdens was never attempted until Christ walked into the arena of our world. When people went wrong the officer of the law meted out punishment to them;

society cast them out of its company, out of its city. For minor offenses the offender was executed.

It was Henry Van Dyke who wrote: "There is a loftier ambition than merely to stand high in the world. It is to stoop down and lift mankind a little higher."

Practical Christian sympathy is like a hot drink on a cold day; like a beautiful flower surrounded with desert sand; like oil on a bearing made hot by friction.

Bearing the burdens of others will give us resemblance to Him who lived solely for others. "He went about doing good." The service of Christ was unrestricted, continuous and joyously rendered.

Burdens are made lighter by kind words — words of appreciation, words of praise. Many a man has found his unbearable burden lighter because someone gave him a friendly smile. Burdens are heavy when the heart is heavy; they grow lighter as the song of gladness grows in the heart. Gladness leaps into a flame when love rules the heart. Inspire men to increase their love one for another and you will lighten every man's burden.

Give yourself away in compassionate burden bearing and, wonder of wonders, your burdens will be changed to wings.

Wherever you go leave a golden thread of human kindness, a touch of healing sympathy, a song of laughing hope, and faith will spring up in the hearts of despairing men. New vision will come to those blinded by care, and a song will be heard as life's burdens blend into a great oratorio of praise.

### THE GOLDEN RULE APPLIED

A slogan in Canada's vacation land, "Leave every camping site better than you found it," is an excellent motto for each of us as we journey toward the land of unsetting sun.

We are surrounded with a multiplicity of gadgets and gimmicks which are supposed to be marks of the full life, yet we are in danger of losing our sunshine and song. Laughter and happiness do not come packaged in expensive wrappings, but flow out from a heart of good will.

"None of you should think only of his own affairs, but should

learn to see things from other people's point of view" (Philippians 2:4, Phillips Translation).

Learn to accept a favor so graciously that the person will wish he could do more for you. Bestow a favor in such a manner that the acceptance of it will not in any wise call attention to your generosity.

The Golden Rule does not merely forbid all petty malice and revenge, all cheating and overreaching, it does much more than this. It settles a hundred difficult points which, in a world like this, are continually arising between man and man.

Says Bishop Ryle: "It [The Golden Rule] prevents the necessity of laying down endless little rules for our conduct in specific cases. It sweeps the whole field with one mighty principle. . . . How many intricate questions would be decided at once, if this rule were honestly used."

A man, motivated by the Golden Rule, lives for tomorrow instead of living in the yesterday, and he feels improvement is necessary if he keeps from sliding to a lower level of living.

The shape of a man's head, the length of his legs, the color of his eyes are inherited from his ancestors, but he alone is responsible for his attitude toward other men.

Wherever Jesus went something happened to relieve suffering, to heal sorrow and to remove want. He who follows Christ must be clean, but he must also be helpful and kind.

A Christian is to be "salt" and "light," not jury and judge; he is to be ruled by love, never by the spirit of selfish censoriousness.

The Golden Rule is the rule of love. To follow the Golden Rule will be to leave "every camping site better than you found it," every heart happier than when you met, every day a day well spent for the Master.

#### SALVATION AND BEHAVIOR

In Luke the tenth chapter is the parable of the Good Samaritan. The story is a beautiful one and full of emotional stimuli.

Jesus used this parable to answer two questions asked by one man, a lawyer. The first, "What shall I do to inherit eternal

life?" and the second, which grew out of the first, "Who is my neighbor?"

Note the Master's answer to the first question: "Thou shalt love . . . God . . . and thy neighbor as thyself." Love is the fulfilling of the law. Love is the ethic by which a Christian must ever guide his life. There is nothing greater than love, nothing beyond love.

We are in danger of missing the importance of the second point in this conversation. Let it be said emphatically that the answer to the first question has to do with establishing right relation between man and God, while the answer to the second has to do with maintaining this right relationship, which, of course, involves our attitudes toward our fellow men.

The force of the parable is not against the foolishness of the man who was robbed. Neither is it against the robbers who so cruelly wronged the lonely man. It is against the heartlessness of the religionists who neglected the man who had been robbed. It is a great wrong if we pass by that wounded man, that broken woman, that spoiled humanity.

Donald M. Baillie says: "When we speak of communism, can we wash our hands? Have we cared enough about the underprivileged, about the sore spots of the world that give communism its chance?"

It is not enough to sing our songs, recite our creeds, pay our budgets. There is a world to be saved. There is human suffering and want and starvation in wide areas of the world.

Look into your bank account, examine your attitudes, evaluate the driving motives which have ruled you for the last month. Will they stand the close scrutiny of Christ?

The binding up of wounds, the pouring in of oil, the lifting of the man — these are the responsibilities of love. The standard is to love God with a perfect heart, love your fellow man to the point of sacrifice, "then ye shall be children of your father in heaven."

#### BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY

In a small town lived a good man. He was not a success as men count success. He was not a great preacher. But the gentle-

ness of his spirit, his love of beauty, his spirit of genuine contentment, his aversion to everything tawdry or cheap, his intolerance of moral dirt, his burning opposition to selfish oppression and hypocrisy, his simple and profound faith in Jesus Christ as the world's example and atoning Saviour, caused men of all stations in life to live cleaner, to be more forgiving and more tolerant.

This good man did not build his philosophy of life upon the principle that the government owed him a living but that he owed the government absolute loyalty. To him patriotism was natural. He took it for granted that all men were patriots wherever they lived, and that patriotism was a link between nations.

He taught his children diligence, frugality, obedience to law and respect for government. The Bible was the rule of conduct in his own life and in the management of his home, as well as his ethical standard in social contacts.

It never occurred to him that a man was his enemy because his skin was dark, or because he came from a different section of the globe. He looked upon all men as his brothers, whose burdens he should share, and whose pathway should be straightened to the limit of his ability.

He had not been schooled in the formal teachings of the universities, but, from the university of life, he had learned the deep principles of life found in such statements as these:

"No man liveth unto himself."

"All men are brothers."

"Happiness is the by-product of obedience."

"Right will triumph."

"He who lives most unselfishly is the most godlike."

"Seek first the kingdom of God."

"Children, obey your parents."

This good man exerted a great influence upon my life. He was an exceptional soul—he was my father. But in thousands of homes throughout this country are men and women who, every day, are helping to build a better community. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ they are helping to overcome race



prejudice, and are doing more to counteract the influence of communism than all the armies ever gathered together.

Make America wholly Christian, and communism will have not a square yard of ground on which to stand. Build the principles of Jesus Christ into the social order, and prosperity, security, piety will bless our land.

#### BREAD UPON THE WATERS

*Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Ecclesiastes 11:1*

It is contrary to the expectation of the natural man to cast bread upon the water and have it return. Nevertheless that is what the Book says. It sounds unreasonable, but it may be only above reason. God does things out of the ordinary paths of human progress.

God's way is not our way. Hear the words of Christ: "He that saveth his life shall lose it." There is a hoarding that tends to poverty, and a withholding that starves the soul.

He that scatters sunshine will have light and warmth and cheer even when his own sun is set.

He who lends a hand to the overburdened will be helped in the day of his calamities.

He who loans three loaves at midnight to feed the wayfarer will not lack bread when spiritual poverty curses the land.

If you would be fed, feed. If you would be helped, help. If you would have a friend, be a friend. If you would know the secrets of God, spend yourself for Him and He will give Himself to you.

In giving yourself, let there be a generous overflow rather than a calculated giving. Sow beside all waters, even upon 'unlikely soil, and in an unpromising season, for "thou shalt find it after many days." God does not pay on Friday night, but He pays. Kindness may not spring up as quickly as mushrooms; but it springs up more abundantly and in all climates. It is here declared that an act of kindness or a deed of charity, whensoever done, will prosper without fail. To the one performing the gen-

erous act there will come a development in graces and Christ-likeness which is wealth of eternal value.

"As therefore ye have opportunity, do good unto all men." "Be not weary in well doing."

Be guided by principles and not by likelihood. Your work done in the name of the Lord will never be lost sight of by the Lord of harvest. "He that soweth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life." Be not miserly in your benevolence. Make it always in the name of the Lord and you are certain of returns.

#### THIS MAN SHALL BE THE PEACE

We look over our war threatened world and wonder, where is the peace promised by the angels when over Judean hills they sang "On earth peace"? Was it all an hallucination, a dream, a groundless hope?

The ancient prophet answers: "And this man [Christ] shall be the peace" (Micah 5:5). Christ is not to proclaim peace, He is not to offer terms of peace, He is the peace.

*This man shall be the peace.* Nations feverishly seeking peace have shut the door in His face. They have refused Him a place at peace conferences, and denied Him His right to participate in the affairs of men. The results have been confusion, distrust, incriminations, hatred and war. It could not be otherwise. He is the peace. He does not offer the platform upon which peace may be secured, He is the peace. When He is invited in, then comes peace: a peace that is equitable, that restores to all men the dignity of true freedom.

*This man shall be the peace.* Labor and management must understand that violence, starvation tactics and bitter invectives are not the way to secure peace. When Christ is acknowledged as the right owner and we as workers together with Him, then only will labor and management be done with lockouts and strikes, with violence and discrimination.

*This man shall be the peace.* Sacred vows are taken, homes are formed, but is no consideration to be given to the Christ, no place given to His Word, no time given in worship? He is the

peace and if He is rudely ignored in a home, there will be no peace in it.

*This man shall be the peace.* He is our peace with God. You see, we do not make peace with God, we enter into peace. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God." In our anguish of soul over sinful indulgence we find peace in Christ.

Amid all the poignant griefs occasioned by life's misunderstanding, He is our peace. In Him the mental unrest is quieted and perfect peace fills the soul with certainty.

Submit to His rule. Enthroned Him in your life and He will establish peace. This is the only road to peace for either nations or individuals.

*This man shall be the peace.*

## CHAPTER 10

# QUEST FOR HOLY LIVING

### PURSUE HOLINESS

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14*

Here is a text which has meant much to countless people. The word "follow" has the force of pursuit. It means to pursue peace with all men as the motivating drive of the life, and pursue the way of holiness as the most precious thing in life.

A life of holiness is the most beautiful thing in this world of beauty, and it is also the most valuable thing, for it cannot be purchased with the combined wealth of the world.

Pursue holiness. Make holiness of heart and life your supreme aim. Make training, home building, secular pursuits, social standing and opinions of men all secondary; follow after holiness.

In the twelfth chapter of Hebrews there are some explicit directions for pursuing holiness: "Lay aside every weight" — anything that is superfluous. Said a runner, "It may refer to clothing or undue fleshiness of body. This would refer to an appetite, though lawful, that tends to grow on one; a devotion to some pursuit that would claim first place in the affections — anything that hinders one in realizing the desire to be Christ-like."

"Run with patience." With patient endurance, despite affliction, persecution or slander, run on.

"Looking unto Jesus." Keep your eyes off the crowd, it matters little what it says or thinks. Keep your eyes off yourself

if you would avoid the evils of pride or discouragement. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

"Endure chastening." — "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." Be concerned with your own piety and devotion, but also be concerned lest your brother miss God's best for his life.

To fail of the grace of holiness is the tragedy of tragedies. It means a wilderness of shifting sands and fiery serpents. It means discontent, unhappiness, unrealized hopes, no settled dwelling place spiritually.

Ever pursue this glorious grace. It is a life of fruitful happiness, a service of delight, a journey accompanied by the anointed of God.

Follow holiness and you will see the Lord.

#### POWER FOR HOLY LIVING

A few years ago a wealthy Chinese gentleman bought a car and had it pushed from place to place. When asked whether there was any power in the car, he replied, "Yes, there is power in it, but I am afraid to turn it on."

Is it possible that this is the fault of many Christians today? Is there power within, the power of the Holy Spirit, which we are afraid to turn on?

"Behold, I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

Every man needs power. Every earnest man covets power. Every surrendered man has the Master's imperial promise of power. But every man does not possess power. On all sides may be heard confessions of failure through weakness. Why?

Power costs. There is a law of exchange that rules in every level of living. "If you get you must give." If I want a car, I must give. If I want an education, I must give. If I want friends, I must give. If I want God's divine power which enables me to

live victoriously in a world ruled by sin, I must give. If I want power in prayer, in witnessing, in helpful service, I must give.

What is the price of this coveted power?

It cannot be bought with gold. In the early days of the Church Peter said to Simon the sorcerer, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."

"If any man would come after me let him deny self" — this is the law of exchange. Self must be denied, put off, crucified. Where Paul uses the word "flesh" in his letters, substitute the Master's word "self" and you will catch the meaning of "deny self."

The power which Christ gives is a Person. He is a Person who is experienced and strong and loving. He will guide, instruct and assist you. His presence unrestrained by self means unlimited power.

Be done with your pushing and turn on the power.

#### SAINTS IN CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD

Our Lord meant for sainthood to be practical. It was to be developed in everyday surroundings. The Lord Jesus prayed: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." We need not give up the interest and concern of this life in order to be saints. In spite of the grinding wear of monotonous commonplace duties, sainthood is possible for all.

We reject medieval theology, yet we cling to the medieval idea of sainthood. We think of a saint as a thin, pale individual with a dour face, transparent hands and a sepulchral voice.

God's saints are men, ordinary men who, amid the grime and sweat of everyday activities, live holy lives and light a torch of truth for all who follow.

With all the forces of Egypt pitted against him and three million souls depending upon him, Moses maintained his trust in God — a picture of God's saint.

Paul witnessing, enduring, denouncing, and demanding his right as a Roman citizen, but joyously triumphant and filled with happy content — this is God's saint.

Sainthood is activity. Sainthood is service for others. Sainthood is not out of this world, but in this world, superior to it. It is a light for darkness, a voice of certainty in the midst of confusion, a helping hand held out to frustrated humanity.

"Saints . . . of Caesar's household" (Philippians 4:22). The Caesar at this time was Nero, the most unscrupulous monster who ever swayed the destinies of a nation; but there were saints in spite of such surroundings. Saints, yes, saints in Nero's household.

Saints in the stained glass windows will do little to control the vicious wickedness of our generation. But saints working behind show windows will be an impelling force of righteousness.

The dealer in art glass can accurately compute the worth of the saint in a stained glass window, but no one can measure the value of a saint in a factory, in a shop, on a farm.

Sainthood is not produced in the hothouses or sheltered nooks of pampered self-indulgence, but it is hammered out on the anvils of hardship and self-forgetfulness. It is not bestowed by ecclesiastical vote, but is built into the hearts of men and women whose lives are abandoned to Christ.

#### THE KEY TO HOLY LIVING

*They . . . first gave their own selves to the Lord.*  
II Corinthians 8:5

The callings of God never leave a man where they find him. To stay where he is, after God has bidden him to move on, is itself a backward movement, though he take no actual step. The further one goes from the self-life, the nearer he comes to God.

The church of Macedonia, of which the above text of Scripture is written, had suffered a great trial and affliction. The fruit of the suffering had brought to them "abundant joy" and turned their poverty into boundless liberality. They prayerfully provided for the poor and met all obligations of the Early Church willingly and without coercion. They gave themselves to the Lord, and that fulfilled everything which was required in following the Lord.

The law of the kingdom of heaven is that we receive only through giving and we gain only through losing. This is an immutable law, and no man yields his all to God who does not "receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18:30). This is a fundamental principle which no man-made rule of conduct or behaviorism can wipe out or destroy.

Discipleship requires cross bearing. Three things seem to be necessary for us each day: our daily food, for which we are to pray (Matthew 6:11); our daily work, in which we are to be faithful (I Thessalonians 4:11, 12); and our daily cross. The Master said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

No man can give to God as much as God will give back to him. We do not possess enough to equal or match His unbounded generosity. This is a principle clearly stated in the Scripture and abundantly illustrated by the lives of men. Let it be observed, however, that God does not show us the results of obedience before we obey, for then the obtainment of results would become our motive to obey. God asks that the motive shall be solely that He wishes obedience. "Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went." While the path that Abraham followed was a path of separation and deferred hopes, yet the rains of blessings conferred upon Abraham reach to the last horizon of time.

No habits or tastes or talents are ever impoverished by being unreservedly offered to God. When "Christ first" becomes the controlling motive of the life, the soul moves in its true orbit and eternity alone will reveal the full unfolding of such a life.

#### SOUNDING LINES

Let your trust in God be deeper than personal health, and independent of creature comforts. He is more than anything He can do for us.

Labor always that His beauty may shine forth from your life without distortion; the world needs to see Jesus Christ anew.

When you are dull and heavy, as often will be the case,



stand firm, hold fast, resist. God is present and is working out His purpose.

Live to please God in the present moment. Avoid anxiety over the past; it is under the blood. Do not perplex yourself over the future; it is in God's hands. Face today without fear, in company with the Living Lord, and your whole personality will expand the beauties of holiness.

Do not puzzle yourself over the absence of joy. Remember that the emotions may be played upon by Satan, and good health may cause you to sing. Never lean on your feelings, lean hard on God.

Encourage and cultivate every desire to be holy. This will lead over the road of denial of self, and through the valley of misunderstanding, but it is the only way to a close fellowship with your Redeemer.

Praise, faith, prayer and patient meditation on the Word will keep the sanctified soul full of love and good works. It is a fact that God hears the heart even when words are not spoken aloud, but He never hears spoken words without the heart.

Shun everything that leads to evil speaking, strife and division if you would know the warmth of God's love in the day of adversity.

Be on your guard against pride of intellect in things religious, for intellectual pride dogmatically states personal opinions as revealed truth, and treats as heresy all contrary views. This attitude is the fountain from which springs fanaticism, schism and utter apostasy.

You are to ever recognize that you are not your own. Christ is your Master. Your possessions are His. Your body is His. Your mind is His. You are His property utterly. You are to live for His glory every moment of every day.

#### TRUE PIETY

True piety is simple, free, without ostentation. It does not condone sin and is free from any "holier than thou" attitude. It is joyous, easy to live with, and is ever ready to lend a hand.

The real saint makes a conscious effort to keep from adding to the burden of others, and by word and deed endeavors to allay fear, suspicion and mistrust.

Rumor has little place in the life of true piety. Piety believes a damaging report only upon indisputable evidence and then does not disclose the story except as far as is necessary to protect truth and justice.

The life of true piety is marked by a consuming desire to make Christ known. Obstacles may arise but the truly pious soul will not be deterred. If there is no way to remove the difficulty then a way is sought to cause the obstacle to work for God.

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8). This was the standard of piety desired in the Old Testament.

The New Testament says: "And to love him [God] with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:33).

Here is the whole gospel message set forth in easily understood language. It demands full abandon to Christ. It leaves no place for selfish gain, and closes the door on all personal place and praise seeking.

To the truly pious soul the essentials of salvation are all things that in any way help to make Christ known—in His compassion, in His tenderness, in His purity and simplicity. It is unthinkable that a follower of Christ would be careless in his language, immodest in his dress, and unkind in his attitudes.

True piety is Christ-likeness in the details of life.

### THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

The "beauty of holiness" is the beauty of adequacy; it is poise rather than polish. It is performance rather than promise.

The "beauty of holiness" is not the absence of turmoil alone, nor the intoxication of joy, but it is energy for the task assigned.

Life in the Spirit is joyous, but it is also pre-eminently efficient. Pentecost brought joy and peace and purity, but it also dispelled forever the paralyzing sense of futility.

The life of holiness is not ease but encounter, not song but strife, not ecstasy but energy, not calmness but conquest.

Pentecost was an enduement for service, equipment for world evangelism — not with frail human reasoning but with divine, compelling conviction.

The world of paganism was a terrible arena for the infant church. All about this little company of Spirit-filled saints were the lure of the flesh, the power of the world and the dominion of Satan. The coming of the Spirit made slaves superior to sovereigns, and turned cowards into conquerors.

Pentecost made those early men soul-savers and life-changers. They undertook a tremendous evangelistic enterprise and pursued it with unprecedented success.

They were so vitalized by the Spirit that the world could not ignore them nor remain indifferent to them.

These Spirit-empowered men sang their way out of jails and by the Word of power subdued mobs of violence.

The world was compelled to listen. The Spirit's presence made the inexperienced church strategically competent and dynamically effective. They marched across the continent declaring salvation through Christ alone and shattered to bits age-old beliefs and customs.

The beauty of holiness is the beauty of efficient performance. It rolls steadily forward like a well-oiled, intelligently directed machine.

The beauty of holiness is not self-emolument or honor or happiness or ease, but world conquest for Christ.

God give us holiness in Spirit — energized men who are fully committed and utterly abandoned to the task of world evangelism.

## CHAPTER 11

### THIS IS THE VICTORY

#### YOU CAN BE VICTORIOUS

You can be victorious. Does that seem impossible? It is not. You can be.

This life of victory is not realized in your own strength but in the name and power of the living Christ.

His expressed statement is, "I am with you alway." He is by your side — a strong friend who cares for your well-being, and who is concerned with the things that concern you.

He has declared: "All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth." And He urges you: "Call . . . and I will answer thee." If you are in trouble, depressed, discouraged or blue, call upon Him and He will come to your aid.

Many who had the same faults you have are now saints in heaven. They made it through to the celestial city despite their sinful dispositions and the fierce onslaughts of Satan. You, too, can one day enter the city where "they need no sun."

Victory is assured to every believer. Not by dogged determination on your part but by divine mercy on God's part. Not by hermit severity but by heaven's Saviour — "Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you."

Only have patience, perseverance. "More haste, less speed," is an old saying that has its parallel in the Scriptures — "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength"; "Stand still and see the salvation of God."

The sweet peace of God comes wrapped in personal resigna-

tion. Soul rest is sure when you cease struggling. It is then that you will hear God whisper: "Yield cheerfully thy will. Be submissive and I will come to thine aid."

"And the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Do not settle for less than a life of victory, a life filled with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This is not an ideal for a day only, but a day by day possibility when the life is hid with Christ in God.

#### VOICES OF VICTORY

In Psalm 34, verses 3 to 7, is a testimony meeting where souls join in a fellowship of praise. As different instruments are used in a great orchestra, so here different individuals express the parts in the great symphony of praise.

The first testimony: "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."

Fear had been this man's burden. He was surrounded by terror — real or imaginary or both. There are many who all their lives are subject to fear, afraid of what might happen; afraid of what people might say; afraid of failure.

This man went to the right source. "I sought the Lord." Rest from fear will not be found in accumulations of money. It will not be found behind locked doors or guarded gates. Fears are not conquered by denying them, but by committing them to the omnipotent God.

What God did for this man in the long ago He will do for you. Your life may be emptied of frustration and fear, and be supremely blessed with fulfillment.

The second testimony: "They looked unto him, and were lightened." Just what their darkness was is not stated. It may have been the oppression of Satan's darkness; it may have been sorrow; it may have been burdens; it may have been want, but — "They looked unto him." If we will look, He will lighten. This was no side glance, no hurried look. It was a fixed, eager gaze. They centered their thoughts upon God. This was the rejection

of every other source of strength, and the acknowledgment of self-weakness and of divine power.

"They were lightened"—made radiant. Depression gave way to buoyancy, melancholy yielded to cheerfulness; self-pity was displaced with a song of assurance.

A third testimony: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."

Some have suggested that the word "troubles" might be translated "sins." The worst trouble in which a soul may be entangled is sin. Sin is the most terrible fact in human history. It has blasted everything that is good, and spread slavery to every level of the human personality.

Love cannot open the prison doors of sin, nor can the sacraments break its chains, but—"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him."

#### DO NOT FORGET YOUR WINGS

It was late autumn. The moon was almost full and my friend's family was having an after supper drive. Suddenly the car stopped and out jumped the driver and excitedly rushed to a street light a few yards back. There, standing stupidly under the light was a wild mallard—a migrant headed for the South, but the dazzle of the city lights had so confused him that he had lost his bearings, had forgotten his goal, and had become a prey to every earth-bound creature. The poor foolish duck tried to run from my friend, but the man soon overtook him. Then, just in the nick of time, the duck remembered he had wings, and with a wild quack leaped into the air and was again on his way to the far South.

Man has wings, too. Wings with which he may surmount his difficulties, and with which he may make progress to the sunshine land beyond the River.

Have you forgotten the resources which Almighty has placed at your disposal? Are you earth-bound, confused and bewildered by the lights of error which glare from every direction? Spread your wings of faith, and with a shout of victory soar

above the sordid appeal of error. Overleap obstacles that would keep you from the goal.

The wild mallard was charmed with the city lights because he came too close to them. Safety for any soul is to constantly widen the margin between the soul and the appeal of a sensuous world. He who begins to examine the blinding and bewildering lights of sin will soon, very soon, find he is following a wavering, weird light that leads only to slavery.

Faith in God, faith in the final triumph of right, will enable you to escape the chains which would bind you to earth. On the stormiest nights and in the blackest dungeons, faith will enable you to mount into God's clear atmosphere of heavenly hope.

Your wings of love will make service a delight. Errands of mercy, words of cheer, acts of kindness flow irrepressibly from a heart of love. Serve graciously when appreciated, and keep on serving when unappreciated, so long as there are burdens to lift and hearts to cheer.

Your wings of faith and love were given you to enable you to rise above life's annoyances and alluring dangers. The call is heard to the reunion in the skies — do not forget your wings.

### VICTORIOUS LIVING

Is victorious living possible?

To many Christians the life of victory is but a beautiful mirage, an ideal never realized, a restful place never reached.

There is a life of victory! And that life is possible for every individual!

With victory comes assurance and overflowing joy. . . . "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

Does this seem vague and unreal? Does it seem to avoid a direct answer? If so, do not criticize the writer, but confess your inner tensions, your so-called respectable sins such as bad temper, irritability, pride, jealousy and spiritual indolence. These lie at the root of all defeat.

Here is a suggested platform for the Victorious Life.

Read and meditate on the Word. Never take an advance

step without the Word of God to stand on. A "thus saith the Lord" is a citadel of strength in the day of battle.

Keep alert. The foes are many and the work is important, therefore do not loiter nor trifle.

Steadily maintain your self-renunciation. "In me there is no good thing"; no strength, no beauty, no wisdom. Christ is the victory. Live wholly separated from the world-spirit; yield at one point and the dike is broken.

Live in the sunshine. Build a ladder of your failures and keep climbing. Refuse to be embittered. Endure the cross patiently.

Live obediently. Full obedience to His commands will bring a song at night, rivers in the desert and a shepherding hand in the valley of the shadow of death.

Sell your life as dearly as you can in beating down the enemies of righteousness and the foes of God. Without the shedding of Christ's blood there is no remission of sins; without the life-blood of the Christian there is no advance in spiritual things.

This is the life of victory; it is for you today.

### **THE TRIUMPHANT CHRISTIAN**

A study of history shows that triumphant Christians in every century have been marked by certain characteristics. It has mattered little what station in life the believer occupied, the characteristics and attitudes remain similar.

Overcoming Christians had a profound sense of God — God who manifested Himself to the inner man, who was real and personal, who loved righteousness and hated iniquity; God whose commands were supreme and whose will was law.

They had deep religious convictions which made them superior to popular fads, independent of current opinions, and not afraid to stand with small minorities.

They had compassionate hearts that lost sight of self in sacrificial service — a service that alters lives; that makes the willful obedient and the proud humble; that keeps the light of hope shining for those who follow.

They possessed a willingness to suffer if need be. Not a



patient endurance filled with self-pity, but that quality of soul that "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," that rejoiced in tribulation and, though seamed with scars, ever radiated hope.

They were intensely aggressive, zealous and courageous. The living sacrifice must blaze with a consuming fire lest the vultures of doubt carry off the offering.

They were gripped with a faith that never made its last trip, that never made its final effort, and in darkness knew no doubt.

When sainthood dies these characteristics are difficult to find. Perhaps the slow snail's pace of much of the work of God in our day is for want of the qualities of godliness which have marked the moral giants of every century. This may be an explanation of the defeated lukewarm lives of many professing followers of Christ.

The salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ is more than an expression of ancient and high-sounding platitudes; it becomes a very part of the soul. It becomes the cohesive force which gives solidity to the whole life.

If you would live triumphantly, look long into the face of God, walk close by the side of the conquering Christ, and believe with a crusading passion that only Christ can meet the needs of the age.

The triumphant Christian is superior to beatings, to slander, to imprisonments, to torture and to death. If some of us are compelled to demonstrate this with our lives, may Almighty God be our strong tower and our defense.

#### LIVE ZESTFULLY

Begin each day with expressions of devotion, praise and thanksgiving to God if you would live zestfully. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings." This is the song of the redeemed on the streets of eternal glory, and it is fitting for us who are among the company of redeemed, who as yet dwell as strangers here.

Resolve to say a kind word, to lend a helping hand, to

be an understanding friend. Let no word of bitterness or anger escape your lips.

Observe the beauties of nature. Love the flowers, listen to the song of the birds, the murmur of the brook, the whispering breeze loaded with fragrance, or the wild winter gale as it sings of God's might. Look up into the heavens and be thankful for the blue, for the sun, for the stars; remember the Christ who sustains them all "by the word of his power" is your Saviour, your Lord.

Face today's load confidently. He who has been your help in all the yesterdays will not fail you today. Trust the wisdom of your Guide, and the power of your God. Today is a segment of eternity, so take your stand with purity and truth. Accept I Corinthians, the thirteenth chapter, as a pattern and ideal. Here is a portion of it from *The Berkeley Version* of the Bible:

"Love is not jealous; love is not out for display; it is not conceited or unmannerly; it is neither self-seeking nor irritable, nor does it take account of a suffered wrong. It . . . has unquenchable faith, hopes under all circumstances, endures without limit."

Live the unselfish love-life and to you will come happiness, serenity of spirit and an abiding hope. To be happy does not mean that nothing needs changing, but happiness springs from the abiding assurance that the remedy for the ills of the world — its poverty, its hates, its sin — is Jesus Christ the Lord.

Begin the day with a prayer, with a song of thanksgiving; soon eternal gladness will gild all your sky, and angels will come to minister unto you.

#### A GARLAND OF VICTORY

Ashes and sackcloth stand for mourning, defeat, death. The garland stands for victory.

There are many of God's dear people in the shadow of defeat, mourning over spiritual bankruptcy, covering themselves with sackcloth and ashes of remorse because of past failures. With such attitudes Satan is delighted, God's will is frustrated, and the ongoing of God's kingdom is retarded.

For ashes of guilt, God will give a garland of forgiveness —

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins" (Isaiah 44:22).

Peter was guilty of publicly denying Christ. Chagrined, and filled with remorse, almost to despair, he went out and wept bitterly. Then he met Jesus. He looked full in His wonderful face, and the ashes of guilt and remorse were exchanged for a garland of victory.

Shame and sorrow over failure are natural, and are to be commended, but to live always under their disintegrating influence serves no purpose. It paralyzes the arm of achieving faith, and thrusts aside the glories of forgiving grace. Take your guilt to Calvary and leave it there.

Christ will give you, even you, a garland of victory for the ashes of the self-life.

How many hearts there are who, struggling with the carnal nature, have cried out, "Miserable wretch that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" Paul gives the answer: "God will!" (Romans 7:25, Moffatt)

There is victory — not in firm resolves, not in clenched fists and gritted teeth, not in change of employment or residence, but in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan. He came to proclaim liberty to the captive.

Cease your struggling and begin to trust; renounce self and proclaim Christ the Lord of your life. Throw yourself with utter abandonment upon His mercy, upon His Calvary work, and then trust.

He will brush away your ashes and give you a garland of victory.

He will give you the "garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

He will fill your life with mirthful satisfaction which flows from the inexhaustible supply of His love.

## CHAPTER 12

### DAY BY DAY

#### FROM SUNUP TO SUNDOWN

Learn to live today — all the day through. It may be the last day.

Dale Carnegie has stressed the importance of living in "day-tight compartments" — one day at a time, one task at a time. Anyone can do his work, however hard, for one day. Anyone can live patiently till the sun goes down.

It is important to live today, for it will not return for a second try. If we miss its joy and zest we miss it forever.

A woman twenty-four years of age was told that her husband, twenty-six, would soon die of an incurable disease. To be sure, this was a blow and caused a night of gloom to settle about them.

After prayerful meditation they decided they would pack every hour of every day full of helpful service and joyous companionship. They lived every day to its full in the face of death. By their wholesome, unselfish living they, according to the doctor's conclusion, added years to the young man's life.

Do we need to be shocked into seeing that so-called ordinary days are precious? Today is all we have. From sunup till sundown let us fill it with life.

We take one another for granted. We let precious experiences and lovely relationships pass as ordinary, thus missing the joys with which they are packed.

Boys on a vacant lot playing nine innings of baseball pack

eternity into time. Nothing else exists. Life for them is there. We are to live for eternal values in the present.

I know some good people who are rigidly fair, completely just, ever loyal to truth, but life to them has become humdrum. The beauty of nature, the joy of freedom, the exhilaration of companionship have all lost their appeal. Life has become existence, and drudgery is the level of all activity. At such a time comes the temptation to doubt, to drink, to rush here and there trying to find life's lost chord and to recapture the joy and wonder of youth.

Turn the control of your life over to Christ. Maintain your faith in God's goodness and wisdom. It may not seem so, but these are the times to trust. "He knoweth the way that I take, and when he has tried me I shall come forth as gold."

#### A DAY IN THY COURTS

*A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.*

Psalm 84:10

This is a poetic description of the life of a believer. Life is lived a day at a time. Weariness comes by stretching life out for years on years. "How can I endure this exasperating monotony?" is the cry wrung from the lips of many.

A better rule to live by is: "I have only today; I shall therefore do my duty and sing because I have a task to do."

Today is mine — a gift from God; an opportunity for service; a privilege granted by infinite wisdom.

I must remember that since I am a believer in Christ, this day is in "thy courts." I am under His eye and I am secured by His almightiness. He is Master of ocean and earth and sky. He can compel all nature to work for Him. I am in His courts.

"A day in thy courts" makes all of life a great cathedral, a sacred oratorio, a well directed orchestra where I make my little contribution to the music of the whole.

Whatever today holds for me, I am in His courts, under His jurisdiction, and He will care for my interests. Satan is neither judge nor jury. Ill-disposed critics are not given a vote. I am

in His courts and He is to decide the quality of my acts and motives.

"A day" suggests the brevity of life. The flaming sun races to midday as though it were anxious to reach the meridian. It does not loiter there, however. Soon the shadows lengthen, the evening breeze springs up, the hills like charging armies hide the sun, and . . . day is done. It has gone fast. What did I do with all those golden moments? Whatever use I made of them is now written in the courts of eternity where the Father keeps the record.

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Every man comes to the forge of life, and there on the anvil of opportunity leaves his imprint on generations which are to follow. I must therefore learn to discriminate carefully, employ myself wisely, and perform faithfully the duties which life's Great Director has charged to me. This is my day — a day in thy courts. I will be faithful and stand my post. I will occupy myself with whatever talent is given to me.

### NUMBERING OUR DAYS

Life is dramatically brief. From the awakening of consciousness until the last breath is exhaled, life is but a fleeting segment of eternity.

The moments are so few, and the days gallop by, one so quickly following the other, that we have no time for malice, greed or slanderous words.

Since we have so few days, and in the glow of impetuous youth we thoughtlessly allow so many to speed aimlessly by, we must crowd full all our remaining days with kind deeds, with words of cheer, with earnest effort to make the hill a little less steep for the feet that follow.

Because of the smallness of the length of time allotted to me I pledge myself to keep my body pure; to keep all untruths from my lips, and all hates from my heart; to forgive all wrong, and forget injustices against myself; to never knowingly injure an-

other by word or deed; to give my best service, lift with all my strength, go the second mile, and love even my enemies.

Tomorrow is not yet here. Its threatenings of failure and pain and problems will come in to live with us if we permit them. When tomorrow calls, say to it, "One day at a time," then resolutely close the door. Today well lived is the best preparation for tomorrow.

No burden is too heavy to be carried until sundown. So carry it today, and let tomorrow's burden be born when tomorrow comes.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." He who learns this lesson has learned well indeed.

Many are growing stooped, not only physically but spiritually, worrying about tomorrow. It is not to be thought that we should fail to make provision for ourselves in the years to come. However, having lived virtuously today, we are to commit the rest to God. "He knoweth that ye have need of these things."

Fill today with holy devotion and with cheerful service, and a joyous song will fill your soul and sweeten all your days.

### I'LL LIVE TODAY

From the writings of Frank W. Boreham comes this choice bit of philosophy.

"I found myself staggering along under a load that was heavy enough to crush half a dozen strong men. Out of sheer exhaustion I put it down and had a good look at it. I found that it was all borrowed. . . . It was a very stupid but very ancient blunder."

Who has not been guilty of this "stupid blunder," and worn himself out before the problems had to be met?

Worry about tomorrow is "stewing without doing." It is the mark of little faith. It is the capital of fear. It is a close ally to atheism.

Worry does not drive away trouble, it only destroys strength.

Dr. Charles Mayo declared: "Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the whole nervous system, and profoundly

affects the health. I have never known a man who died from overwork, but many who died from doubt."

I am a Christian. I live today in God's infinite loving care. What He permits to come to me of pain or affliction or want, He will work out for my good — "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord."

I am a child of God. My God controls the universe and also cares for the sparrow. He is never frustrated, fearful, or dismayed. He knows, therefore "I will trust, and not be afraid" (Isaiah 12:2).

I am safe in God's love even though I must "walk through the valley of the shadow of death." "Though an host should rise against me, in this will I be confident." God will not fail me.

The prophet Isaiah lived in a time filled with great trouble. The present was full of peril and the future was filled with uncertainty, yet he wrote a classic statement of hope for men of all generations: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God" (Isaiah 50:10).

I'll live today.

I'll carry today's burdens.

I'll enjoy today's sunshine and laughter.

I'll give today my best service, my happiest smile, and live all the day through.

#### SUNDIAL PHILOSOPHY

An old sundial holds this inscription: "I count only the hours that are bright."

Why not adopt this as a rule to live by? Why keep a chest in which live unpleasant hours, bitter disappointments, rude treatment? Cast away the unpleasant things as a refiner casts away the dross or the housewife disposes of the garbage down the kitchen sink. Refuse any place in your way of living for the things that breed cynicism, doubt and fear.

Collect and hold dear life's pleasant memories. Let them decorate the walls of your thought-life like beautiful hand paint-



ings. Time will add mellowness to the scenes, and the years will bring out the touching soft lights.

You are important to someone. Hang this up near the front entrance of your soul. It was Charles Dickens who wrote: "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of anyone else."

Out of the murk and confusion of frustrated plans and blasted hopes there comes to us from the most ancient of the sacred writings of the Bible, the words of Job: "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

There is never a day so dreary, there is never a night so dismal, but out of the confused murk comes a light, a song, a new vision of God, if we will but hold steadily the course of right.

No one is responsible for the sunshine within but yourself. You cannot do much about the weather without, nor with the moral attitudes with which you are surrounded, but you can create sunshine within, and generate gladness and cheer from your own inner springs.

Discard the crepe; displace the "blues" with sunshine; walk courageously into your future though your body may be battered by accident or twisted by disease. No one can embitter and sour you. Every manner of handicap can be — has been — overcome. "Believe that life is worth living and your belief will create the fact," said William James.

"Forgetting those things which are behind, and looking forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark."

#### BUYING UP YESTERDAY

God is concerned with man's past. He will forgive the sins, and He will make the failures and the blunders a guiding discipline for the future.

God does not deal with the yesterdays and make them as though they never had been, but He will "blot out as a thick cloud thy transgressions." As for the sins, He will "remove them as far as the east is from the west."

Yesterday is in God's hands. The acts there recorded must

stand. No amount of scholastic juggling, or philosophical sleight of hand can alter the record; but God can restore the years.

"How?" you ask.

By an increase of efficiency through the power of the Holy Spirit; by the gifts and graces of the Spirit; by intensifying our zeal and multiplying our tryings.

Yes, God will restore the years!

Let all who are plagued by the thought of wasted years grasp this promise and with it challenge the accusations of Satan. The sunshine of God's love and the showers of the Spirit will bring an abundant harvest of choice fruit to the glory of God the Father.

Be sure of what Christ can do. The breath of God, blowing on the valley of sun-bleached bones in Ezekiel's vision, caused them to become an exceedingly great army, marching to conquest. The valley of lost opportunities may become a citadel of defense, springboard for glorious achievement.

The incident in Ezekiel 37 declares the magnanimity of God. By our foolish willfulness we wasted the years, but God through His generosity does not chide. Rather, He restores these years. He not only forgives the sins, but gives great and undeserved opportunities.

This promise sings of the miracles of God. How impossible that the years be restored, cries the human heart. How gloriously possible, sings the promise of God. It is possible for man to restore things, but only God can restore years.

Working with God in buying up yesterday, the soul must be alert to opportunities, intense in effort, responsive and teachable to the voice of the Holy Spirit. When day is done you will discover that life is reckoned not in years but in deeds. If you would fill your arms with sheaves for the Master, you must fill your time with sacrificial labor.

#### THIS IS MY PRAYER

Grant me these petitions, O Lord, my God, I pray through Jesus Christ —

As the years increase may sympathetic understanding for others increase.

Keep me from the fatal habit of expressing an opinion before all the facts are known and about things of which I know little.

Teach me to listen patiently to the recitation of the troubles and sufferings of others but to keep my lips sealed on my own heartbreak.

By whatever means Thy wisdom directs, show me my own unworthiness to be part of Thy great family; that all benefits which come from Thee, come to me because of Thy grace.

Keep me from idleness, from sourness, from bitterness.

Make me helpful but not meddlesome, cheerful but not silly, thoughtful but not moody.

As an antidote to discouragement and depression, help me to understand that Thou hast a purpose for my life: a work to do, a place to fill, an influence to exert. So may I move along confidently through each day.

Help me to remember that living for myself — my amusement, my advancement, my interests — is not worthy living.

Make me brave, courageous, adventuresome and loyal to duty.

Teach me to endure injustice, slander and opposition in a manner worthy of one naming Thy name.

Keep me calm in perplexities and distresses, composed in all griefs, and confident as eternity dawns.

Help me to not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when rebuked of Him.

In the night hours — hours of silence and solitude — speak to me that I may be more aware of Thy presence.

Help me to hold fast to love.

## CHAPTER 13

### LESSONS IN CONTRAST

*For every night of darkness there is a dawn of light.  
For every valley of gloom there is a mountain of grandeur.  
For every sob of grief there is a song of gladness.  
For every thorn of pain there is a rose of beauty.*

#### BELIEF OR BEWILDERMENT

*I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness  
of the Lord in the land of the living. Psalm 27:13*

What would have become of me had I not believed? Where would I be? With what conditions would my life be environed were it not for belief in the sovereignty of God? The psalmist said that the opposite of faith is futility.

In the breast of the psalmist hope was ready to expire, love was lukewarm and cold, but faith raised its head and slogged on. Faith is the life-giving tonic for hope, and in company with faith love again becomes radiant.

Kant, the philosopher, declared that in the last analysis all real problems of life are summed up in three simple questions:

What can I know?

What ought I to do?

What may I hope for?

Faith in the superintending goodness of God brings a satisfactory answer to each of Kant's questions.

"What can I know?" I can know that "God is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

"What ought I to do?" "Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

"What may I hope for?" "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

We may not have great struggles like Paul, or like Martin Luther, or like John Wesley, but the monotony of the trifling things, the futility of our living, bears down upon us. Belief in God returns us to the place of peace, to the land of sunshine and song. A popular phrase is "Seeing is believing," but for the spiritual man "Believing is seeing."

When songs die in our breasts it is because we do not believe God.

Look up! Continue to look up! Look on — on past the petty to the fundamental; past the trivial to the permanent. There is land ahead — a land of equity, of justice, of truth and righteousness — "where the wicked cease from troubling and where the weary [righteous] are at rest."

#### A TREE OR A BRUSH-PILE

*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.* Psalm 1:3

Driving across the plains of Kansas where there are but few trees, I saw in the distance what appeared to be the outline of one of those scrub oaks for which this particular part of Kansas is noted. As I drew nearer, however, and the object began to take form, I said to myself, "Not a tree, only a brush-pile."

This started a line of thinking: Just what is the difference between a brush-pile and a tree?

The brush-pile lacks two essentials — life and organization. It might be that at one time this brush-pile by the Kansas highway had been a beautiful tree. It may be that it produced shade and possibly food for weary travelers who chanced to pass that way. What had caused the change? Something had destroyed its life and had broken down its organization. At one time it had been symmetrical and beautiful; now it was a mass of tangled sticks.

There are individuals whose lives have become nothing but brush-piles. There is no great central purpose directing their activities. There is no glow of divine life.

It is to be observed that one characteristic of brush-piles is that they become hide-outs for all manner of creeping things. Should a hunter prod around for any length of time, it is highly probable that animals of many varieties would run out into the open. And a life that is a brush-pile becomes a den of ugly, vicious things. There will be jealousies, evil speaking, envies, hatreds and every evil work.

Further observation reveals the brush-pile to be in the process of decay. It will become smaller and smaller with each passing year, while a tree will expand and grow. The brush-pile is a nuisance, while the tree is a blessing; the brush-pile is ugly; the tree, beautiful. The sun and rain that destroy the brush-pile feed the tree and cause it to widen its influence.

The contrasts may be almost parallel in the life of a sinful man and the life of a Christian. He who is living for God will expand and grow and produce fruit under the grinding influences of life. The man who is sinful in heart will become bitter, censorious and hateful under the hard things of life.

Are you a tree or a brush-pile?

#### OVERFLOW, NOT OVERWORK

A young pastor with perplexity in his voice, declared: "I am not a shepherd, I am a slave, a slave to inconsequential details. I have no time for communion with God or improvement of self. I am compelled to ask, Where is the well that the Master said should flow from our lives?"

I have a deep persuasion that if that young pastor would overflow more he would not be so sadly overworked. It is machinery that is operated without oil that generates heat and is soon useless. The life that endeavors to do God's work without the oil of the Spirit will soon discover that mere human strength is insufficient for doing soul winning work.

The first prerequisite of the overflow life is purity of heart. Any selfishness, unholy ambition, personal resentment against

another soul will stop the joy of God's presence and will cause a blight to settle over the soul.

If you would overflow you must be indwelt by the living Christ. Again and again many have tried to serve the Master by some native power within rather than by His power and presence.

If you want the overflow life you must separate yourself from persons, places and things that in the slightest manner shut Him out, weaken the touch of His hand upon your life and loosen your grasp upon Him.

A second prerequisite of the overflow life is a full and utter confidence in the power and authority of God's Word. God wants us to trust, and not to rely upon feelings, fancies or appearances. He would save us from the peril of testing our victory or His indwelling by any preconceived notion of ours as to how His presence shall be felt or manifested.

A third prerequisite to the overflow life is to live independent of the opinions of others. Jesus Christ lived a victorious, stainless life on earth. However, the leaders of religion in His day were so blind they failed to see the victorious life in Him.

He who lives for the good opinion of others will never know the glories of the overflow life.

To live the overflow life ever keep in mind that the work to be done is His work. The harvest to be gathered is His harvest. The church to be built is His church.

He is the power, He is the glory, He is the victory. He will start the wells flowing, and multitudes will be refreshed by the overflow.

#### A SIGH OR A SONG

*I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.*

Psalm 77:3

*I will remember the works of the Lord.*

Psalm 77:11

Complaining leads to distrust, bitterness, cynicism. Meditating on the works of God leads to wonderment, rest and a song.

The writer of this Psalm starts with a sigh because his

thoughts are self-centered. He ends with a song because he turns from self to God.

The psalmist declared, "I commune with mine heart." This was his trouble. Quit talking to yourself about your troubles, and talk to God about His triumphs.

The question which troubled the writer of this Psalm, "Hath God forgotten?" is the same question that has tormented many others all through the centuries.

Hath God forgotten? Hath He forgotten Calvary; hath He forgotten the intercession of the righteous? No, a thousand times no!

Think on God and be comforted. Think on His goodness, love and grace. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

He will comfort and sustain you on those days when black grief blots out the last ray of light. He will not fail you.

If you would change weariness and disappointments to rest and contentment, "remember the work of the Lord."

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" (Psalm 56:3). And who is not afraid at times! What course are we then to take? Trust! There is nothing like trust to help in a pinch; trust dissolves doubts as the sun drives away the fog. Trust spans the storm cloud with a rainbow of hope.

It was John Ruskin who said: "When God shuts a door he opens a window." If you are in need of guidance, listen to God, not to the radio commentator.

An old saint was overheard talking to the Lord one day: "O Lord, help me to understand that You aren't going to let anything come my way that You and I together can't handle."

Turn your eyes Godward. Put your hand in God's hand, go where He directs, be content with what He gives you and you will have songs in the night.

#### CONFORMED OR TRANSFORMED

Conformity to the world, whenever or wherever it has occurred, has proved the ruin of the Church. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever



therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

What is world conformity? Worldliness consists in attachment to things, to the secular — to live as though God did not exist. To be more specific, conformity to the world is:

The adoption of anything that genders pride.

The acceptance of any mode of living that exalts self as being superior to others in purse or in devotion.

The spirit that praises self while reflecting on others.

The attitude of softness and complacency toward evil.

Indulging in anything that arouses the passions of anger, pride, lust, envy, greed.

To be held in the grip of the love of money or worldly honor.

What does it mean to live the transformed life? The transformed life is the result of grace. It flows from full consecration to the will of God and faith in His atoning sacrifice for full deliverance. It is the transference of the affections from the world to Christ.

In what manner is the transformed life manifested? God's will is ever "good and acceptable and perfect." The heart that accepts God's will as perfect never complains, but rests content in the good will of God.

There is a submission that is resentful, rebellious. It bows to the inevitable, it yields when nothing else can be done. There is no rest in such submission, neither are there any blessings.

Hear the wise words of John Flavel: "See that you receive Christ with all your heart. As there is nothing in Christ that may be refused, so there is nothing in you from which He must be excluded."

Said the saintly Fenelon: "Live, as it were, on trust. All that is in you, all that you are, is only loaned to you; make use of it according to the will of Him who lends it: but never regard it for a moment as your own."

The transformed life dares look up to God and say: Make use of me as Thou wilt. I refuse nothing which seems good to Thee. Lead me, feed me, clothe me, house me, as Thou wilt.

This is the life that knows the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

#### FRIGHT OR FAITH

There is a short narrative in Mark 4 that is filled with meaningful lessons for us today. The Master said, "Let us go over to the other side." And so, after a long and difficult day, the disciples pushed out from the shore in full obedience to the Master's command.

These men, at the express command of the Lord and in direct company with Him, encountered perhaps the fiercest storm they had ever seen in a lifetime of earning a livelihood on Galilee.

A double fear gripped the hearts of these men. First, they feared for their lives: "We perish." This was a natural fear and shows the fierceness of the storm. But the other fear, "Carest thou not?" brought real consternation to these swarthy fishermen. When life's dark days of affliction and loss strike, Satan declares that "God careth not."

It was not the fierceness of the storm that alarmed them so much as the fact that it struck while Christ was on board. He could have prevented such a tempest. They could have waited on shore until the next day. But it happened, and the disciples were left alone to battle against it. How like life. The temptation is ever, when intense opposition arises, for the soul to conclude he is out of divine order, not going under divine appointment. This is a satanic falsehood, proved to be such on almost every page of the Bible.

Now let us look a bit further into this beautiful but frightening narrative. Jesus, the exhausted man, suddenly becomes Christ, the element-controlling God. Let it be noted that this God-man had more difficulty stilling the storm in the human soul than He did in stilling the storm on the sea. It is always thus. He commands the winds and the sea, and they obey Him, but man falters, questions and fearfully commits himself to the Lord.

No trusting child of God is destined to live in a sheltered

nook. We are appointed to hardship and suffering — hardship and hindered work. This is the heritage of those who love God.

Then let the storms come; He controls them. And let it be remembered: "There is nothing too hard for God."

Storms may come, but fear not. They blow by His permission, and "He knows, He loves, He cares."

#### BEYOND TRAGEDY — TRIUMPH!

Jeremiah has been spoken of as the weeping prophet, but I would speak of him as the prophet of hope. He speaks of hope more than all the other prophets combined.

It was midnight and this man Jeremiah was to look upon three great tragedies, the greatest that human mind can imagine. First, he saw the temple destroyed. Second, he saw the city of God demolished. Third, he saw some of his countrymen slain and some led into slavery.

Yet he stood on the ruins of the temple and declared, "There will be another temple greater and grander than the first."

He gazed on the rubbish heap of what had once been called Jerusalem the Beautiful, the City of God, and said: "There will be another city."

Looking through his tears at the long line of captives with chains about their necks, from whose faces all hope had fled, Jeremiah affirmed positively: "They will come back."

How do you explain these unusual statements of a man in the other century? He had an absolute trust in the declared word of God, and believed that God was equal to every emergency, and that out of all the debris and loss and sin right would triumph. He refused to doubt God.

Brooding over the past, however foolish and ruinous it has been, is useless; only a waste of strength and opportunity. From somewhere this little couplet came to me: "My cheek with tears is always wet, I have forgotten to forget."

The Apostle Paul said: "Forgetting those things which are behind."

The Apostle Paul had many things to bring weeping to his life. He persecuted the saints, causing some to blaspheme and

turn their backs upon Christ. This would have been enough to shadow his later life and fill him with despondency. Paul's lesson learned is good for us — "Forgetting."

Too many people fail to forget the things which are behind — the mistakes, the failures, the losses — and these become burdens that hinder them in accomplishing the duties of today.

Helen Keller said: "Face your deficiencies and acknowledge them, but do not let them master you. Let them teach you patience, sweetness, insight. When we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life or in the life of another."

The primary condition of success is: Concentrate your energies, thought and capital exclusively upon the business at hand. Let not the past weigh you down nor the future frighten you.

Remember Jesus Christ. Keep your mind centered upon Him, your eyes fixed upon Him, and life's pathway will lead you straight to the City of God.