

WRITINGS OF ANDREW MURRAY - VOLUME 1

by Andrew Murray

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Andrew Murray (Volume 1), compiled for study and devotional reading.

100 Chapters

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01.00. Abide in Christ

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John 15:1-12 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

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

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

PREFACE-- By Andrew Murray

During the life of Jesus on earth, the word He chiefly used when speaking of the relations of the disciples to Himself was: "Follow me." When about to leave for heaven, He gave them a new word, in which their more intimate and spiritual union with Himself in glory should be expressed. That chosen word was: "Abide in me."

It is to be feared that there are many earnest followers of Jesus from whom the meaning of this word, with the blessed experience it promises, is very much hidden. While trusting in their Saviour for pardon and for help, and seeking to some extent to obey Him, they have hardly realized to what closeness of union, to what intimacy of fellowship, to what wondrous oneness of life and interest, He invited them when He said, "Abide in me." This is not only an unspeakable loss to themselves, but the Church and the world suffer in what they lose.

If we ask the reason why those who have indeed accepted the Saviour, and been made partakers of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, thus come short of the full salvation prepared for them, I am sure the answer will in very many cases be, that ignorance is the cause of the unbelief that fails of the inheritance. If, in our orthodox Churches, the abiding in Christ, the living union with Him, the experience of His daily and hourly presence and keeping, were preached with the same distinctness and urgency as His atonement and pardon through His blood, I am confident that many would be found to accept with gladness the invitation to such a life, and that its influence would be manifest in their experience of the purity and the power, the love and the joy, the fruit-bearing, and all the blessedness which the Saviour connected with the abiding in Him.

It is with the desire to help those who have not yet fully understood what the Saviour meant with His command, or who have feared that it was a life beyond their reach, that these meditations are now published. It is only by frequent repetition that a child learns its lessons. It is only by continuously fixing the mind for a time on some one of the lessons of faith, that the believer is gradually helped to take and thoroughly assimilate them. I have the hope that to some, especially young believers, it will be a help to come and for a month day after day spell over the precious words, "Abide in me," with the lessons connected with them in the parable of the Vine. Step by step we shall get to see how truly this promise-precept is meant for us, how surely grace is provided to enable us to obey it, how indispensable the experience of its blessing is to a healthy Christian life, and how unspeakable the blessings are that flow from it. As we listen, and meditate, and pray--as we surrender ourselves, and accept in faith the whole Jesus as He offers Himself to us in it--the Holy Spirit will make the word to be spirit and life; this word of Jesus, too, will become to us the power of God unto salvation, and through it will come the faith that grasps the long desired blessing.

I pray earnestly that our gracious Lord may be pleased to bless this little book, to help those who seek to know Him fully, as He has already blessed it in its original issue in a different (the Dutch) language. I pray still more earnestly that He would, by whatever means, make the multitudes of His dear children who are still living divided lives, to see how He claims them wholly for Himself, and how the wholehearted surrender to abide in Him alone brings the joy unspeakable and full of glory. Oh, let each of us who has begun to taste the sweetness of this life, yield himself wholly to be a witness to the grace and power of our Lord to keep us united with Himself, and seek by word and walk to win others to follow Him fully. It is only in such fruitbearing that our own abiding can be maintained. In conclusion, I ask to be permitted to give one word of advice to my reader. It is this. It needs time to grow into Jesus the Vine: do not expect to abide in Him unless you will give Him that time. It is not enough to read God's Word, or meditations as here offered, and when we think we have hold of the thoughts, and have asked God for His blessing, to go out in the hope that the blessing will abide. No, it needs day by day time with Jesus and with God. We all know the need of time for our meals each day--every workman claims his hour for dinner; the hurried eating of so much food is not enough. If we are to live through Jesus, we must feed on Him (John 6:57); we must thoroughly take in and assimilate that heavenly food the Father has given us in His life. Therefore, my brother, who would learn to abide in Jesus, take time each day, ere you read, and while you read, and after you read, to put yourself into living contact with the living Jesus, to yield yourself distinctly and consciously to His blessed influence; so will you give Him the opportunity of taking hold of you, of drawing you up and keeping you safe in His almighty life. And now, to all God's children whom He allows me the privilege of pointing to the Heavenly Vine, I offer my fraternal love and salutations, with the prayer that to each one of them may be given the rich and full experience of the blessedness of abiding in Christ. And may the grace of Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be their daily portion. Amen.

01.01. All you who have come to Him

Chapter 1-- ALL YOU WHO HAVE COME TO HIM "Come unto me."-- Matthew 11:28 "Abide in me."-- John 15:4

IT IS to you who have heard and hearkened to the call, "Come unto me," that this new invitation comes, "Abide in me." The message comes from the same loving Saviour. You doubtless have never repented having come at His call. You experienced that His word was truth; all His promises He fulfilled; He made you partakers of the blessings and the joy of His love. Was not His welcome most hearty, His pardon full and free, His love most sweet and precious? You more than once, at your first coming to Him, had reason to say, "The half was not told me." And yet you have had to complain of disappointment: as time went on, your expectations were not realized. The blessings you once enjoyed were lost; the love and joy of your first meeting with your Saviour, instead of deepening, have become faint and feeble. And often you have wondered what the reason could be, that with such a Saviour, so mighty and so loving, your experience of salvation should not have been a fuller one. The answer is very simple. You wandered from Him. The blessings He bestows are all connected with His "Come to ME," and are only to be enjoyed in close fellowship with Himself. You either did not fully understand, or did not rightly remember, that the call meant, "Come to me to stay with me." And yet this was in very deed His object and purpose when first He called you to Himself. It was not to refresh you for a few short hours after your conversion with the joy of His love and deliverance, and then to send you forth to wander in sadness and sin. He had destined you to something better than a short-lived blessedness, to be enjoyed only in times of special earnestness and prayer, and then to pass away, as you had to return to those duties in which far the greater part of life has to be spent. No, indeed; He had prepared for you an abiding dwelling with Himself, where your whole life and every moment of it might be spent, where the work of your daily life might be done, and where all the while you might be enjoying unbroken communion with Himself. It was even this He meant when to that first word, "Come to me," He added this, "Abide in me." As earnest and faithful, as loving and tender, as the compassion that breathed in that blessed "Come," was the grace that added this no less blessed "Abide." As mighty as the attraction with which that first word drew you, were the bonds with which this second, had you but listened to it, would have kept you. And as great as were the blessings with which that coming was rewarded, so large, yea, and much greater, were the treasures to which that abiding would have given you access. And observe especially, it was not that He said, "Come to me and abide with me," but, "Abide in me." The intercourse was not only to be unbroken, but most intimate and complete. He opened His arms, to press you to His bosom; He opened His heart, to welcome you there; He opened up all His divine fulness of life and love, and offered to take you up into its fellowship, to make you wholly one with Himself. There was a depth of meaning you cannot yet realize in His words: "Abide IN ME." And with no less earnestness than He had cried, "Come to me," did He plead, had you but noticed it, "Abide in me." By every motive that had induced you to come, did He beseech you to abide. Was it the fear of sin and its curse that first drew you? the pardon you received on first coming could, with all the blessings flowing from it, only be confirmed

and fully enjoyed on abiding in Him. Was it the longing to know and enjoy the Infinite Love that was calling you? the first coming gave but single drops to taste--'tis only the abiding that can really satisfy the thirsty soul, and give to drink of the rivers of pleasure that are at His right hand. Was it the weary longing to be made free from the bondage of sin, to become pure and holy, and so to find rest, the rest of God for the soul? this too can only be realized as you abide in Him--only abiding in Jesus gives rest in Him. Or if it was the hope of an inheritance in glory, and an everlasting home in the presence of the Infinite One: the true preparation for this, as well as its blessed foretaste in this life, are granted only to those who abide in Him. In very truth, there is nothing that moved you to come, that does not plead with thousandfold greater force: "Abide in Him." You did well to come; you do better to abide. Who would, after seeking the King's palace, be content to stand in the door, when he is invited in to dwell in the King's presence, and share with Him in all the glory of His royal life? Oh, let us enter in and abide, and enjoy to the full all the rich supply His wondrous love hath prepared for us! And yet I fear that there are many who have indeed come to Jesus, and who yet have mournfully to confess that they know but little of this blessed abiding in Him. With some the reason is, that they never fully understood that this was the meaning of the Saviour's call. With others, that though they heard the word, they did not know that such a life of abiding fellowship was possible, and indeed within their reach. Others will say that, though they did believe that such a life was possible, and seek after it, they have never yet succeeded discovering the secret of its attainment. And others, again, alas! will confess that it is their own unfaithfulness that has kept them from the enjoyment of the blessing. When the Saviour would have kept them, they were not found ready to stay; they were not prepared to give up everything, and always, only, wholly to abide in Jesus. To all such I come now in the name of Jesus, their Redeemer and mine, with the blessed message: "Abide in me." In His name I invite them to come, and for a season meditate with me daily on its meaning, its lessons, its claims, and its promises. I know how many, and, to the young believer, how difficult, the questions are which suggest themselves in connection with it. There is especially the question, with its various aspects, to the possibility, in the midst of wearying work and continual distraction, of keeping up, or rather being kept in, the abiding communion. I do not undertake to remove all difficulties; this Jesus Christ Himself alone must do by His Holy Spirit. But what I would fain by the grace of God be permitted to do is, to repeat day by day the Master's blessed command, "Abide in me," until it enter the heart and find a place there, no more to be forgotten or neglected. I would fain that in the light of Holy Scripture we should Meditate on its meaning, until the understanding, that gate to the heart, opens to apprehend something of what it offers and expects. So we shall discover the means of its attainment, and learn to know what keeps us from it, and what can help us to it. So we shall feel its claims, and be compelled to acknowledge that there can be no true allegiance to our King without simply and heartily accepting this one, too, of His commands. So we shall gaze on its blessedness, until desire be inflamed, and the will with all its energies be roused to claim and possess the unspeakable blessing.

Come, my brethren, and let us day by day set ourselves at His feet, and meditate on this word of His, with an eye fixed on Him alone. Let us set ourselves in quiet trust before Him, waiting to hear His holy voice--the still small voice that is mightier than the storm that rends the rocks--breathing its quickening spirit within us, as He speaks: "Abide in me." The soul that truly hears Jesus Himself speak the word, receives with the word the power to accept and to hold the blessing He offers. And it may please Thee, blessed Saviour, indeed, to speak to us; let each of us hear Thy blessed

voice. May the feeling of our deep need, and the faith of Thy wondrous love, combined with the sight of the wonderfully blessed life Thou art waiting to bestow upon us, constrain us to listen and to obey, as often as Thou speakest: "Abide in me." Let day by day the answer from our heart be clearer and fuller: "Blessed Saviour, I do abide in Thee. "

01.02. And you shall find rest to your souls

Chapter 2-- AND YOU SHALL FIND REST TO YOUR SOULS

"Come unto me, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest to your souls - Matthew 11:28-29

REST for the soul: Such was the first promise with which the Saviour sought to win the heavy-laden sinner. Simple though it appears, the promise is indeed as large and comprehensive as can be found. Rest for the soul--does it not imply deliverance from every fear, the supply of every want, the fulfilment of every desire? And now nothing less than this is the prize with which the Saviour woos back the wandering one--who is mourning that the rest has not been so abiding or so full as it had hoped--to come back and abide in Him. Nothing but this was the reason that the rest has either not been found, or, if found, has been disturbed or lost again: you did not abide with, you did not abide in Him. Have you ever noticed how, in the original invitation of the Saviour to come to Him, the promise of rest was repeated twice, with such a variation in the conditions as might have suggested that abiding rest could only be found in abiding nearness. First the Saviour says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest"; the very moment you come, and believe, I will give you rest--the rest of pardon and acceptance--the rest in my love. But we know that all that God bestows needs time to become fully our own; it must be held fast, and appropriated, and assimilated into our inmost being; without this not even Christ's giving can make it our very own, in full experience and enjoyment. And so the Saviour repeats His promise, in words which clearly speak not so much of the initial rest with which He welcomes the weary one who comes, but of the deeper and personally appropriated rest of the soul that abides with Him. He now not only says, "Come unto me," but "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me"; become my scholars, yield yourselves to my training, submit in all things to my will, let your whole life be one with mine--in other words, Abide in me. And then He adds, not only, "I will give," but "ye shall find rest to your souls." The rest He gave at coming will become something you have really found and made your very own--the deeper the abiding rest which comes from longer acquaintance and closer fellowship, from entire surrender and deeper sympathy. "Take my yoke, and learn of me," "Abide in me"--this is the path to abiding rest. Do not these words of the Saviour discover what you have perhaps often sought in vain to know, how it is that the rest you at times enjoy is so often lost. It must have been this: you had not understood how entire surrender to Jesus is the secret of perfect rest. Giving up one's whole life to Him, for Him alone to rule and order it; taking up His yoke, and submitting to be led and taught, to learn of Him; abiding in Him, to be and do only what He wills--these are the conditions of discipleship without which there can be no thought of maintaining the rest that was bestowed on first coming to Christ. The rest is in Christ, and not something He gives apart from Himself, and so it is only in having Him that the rest can really be kept and enjoyed.

It is because so many a young believer fails to lay hold of this truth that the rest so speedily passes away. With some it is that they really did not know; they were never taught how Jesus claims the

undivided allegiance of the whole heart and life; how there is not a spot in the whole of life over which He does not wish to reign; how in the very least things His disciples must only seek to please Him. They did not know how entire the consecration was that Jesus claimed. With others, who had some idea of what a very holy life a Christian ought to lead, the mistake was a different one: they could not believe such a life to be a possible attainment. Taking, and bearing, and never for a moment laying aside the yoke of Jesus, appeared to them to require such a strain of effort, and such an amount of goodness, as to be altogether beyond their reach. The very idea of always, all the day, abiding in Jesus, was too high--something they might attain to after a life of holiness and growth, but certainly not what a feeble beginner was to start with. They did not know how, when Jesus said, "My yoke is easy," He spoke the truth; how just the yoke gives the rest, because the moment the soul yields itself to obey, the Lord Himself gives the strength and joy to do it. They did not notice how, when He said, "Learn of me," He added, "I am meek and lowly in heart," to assure them that His gentleness would meet their every need, and bear them as a mother bears her feeble child. Oh, they did not know that when He said, "Abide in me," He only asked the surrender to Himself, His almighty love would hold them fast, and keep and bless them. And so, as some had erred from the want of full consecration, so these failed because they did not fully trust. These two, consecration and faith, are the essential elements of the Christian life--the giving up all to Jesus, the receiving all from Jesus. They are implied in each other; they are united in the one word--surrender. A full surrender is to obey as well as to trust, to trust as well as to obey. With such misunderstanding at the outset, it is no wonder that the disciple life was not one of such joy or strength as had been hoped. In some things you were led into sin without knowing it, because you had not learned how wholly Jesus wanted to rule you, and how you could not keep right for a moment unless you had Him very near you. In other things you knew what sin was, but had not the power to conquer, because you did not know or believe how entirely Jesus would take charge of you to keep and to help you. Either way, it was not long before the bright joy of your first love was lost, and your path, instead of being like the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day, became like Israel's wandering in the desert--ever on the way, never very far, and yet always coming short of the promised rest. Weary soul, since so many years driven to and fro like the panting hart, O come and learn this day the lesson that there is a spot where safety and victory, where peace and rest, are always sure, and that that spot is always open to thee--the heart of Jesus.

But, alas! I hear someone say, it is just this abiding in Jesus, always bearing His yoke, to learn of Him, that is so difficult, and the very effort to attain to this often disturbs the rest even more than sin or the world. What a mistake to speak thus, and yet how often the words are heard! Does it weary the traveller to rest in the house or on the bed where he seeks repose from his fatigue? Or is it a labour to a little child to rest in its mother's arms? Is it not the house that keeps the traveller within its shelter? do not the arms of the mother sustain and keep the little one? And so it is with Jesus. The soul has but to yield itself to Him, to be still and rest in the confidence that His love has undertaken, and that His faithfulness will perform, the work of keeping it safe in the shelter of His bosom. Oh, it is because the blessing is so great that our little hearts cannot rise to apprehend it; it is as if we cannot believe that Christ, the Almighty One, will in very deed teach and keep us all the day. And yet this is just what He has promised, for without this He cannot really give us rest. It is as our heart takes in this truth that, when He says, "Abide in me," "Learn of me," He really means it, and that it is His own work to keep us abiding when we yield ourselves to Him, that we shall

venture to cast ourselves into the arms of His love, and abandon ourselves to His blessed keeping. It is not the yoke, but resistance to the yoke, that makes the difficulty; the whole-hearted surrender to Jesus, as at once our Master and our Keeper, finds and secures the rest.

Come, my brother, and let us this very day commence to accept the word of Jesus in all simplicity. It is a distinct command this: "Take my yoke, and learn of me, " "Abide in me. " A command has to be obeyed. The obedient scholar asks no questions about possibilities or results; he accepts every order in the confidence that his teacher has provided for all that is needed. The power and the perseverance to abide in the rest, and the blessing in abiding--it belongs to the Saviour to see to this; 'tis mine to obey, 'tis His to provide. Let us this day in immediate obedience accept the command, and answer boldly, "Saviour, I abide in Thee. At Thy bidding I take Thy yoke; I undertake the duty without delay; I abide in Thee." Let each consciousness of failure only give new urgency to the command, and teach us to listen more earnestly than ever till the Spirit again give us to hear the voice of Jesus saying, with a love and authority that inspire both hope and obedience, "Child, abide in me." That word, listened to as coming from Himself, will be an end of all doubting--a divine promise of what shall surely be granted. And with ever-increasing simplicity its meaning will be interpreted. Abiding in Jesus is nothing but the giving up of oneself to be ruled and taught and led, and so resting in the arms of Everlasting Love.

Blessed rest! the fruit and the foretaste and the fellowship of God's own rest! found of them who thus come to Jesus to abide in Him. It is the peace of God, the great calm of the eternal world, that passeth all understanding, and that keeps the heart and mind. With this grace secured, we have strength for every duty, courage for every struggle, a blessing in every cross, and the joy of life eternal in death itself.

O my Saviour! if ever my heart should doubt or fear again, as if the blessing were too great to expect, or too high to attain, let me hear Thy voice to quicken my faith and obedience: "Abide in me"; "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; ye shall find rest to your souls."

01.03. Trusting Him to Keep you Phil

Chapter 3--TRUSTING HIM TO KEEP YOU "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus."-- Php 3:12

MORE than one admits that it is a sacred duty and a blessed privilege to abide in Christ, but shrinks back continually before the question: Is it possible, a life of unbroken fellowship with the Saviour? Eminent Christians, to whom special opportunities of cultivating this grace have been granted, may attain to it; for the large majority of disciples, whose life, by a divine appointment, is so fully occupied with the affairs of this life, it can scarce be expected. The more they hear of this life, the deeper their sense of its glory and blessedness, and there is nothing they would not sacrifice to be made partakers of it. But they are too weak, too unfaithful--they never can attain to it.

Dear souls! how little they know that the abiding in Christ is just meant for the weak, and so beautifully suited to their feebleness. It is not the doing of some great thing, and does not demand that we first lead a very holy and devoted life. No, it is simply weakness entrusting itself to a Mighty One to be kept--the unfaithful one casting self on One who is altogether trustworthy and true. Abiding in Him is not a work that we have to do as the condition for enjoying His salvation, but a consenting to let Him do all for us, and in us, and through us. It is a work He does for us--the fruit and the power of His redeeming love. Our part is simply to yield, to trust, and to wait for what He has engaged to perform.

It is this quiet expectation and confidence, resting on the word of Christ that in Him there is an abiding place prepared, which is so sadly wanting among Christians. They scarce take the time or the trouble to realize that when He says "Abide IN ME," He offers Himself, the Keeper of Israel that slumbers not nor sleeps, with all His power and love, as the living home of the soul, where the mighty influences of His grace will be stronger to keep than all their feebleness to lead astray. The idea they have of grace is this--that their conversion and pardon are God's work, but that now, in gratitude to God, it is their work to live as Christians, and follow Jesus. There is always the thought of a work that has to be done, and even though they pray for help, still the work is theirs. They fail continually, and become hopeless; and the despondency only increases the helplessness. No, wandering one; as it was Jesus who drew you when He spake "Come," so it is Jesus who keeps you when He says "Abide." The grace to come and the grace to abide are alike from Him alone. That word Come, heard, meditated on, accepted, was the cord of love that drew you nigh; that word Abide is even so the band with which He holds you fast and binds you to Himself. Let the soul but take time to listen to the voice of Jesus. "In me," He says, "is thy place--in my almighty arms. It is I who love thee so, who speak Abide in me; surely thou canst trust me." The voice of Jesus entering and dwelling in the soul cannot but call for the response: "Yes, Saviour, in Thee I can, I will abide."

Abide in me: These words are no law of Moses, demanding from the sinful what they cannot perform. They are the command of love, which is ever only a promise in a different shape. Think of

this until all feeling of burden and fear and despair pass away, and the first thought that comes as you hear of abiding in Jesus be one of bright and joyous hope: it is for me, I know I shall enjoy it. You are not under the law, with its inexorable Do, but under grace, with its blessed Believe what Christ will do for you. And if the question be asked, "But surely there is something for us to do?" the answer is, "Our doing and working are but the fruit of Christ's work in us." It is when the soul becomes utterly passive, looking and resting on what Christ is to do, that its energies are stirred to their highest activity, and that we work most effectually because we know that He works in us. It is as we see in that word IN ME the mighty energies of love reaching out after us to have us and to hold us, that all the strength of our will is roused to abide in Him. This connection between Christ's work and our work is beautifully expressed in the words of Paul: "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that whereunto I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus." It was because he knew that the mighty and the faithful One had grasped him with the glorious purpose of making him one with Himself, that he did his utmost to grasp the glorious prize. The faith, the experience, the full assurance, "Christ hath apprehended me," gave him the courage and the strength to press on and apprehend that whereunto he was apprehended. Each new insight of the great end for which Christ had apprehended and was holding him, roused him afresh to aim at nothing less.

Paul's expression, and its application to the Christian life, can be best understood if we think of a father helping his child to mount the side of some steep precipice. The father stands above, and has taken the son by the hand to help him on. He points him to the spot on which he will help him to plant his feet, as he leaps upward. The leap would be too high and dangerous for the child alone; but the father's hand is his trust, and he leaps to get hold of the point for which his father has taken hold of him. It is the father's strength that secures him and lifts him up, and so urges him to use his utmost strength.

Such is the relation between Christ and you, O weak and trembling believer! Fix first your eyes on the whereunto for which He has apprehended you. It is nothing less than a life of abiding, unbroken fellowship with Himself to which He is seeking to lift you up. All that you have already received--pardon and peace, the Spirit and His grace--are but preliminary to this. And all that you see promised to you in the future--holiness and fruitfulness and glory everlasting--are but its natural outcome. Union with Himself, and so with the Father, is His highest object. Fix your eye on this, and gaze until it stand out before you clear and unmistakeable: Christ's aim is to have me abiding in Him. And then let the second thought enter your heart: Unto this I am apprehended of Christ. His almighty power hath laid hold on me, and offers now to lift me up to where He would have me. Fix your eyes on Christ. Gaze on the love that beams in those eyes, and that asks whether you cannot trust Him, who sought and found and brought you nigh, now to keep you. Gaze on that arm of power, and say whether you have reason to be assured that He is indeed able to keep you abiding in Him. And as you think of the spot whither He points--the blessed whereunto for which He apprehended you--and keep your gaze fixed on Himself, holding you and waiting to lift you up, O say, could you not this very day take the upward step, and rise to enter upon this blessed life of abiding in Christ? Yes, begin at once, and say, "O my Jesus, if Thou biddest me, and if Thou engagest to lift and keep me there, I will venture. Trembling, but trusting, I will say: Jesus, I do abide in Thee. " My beloved fellow-believer, go, and take time alone with Jesus, and say this to Him. I dare not speak to you about abiding in Him for the mere sake of calling forth a pleasing religious sentiment. God's truth must at once be acted on. O yield yourself this very day

to the blessed Saviour in the surrender of the one thing He asks of you: give up yourself to abide in Him. He Himself will work it in you. You can trust Him to keep you trusting and abiding. And if ever doubts again arise, or the bitter experience of failure tempt you to despair, just remember where Paul found His strength: "I am apprehended of Jesus Christ." In that assurance you have a fountain of strength. From that you can look up to the whereunto on which He has set His heart, and set yours there too. From that you gather confidence that the good work He hath begun He will also perform. And in that confidence you will gather courage, day by day, afresh to say, "I follow on, that I may also apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' It is because Jesus has taken hold of me, and because Jesus keeps me, that I dare to say: Saviour, I abide in Thee. "

01.04. As the Branch in the Vine John

Chapter 4 - AS THE BRANCH IN THE VINE "I am the vine, ye are the branches."- John 15:5

IT WAS in connection with the parable of the Vine that our Lord first used the expression, "Abide in me." That parable, so simple, and yet so rich in its teaching, gives us the best and most complete illustration of the meaning of our Lord's command, and the union to which He invites us. The parable teaches us the nature of that union. The connection between the vine and the branch is a living one. No external, temporary union will suffice; no work of man can effect it: the branch, whether an original or an engrafted one, is such only by the Creator's own work, in virtue of which the life, the sap, the fatness, and the fruitfulness of the vine communicate themselves to the branch. And just so it is with the believer too. His union with his Lord is no work of human wisdom or human will, but an act of God, by which the closest and most complete life-union is effected between the Son of God and the sinner. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." The same Spirit which dwelt and still dwells in the Son, becomes the life of the believer; in the unity of that one Spirit, and the fellowship of the same life which is in Christ, he is one with Him. As between the vine and branch, it is a life-union that makes them one. The parable teaches us the completeness of the union. So close is the union between the vine and the branch, that each is nothing without the other, that each is wholly and only for the other.

Without the vine the branch can do nothing. To the vine it owes its right of place in the vineyard, its life and its fruitfulness. And so the Lord says, "Without me ye can do nothing." The believer can each day be pleasing to God only in that which he does through the power of Christ dwelling in him. The daily inflowing of the life-sap of the Holy Spirit is his only power to bring forth fruit. He lives alone in Him and is for each moment dependent on Him alone.

Without the branch the vine can also do nothing. A vine without branches can bear no fruit. No less indispensable than the vine to the branch, is the branch to the vine. Such is the wonderful condescension of the grace of Jesus, that just as His people are dependent on Him, He has made Himself dependent on them. Without His disciples He cannot dispense His blessing to the world; He cannot offer sinners the grapes of the heavenly Canaan. Marvel not! It is His own appointment; and this is the high honour to which He has called His redeemed ones, that as indispensable as He is to them in heaven, that from Him their fruit may be found, so indispensable are they to Him on earth, that through them His fruit may be found. Believers, meditate on this, until your soul bows to worship in presence of the mystery of the perfect union between Christ and the believer.

There is more: as neither vine nor branch is anything without the other, so is neither anything except for the other.

All the vine possesses belongs to the branches. The vine does not gather from the soil its fatness and its sweetness for itself--all it has is at the disposal of the branches. As it is the parent, so it is the servant of the branches. And Jesus, to whom we owe our life, how completely does He give Himself for us and to us: "The glory Thou gavest me, I have given them"; "He that believeth in me,

the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works shall he do." All His fullness and all His riches are for thee, O believer; for the vine does not live for itself, keeps nothing for itself, but exists only for the branches. All that Jesus is in heaven, He is for us: He has no interest there separate from ours; as our representative He stands before the Father. And all the branch possesses belongs to the vine. The branch does not exist for itself, but to bear fruit that can proclaim the excellence of the vine: it has no reason of existence except to be of service to the vine. Glorious image of the calling of the believer, and the entireness of his consecration to the service of his Lord. As Jesus gives Himself so wholly over to him, he feels himself urged to be wholly his Lord's. Every power of his being, every moment of his life, every thought and feeling, belong to Jesus, that from Him and for Him he may bring forth fruit. As he realizes what the vine is to the branch, and what the branch is meant to be to the vine, he feels that he has but one thing to think of and to live for, and that is, the will, the glory, the work, the kingdom of his blessed Lord--the bringing forth of fruit to the glory of His name. The parable teaches us the object of the union. The branches are for fruit and fruit alone. "Every branch that beareth not fruit He taketh away." The branch needs leaves for the maintenance of its own life, and the perfection of its fruit: the fruit itself it bears to give away to those around. As the believer enters into his calling as a branch, he sees that he has to forget himself, and to live entirely for his fellowmen. To love them, to seek for them, and to save them, Jesus came: for this every branch on the Vine has to live as much as the Vine itself. It is for fruit, much fruit, that the Father has made us one with Jesus.

Wondrous parable of the Vine--unveiling the mysteries of the Divine love, of the heavenly life, of the world of Spirit--how little have I understood thee! Jesus the living Vine in heaven, and I the living branch on earth! How little have I understood how great my need, but also how perfect my claim, to all His fullness! How little understood, how great His need, but also how perfect His claim, to my emptiness! Let me, in its beautiful light, study the wondrous union between Jesus and His people, until it becomes to me the guide into full communion with my beloved Lord. Let me listen and believe, until my whole being cries out, "Jesus is indeed to me the True Vine, bearing me, nourishing me, supplying me, using me, and filling me to the full to make me bring forth fruit abundantly." Then shall I not fear to say, "I am indeed a branch to Jesus, the True Vine, abiding in Him, resting on Him, waiting for Him, serving Him, and living only that through me, too, He may show forth the riches of His grace, and give His fruit to a perishing world."

It is when we try thus to understand the meaning of the parable, that the blessed command spoken in connection with it will come home to us in its true power. The thought of what the vine is to the branch, and Jesus to the believer, will give new force to the words, "Abide in me!" It will be as if He says, "Think, soul, how completely I belong to thee. I have joined myself inseparably to thee; all the fulness and fatness of the Vine are thine in very deed. Now thou once art in me, be assured that all I have is wholly thine. It is my interest and my honour to have thee a fruitful branch; only Abide in me. Thou art weak, but I am strong; thou art poor, but I am rich. Only abide in me; yield thyself wholly to my teaching and rule; simply trust my love, my grace, my promises. Only believe; I am wholly thine; I am the Vine, thou art the branch. Abide in me."

What sayest thou, O my soul? Shall I longer hesitate, or withhold consent? Or shall I not, instead of only thinking how hard and how difficult it is to live like a branch of the True Vine, because I thought of it as something I had to accomplish--shall I not now begin to look upon it as the most blessed and joyful thing under heaven? Shall I not believe that, now I once am in Him, He Himself

will keep me and enable me to abide? On my part, abiding is nothing but the acceptance of my position, the consent to be kept there, the surrender of faith to the strong Vine still to hold the feeble branch. Yes, I will, I do abide in Thee, blessed Lord Jesus.

O Saviour, how unspeakable is Thy love! "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it." I can only yield myself to Thy love with the prayer that, day by day, Thou wouldest unfold to me somewhat of its precious mysteries, and so encourage and strengthen Thy loving disciple to do what his heart longs to do indeed--ever, only, wholly to abide in Thee.

01.05. As you came to Him, by Faith

Chapter 5--AS YOU CAME TO HIM, BY FAITH

"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, abounding therein." Colossians 2:6-7 IN THESE words the apostle teaches us the weighty lesson, that it is not only by faith that we first come to Christ and are united to Him, but that it is by faith that we are to be rooted and established in our union with Christ. Not less essential than for the commencement, is faith for the progress of the spiritual life. Abiding in Jesus can only be by faith.

There are earnest Christians who do not understand this; or, if they admit it in theory, they fail to realize its application in practice. They are very zealous for a free gospel, with our first acceptance of Christ, and justification by faith alone. But after this they think everything depends on our diligence and faithfulness. While they firmly grasp the truth, "The sinner shall be justified by faith," they have hardly found a place in their scheme for the larger truth, "The just shall live by faith." They have never understood what a perfect Saviour Jesus is, and how He will each day do for the sinner just as much as He did the first day when he came to Him. They know not that the life of grace is always and only a life of faith, and that in the relationship to Jesus the one daily and unceasing duty of the disciple is to believe, because believing is the one channel through which divine grace and strength flow out into the heart of man. The old nature of the believer remains evil and sinful to the last; it is only as he daily comes, all empty and helpless, to his Saviour to receive of His life and strength, that he can bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God. Therefore it is: "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted in Him, and established in the faith, abounding therein." As you came to Jesus, so abide in Him, by faith. And if you would know how faith is to be exercised in thus abiding in Jesus, to be rooted more deeply and firmly in Him, you have only to look back to the time when first you received Him. You remember well what obstacles at that time there appeared to be in the way of your believing. There was first your vileness and guilt: it appeared impossible that the promise of pardon and love could be for such a sinner. Then there was the sense of weakness and death: you felt not the power for the surrender and the trust to which you were called. And then there was the future: you dared not undertake to be a disciple of Jesus while you felt so sure that you could not remain standing, but would speedily again be unfaithful and fall. These difficulties were like mountains in your way. And how were they removed? Simply by the word of God. That word, as it were, compelled you to believe that, notwithstanding guilt in the past, and weakness in the present, and unfaithfulness in the future, the promise was sure that Jesus would accept and save you. On that word you ventured to come, and were not deceived: you found that Jesus did indeed accept and save.

Apply this, your experience in coming to Jesus, to the abiding in Him. Now, as then, the temptations to keep you from believing are many. When you think of your sins since you became a disciple, your heart is cast down with shame, and it looks as if it were too much to expect that

Jesus should indeed receive you into perfect intimacy and the full enjoyment of His holy love. When you think how utterly, in times past, you have failed in keeping the most sacred vows, the consciousness of present weakness makes you tremble at the very idea of answering the Saviour's command with the promise, "Lord, from henceforth I will abide in Thee. " And when you set before yourself the life of love and joy, of holiness and fruitfulness, which in the future are to flow from abiding in Him, it is as if it only serves to make you still more hopeless: you, at least, can never attain to it. You know yourself too well. It is no use expecting it, only to be disappointed; a life fully and wholly abiding in Jesus is not for you.

Oh that you would learn a lesson from the time of your first coming to the Saviour! Remember, dear soul, how you then were led, contrary to all that your experience, and your feelings, and even your sober judgment said, to take Jesus at His word, and how you were not disappointed. He did receive you, and pardon you; He did love you, and save you--you know it. And if He did this for you when you were an enemy and a stranger, what think you, now that you are His own, will He not much more fulfil His promise? Oh that you would come and begin simply to listen to His word, and to ask only the one question: Does He really mean that I should abide in Him? The answer His word gives is so simple and so sure: By His almighty grace you now are in Him; that same almighty grace will indeed enable you to abide in Him. By faith you became partakers of the initial grace; by that same faith you can enjoy the continuous grace of abiding in Him. And if you ask what exactly it is that you now have to believe that you may abide in Him, the answer is not difficult. Believe first of all what He says: "I am the Vine." The safety and the fruitfulness of the branch depend upon the strength of the vine. Think not so much of yourself as a branch, nor of the abiding as your duty, until you have first had your soul filled with the faith of what Christ as the Vine is. He really will be to you all that a vine can be--holding you fast, nourishing you, and making Himself every moment responsible for your growth and your fruit. Take time to know, set yourself heartily to believe: My Vine, on whom I can depend for all I need, is Christ. A large, strong vine bears the feeble branch, and holds it more than the branch holds the vine. Ask the Father by the Holy Ghost to reveal to you what a glorious, loving, mighty Christ this is, in whom you have your place and your life; it is the faith in what Christ is, more than anything else, that will keep you abiding in Him. A soul filled with large thoughts of the Vine will be a strong branch, and will abide confidently in Him. Be much occupied with Jesus, and believe much in Him, as the True Vine. And then, when Faith can well say, "He is my Vine," let it further say, "I am His branch, I am in Him." I speak to those who say they are Christ's disciples, and on them I cannot too earnestly press the importance of exercising their faith in saying, "I am in Him." It makes the abiding so simple. If I realize clearly as I meditate: Now I am in Him, I see at once that there is nothing wanting but just my consent to be what He has made me, to remain where He has placed me. I am in Christ: This simple thought, carefully, prayerfully, believingly uttered, removes all difficulty as if there were some great attainment to be reached. No, I am in Christ, my blessed Saviour. His love has prepared a home for me with Himself, when He says, "Abide in my love"; and His power has undertaken to keep the door, and to keep me in, if I will but consent. I am in Christ: I have now but to say, "Saviour, I bless Thee for this wondrous grace. I consent; I yield myself to Thy gracious keeping; I do abide in Thee."

It is astonishing how such a faith will work out all that is further implied in abiding in Christ. There is in the Christian life great need of watchfulness and of prayer, of self-denial and of striving, of

obedience and of diligence. But "all things are possible to him that believeth." "This is the victory that overcometh, even our faith." It is the faith that continually closes its eyes to the weakness of the creature, and finds its joy in the sufficiency of an Almighty Saviour, that makes the soul strong and glad. It gives itself up to be led by the Holy Spirit into an ever deeper appreciation of that wonderful Saviour whom God hath given us--the Infinite Immanuel. It follows the leading of the Spirit from page to page of the blessed Word, with the one desire to take each revelation of what Jesus is and what He promises as its nourishment and its life. In accordance with the promise, "If that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye shall also abide in the Father and the Son," it lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. And so it makes the soul strong with the strength of God, to be and to do all that is needed for abiding in Christ.

Believer, you would abide in Christ: only believe. Believe always; believe now. Bow even now before your Lord, and say to Him in childlike faith, that because He is your Vine, and you are His branch, you will this day abide in Him.

NOTE

" 'I am the True Vine.' He who offers us the privilege of an actual union with Himself is the great I AM, the almighty God, who upholds all things by the word of His power. And this almighty God reveals Himself as our perfect Saviour, even to the unimaginable extent of seeking to renew our fallen natures by grafting them into His own Divine nature.

"To realize the glorious Deity of Him whose call sounds forth to longing hearts with such exceeding sweetness, is no small step towards gaining the full privilege to which we are invited. But longing is by itself of no use; still less can there be any profit in reading of the blessed results to be gained from a close and personal union with our Lord, if we believe that union to be practically beyond our reach. His words are meant to be a living, an eternal, precious reality. And this they can never become unless we are sure that we may reasonably expect their accomplishment. But what could make the accomplishment of such an idea possible--what could make it reasonable to suppose that we poor, weak, selfish creatures, full of sin and full of failures, might be saved out of the corruption of our nature and made partakers of the holiness of our Lord--except the fact, the marvellous, unalterable fact, that He who proposes to us so great a transformation is Himself the everlasting God, as able as He is willing to fulfil His own word. In meditating, therefore, upon these utterances of Christ, containing as they do the very essence of His teaching, the very concentration of His love, let us, at the outset, put away all tendency to doubt. Let us not allow ourselves so much as to question whether such erring disciples as we are can be enabled to attain the holiness to which we are called through a close and intimate union with our Lord. If there be any impossibility, any falling short of the proposed blessedness, it will arise from the lack of earnest desire on our part. There is no lack in any respect on His part who puts forth the invitation; with GOD there can be no shortcoming in the fulfilment of His promise."--The Life of Fellowship; Meditations on John 15:1; John 15:11 by A. M. James.

It is perhaps necessary to say, for the sake of young or doubting Christians, that there is something more necessary than the effort to exercise faith in each separate promise that is brought under our notice. What is of even greater importance is the cultivation of a trustful disposition towards God, the habit of always thinking of Him, of His ways and His works, with bright confiding hopefulness. In such soil alone can the individual promises strike root and grow

up. In a little work published by the Tract Society, Encouragements to Faith, by James Kimball, there will be found many most suggestive and helpful thoughts, all pleading for the right God has to claim that He shall be trusted. The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life is another little work that has been a great help to many. Its bright and buoyant tone, its loving and unceasing repetition of the keynote--we may indeed depend on Jesus to do all He has said, and more than we can think --has breathed hope and joy into many a heart that was almost ready to despair of ever getting on. In Frances Havergal's Kept for the Master's Use, there is the same healthful, hope-inspiring tone.

01.06. God Himself has united you to Him

Chapter 6--GOD HIMSELF HAS UNITED YOU TO HIM

"OF GOD ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."-- 1 Corinthians 1:30 (R.V. marg.).

"My Father is the husbandman."-- John 15:1

"Ye ARE in Christ Jesus." The believers at Corinth were still feeble and carnal, only babes in Christ. And yet Paul wants them, at the outset of his teaching, to know distinctly that they are in Christ Jesus. The whole Christian life depends on the clear consciousness of our position in Christ. Most essential to the abiding in Christ is the daily renewal of our faith's assurance, "I am in Christ Jesus." All fruitful preaching to believers must take this as its startingpoint: "Ye are in Christ Jesus." But the apostle has an additional thought, of almost greater importance: "OF GOD are ye in Christ Jesus." He would have us not only remember our union to Christ, but specially that it is not our own doing, but the work of God Himself. As the Holy Spirit teaches us to realize this, we shall see what a source of assurance and strength it must become to us. If it is of God alone that I am in Christ, then God Himself, the Infinite One, becomes my security for all I can need or wish in seeking to abide in Christ.

Let me try to understand what it means, this wonderful "OF GOD in Christ." In becoming partakers of the union with Christ, there is a work God does and a work we have to do. God does His work by moving us to do our work. The work of God is hidden and silent; what we do is something distinct and tangible. Conversion and faith, prayer and obedience, are conscious acts of which we can give a clear account; while the spiritual quickening and strengthening that come from above are secret and beyond the reach of human sight. And so it comes that when the believer tries to say, "I am in Christ Jesus," he looks more to the work he did, than to that wondrous secret work of God by which he was united to Christ. Nor can it well be otherwise at the commencement of the Christian course. "I know that I have believed," is a valid testimony. But it is of great consequence that the mind should be led to see that at the back of our turning, and believing, and accepting of Christ, there was God's almighty power doing its work--inspiring our will, taking possession of us, and carrying out its own purpose of love in planting us into Christ Jesus. As the believer enters into this, the divine side of the work of salvation, he will learn to praise and to worship with new exultation, and to rejoice more than ever in the divineness of that salvation he has been made partaker of. At each step he reviews, the song will come, "This is the Lord's doing"--Divine Omnipotence working out what Eternal Love had devised. "OF GOD I am in Christ Jesus." The words will lead him even further and higher, even to the depths of eternity. "Whom He hath predestinated, them He also called." The calling in time is the manifestation of the purpose in eternity. Ere the world was, God had fixed the eye of His sovereign love on you in the election of grace, and chosen you in Christ. That you know yourself to be in Christ, is the stepping-stone by which you rise to understand in its full meaning the word, "OF GOD I am in Christ Jesus." With the prophet, your language will be, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me: yea, I have loved thee

with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." And you will recognise your own salvation as a part of that "mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure of His will which He purposed in Himself," and join with the whole body of believers in Christ as these say, "In whom we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Nothing will more exalt free grace, and make man bow very low before it, than this knowledge of the mystery "OF GOD in Christ."

It is easy to see what a mighty influence it must exert on the believer who seeks to abide in Christ. What a sure standing-ground it gives him, as he rests his right to Christ and all His fulness on nothing less than the Father's own purpose and work! We have thought of Christ as the Vine, and the believer as the branch; let us not forget that other precious word, "My Father is the husbandman." The Saviour said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up"; but every branch grafted by Him in the True Vine, shall never be plucked out of His hand. As it was the Father to whom Christ owed all He was, and in whom He had all His strength and His life as the Vine, so to the Father the believer owes his place and his security in Christ. The same love and delight with which the Father watched over the beloved Son Himself, watch over every member of His body, every one who is in Christ Jesus.

What confident trust this faith inspires--not only as to the being kept in safety to the end, but specially as to the being able to fulfil in every point the object for which I have been united to Christ. The branch is as much in the charge and keeping of the husbandman as the vine; his honour as much concerned in the wellbeing and growth of the branch as of the vine. The God who chose Christ to be Vine fitted Him thoroughly for the work He had as Vine to perform. The God who has chosen me and planted me in Christ, has thereby engaged to secure, if I will but let Him, by yielding myself to Him, that I in every way be worthy of Jesus Christ. Oh that I did but fully realize this! What confidence and urgency it would give to my prayer to the God and Father of Jesus Christ! How it would quicken the sense of dependence, and make me see that praying without ceasing is indeed the one need of my life--an unceasing waiting, moment by moment, on the God who has united me to Christ, to perfect His own divine work, to work in me both to will and to do of His good pleasure. And what a motive this would be for the highest activity in the maintenance of a fruitful branch-life! Motives are mighty powers; it is of infinite importance to have them high and clear. Here surely is the highest: "You are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works": grafted by Him into Christ, unto the bringing forth of much fruit. Whatever God creates is exquisitely suited to its end. He created the sun to give light: how perfectly it does its work! He created the eye to see: how beautifully it fulfils its object! He created the new man unto good works: how admirably it is fitted for its purpose. OF GOD I am in Christ: created anew, made a branch of the Vine, fitted for fruit-bearing. Would to God that believers would cease looking most at their old nature, and complaining of their weakness, as if God called them to what they were unfitted for! Would that they would believingly and joyfully accept the wondrous revelation of how God, in uniting them to Christ, has made Himself chargeable for their spiritual growth and fruitfulness! How all sickly hesitancy and sloth would disappear, and under the influence of this mighty motive--the faith in the faithfulness of Him of whom they are in Christ--their whole nature would rise to accept and fulfil their glorious destiny!

O my soul! yield yourself to the mighty influence of this word: "OF GOD ye are in Christ Jesus." It is the same GOD OF WHOM Christ is made all that He is for us, OF WHOM we also are in Christ,

and will most surely be made what we must be to Him. Take time to meditate and to worship, until the light that comes from the throne of God has shone into you, and you have seen your union to Christ as indeed the work of His almighty Father. Take time, day after day, and let, in your whole religious life, with all it has of claims and duties, of needs and wishes, God be everything. See Jesus, as He speaks to you, "Abide in me," pointing upward and saying, "My FATHER IS THE HUSBANDMAN. Of Him you are in me, through Him you abide in me, and to Him and to His glory shall be the fruit you bear." And let your answer be, Amen, Lord! So be it. From eternity Christ and I were ordained for each other; inseparably we belong to each other: it is God's will; I shall abide in Christ. It is of God I am in Christ Jesus.

01.07. As your Wisdom

Chapter 7--AS YOUR WISDOM

"Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us WISDOM from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."-- 1 Corinthians 1:30 (R.V. marg.).

JESUS CHRIST is not only Priest to purchase, and King to secure, but also Prophet to reveal to us the salvation which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Just as at the creation the light was first called into existence, that in it all God's other works might have their life and beauty, so in our text wisdom is mentioned first as the treasury in which are to be found the three precious gifts that follow. The life is the light of man; it is in revealing to us, and making us behold the glory of God in His own face, that Christ makes us partakers of eternal life. It was by the tree of knowledge that sin came; it is through the knowledge that Christ gives that salvation comes. He is made of God unto us wisdom. In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And of God you are in Him, and have but to abide in Him, to be made partaker of these treasures of wisdom. In Him you are, and in Him the wisdom is; dwelling in Him, you dwell in the very fountain of all light; abiding in Him, you have Christ the wisdom of God leading your whole spiritual life, and ready to communicate, in the form of knowledge, just as much as is needful for you to know. Christ is made unto us wisdom: you are in Christ.

It is this connection between what Christ has been made of God to us, and how we have it only as also being in Him, that we must learn to understand better. We shall thus see that the blessings prepared for us in Christ cannot be obtained as special gifts in answer to prayer apart from the abiding in Him. The answer to each prayer must come in the closer union and the deeper abiding in Him; in Him, the unspeakable gift, all other gifts are treasured up, the gift of wisdom and knowledge too.

How often have you longed for wisdom and spiritual understanding that you might know God better, whom to know is life eternal! Abide in Jesus: your life in Him will lead you to that fellowship with God in which the only true knowledge of God is to be had. His love, His power, His infinite glory will, as you abide in Jesus, be so revealed as it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. You may not be able to grasp it with the understanding, or to express it in words; but the knowledge which is deeper than thoughts or words will be given--the knowing of God which comes of being known of Him. "We preach Christ crucified unto them which are called, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Or you would fain count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ your Lord. Abide in Jesus, and be found in Him. You shall know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. Following Him, you shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. It is only when God shines into the heart, and Christ Jesus dwells there, that the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ can be seen. Or would you understand his blessed work, as He wrought it on earth, or works it from heaven by His Spirit? Would you know how Christ can become our righteousness, and our sanctification, and redemption? It is just as bringing, and revealing, and communicating these that He is made unto

us wisdom from God. There are a thousand questions that at times come up, and the attempt to answer them becomes a weariness and a burden. It is because you have forgotten you are in Christ, whom God has made to be your wisdom. Let it be your first care to abide in Him in undivided fervent devotion of heart; when the heart and the life are right, rooted in Christ, knowledge will come in such measure as Christ's own wisdom sees meet. And without such abiding in Christ the knowledge does not really profit, but is often most hurtful. The soul satisfies itself with thoughts which are but the forms and images of truth, without receiving the truth itself in its power. God's way is ever first to give us, even though it be but as a seed, the thing itself, the life and the power, and then the knowledge. Man seeks the knowledge first, and often, alas! never gets beyond it. God gives us Christ, and in Him hid the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. O let us be content to possess Christ, to dwell in Him, to make Him our life, and only in a deeper searching into Him, to search and find the knowledge we desire. Such knowledge is life indeed.

Therefore, believer, abide in Jesus as your wisdom, and expect from Him most confidently whatever teaching you may need for a life to the glory of the Father. In all that concerns your spiritual life, abide in Jesus as your wisdom. The life you have in Christ is a thing of infinite sacredness, far too high and holy for you to know how to act it out. It is He alone who can guide you, as by a secret spiritual instinct, to know what is becoming your dignity as a child of God, what will help and what will hinder your inner life, and specially your abiding in Him. Do not think of it as a mystery or a difficulty you must solve. Whatever questions come up as to the possibility of abiding perfectly and uninterruptedly in Him, and of really obtaining all the blessing that comes from it, always remember: He knows, all is perfectly clear to Him, and He is my wisdom. Just as much as you need to know and are capable of apprehending, will be communicated, if you only trust Him. Never think of the riches of wisdom and knowledge hid in Jesus as treasures without a key, or of your way as a path without a light. Jesus your wisdom is guiding you in the right way, even when you do not see it. In all your intercourse with the blessed Word, remember the same truth: abide in Jesus, your wisdom. Study much to know the written Word; but study more to know the living Word, in whom you are of God. Jesus, the wisdom of God, is only known by a life of implicit confidence and obedience. The words He speaks are spirit and life to those who live in Him. Therefore, each time you read, or hear, or meditate upon the Word, be careful to take up your true position. Realize first your oneness with Him who is the wisdom of God; know yourself to be under His direct and special training; go to the Word abiding in Him, the very fountain of divine light--in His light you shall see light. In all your daily life, its ways and its work, abide in Jesus as your wisdom. Your body and your daily life share in the great salvation: in Christ, the wisdom of God, provision has been made for their guidance too. Your body is His temple, your daily life the sphere for glorifying Him: it is to Him a matter of deep interest that all your earthly concerns should be guided aright. Only trust His sympathy, believe His love, and wait for His guidance--it will be given. Abiding in Him, the mind will be calmed and freed from passion, the judgment cleared and strengthened, the light of heaven will shine on earthly things, and your prayer for wisdom, like Solomon's, will be fulfilled above what you ask or think. And so, especially in any work you do for God, abide in Jesus as your wisdom. "We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"; let all fear or doubt lest we should not know exactly what these works are, be put far away. In Christ we are created for them: He will show us what they are, and how to do them. Cultivate the habit of rejoicing in the assurance that the divine wisdom is guiding you, even where you do not yet see the way.

All that you can wish to know is perfectly clear to Him. As Man, as Mediator, He has access to the counsels of Deity, to the secrets of Providence, in your interest, and on your behalf. If you will but trust Him fully, and abide in Him entirely, you can be confident of having unerring guidance.

Yes, abide in Jesus as your wisdom. Seek to maintain the spirit of waiting and dependence, that always seeks to learn, and will not move but as the heavenly light leads on. Withdraw yourself from all needless distraction, close your ears to the voices of the world, and be as a docile learner, ever listening for the heavenly wisdom the Master has to teach. Surrender all your own wisdom; seek a deep conviction of the utter blindness of the natural understanding in the things of God; and both as to what you have to believe and have to do, wait for Jesus to teach and to guide. Remember that the teaching and guidance come not from without: it is by His life in us that the divine wisdom does His work. Retire frequently with Him into the inner chamber of the heart, where the gentle voice of the Spirit is only heard if all be still. Hold fast with unshaken confidence, even in the midst of darkness and apparent desertion, His own assurance that He is the light and the leader of His own. And live, above all, day by day in the blessed truth that, as He Himself, the living Christ Jesus, is your wisdom, your first and last care must ever be this alone--to abide in Him. Abiding in Him, His wisdom will come to you as the spontaneous outflowing of a life rooted in Him. I am, I abide in Christ, who was made unto us wisdom from God; wisdom will be given me.

01.08. As your Righteousness

Chapter 8--AS YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both RIGHTEOUSNESS and sanctification, and redemption."- 1 Corinthians 1:30 (R.V. marg.). THE first of the great blessings which Christ our wisdom reveals to us as prepared in Himself, is --righteousness. It is not difficult to see why this must be first.

There can be no real prosperity or progress in a nation, a home, or a soul, unless there be peace. As not even a machine can do its work unless it be in rest, secured on a good foundation, quietness and assurance are indispensable to our moral and spiritual well-being. Sin had disturbed all our relations; we were out of harmony with ourselves, with men, and with God. The first requirement of a salvation that should really bring blessedness to us was peace. And peace can only come with right. Where everything is as God would have it, in God's order and in harmony with His will, there alone can peace reign. Jesus Christ came to restore peace on earth, and peace in the soul, by restoring righteousness. Because He is Melchizedek, King of righteousness, He reigns as King of Salem, King of peace (Hebrews 7:2). He so fulfils the promise the prophets held out: "A king shall reign in righteousness: and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever" (Isaiah 32:1; Isaiah 32:17). Christ is made of God unto us righteousness; of God we are in Him as our righteousness; we are made the righteousness of God in Him. Let us try to understand what this means. When first the sinner is led to trust in Christ for salvation, he, as a rule, looks more to His work than His person. As he looks at the Cross, and Christ suffering there, the Righteous One for the unrighteous, he sees in that atoning death the only but sufficient foundation for his faith in God's pardoning mercy. The substitution, and the curse-bearing, and the atonement of Christ dying in the stead of sinners, are what give him peace. And as he understands how the righteousness which Christ brings becomes his very own, and how, in the strength of that, he is counted righteous before God, he feels that he has what he needs to restore him to God's favour: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." He seeks to wear this robe of righteousness in the ever renewed faith in the glorious gift of righteousness which has been bestowed upon him. But as time goes on, and he seeks to grow in the Christian life, new needs arise. He wants to understand more fully how it is that God can thus justify the ungodly on the strength of the righteousness of another. He finds the answer in the wonderful teaching of Scripture as to the true union of the believer with Christ as the second Adam. He sees that it is because Christ had made Himself one with His people, and they were one with Him; that it was in perfect accordance with all law in the kingdom of nature and of heaven, that each member of the body should have the full benefit of the doing and the suffering as of the life of the head. And so he is led to feel that it can only be in fully realizing his personal union with Christ as the Head, that he can fully experience the power of His righteousness to bring the soul into the full favour and fellowship of the Holy One. The work of Christ does not become less precious, but the Person of Christ more so; the work leads up into the very heart, the love and the life of the God-man. And this experience sheds its light again upon

Scripture. It leads him to notice, what he had scarce remarked before, how distinctly the righteousness of God, as it becomes ours, is connected with the Person of the Redeemer. "This is His name whereby HE shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." "IN JEHOVAH have I righteousness and strength." "Of God is HE made unto us righteousness." "That we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM." "That I may be found IN HIM, having the righteousness of God." He sees how inseparable righteousness and life in Christ are from each other: "The righteousness of one comes upon all unto justification of life." "They which receive the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." And he understands what deep meaning there is in the key-word of the Epistle to the Romans: "The righteous shall live by faith." He is not now content with only thinking of the imputed righteousness as his robe; but, putting on Jesus Christ, and seeking to be wrapped up in, to be clothed upon with Himself and His life, he feels how completely the righteousness of God is his, because the Lord our righteousness is his. Before he understood this, he too often felt it difficult to wear his white robe all the day: it was as if he specially had to put it on when he came into God's presence to confess his sins, and seek new grace. But now the living Christ Himself is his righteousness--that Christ who watches over, and keeps and loves us as His own; it is no longer an impossibility to walk all the day enrobed in the loving presence with which He covers His people.

Such an experience leads still further. The life and the righteousness are inseparably linked, and the believer becomes more conscious than before of a righteous nature planted within him. The new man created in Christ Jesus, is "created in righteousness and true holiness." "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." The union to Jesus has effected a change not only in the relation to God, but in the personal state before God. And as the intimate fellowship to which the union has opened up the way is maintained, the growing renewal of the whole being makes righteousness to be his very nature. To a Christian who begins to see the deep meaning of the truth, "HE is made to us righteousness," it is hardly necessary to say, "Abide in Him." As long as he only thought of the righteousness of the substitute, and our being counted judicially righteous for His sake, the absolute necessity of abiding in Him was not apparent. But as the glory of "Jehovah our righteousness" unfolds to the view, he sees that abiding in Him personally is the only way to stand, at all times, complete and accepted before God, as it is the only way to realize how the new and righteous nature can be strengthened from Jesus our Head. To the penitent sinner the chief thought was the righteousness which comes through Jesus dying for sin; to the intelligent and advancing believer, Jesus, the Living One, through whom the righteousness comes, is everything, because having Him he has the righteousness too.

Believer, abide in Christ as your righteousness. You bear about with you a nature altogether corrupt and vile, ever seeking to rise up and darken your sense of acceptance, and of access to unbroken fellowship with the Father. Nothing can enable you to dwell and walk in the light of God, without even the shadow of a cloud between, but the habitual abiding in Christ as your righteousness. To this you are called. Seek to walk worthy of that calling. Yield yourself to the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the wonderful grace that permits you to draw nigh to God, clothed in a divine righteousness. Take time to realize that the King's own robe has indeed been put on, and that in it you need not fear entering His presence. It is the token that you are the man whom the King delights to honour. Take time to remember that as much as you need it in the palace, no less do you require it when He sends you forth into the world, where you are the King's messenger and

representative. Live your daily life in the full consciousness of being righteous in God's sight, an object of delight and pleasure in Christ. Connect every view you have of Christ in His other graces with this first one: "Of God He is made to you righteousness." This will keep you in perfect peace. Thus shall you enter into, and dwell in, the rest of God. So shall your inmost being be transformed into being righteous and doing righteousness. In your heart and life it will become manifest where you dwell; abiding in Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, you will share His position, His character, and His blessedness: "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Joy and gladness above measure will be your portion.

01.09. As your Sanctification

Chapter 9--AS YOUR SANCTIFICATION

"Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who has made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and SANCTIFICATION, and redemption." 1 Corinthians 1:30(R.V. marg.).

"PAUL, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints";--thus the chapter opens in which we are taught that Christ is our sanctification. In the Old Testament, believers were called the righteous; in the New Testament they are called saints, the holy ones, sanctified in Christ Jesus. Holy is higher than righteous.[1] Holy in God has reference to His inmost being; righteous, to His dealings with His creatures. In man, righteousness is but a tepping-stone to holiness. It is in this he can approach most near to the perfection of God (comp. Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16). In the Old Testament righteousness was found, while holiness was only typified; in Jesus Christ, the Holy One, and in His people, His saints or holy ones, it is first realized. As in Scripture, and in our text, so in personal experience righteousness precedes holiness. When first the believer finds Christ as his righteousness, he has such joy in the new-made discovery that the study of holiness hardly has a place. But as he grows, the desire for holiness makes itself felt, and he seeks to know what provision his God has made for supplying that need. A superficial acquaintance with God's plan leads to the view that while justification is God's work, by faith in Christ, sanctification is our work, to be performed under the influence of the gratitude we feel for the deliverance we have experienced, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit. But the earnest Christian soon finds how little gratitude can supply the power. When he thinks that more prayer will bring it, he finds that, indispensable as prayer is, it is not enough. Often the believer struggles hopelessly for years, until he listens to the teaching of the Spirit, as He glorifies Christ again, and reveals Christ, our anctification, to be appropriated by faith alone.

Christ is made of God unto us sanctification. Holiness is the very nature of God, and that alone is holy which God takes possession of and fills with Himself. God's answer to the question, How could sinful man become holy? is, "Christ, the Holy One of God." In Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, God's holiness was revealed incarnate, and brought within reach of man. "I sanctify myself for them, that they also may be sanctified in truth." There is no other way of our becoming holy, but by becoming partakers of the holiness of Christ. [2] And there is no other way of this taking place than by our personal spiritual union with Him, so that through His Holy Spirit His holy life flows into us. "Of God are ye in Christ, who is made unto us sanctification." Abiding by faith in Christ our sanctification is the simple secret of a holy life. The measure of sanctification will depend on the measure of abiding in Him; as the soul learns wholly to abide in Christ, the promise is increasingly fulfilled: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." To illustrate this relation between the measure of the abiding and the measure of sanctification experienced, let us think of the grafting a tree, that instructive symbol of our union to Jesus. The illustration is suggested by the Saviour's words, "Make the tree good, and his fruit good." I can graft a tree so that only a single branch bears good fruit, while many of the natural branches

remain, and bear their old fruit--a type of believer in whom a small part of the life is sanctified, but in whom, from ignorance or other reasons, the carnal life still in many respects has full dominion. I can graft a tree so that every branch is cut off, and the whole tree becomes renewed to bear good fruit; and yet, unless I watch over the tendency of the stems to give sprouts, they may again rise and grow strong, and, robbing the new graft of the strength it needs, make it weak. Such are Christians who, when apparently powerfully converted, forsake all to follow Christ, and yet after a time, through unwatchfulness, allow old habits to regain their power, and whose Christian life and fruit are but feeble. But if I want a tree wholly made good, I take it when young, and, cutting the stem clean off on the ground, I graft it just where it emerges from the soil. I watch over every bud which the old nature could possibly put forth, until the flow of sap from the old roots into the new stem is so complete, that the old life has, as it were, been entirely conquered and covered by the new. Here I have a tree entirely renewed--emblem of the Christian who has learnt in entire consecration to surrender everything for Christ, and in a whole-hearted faith wholly to abide in Him.

If, in this last case, the old tree were a reasonable being that could co-operate with the gardener, what would his language be to it? Would it not be this: "Yield now yourself entirely to this new nature with which I have invested you; repress every tendency of the old nature to give buds or sprouts; let all your sap and all your life-powers rise up into this graft from yonder beautiful tree, which I have put on you; so shall you bring forth sweet and much fruit." And the language of the tree to the gardener would be: "When you graft me, O spare not a single branch; let everything of the old self, even the smallest bud, be destroyed, that I may no longer live in my own, but in that other life that was cut off and brought and put upon me, that I might be wholly new and good." And, once again, could you afterwards ask the renewed tree, as it was bearing abundant fruit, what it could say of itself, its answer would be this: "In me, that is, in my roots, there dwells no good thing. I am ever inclined to evil; the sap I collect from the soil is in its nature corrupt, and ready to show itself in bearing evil fruit. But just when the sap rises into the sunshine to ripen into fruit, the wise gardener has clothed me with a new life, through which my sap is purified, and all my powers are renewed to the bringing forth of good fruit. I have only to abide in that which I have received. He cares for the immediate repression and removal of every bud which the old nature still would put forth."

Christian, fear not to claim God's promises to make you holy. Listen not to the suggestion that the corruption of your old nature would render holiness an impossibility. In your flesh dwells no good thing, and that flesh, though crucified with Christ, is not yet dead, but will continually seek to rise and lead you to evil. But the Father is the Husbandman. He has grafted the life of Christ on your life. That holy life is mightier than your evil life; under the watchful care of the Husbandman, that new life can keep down the workings of the evil life within you. The evil nature is there, with its unchanged tendency to rise up and show itself. But the new nature is there too--the living Christ, your sanctification, is there--and through Him all your powers can be sanctified as they rise into life, and be made to bear fruit to the glory of the Father. And now, if you would live a holy life, abide in Christ your sanctification. Look upon Him as the Holy One of God, made man that He might communicate to us the holiness of God. Listen when Scripture teaches that there is within you a new nature, a new man, created in Christ Jesus in righteousness and true holiness. Remember that this holy nature which is in you is singularly fitted for living a holy life, and

performing all holy duties, as much so as the old nature is for doing evil. Understand that this holy nature within you has its root and life in Christ in heaven, and can only grow and become strong as the intercourse between it and its source is uninterrupted. And above all, believe most confidently that Jesus Christ Himself delights in maintaining that new nature within you, and imparting to it His own strength and wisdom for its work. Let that faith lead you daily to the surrender of all self-confidence, and the confession of the utter corruption of all there is in you by nature. Let it fill you with a quiet and assured confidence that you are indeed able to do what the Father expects of you as His child, under the covenant of His grace, because you have Christ strengthening you. Let it teach you to lay yourself and your services on the altar as spiritual sacrifices, holy and acceptable in His sight, a sweet-smelling savour. Look not upon a life of holiness as a strain and an effort, but as the natural outgrowth of the life of Christ within you. And let ever again a quiet, hopeful, gladsome faith hold itself assured that all you need for a holy life will most assuredly be given you out of the holiness of Jesus. Thus will you understand and prove what it is to abide in Christ our sanctification.

NOTE The thought that in the personal holiness of our Lord a new holy nature was formed to be communicated to us, and that we make use of it by faith, is the central idea of Marshall's invaluable work, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*:

"One great mystery is, that the holy frame and disposition whereby our souls are furnished and enabled for immediate practice of the law, must be obtained by receiving it out of Christ's fulness, as a thing already prepared and brought to an existence for us in Christ, and treasured up in Him; and that, as we are justified by a righteousness wrought out in Christ, and imputed to us, so we are sanctified by such a holy frame and qualification as are first wrought out and completed in Christ for us, and then imparted to us. As our natural corruption was produced originally in the first Adam, and propagated from him to us, so our new nature and holiness is first produced in Christ, and derived from Him to us, or, as it were, propagated. So that we are not at all to work together with Christ in making or producing that holy frame in us, but only to take it to ourselves, and use it in our holy practice, as made ready to our hands. Thus we have fellowship with Christ, in receiving that holy frame of spirit that was originally in Him; for fellowship is where several persons have the same things in common. This mystery is so great, that notwithstanding all the light of the Gospel, we commonly think that we must get an holy frame by producing it anew in ourselves, and by pursuing it and working it out of our own heart" (see chap. 3). [3]

Footnotes:

1. "Holiness may be called spiritual perfection, as righteousness is legal completeness." --Horatius Bonar in *God's Way of Holiness*.

2. See note at end of chapter.

3. I have felt so strongly that the teaching of Marshall is just what the Church needs to bring out clearly what the Scripture path of holiness is, that I have prepared an abridgment (all in the author's own words) of his work. By leaving out what was not essential to his argument, and shortening when he appeared diffuse, I hoped to bring his book within reach of many who might never read the larger work. It is published by Nisbet & Co. under the title, *The Highway of Holiness*. I cannot too earnestly urge every student of theology, and of Scripture, and of the art of

holy living, to make himself master of the teaching of Marshall's third, fourth, and twelfth chapters.

Publisher's Note: The original complete work, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, was reissued by Oliphants Ltd. in 1955.

01.10. As your Redemption

Chapter 10--AS YOUR REDEMPTION

"Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and REDEMPTION."-- 1 Corinthians 1:30(R.V. marg.).

HERE we have the top of the ladder, reaching into heaven--the blessed end to which Christ and life in Him is to lead. The word redemption, though sometimes applied to our deliverance from the guilt of sin, here refers to our complete and final deliverance from all its consequences, when the Redeemer's work shall become fully manifest, even to the redemption of the body itself (comp. Romans 8:21-23; Ephesians 1:14; Ephesians 4:30). The expression points us to the highest glory to be hoped for in the future, and therefore also to the highest blessing to be enjoyed in the present in Christ. We have seen how, as a Prophet, Christ is our wisdom, revealing to us God and His love, with the nature and conditions of the salvation that love has prepared. As a Priest, He is our righteousness, restoring us to right relations to God, and securing us His favour and friendship. As a King, He is our sanctification, forming and guiding us into the obedience to the Father's holy will. As these three offices work out God's one purpose, the grand consummation will be reached, the complete deliverance from sin and all its effects be accomplished, and ransomed humanity regain all that it had ever lost.

Christ is made of God unto us redemption. The word invites us to look upon Jesus, not only as He lived on earth, teaching us by word and example, as He died, to reconcile us with God, as He lives again, a victorious King, rising to receive His crown, but as, sitting at the right hand of God, He takes again the glory which He had with the Father, before the world began, and holds it there for us. It consists in this, that there His human nature, yea, His human body, freed from all the consequences of sin to which He once had been exposed, is now admitted to share the divine glory. As Son of Man, He dwells on the throne and in the bosom of the Father: the deliverance from what He had to suffer from sin is complete and eternal. The complete redemption is found embodied in His own Person: what He as man is and has in heaven is the complete redemption. HE is made of God to us redemption.

We are in Him as such. And the more intelligently and believingly we abide in Him as our redemption, the more shall we experience, even here, of "the powers of the world to come." As our communion with Him becomes more intimate and intense, and we let the Holy Spirit reveal Him to us in His heavenly glory, the more we realize how the life in us is the life of One who sits upon the throne of heaven. We feel the power of an endless life working in us. We taste the eternal life. We have the foretaste of the eternal glory. The blessings flowing from abiding in Christ as our redemption are great. The soul is delivered from all fear of death. There was a time when even the Saviour feared death. But now no longer. He has triumphed over death; even His body has entered into the glory. The believer who abides in Christ as his full redemption, realizes even now his spiritual victory over death. It becomes to him the servant that removes the last rags of the old carnal vesture, ere he be clothed upon with the new body of glory. It carries the body to the grave,

to lie there as the seed whence the new body will arise the worthy companion of the glorified spirit. The resurrection of the body is no longer a barren doctrine, but a living expectation, and even an incipient experience, because the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in the body as the pledge that even our mortal bodies shall be quickened (Romans 8:11-23). This faith exercises its sanctifying influence in the willing surrender of the sinful members of the body to be mortified and completely subjected to the dominion of the Spirit, as preparation for the time when the frail body shall be changed and fashioned like to His glorious body. This full redemption of Christ as extending to the body, has a depth of meaning not easily expressed. It was of man as a whole, soul and body that it is said that he was made in the image and likeness of God. In the angels, God had created spirits without material bodies; in the creation of the world, there was matter without spirit. Man was to be the highest specimen of divine art: the combination in one being, of matter and spirit in perfect harmony, as type of the most perfect union between God and His own creation. Sin entered in, and appeared to thwart the divine plan: the material obtained a fearful supremacy over the spiritual. The Word was made flesh, the divine fulness received an embodiment in the humanity of Christ, that the redemption might be a complete and perfect one; that the whole creation, which now groaneth and travaileth in pain together, might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. God's purpose will not be accomplished, and Christ's glory will not be manifested fully, until the body, with that whole of nature of which it is part and head, has been transfigured by the power of the spiritual life, and made the transparent vesture for showing forth the glory of the Infinite Spirit. Then only shall we understand: "Christ Jesus is made unto us (complete) redemption."

Meantime we are taught to believe: "Of God are ye in Christ, as your redemption." This is not meant as a revelation, to be left to the future; for the full development of the Christian life, our present abiding in Christ must seek to enter into and appropriate it. We do this as we learn to triumph over death. We do it as we learn to look upon Christ as the Lord of our body, claiming its entire consecration, securing even here, if faith will claim it (Mark 16:17-18), victory over the terrible dominion sin hath had in the body. We do this as we learn to look on all nature as part of the Kingdom of Christ, destined, even though it be through a baptism of fire, to partake in His redemption. We do it as we allow the powers of the coming world to possess us, and to lift us up into a life in the heavenly places, to enlarge our hearts and our views, to anticipate, even here, the things which have never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Believer, abide in Christ as your redemption. Let this be the crown of your Christian life. Seek it not first or only, apart from the knowledge of Christ in His other relations. But seek it truly as that to which they are meant to lead you up. Abide in Christ as your redemption. Nothing will fit you for this but faithfulness in the previous steps of the Christian life. Abide in Him as your wisdom, the perfect revelation of all that God is and has for you. Follow, in the daily ordering of the inner and the outer life, with meek docility His teaching, and you shall be counted worthy to have secrets revealed to you which to most disciples are a sealed book. The wisdom will lead you into the mysteries of complete redemption. Abide in Him as your righteousness, and dwell clothed upon with Him in that inner sanctuary of the Father's favour and presence to which His righteousness gives you access. As you rejoice in your reconciliation, you shall understand how it includes all things, and how they too wait the full redemption; "for it pleased the Father by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven." And abide

in Him as your sanctification; the experience of His power to make you holy, spirit and soul and body, will quicken your faith in a holiness that shall not cease its work until the bells of the horses and every pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness to the Lord. Abide in Him as your redemption, and live, even here, as the heir of the future glory. And as you seek to experience in yourself to the full, the power of His saving grace, your heart shall be enlarged to realize the position man has been destined to occupy in the universe, as having all things made subject to him, and you shall for your part be fitted to live worthy of that high and heavenly calling.

01.11. The Crucified One

Chapter 11--THE CRUCIFIED ONE "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."-- Galatians 2:20.

"We have been planted together in the likeness of his death. "-- Romans 6:5

"I AM crucified with Christ." Thus the apostle expresses his assurance of his fellowship with Christ in His sufferings and death, and his full participation in all the power and the blessing of that death. And so really did he mean what he said, and know that he was now indeed dead, that he adds: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me." How blessed must be the experience of such a union with the Lord Jesus! To be able to look upon His death as mine, just as really as it was His--upon His perfect obedience to God, His victory over sin, and complete deliverance from its power, as mine; and to realize that the power of that death does by faith work daily with a divine energy in mortifying the flesh, and renewing the whole life into the perfect conformity to the resurrection life of Jesus! Abiding in Jesus, the Crucified One, is the secret of the growth of that new life which is ever begotten of the death of nature.

Let us try to understand this. The suggestive expression, "Planted into the likeness of His death," will teach us what the abiding in the Crucified One means. When a graft is united with the stock on which it is to grow, we know that it must be kept fixed, it must abide in the place where the stock has been cut, been wounded, to make an opening to receive the graft. No graft without wounding--the laying bare and opening up of the inner life of the tree to receive the stranger branch. It is only through such wounding that access can be obtained to the fellowship of the sap and the growth and the life of the stronger stem. Even so with Jesus and the sinner. Only when we are planted into the likeness of His death shall we also be in the likeness of His resurrection, partakers of the life and the power there are in Him. In the death of the Cross Christ was wounded, and in His opened wounds a place prepared where we might be grafted in. And just as one might say to a graft, and does practically say as it is fixed in its place, "Abide here in the wound of the stem, that is now to bear you"; so to the believing soul the message comes, "Abide in the wounds of Jesus; there is the place of union, and life, and growth. There you shall see how His heart was opened to receive you; how His flesh was rent that the way might be opened for your being made one with Him, and having access to all the blessings flowing from His divine nature."

You have also noticed how the graft has to be torn away from the tree where it by nature grew, and to be cut into conformity to the place prepared for it in the wounded stem. Even so the believer has to be made conformable to Christ's death--to be crucified and to die with Him. The wounded stem and the wounded graft are cut to fit into each other, into each other's likeness. There is a fellowship between Christ's sufferings and your sufferings. His experiences must become yours. The disposition He manifested in choosing and bearing the cross must be yours. Like Him, you will have to give full assent to the righteous judgment and curse of a holy God against sin. Like Him, you have to consent to yield your life, as laden with sin and curse, to death, and through it to pass to the new life. Like Him, you shall experience that it is only through the self-sacrifice of

Gethsemane and Calvary that the path is to be found to the joy and the fruit-bearing of the resurrection life. The more clear the resemblance between the wounded stem and the wounded graft, the more exactly their wounds fit into each other, the surer and the easier, and the more complete will be the union and the growth.

It is in Jesus, the Crucified One, I must abide. I must learn to look upon the Cross as not only an atonement to God, but also a victory over the devil--not only a deliverance from the guilt, but also from the power of sin. I must gaze on Him on the Cross as wholly mine, offering Himself to receive me into the closest union and fellowship, and to make me partaker of the full power of His death to sin, and the new life of victory to which it is but the gateway. I must yield myself to Him in an undivided surrender, with much prayer and strong desire, imploring to be admitted into the ever closer fellowship and conformity of His death, of the Spirit in which He died that death.

Let me try and understand why the Cross is thus the place of union. On the Cross the Son of God enters into the fullest union with man--enters into the fullest experience of what it says to have become a son of man, a member of a race under the curse. It is in death that the Prince of life conquers the power of death; it is in death alone that He can make me partaker of that victory. The life He imparts is a life from the dead; each new experience of the power of that life depends upon the fellowship of the death. The death and the life are inseparable. All the grace which Jesus the Saving One gives is given only in the path of fellowship with Jesus the Crucified One. Christ came and took my place; I must put myself in His place, and abide there. And there is but one place which is both His and mine--that place is the Cross. His in virtue of His free choice; mine by reason of the curse of sin. He came there to seek me; there alone I can find Him. When He found me there, it was the place of cursing; this He experienced, for "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." He made it a place of blessing; this I experienced, for Christ has delivered us from the curse, being made a curse for us. When Christ comes in my place, He remains what He was, the beloved of the Father; but in the fellowship with me He shares my curse and dies my death. When I stand in His place, which is still always mine, I am still what I was by nature, the accursed one, who deserves to die; but as united to Him, I share His blessing, and receive His life. When He came to be one with me He could not avoid the Cross, for the curse always points to the Cross as its end and fruit. And when I seek to be one with Him, I cannot avoid the Cross either, for nowhere but on the Cross are life and deliverance to be found. As inevitably as my curse pointed Him to the Cross as the only place where He could be fully united to me, His blessing points me to the Cross too as the only place where I can be united to Him. He took my cross for His own; I must take His Cross as my own; I must be crucified with Him. It is as I abide daily, deeply in Jesus the Crucified One, that I shall taste the sweetness of His love, the power of His life, the completeness of His salvation.

Beloved believer! it is a deep mystery, this of the Cross of Christ. I fear there are many Christians who are content to look upon the Cross, with Christ on it dying for their sins, who have little heart for fellowship with the Crucified One. They hardly know that He invites them to it. Or they are content to consider the ordinary afflictions of life, which the children of the world often have as much as they, as their share of Christ's Cross. They have no conception of what it is to be crucified with Christ, that bearing the cross means likeness to Christ in the principles which animated Him in His path of obedience. The entire surrender of all self-will, the complete denial to the flesh of its every desire and pleasure, the perfect separation from the world in all its ways of thinking and

acting, the losing and hating of one's life, the giving up of self and its interests for the sake of others--this is the disposition which marks him who has taken up Christ's Cross, who seeks to say, "I am crucified with Christ; I abide in Christ, the Crucified One." Would you in very deed please your Lord, and live in as close fellowship with Him as His grace could maintain you in? O pray that His Spirit lead you into this blessed truth: this secret of the Lord for them that fear Him. We know how Peter knew and confessed Christ as the Son of the living God while the Cross was still an offence (Matthew 16:16-17; Matthew 16:21; Matthew 16:23). The faith that believes in the blood that pardons, and the life that renews, can only reach its perfect growth as it abides beneath the Cross, and in living fellowship with Him seeks for perfect conformity with Jesus the Crucified.

O Jesus, our crucified Redeemer, teach us not only to believe on Thee, but to abide in Thee, to take Thy Cross not only as the ground of our pardon, but also as the law of our life. O teach us to love it not only because on it Thou didst bear our curse, but because on it we enter into the closest fellowship with Thyself, and are crucified with Thee. And teach us, that as we yield ourselves wholly to be possessed of the Spirit in which Thou didst bear the Cross, we shall be made partakers of the power and the blessing to which the Cross alone gives access.

01.12. God Himself will stablish you in Him

Chapter 12--GOD HIMSELF WILL STABLISH YOU IN HIM "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, is God."- 2 Corinthians 1:21

THESE words of Paul teach us a much needed and most blessed truth--that just as our first being united with Christ was the work of divine omnipotence, so we may look to the Father, too, for being kept and being fixed more firmly in Him. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me"--this expression of confidence should ever accompany the prayer, "Forsake not the work of Thine own hands." In all his longings and prayers to attain to a deeper and more perfect abiding in Christ, the believer must hold fast his confidence: "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." There is nothing that will so help to root and ground him in Christ as this faith: "He which stablisheth us in Christ is God."

How many there are who can witness that this faith is just what they need! They continually mourn over the variableness of their spiritual life. Sometimes there are hours and days of deep earnestness, and even of blessed experience of the grace of God. But how little is needed to mar their peace, to bring a cloud over the soul! And then, how their faith is shaken! All efforts to regain their standing appear utterly fruitless; and neither solemn vows, nor watching and prayer, avail to restore to them the peace they for a while had tasted. Could they but understand how just their own efforts are the cause of their failure, because it is God alone who can establish us in Christ Jesus. They would see that just as in justification they had to cease from their own working, and to accept in faith the promise that God would give them life in Christ, so now, in the matter of their sanctification, their first need is to cease from striving themselves to establish the connection with Christ more firmly, and to allow God to do it. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ." What they need is the simple faith that the stablishing in Christ, day by day, is God's work--a work that He delights to do, in spite of all our weakness and unfaithfulness, if we will but trust Him for it. To the blessedness of such a faith, and the experience it brings, many can testify. What peace and rest, to know that there is a Husbandman who cares for the branch, to see that it grows stronger, and that its union with the Vine becomes more perfect, who watches over every hindrance and danger, who supplies every needed aid! What peace and rest, fully and finally to give up our abiding into the care of God, and never have a wish or thought, never to offer a prayer or engage in an exercise connected with it, without first having the glad remembrance that what we do is only the manifestation of what God is doing in us! The establishing in Christ is His work: He accomplishes it by stirring us to watch, and wait, and work. But this He can do with power only as we cease interrupting Him by our self-working--as we accept in faith the dependent posture which honours Him and opens the heart to let Him work. How such a faith frees the soul from care and responsibility! In the midst of the rush and bustle of the world's stirring life, amid the subtle and ceaseless temptations of sin, amid all the daily cares and trials that so easily distract and lead to failure, how blessed it would be to be an established Christian--always abiding in Christ! How blessed even to have the faith that one can surely become it--that the attainment is within our reach!

Dear believer, the blessing is indeed within your reach. He that stablisheth you with us in Christ is God. What I want you to take in is this--that believing this promise will not only give you comfort, but will be the means of your obtaining your desire. You know how Scripture teaches us that in all God's leadings of His people faith has everywhere been the one condition of the manifestation of His power. Faith is the ceasing from all nature's efforts, and all other dependence; faith is confessed helplessness casting itself upon God's promise, and claiming its fulfilment; faith is the putting ourselves quietly into God's hands for Him to do His work. What you and I need now is to take time, until this truth stands out before us in all its spiritual brightness: It is God Almighty, God the Faithful and Gracious One, who has undertaken to stablish me in Christ Jesus.

Listen to what the Word teaches you:--"The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself"; "O Lord God, stablish their heart unto Thee"; "Thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever"; "Thou wilt establish the heart of the humble"; "Now to Him that is of power to establish you, be glory for ever"; "To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness" ; "THE LORD IS FAITHFUL, who shall stablish you and keep you from all evil"; "The God of all grace, who hath called us in Christ Jesus, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." Can you take these words to mean anything less than that you too--however fitful your spiritual life has hitherto been, however unfavourable your natural character or your circumstances may appear--can be established in Christ Jesus--can become an established Christian? Let us but take time to listen, in simple childlike teachableness, to these words as the truth of God, and the confidence will come: As surely--as I am in Christ, I shall also, day by day, be established in Him. The lesson appears so simple; and yet the most of us take so long to learn it. The chief reason is, that the grace the promise offers is so large, so God-like, so beyond all our thoughts, that we do not take it really to mean what it says. The believer who has once come to see and accept what it brings, can bear witness to the wonderful change there comes over the spiritual life. Hitherto he had taken charge of his own welfare; now he has a God to take charge of it. He now knows himself to be in the school of God, a Teacher who plans the whole course of study for each of His pupils with infinite wisdom, and delights to have them come daily for the lessons He has to give. All he asks is to feel himself constantly in God's hands, and to follow His guidance, neither lagging behind nor going before. Remembering that it is God who worketh both to will and to do, he sees his only safety to be in yielding himself to God's working. He lays aside all anxiety about his inner life and its growth, because the Father is the Husbandman under whose wise and watchful care each plant is well secured. He knows that there is the prospect of a most blessed life of strength and fruitfulness to every one who will take God alone and wholly as his hope.

Believer, you cannot but admit that such a life of trust must be a most blessed one. You say, perhaps, that there are times when you do, with your whole heart, consent to this way of living, and do wholly abandon the care of your inner life to your Father. But somehow it does not last. You forget again; and instead of beginning each morning with the joyous transference of all the needs and cares of your spiritual life to the Father's charge, you again feel anxious, and burdened, and helpless. Is it not, perhaps, my brother, because you have not committed to the Father's care this matter of daily remembering to renew your entire surrender? Memory is one of the highest powers in our nature. By it day is linked to day, the unity of life through all our years is kept up, and we know that we are still ourselves. In the spiritual life, recollection is of infinite value. For the sanctifying of our memory, in the service of our spiritual life, God has provided most beautifully.

The Holy Spirit is the remembrancer, the Spirit of recollection. Jesus said, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance." "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." It is just for the stablishing that the Holy Remembrancer has been given. God's blessed promises, and your unceasing acts of faith and surrender accepting of them--He will enable you to remember these each day. The Holy Spirit is--blessed be God--the memory of the new man.

Apply this to the promise of the text: "He that stablisheth us in Christ is God." As you now, at this moment, abandon all anxiety about your growth and progress to the God who has undertaken to stablish you in the Vine, and feel what a joy it is to know that God alone has charge, ask and trust Him by the Holy Spirit ever to remind you of this your blessed relation to Him. He will do it; and with each new morning your faith may grow stronger and brighter: I have a God to see that each day I become more firmly united to Christ. And now, beloved fellow-believer, "the God of all grace, who hath called us in Christ Jesus, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." What more can you desire? Expect it confidently, ask it fervently. Count on God to do His work. And learn in faith to sing the song, the notes of which each new experience will make deeper and sweeter: "Now to Him, that is of power to establish you, be glory for ever. Amen." Yes, glory to God, who has undertaken to establish us in Christ!

01.13. Every Moment

Chapter 13--EVERY MOMENT

"In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."-- Isaiah 27:2-3. THE vineyard was the symbol of the people of Israel, in whose midst the True Vine was to stand. The branch is the symbol of the individual believer, who stands in the Vine. The song of the vineyard is also the song of the Vine and its every branch. The command still goes forth to the watchers of the vineyard--would that they obeyed it, and sang till every feeble-hearted believer had learned and joined the joyful strain--"Sing ye unto her: I, JEHOVAH, Do KEEP IT; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I WILL KEEP it night and day."

What an answer from the mouth of God Himself to the question so often asked: Is it possible for the believer always to abide in Jesus? Is a life of unbroken fellowship with the Son of God indeed attainable here in this earthly life? Truly not, if the abiding is our work, to be done in our strength. But the things that are impossible with men are possible with God. If the Lord Himself will keep the soul night and day, yea, will watch and water it every moment, then surely the uninterrupted communion with Jesus becomes a blessed possibility to those who can trust God to mean and to do what He says. Then surely the abiding of the branch of the vine day and night, summer and winter, in a never-ceasing life-fellowship, is nothing less than the simple but certain promise of your abiding in your Lord. In one sense, it is true, there is no believer who does not always abide in Jesus; without this there could not be true life. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth." But when the Saviour gives the command, "Abide in me," with the promise, "He that abideth in me bringeth forth much fruit," He speaks of that willing, intelligent, and whole-hearted surrender by which we accept His offer, and consent to the abiding in Him as the only life we choose or seek. The objections raised against our right to expect that we shall always be able thus voluntarily and consciously to abide in Jesus are chiefly two. The one is derived from the nature of man. It is said that our limited powers prevent our being occupied with two things at the same moment. God's providence places many Christians in business, where for hours at a time the closest attention is required to the work they have to do. How can such a man, it is asked, with his whole mind in the work he has to do, be at the same time occupied with Christ, and keeping up fellowship with Him? The consciousness of abiding in Jesus is regarded as requiring such a strain, and such a direct occupation of the mind with heavenly thoughts, that to enjoy the blessing would imply a withdrawing of oneself from all the ordinary avocations of life. This is the same error as drove the first monks into the wilderness.

Blessed be God, there is no necessity for such a going out of the world. Abiding in Jesus is not a work that needs each moment the mind to be engaged, or the affections to be directly and actively occupied with it. It is an entrusting of oneself to the keeping of the Eternal Love, in the faith that it will abide near us, and with its holy presence watch over us and ward off the evil, even when we have to be most intently occupied with other things. And so the heart has rest and peace and joy in

the consciousness of being kept when it cannot keep itself. In ordinary life, we have abundant illustration of the influence of a supreme affection reigning in and guarding the soul, while the mind concentrates itself on work that requires its whole attention. Think of the father of a family, separated for a time from his home, that he may secure for his loved ones what they need. He loves his wife and children, and longs much to return to them. There may be hours of intense occupation when he has not a moment to think of them, and yet his love is as deep and real as when he can call up their images; all the while his love and the hope of making them happy urge him on, and fill him with a secret joy in his work. Think of a king: in the midst of work, and pleasure, and trial, he all the while acts under the secret influence of the consciousness of royalty, even while he does not think of it. A loving wife and mother never for one moment loses the sense of her relation to the husband and children: the consciousness and the love are there, amid all her engagements. And shall it be thought impossible for the Everlasting Love so to take and keep possession of our spirits, that we too shall never for a moment lose the secret consciousness: We are in Christ, kept in Him by His almighty power. Oh, it is possible; we can be sure it is. Our abiding in Jesus is even more than a fellowship of love--it is a fellowship of life. In work or in rest, the consciousness of life never leaves us. And even so can the mighty power of the Eternal Life maintain within us the consciousness of its presence. Or rather, Christ, who is our life, Himself dwells within us, and by His presence maintains our consciousness that we are in Him. The second objection has reference to our sinfulness. Christians are so accustomed to look upon sinning daily as something absolutely inevitable, that they regard it as a matter of course that no one can keep up abiding fellowship with the Saviour: we must sometimes be unfaithful and fail. As if it was not just because we have a nature which is naught but a very fountain of sin, that the abiding in Christ has been ordained for us as our only but our sufficient deliverance! As if it were not the Heavenly Vine, the living, loving Christ, in whom we have to abide, and whose almighty power to hold us fast is to be the measure of our expectations! As if He would give us the command, "Abide in me," without securing the grace and the power to enable us to perform it! As if, above all, we had not the Father as the Husbandman to keep us from falling, and that not in a large and general sense, but according to His own precious promise: "Night and day, every moment!" Oh, if we will but look to our God as the Keeper of Israel, of whom it is said, "Jehovah shall keep thee from all evil; He shall keep thy soul," we shall learn to believe that conscious abiding in Christ every moment, night and day, is indeed what God has prepared for them that love Him. My beloved fellow-Christians, let nothing less than this be your aim. I know well that you may not find it easy of attainment; that there may come more than one hour of weary struggle and bitter failure. Were the Church of Christ what it should be--were older believers to younger converts what they should be, witnesses to God's faithfulness, like Caleb and Joshua, encouraging their brethren to go up and possess the land with their, "We are well able to overcome; if the Lord delight in us, then HE WILL BRING us into this land"--were the atmosphere which the young believer breathes as he enters the fellowship of the saints that of a healthy, trustful, joyful consecration, abiding in Christ would come as the natural outgrowth of being in Him. But in the sickly state in which such a great part of the body is, souls that are pressing after this blessing are sorely hindered by the depressing influence of the thought and the life around them. It is not to discourage that I say this, but to warn, and to urge to a more entire casting of ourselves upon the word of God Himself. There may come more than our hour in which you are ready to yield to despair; but be of good courage. Only believe. He who has put the blessing within your reach will

assuredly lead to its possession. The way in which souls enter into the possession may differ. To some it may come as the gift of a moment. In times of revival, in the fellowship with other believers in whom the Spirit is working effectually, under the leading of some servant of God who can guide, and sometimes in solitude too, it is as if all at once a new revelation comes upon the soul. It sees, as in the light of heaven, the strong Vine holding and bearing the feeble branches so securely, that doubt becomes impossible. It can only wonder how it ever could have understood the words to mean aught else than this: To abide unceasingly in Christ is the portion of every believer. It sees it; and to believe, and rejoice, and love, come as of itself. To others it comes by a slower and more difficult path. Day by day, amid discouragement and difficulty, the soul has to press forward. Be of good cheer; this way too leads to the rest. Seek but to keep your heart set upon the promise: "I THE LORD DO KEEP IT, night and day." Take from His own lips the watchword: "Every moment." In that you have the law of His love, and the law of your hope. Be content with nothing less. Think no longer that the duties and the cares, that the sorrows and the sins of this life must succeed in hindering the abiding life of fellowship. Take rather for the rule of your daily experience the language of faith: I am persuaded that neither death with its fears, nor life with its cares, nor things present with their pressing claims, nor things to come with their dark shadows, nor height of joy, nor depth of sorrow, nor any other creature, shall be able, for one single moment, to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and in which He is teaching me to abide. If things look dark and faith would fail, sing again the song of the vineyard: "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." And be assured that, if Jehovah keep the branch night and day, and water it every moment, a life of continuous and unbroken fellowship with Christ is indeed our privilege.

01.14. Day by Day

Chapter 14--DAY BY DAY "And the people shall go out and gather the portion of a day in his day."- Exodus 16:4 (marg.). THE day's portion in its day: Such was the rule for God's giving and man's working in the ingathering of the manna. It is still the law in all the dealings of God's grace with His children. A clear insight into the beauty and application of this arrangement is a wonderful help in understanding how one, who feels himself utterly weak, can have the confidence and the perseverance to hold on brightly through all the years of his earthly course. A doctor was once asked by a patient who had met with a serious accident: "Doctor, how long shall I have to lie here?" The answer, "Only a day at a time," taught the patient a precious lesson. It was the same lesson God had recorded for His people of all ages long before: The day's portion in its day.

It was, without doubt, with a view to this and to meet man's weakness, that God graciously appointed the change of day and night. If time had been given to man in the form of one long unbroken day, it would have exhausted and overwhelmed him; the change of day and night continually recruits and recreates his powers. As a child, who easily makes himself master of a book, when each day only the lesson for the day is given him, would be utterly hopeless if the whole book were given him at once; so it would be with man, if there were no divisions in time. Broken small and divided into fragments, he can bear them; only the care and the work of each day have to be undertaken--the day's portion in its day. The rest of the night fits him for making a fresh start with each new morning; the mistakes of the past can be avoided, its lessons improved. And he has only each day to be faithful for the one short day, and long years and a long life take care of themselves, without the sense of their length or their weight ever being a burden.

Most sweet is the encouragement to be derived from this truth in the life of grace. Many a soul is disquieted with the thought as to how it will be able to gather and to keep the manna needed for all its years of travel through such a barren wilderness. It has never learnt what unspeakable comfort there is in the word: The day's portion for its day. That word takes away all care for the morrow most completely. Only to-day is yours; to-morrow is the Father's. The question: What security have you that during all the years in which you have to contend with the coldness, or temptations, or trials of the world, you will always abide in Jesus? is one you need, yea, you may not ask. Manna, as your food and strength, is given only by the day; faithfully to fill the present is your only security for the future. Accept, and enjoy, and fulfil with your whole heart the part you have this day to perform. His presence and grace enjoyed to-day will remove all doubt whether you can entrust the morrow to Him too.

How great the value which this truth teaches us to attach to each single day! We are so easily led to look at life as a great whole, and to neglect the little to-day, to forget that the single days do indeed make up the whole, and that the value of each single day depends on its influence on the whole. One day lost is a link broken in the chain, which it often takes more than another day to mend. One day lost influences the next, and makes its keeping more difficult. Yea, one day lost may be the loss of what months or years of careful labour had secured. The experience of many a

believer could confirm this.

Believer! would you abide in Jesus, let it be day by day. You have already heard the message: Moment by moment; the lesson of day by day has something more to teach. Of the moments there are many where there is no direct exercise of the mind on your part; the abiding is in the deeper recesses of the heart, kept by the Father, to whom you entrusted yourself. But just this is the work that with each new day has to be renewed for the day--the distinct renewal of surrender and trust for the life of moment by moment. God has gathered up the moments and bound them up into a bundle, for the very purpose that we might take measure of them. As we look forward in the morning, or look back in the evening, and weigh the moments, we learn how to value and how to use them rightly. And even as the Father, with each new morning, meets you with the promise of just sufficient manna for the day for yourself and those who have to partake with you, meet Him with the bright and loving renewal of your acceptance of the position He has given you in His beloved Son. Accustom yourself to look upon this as one of the reasons for the appointment of day and night. God thought of our weakness, and sought to provide for it. Let each day have its value from your calling to abide in Christ. As its light opens on your waking eyes, accept it on these terms: A day, just one day only, but still a day, given to abide and grow up in Jesus Christ. Whether it be a day of health or sickness, joy or sorrow, rest or work, of struggle or victory, let the chief thought with which you receive it in the morning thanksgiving be this: "A day that the Father gave; in it I may, I must become more closely united to Jesus." As the Father asks, "Can you trust me just for this one day to keep you abiding in Jesus, and Jesus to keep you fruitful?" you cannot but give the joyful response: "I will trust and not be afraid." The day's portion for its day was given to Israel in the morning very early. The portion was for use and nourishment during the whole day, but the giving and the getting of it was the morning's work. This suggests how greatly the power to spend a day aright, to abide all the day in Jesus, depends on the morning hour. If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is holy. During the day there come hours of intense occupation in the rush of business or the throng of men, when only the Father's keeping can maintain the connection with Jesus unbroken. The morning manna fed all the day; it is only when the believer in the morning secures his quiet time in secret to renew distinctly and effectually loving fellowship with his Saviour, that the abiding can be kept up all the day. But what cause for thanksgiving that it may be done! In the morning, with its freshness and quiet, the believer can look out upon the day. He can consider its duties and its temptations, and pass them through beforehand, as it were, with his Saviour, throwing all upon Him who has undertaken to be everything to him. Christ is his manna, his nourishment, his strength, his life: he can take the day's portion for the day, Christ as his for all the needs the day may bring, and go on in the assurance that the day will be one of blessing and of growth. And then, as the lesson of the value and the work of the single day is being taken to heart, the learner is all unconsciously being led on to get the secret of "day by day continually" (Exodus 29:38). The blessed abiding grasped by faith for each day apart is an unceasing and ever-increasing growth. Each day of faithfulness brings a blessing for the next; makes both the trust and the surrender easier and more blessed. And so the Christian life grows: as we give our whole heart to the work of each day, it becomes all the day, and from that every day. And so each day separately, all the day continually, day by day successively, we abide in Jesus. And the days make up the life: what once appeared too high and too great to attain, is given to the soul that was content to take and use "every day his portion" (Ezra 3:4), "as the duty of every day required." Even here on earth the voice is heard: "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been

faithful over few, I will make thee ruler over many: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Our daily life becomes a wonderful interchange of God's daily grace and our daily praise: "Daily He loadeth us with His benefits"; "that I may daily perform my vows." We learn to understand God's reason for daily giving, as He most certainly gives, only enough, but also fully enough, for each day. And we get into His way, the way of daily asking and expecting only enough, but most certainly fully enough, for the day. We begin to number our days not from the sun's rising over the world, or by the work we do or the food we eat, but the daily renewal of the miracle of the manna--the blessedness of daily fellowship with Him who is the Life and the Light of the world. The heavenly life is as unbroken and continuous as the earthly; the abiding in Christ each day has for that day brought its blessing; we abide in Him every day, and all the day. Lord, make this the portion of each one of us.

01.15. At this Moment

Chapter 15--AT THIS MOMENT "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:2 THE thought of living moment by moment is of such central importance--looking at the abiding in Christ from our side--that we want once more to speak of it. And to all who desire to learn the blessed art of living only a moment at a time, we want to say: The way to learn it is to exercise yourself in living in the present moment. Each time your attention is free to occupy itself with the thought of Jesus--whether it be with time to think and pray, or only for a few passing seconds--let your first thought be to say: Now, at this moment, I do abide in Jesus. Use such time, not in vain regrets that you have not been abiding fully, or still more hurtful fears that you will not be able to abide, but just at once take the position the Father has given you: "I am in Christ; this is the place God has given me. I accept it; here I rest; I do now abide in Jesus." This is the way to learn to abide continually. You may be yet so feeble as to fear to say of each day, "I am abiding in Jesus"; but the feeblest can, each single moment, say, as he consents to occupy his place as a branch in the vine, "Yes, I do abide in Christ." It is not a matter of feeling--it is not a question of growth or strength in the Christian life--it is the simple question whether the will at the present moment desires and consents to recognise the place you have in your Lord, and to accept it. If you are a believer, you are in Christ. If you are in Christ, and wish to stay there, it is your duty to say, though it be but for a moment, "Blessed Saviour, I abide in Thee now; Thou keepest me now."

It has been well said that in that little word now lies one of the deepest secrets of the life of faith. At the close of a conference on the spiritual life, a minister of experience rose and spoke. He did not know that he had learnt any truth he did not know before, but he had learnt how to use aright what he had known. He had learnt that it was his privilege at each moment, whatever surrounding circumstances might be, to say, "Jesus saves me now." This is indeed the secret of rest and victory. If I can say, "Jesus is to me at this moment all that God gave Him to be--life, and strength, and peace"--I have but as I say it to hold still, and rest, and realize it, and for that moment I have what I need. As my faith sees how of God I am in Christ, and takes the place in Him my Father has provided, my soul can peacefully settle down: Now I abide in Christ.

Believer! when striving to find the way to abide in Christ from moment to moment, remember that the gateway is: Abide in Him at this present moment. Instead of wasting effort in trying to get into a state that will last, just remember that it is Christ Himself, the living, loving Lord, who alone can keep you, and is waiting to do so. Begin at once and act faith in Him for the present moment: this is the only way to be kept the next. To attain the life of permanent and perfect abiding is not ordinarily given at once as a possession for the future: it comes mostly step by step. Avail yourself, therefore, of every opportunity of exercising the trust of the present moment. Each time you bow in prayer, let there first be an act of simple devotion: "Father, I am in Christ; I now abide in Him." Each time you have, amidst the bustle of duty, the opportunity of self-recollection, let its first involuntary act be: "I am still in Christ, abiding in Him now." Even when overtaken by sin, and the heart within is all disturbed and excited, O let your first look upwards be with the words: "Father, I

have sinned; and yet I come--though I blush to say it--as one who is in Christ. Father! here I am; I can take no other place; of God I am in Christ; I now abide in Christ." Yes, Christian, in every possible circumstance, every moment of the day, the voice is calling: Abide in me, do it now. And even now, as you are reading this, O come at once and enter upon the blessed life of always abiding, by doing it at once: do it now. In the life of David there is a beautiful passage which may help to make this thought clearer (2 Samuel 3:17-18). David had been anointed king in Judah. The other tribes still followed Ish-bosheth, Saul's son. Abner, Saul's chief captain, resolves to lead the tribes of Israel to submit to David, the God-appointed king of the whole nation. He speaks to the elders of Israel: "Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you; now, then, do it, for Jehovah hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David will I save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies." And they did it, and anointed David a second time to be king, now over all Israel, as at first only over Judah (2 Samuel 5:3)--a most instructive type of the way in which a soul is led to the life of entire surrender and undivided allegiance, to the full abiding.

First you have the divided kingdom: Judah faithful to the king of God's appointment; Israel still clinging to the king of its own choosing. As a consequence, the nation divided against itself, and no power to conquer the enemies. Picture of the divided heart. Jesus accepted as King in Judah, the place of the holy mount, in the inner chamber of the soul; but the surrounding territory, the every-day life, not yet brought to subjection; more than half the life still ruled by self-will and its hosts. And so no real peace within and no power over the enemies.

Then there is the longing desire for a better state: "Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you." There was a time, when David had conquered the Philistines, that Israel believed in him; but they had been led astray. Abner appeals to their own knowledge of God's will, that David must rule over all. So the believer, when first brought to Jesus, did indeed want Him to be Lord over all, had hoped that He alone would be King. But, alas! unbelief and self-will had come in, and Jesus could not assert His power over the whole life. And yet the Christian is not content. How he longs--sometimes without daring to hope that it can be--for a better time.

Then follows God's promise. Abner says: "The Lord hath spoken, By the hand of David I will save my people from the hand of all their enemies." He appeals to God's promise: as David had conquered the Philistines, the nearest enemy in time past, so he alone could conquer those farther off. He should save Israel from the hand of all their enemies. Beautiful type of the promise by which the soul is now invited to trust Jesus for the victory over every enemy, and a life of undisturbed fellowship. "The Lord hath spoken"--this is our only hope. On that word rests the sure expectation (Luke 1:70-75): "As He spake, That we should be saved from the hand of all that hate us, to perform the oath which He swore, that He would grant unto us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, should serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." David reigning over every corner of the land, and leading a united and obedient people on from victory to victory: this is the promise of what Jesus can do for us, as soon as in faith in God's promise all is surrendered to Him, and the whole life given up to be kept abiding in Him.

"Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you," spake Abner, and added, "Then do it now." Do it now is the message that this story brings to each one of us who longs to give Jesus

unreserved supremacy. Whatever the present moment be, however unprepared the message finds you, however sad the divided and hopeless state of the life may be, still I come and urge Christ's claim to an immediate surrender--this very moment. I know well that it will take time for the blessed Lord to assert His power, and order all within you according to His will--to conquer the enemies and train all your powers for His service. This is not the work of a moment. But there are things which are the work of a moment--of this moment. The one is--your surrender of all to Jesus; your surrender of yourself entirely to live only in Him. As time goes on, and exercise has made faith stronger and brighter, that surrender may become clearer and more intelligent. But for this no one may wait. The only way ever to attain to it is to begin at once. Do it now. Surrender yourself this very moment to abide wholly, only, always in Jesus. It is the work of a moment. And just so, Christ's renewed acceptance of you is the work of a moment. Be assured that He has you and holds you as His own, and that each new "Jesus, I do abide in Thee," meets with an immediate and most hearty response from the Unseen One. No act of faith can be in vain. He does indeed anew take hold on us and draw us close to Himself. Therefore, as often as the message comes, or the thought of it comes, Jesus says: Abide in me, do it at once. Each moment there is the whisper: Do it now.

Let any Christian begin, then, and he will speedily experience how the blessing of the present moment is passed on to the next. It is the unchanging Jesus to whom he links himself; it is the power of a divine life, in its unbroken continuity, that takes possession of him. The do it now of the present moment--a little thing though it seems--is nothing less than the beginning of the ever-present now, which is the mystery and the glory of eternity. Therefore, Christian, abide in Christ: do it now.

01.16. Forsaking all for Him

Chapter 16 -- FORSAKING ALL FOR HIM

"I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found IN HIM.-- Php 3:8-9.

WHEREVER there is life, there is a continual interchange of taking in and giving out, receiving and restoring. The nourishment I take is given out again in the work I do; the impressions I receive, in the thoughts and feelings I express. The one depends on the other--the giving out ever increases the power of taking in. In the healthy exercise of giving and taking is all the enjoyment of life.

It is so in the spiritual life too. There are Christians who look on its blessedness as consisting all in the privilege of ever receiving; they know not how the capacity for receiving is only kept up and enlarged by continual giving up and giving out--how it is only in the emptiness that comes from the parting with what we have, that the divine fulness can flow in. It was a truth our Saviour continually insisted on. When He spoke of selling all to secure the treasure, of losing our life to find it, of the hundred-fold to those who forsake all, He was expounding the need of self-sacrifice as the law of the Kingdom for Himself as well as for His disciples. If we are really to abide in Christ, and to be found in Him--to have our life always and wholly in Him--we must each in our measure say with Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, that I may win Christ, and be FOUND IN Him."

Let us try and see what there is to be forsaken and given up. First of all, there is sin. There can be no true conversion without the giving up of sin. And yet, owing to the ignorance of the young convert of what really is sin, of what the claims of God's holiness are, and what the extent to which the power of Jesus can enable us to conquer sin, the giving up of sin is but partial and superficial. With the growth of the Christian life there comes the want of a deeper and more entire purging out of everything that is unholy. And it is specially when the desire to abide in Christ uninterruptedly, to be always found in Him, becomes strong, that the soul is led to see the need of a new act of surrender, in which it afresh accepts and ratifies its death to sin in Christ, and parts indeed with everything that is sin. Availing himself, in the strength of God's Spirit, of that wonderful power of our nature by which the whole of one's future life can be gathered up and disposed of in one act of the will, the believer yields himself to sin no more--to be only and wholly a servant of righteousness. He does it in the joyful assurance that every sin surrendered is gain indeed--room for the inflowing of the presence and the love of Christ.

Next to the parting with unrighteousness, is the giving up of self-righteousness. Though contending most earnestly against our own works or merits, it is often long before we come really to understand what it is to refuse self the least place or right in the service of God. Unconsciously we allow the actings of our own mind and heart and will free scope in God's presence. In prayer and worship, in Bible reading and working for God, instead of absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit's leading, self is expected to do a work it never can do. We are slow to learn the lesson, "In

me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." As it is learnt, and we see how corruption extends to everything that is of nature, we see that there can be no entire abiding in Christ without the giving up of all that is of self in religion--without giving it up to the death, and waiting for the breathings of the Holy Spirit as alone able to work in us what is acceptable in God's sight.

Then, again, there is our whole natural life, with all the powers and endowments bestowed upon us by the Creator, with all the occupations and interests with which Providence has surrounded us. It is not enough that, when once you are truly converted, you have the earnest desire to have all these devoted to the service of the Lord. The desire is good, but can neither teach the way nor give the strength to do it acceptably. Incalculable harm has been done to the deeper spirituality of the Church, by the idea that when once we are God's children the using of our gifts in His service follows as a matter of course. No; for this there is indeed needed very special grace. And the way in which the grace comes is again that of sacrifice and surrender. I must see how all my gifts and powers are, even though I be a child of God, still defiled by sin, and under the power of the flesh. I must feel that I cannot at once proceed to use them for God's glory. I must first lay them at Christ's feet, to be accepted and cleansed by Him. I must feel myself utterly powerless to use them aright. I must see that they are most dangerous to me, because through them the flesh, the old nature, self, will so easily exert its power. In this conviction I must part with them, giving them entirely up to the Lord. When He has accepted them, and set His stamp upon them, I receive them back, to hold them as His property, to wait on Him for the grace to use them aright day by day, and to have them act only under His influence. And so experience proves it true here too, that the path of entire consecration is the path of full salvation. Not only is what is thus given up received back again to become doubly our own, but the forsaking all is followed by the receiving all. We abide in Christ more fully as we forsake all and follow Him. As I count all things loss for His sake, I am found IN Him. The same principle holds good of all the lawful occupations and possessions with which we are entrusted of God. Such were the fish-nets on the Sea of Galilee, and the household duties of Martha of Bethany--the home and the friends of many a one among Jesus' disciples. Jesus taught them in very deed to forsake all for Him. It was no arbitrary command, but the simple application of a law in nature to the Kingdom of His grace--that the more perfectly the old occupant is cast out, the more complete can be the possession of the new, and the more entire the renewal of all within. This principle has a still deeper application. The truly spiritual gifts which are the working of God's own Holy Spirit within us--these surely need not be thus given up and surrendered? They do indeed; the interchange of giving up and taking in is a life process, and may not cease for a moment. No sooner does the believer begin to rejoice in the possession of what he has, than the inflow of new grace is retarded, and stagnation threatens. It is only into the thirst of an empty soul that the streams of living waters flow. Ever thirsting is the secret of never thirsting. Each blessed experience we receive as a gift of God, must at once be returned back to Him from whom it came, in praise and love, in self-sacrifice and service; so only can it be restored to us again, fresh and beautiful with the bloom of heaven. Is not this the wonderful lesson Isaac on Moriah teaches us? Was he not the son of promise, the God-given life, the wonder-gift of the omnipotence of Him who quickeneth the dead? (Romans 4:17). And yet even he had to be given up, and sacrificed, that he might be received back again a thousandfold more precious than before--a type of the Only-begotten of the Father, whose pure and holy life had to be given up ere He could receive it again in resurrection power, and could make His people partakers of it. A type, too, of what takes place in the life of each believer, as, instead of resting content with past experiences or present

grace, he presses on, forgetting and giving up all that is behind, and reaches out to the fullest possible apprehension of Christ His life. And such surrender of all for Christ, is it a single step, the act and experience of a moment, or is it a course of daily renewed and progressive attainment? It is both. There may be a moment in the life of a believer when he gets a first sight, or a deeper insight, of this most blessed truth, and when, made willing in the day of God's power, he does indeed, in an act of the will, gather up the whole of life yet before him into the decision of a moment, and lay himself on the altar a living and an acceptable sacrifice. Such moments have often been the blessed transition from a life of wandering and failure to a life of abiding and power divine. But even then his daily life becomes, what the life must be of each one who has no such experience, the unceasing prayer for more light on the meaning of entire surrender, the ever-renewed offering up of all he has to God.

Believer, would you abide in Christ, see here the blessed path. Nature shrinks back from such self-denial and crucifixion in its rigid application to our life in its whole extent. But what nature does not love and cannot perform, grace will accomplish, and make to you a life of joy and glory. Do you but yield up yourself to Christ your Lord; the conquering power of His incoming presence will make it joy to cast out all that before was most precious. "A hundredfold in this life": this word of the Master comes true to all who, with whole-hearted faithfulness, accept His commands to forsake all. The blessed receiving soon makes the giving up most blessed too. And the secret of a life of close abiding will be seen to be simply this: As I give myself wholly to Christ, I find the power to take Him wholly for myself; and as I lose myself and all I have for Him, He takes me wholly for Himself, and gives Himself wholly to me.

01.17. Through the Holy Spirit

Chapter 17--THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

"The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."-- 1 John 2:27.

How beautiful the thought of a life always abiding in Christ! The longer we think of it, the more attractive it becomes. And yet how often it is that the precious words, "Abide in me," are heard by the young disciple with a sigh! It is as if he understands so little what they really mean, and can realize so little how this full enjoyment can be attained. He longs for some one who could make it perfectly clear, and continually again remind him that the abiding is in very deed within his reach. If such an one would but listen to the word we have from John this day, what hope and joy it would bring! It gives us the divine assurance that we have the anointing of the Holy Spirit to teach us all things, also to teach us how to abide in Christ.

Alas! someone answers, this word does not give me comfort, it only depresses me more. For it tells of another privilege I so little know to enjoy: I do not understand how the teaching of the Spirit is given--where or how I can discern His voice. If the Teacher is so unknown, no wonder that the promise of His teaching about the abiding does not help me much.

Thoughts like these come from an error which is very common among believers. They imagine that the Spirit, in teaching them, must reveal the mysteries of the spiritual life first to their intellect, and afterwards in their experience. And God's way is just the contrary of this. What holds true of all spiritual truth is specially true of the abiding in Christ: We must live and experience truth in order to know it. Life-fellowship with Jesus is the only school for the science of heavenly things. "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," is a law of the Kingdom, specially true of the daily cleansing of which it first was spoken, and the daily keeping. Receive what you do not comprehend, submit to what you cannot understand, accept and expect what to reason appears a mystery, believe what looks impossible, walk in a way which you know not--such are the first lessons in the school of God. "If ye abide in my word, ye shall understand the truth": in these and other words of God we are taught that there is a habit of mind and life which precedes the understanding of the truth. True discipleship consists in first following, and then knowing the Lord. The believing surrender to Christ, and the submission to His word to expect what appears most improbable, is the only way to the full blessedness of knowing Him.

These principles hold specially good in regard to the teaching of the Spirit. That teaching consists in His guiding the spiritual life within us to that which God has prepared for us, without our always knowing how. On the strength of God's promise, and trusting in His faithfulness, the believer yields himself to the leading of the Holy Spirit, without claiming to have it first made clear to the intellect what He is to do, but consenting to let Him do His work in the soul, and afterwards to know what He has wrought there. Faith trusts the working of the Spirit unseen in the deep recesses of the inner life. And so the word of Christ and the gift of the Spirit are to the believer sufficient guarantee

that He will be taught of the Spirit to abide in Christ. By faith he rejoices in what he does not see or feel: he knows, and is confident that the blessed Spirit within is doing His work silently but surely, guiding him into the life of full abiding and unbroken communion. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; it is His work, not only to breathe, but ever to foster and strengthen, and so to perfect the new life within. And just in proportion as the believer yields himself in simple trust to the unseen, but most certain law of the Spirit of life working within him, his faith will pass into knowledge. It will be rewarded by the Spirit's light revealing in the Word what has already been wrought by the Spirit's power in the life.

Apply this now to the promise of the Spirit's teaching us to abide in Christ. The Holy Spirit is indeed the mighty power of God. And He comes to us from the heart of Christ, the bearer of Christ's life, the revealer and communicator of Christ Himself within us. In the expression, "the fellowship of the Spirit," we are taught what His highest work is. He is the bond of fellowship between the Father and the Son: by Him they are one. He is the bond of fellowship between all believers: by Him they are one. Above all, He is the bond of fellowship between Christ and believers ; He is the life-sap through which Vine and branch grow into real and living oneness: by Him we are one. And we can be assured of it, that if we do but believe in His presence and working, if we do but watch not to grieve Him, because we know that He is in us, if we wait and pray to be filled with Him, He will teach us how to abide. First guiding our will to a whole-hearted cleaving to Christ, then quickening our faith into ever larger confidence and expectation, then breathing into our hearts a peace and joy that pass understanding, He teaches us to abide, we scarce know how. Then coming through the heart and life into the understanding, He makes us know the truth--not as mere thought-truth, but as the truth which is in Christ Jesus, the reflection into the mind of the light of what He has already made a reality in the life. "The life was the light of men." In view of such teaching, it is clear how, if we would have the Spirit to guide us into the abiding life, our first need is--quiet restful faith. Amid all the questions and difficulties that may come up in connection with our striving to abide in Christ--amid all the longing we may sometimes feel to have a Christian of experience to aid us--amid the frequent painful consciousness of failure, of ignorance, of helplessness--do let us hold fast the blessed confidence: We have the unction of the Holy One to teach us to abide in Him. "THE ANOINTING which ye have received of Him, ABIDETH IN you; and even as it hath taught you, YE SHALL ABIDE IN Him." Make this teaching of His in connection with the abiding a matter of special exercise of faith. Believe that as surely as you have part in Christ, you have His Spirit too. Believe that He will do His work with power, if only you do not hinder Him. Believe that He is working, even when you cannot discern it. Believe that He will work mightily if you ask this from the Father. It is impossible to live the life of full abiding without being full of the the Holy Spirit; believe that the fulness of the Spirit is indeed your daily portion. Be sure and take time in prayer to dwell at the footstool of the throne of God and the Lamb, whence flows the river of the water of life. It is there, and only there, that you can be filled with the Spirit. Cultivate carefully the habit of daily, yea, continually honouring Him by the quiet, restful confidence that He is doing His work within. Let faith in His indwelling make you jealous of whatever could grieve Him--the spirit of the world or the actings of self and the flesh. Let that faith seek its nourishment in the Word and all it says of the Spirit, His power, His comfort, and His work. Above all, let that faith in the Spirit's indwelling lead you specially, to look away to Jesus; as we have received the anointing of Him, it comes in ever stronger flow from Him as we are occupied with Him alone. Christ is the Anointed One. As we look up to Him, the holy anointing comes, "the precious ointment upon the head of Aaron, that went

down to the skirts of his garments." It is faith in Jesus that brings the anointing; the anointing leads to Jesus, and to the abiding in Him alone.

Believer, abide in Christ, in the power of the Spirit. What think you, ought the abiding longer to be a fear or a burden? Surely not. Oh, if we did but know the graciousness of our Holy Comforter, and the blessedness of wholly yielding ourselves to His leading, we should indeed experience the divine comfort of having such a teacher to secure our biding in Christ. The Holy Spirit was given for this one purpose--that the glorious redemption and life in Christ might with divine power be conveyed and communicated to us. We have the Holy Spirit to make the living Christ, in all His saving power, and in the completeness of His victory over sin, ever present within us. It is this that constitutes Him the Comforter: with Him we need never mourn an absent Christ. Let us therefore, as often as we read, or meditate, or pray in connection with this abiding in Christ, reckon upon it as a settled thing that we have the Spirit of God Himself within us, teaching, and guiding, and working. Let us rejoice in the confidence that we must succeed in our desires, because the Holy Spirit is working all the while with secret but divine power in the soul that does not hinder Him by its unbelief.

01.18. In Stillness of Soul

Chapter 18--IN STILLNESS OF SOUL "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."-- Isaiah 30:15 "Be silent to the Lord, and wait patiently for him."-- Psalms 37:7 (marg.) "Truly my soul is silent unto God."-- Psalms 62:1 (marg.)

THERE is a view of the Christian life that regards it as a sort of partnership, in which God and man have each to do their part. It admits that it is but little that man can do, and that little defiled with sin; still he must do his utmost--then only can he expect God to do His part. To those who think thus, it is extremely difficult to understand what Scripture means when it speaks of our being still and doing nothing, of our resting and waiting to see the salvation of God. It appears to them a perfect contradiction, when we speak of this quietness and ceasing from all effort as the secret of the highest activity of man and all his powers. And yet this is just what Scripture does teach. The explanation of the apparent mystery is to be found in this, that when God and man are spoken of as working together, there is nothing of the idea of a partnership between two partners who each contribute their share to a work. The relation is a very different one. The true idea is that of cooperation founded on subordination. As Jesus was entirely dependent on the Father for all His words and all His works, so the believer can do nothing of himself. What he can do of himself is altogether sinful. He must therefore cease entirely from his own doing, and wait for the working of God in him. As he ceases from self-effort, faith assures him that God does what He has undertaken, and works in him. And what God does is to renew, to sanctify, and waken all his energies to their highest power. So that just in proportion as he yields himself a truly passive instrument in the hand of God, will he be wielded of God as the active instrument of His almighty power. The soul in which the wondrous combination of perfect passivity with the highest activity is most completely realized, has the deepest experience of what the Christian life is.

Among the lessons to be learnt of those who are studying the blessed art of abiding in Christ, there is none more needful and more profitable than this one of stillness of soul. In it alone can we cultivate that teachableness of spirit, to which the Lord will reveal His secrets--that meekness to which He shows His ways. It is the spirit exhibited so beautifully in all the three Marys: In her whose only answer to the most wonderful revelation ever made to human being was, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word"; and of whom, as mysteries multiplied around her, it is written: "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." And in her who "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word," and who showed, in the anointing Him for His burial, how she had entered more deeply into the mystery of His death than even the beloved disciple. And in her, too, who sought her Lord in the house of the Pharisee, with tears that spake more than words. It is a soul silent unto God that is the best preparation for knowing Jesus, and for holding fast the blessings He bestows. It is when the soul is hushed in silent awe and worship before the Holy Presence that reveals itself within, that the still small voice of the blessed Spirit will be heard.

Therefore, beloved Christian, as often as you seek to understand better the blessed mystery of abiding in Christ, let this be your first thought (Psalms 62:5, marg.): "My soul, only be silent unto

God; for my expectation is from Him." Do you in very deed hope to realize the wondrous union with the Heavenly Vine? Know that flesh and blood cannot reveal it unto you, but only the Father in heaven. "Cease from thine own wisdom." You have but to bow in the confession of your own ignorance and impotence; the Father will delight to give you the teaching of the Holy Spirit. If but your ear be open, and your thoughts brought into subjection, and your heart prepared in silence to wait upon God, and to hear what He speaks, He will reveal to you His secrets. And one of the first secrets will be the deeper insight into the truth, that as you sink low before Him in nothingness and helplessness, in a silence and a stillness of soul that seeks to catch the faintest whisper of His love, teachings will come to you which you had never heard before for the rush and noise of your own thoughts and efforts. You shall learn how your great work is to listen, and hear, and believe what He promises; to watch and wait and see what He does; and then, in faith, and worship, and obedience, to yield yourself to His working who works in you mightily.

One would think that no message could be more beautiful or welcome than this, that we may rest and be quiet, and that our God will work for us and in us. And yet how far this is from being the case! And how slow many are to learn that quietness is blessedness, that quietness is strength, that quietness is the source of the highest activity--the secret of all true abiding in Christ! Let us try to learn it, and to watch against whatever interferes with it. The dangers that threaten the soul's rest are not a few.

There is the dissipation of soul which comes from entering needlessly and too deeply into the interests of this world. Every one of us has his divine calling; and within the circle pointed out by God Himself, interest in our work and its surroundings is a duty. But even here the Christian needs to exercise watchfulness and sobriety. And still more do we need a holy temperance in regard to things not absolutely imposed upon us by God. If abiding in Christ really be our first aim, let us beware of all needless excitement. Let us watch even in lawful and necessary things against the wondrous power these have to keep the soul so occupied, that there remains but little power or zest for fellowship with God. Then there is the restlessness and worry that come of care and anxiety about earthly things; these eat away the life of trust, and keep the soul like a troubled sea. There the gentle whispers of the Holy Comforter cannot be heard. No less hurtful is the spirit of fear and distrust in spiritual things; with its apprehensions and its efforts, it never comes really to hear what God has to say. Above all, there is the unrest that comes of seeking in our own way and in our own strength the spiritual blessing which comes alone from above. The heart occupied with its own plans and efforts for doing God's will, and securing the blessing of abiding in Jesus, must fail continually. God's work is hindered by our interference. He can do His work perfectly only when the soul ceases from its work. He will do His work mightily in the soul that honours Him by expecting Him to work both to will and to do.

And, last of all, even when the soul seeks truly to enter the way of faith, there is the impatience of the flesh, which forms its judgment of the life and progress of the soul not after the divine but the human standard. In dealing with all this, and so much more, blessed the man who learns the lesson of stillness, and fully accepts God's word: "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Each time he listens to the word of the Father, or asks the Father to listen to his words, he dares not begin his Bible reading or prayer without first pausing and waiting, until the soul be hushed in the presence of the Eternal Majesty. Under a sense of the divine nearness, the soul, feeling how self is always ready to assert itself, and intrude even into the holiest of all with its

thoughts and efforts, yields itself in a quiet act of self-surrender to the teaching and working of the divine Spirit. It is still and waits in holy silence, until all is calm and ready to receive the revelation of the divine will and presence. Its reading and prayer then indeed become a waiting on God with ear and heart opened and purged to receive fully only what He says.

"Abide in Christ!" Let no one think that he can do this if he has not daily his quiet time, his seasons of meditation and waiting on God. In these a habit of soul must be cultivated, in which the believer goes out into the world and its distractions, the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, keeping the heart and mind. It is in such a calm and restful soul that the life of faith can strike deep root, that the Holy Spirit can give His blessed teaching, that the Holy Father can accomplish His glorious work. May each one of us learn every day to say, "Truly my soul is silent unto God." And may every feeling of the difficulty of attaining this only lead us simply to look and trust to Him whose presence makes even the storm a calm. Cultivate the quietness as a means to the abiding in Christ; expect the ever deepening quietness and calm of heaven in the soul as the fruit of abiding in Him.

01.19. In Affliction and Trial

Chapter 19--IN AFFLICTION AND TRIAL "Every branch that bearest fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."-- John 15:2. IN THE whole plant world there is not a tree to be found so specially suited to the image of man in his relation to God, as the vine. There is none of which the fruit and its juice are so full of spirit, so quickening and stimulating. But there is also none of which the natural tendency is so entirely evil--none where the growth is so ready to run into wood that is utterly worthless except for the fire. Of all plants, not one needs the pruning knife so unsparingly and so unceasingly. None is so dependent on cultivation and training, but with this none yields a richer reward to the husbandman. In His wonderful parable, the Saviour, with a single word, refers to this need of pruning in the vine, and the blessing it brings. But from that single word what streams of light pour in upon this dark world, so full of suffering and of sorrow to believers! What treasures of teaching and comfort to the bleeding branch in its hour of trial: "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." And so He has prepared His people, who are so ready when trial comes to be shaken in their confidence, and to be moved from their abiding in Christ, to hear in each affliction the voice of a messenger that comes to call them to abide still more closely. Yes, believer, most specially in times of trial, abide in Christ.

Abide in Christ! This is indeed the Father's object in sending the trial. In the storm the tree strikes deeper roots in the soil; in the hurricane the inhabitants of the house abide within, and rejoice in its shelter. So by suffering the Father would lead us to enter more deeply into the love of Christ. Our hearts are continually prone to wander from Him; prosperity and enjoyment all too easily satisfy us, dull our spiritual perception, and unfit us for full communion with Himself. It is an unspeakable mercy that the Father comes with His chastisement, makes the world round us all dark and unattractive, leads us to feel more deeply our sinfulness, and for a time lose our joy in what was becoming so dangerous. He does it in the hope that, when we have found our rest in Christ in time of trouble, we shall learn to choose abiding in Him as our only portion; and when the affliction is removed, have so grown more firmly into Him, that in prosperity He still shall be our only joy. So much has He set His heart on this, that though He has indeed no pleasure in afflicting us, He will not keep back even the most painful chastisement if He can but thereby guide His beloved child to come home and abide in the beloved Son. Christian! pray for grace to see in every trouble, small or great, the Father's finger pointing to Jesus, and saying, Abide in Him.

Abide in Christ: so will you become partaker of all the rich blessings God designed for you in the affliction. The purposes of God's wisdom will become clear to you, your assurance of the unchangeable love become stronger, and the power of His Spirit fulfil you the promise: "He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." Abide in Christ: and your cross becomes the means of fellowship with His cross, and access into its mysteries--the mystery of the curse which He bore for you, of the death to sin in which you partake with Him, of the love in which, as sympathizing High Priest, He descended into all your sorrows. Abide in Christ: growing in conformity to your blessed Lord in His sufferings, deeper experience of the reality and the tenderness of His love will be yours. Abide in Christ: in the fiery oven, one like the Son of Man will

be seen as never before; the purging away of the dross and the refining of the gold will be accomplished, and Christ's own likeness reflected in you. O abide in Christ: the power of the flesh will be mortified, the impatience and self-will of the old nature be humbled, to make place for the meekness and gentleness of Christ. A believer may pass through much affliction, and yet secure but little blessing from it all. Abiding in Christ is the secret of securing all that the Father meant the chastisement to bring us.

Abide in Christ: in Him you shall find sure and abundant consolation. With the afflicted comfort is often first, and the profit of the affliction second. The Father loves us so, that with Him our real and abiding profit is His first object, but He does not forget to comfort too. When He comforts it is that He may turn the bleeding heart to Himself to receive the blessing in fellowship with Him; when He refuses comfort, His object is still the same. It is in making us partakers of His holiness that true comfort comes. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, not only because He can suggest comforting thoughts of God's love, but far more, because He makes us holy, and brings us into close union with Christ and with God. He teaches us to abide in Christ; and because God is found there, the truest comfort will come there too. In Christ the heart of the Father is revealed, and higher comfort there cannot be than to rest in the Father's bosom. In Him the fulness of the divine love is revealed, combined with the tenderness of a mother's compassion--and what can comfort like this? In Him you see a thousand times more given you than you have lost; see how God only took from you that you might have room to take from Him what is so much better. In Him suffering is consecrated, and becomes the foretaste of eternal glory; in suffering it is that the Spirit of God and of glory rests on us. Believer! would you have comfort in affliction?--Abide in Christ.

Abide in Christ: so will you bear much fruit. Not a vine is planted but the owner thinks of the fruit, and the fruit only. Other trees may be planted for ornament, for the shade, for the wood--the vine only for the fruit. And of each vine the husbandman is continually asking how it can bring forth more fruit, much fruit. Believer! abide in Christ in times of affliction, and you shall bring forth more fruit. The deeper experience of Christ's tenderness and the Father's love will urge you to live to His glory. The surrender of self and selfwill in suffering will prepare you to sympathize with the misery of others, while the softening that comes of chastisement will fit you for becoming, as Jesus was, the servant of all. The thought of the Father's desire for fruit in the pruning will lead you to yield yourself afresh, and more than ever, to Him, and to say that now you have but one object in life--making known and conveying His wonderful love to fellow-men. You shall learn the blessed art of forgetting self, and, even in affliction, availing yourself of your separation from ordinary life to plead for the welfare of others. Dear Christian, in affliction abide in Christ. When you see it coming, meet it in Christ; when it is come, feel that you are more in Christ than in it, for He is nearer you than affliction ever can be; when it is passing, still abide in Him. And let the one thought of the Saviour, as He speaks of the pruning, and the one desire of the Father, as He does the pruning, be yours too: "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit." So shall your times of affliction become your times of choicest blessing--preparation for richest fruitfulness. Led into closer fellowship with the Son of God, and deeper experience of His love and grace--established in the blessed confidence that He and you entirely belong to each other--more completely satisfied with Him and more wholly given up to Him than ever before--with your own will crucified afresh, and the heart brought into deeper harmony with God's will--you shall be a vessel cleansed, meet for the Master's use, prepared for every good work. True believer! O try and learn

the blessed truth, that in affliction your first, your only, your blessed calling is to abide in Christ. Be much with Him alone. Beware of the comfort and the distractions that friends so often bring. Let Jesus Christ Himself be your chief companion and comforter. Delight yourself in the assurance that closer union with Him, and more abundant fruit through Him, are sure to be the results of trial, because it is the Husbandman Himself who is pruning, and will ensure the fulfilment of the desire of the soul that yields itself lovingly to His work.

01.20. That you may bear much Fruit

Chapter 20--THAT YOU MAY BEAR MUCH FRUIT

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."-- John 15:5; John 15:8.

WE ALL know what fruit is. The produce of the branch, by which men are refreshed and nourished. The fruit is not for the branch, but for those who come to carry it away. As soon as the fruit is ripe, the branch gives it off, to commence afresh its work of beneficence, and anew prepare its fruit for another season. A fruit-bearing tree lives not for itself, but wholly for those to whom its fruit brings refreshment and life. And so the branch exists only and entirely for the sake of the fruit. To make glad the heart of the husbandman is its object, its safety, and its glory.

Beautiful image of the believer, abiding in Christ! He not only grows in strength, the union with the Vine becoming ever surer and firmer, he also bears fruit, yea, much fruit. He has the power to offer that to others of which they can eat and live. Amid all who surround him he becomes like a tree of life, of which they can taste and be refreshed. He is in his circle a centre of life and of blessing, and that simply because he abides in Christ, and receives from Him the Spirit and the life of which he can impart to others. Learn thus, if you would bless others, to abide in Christ, and that if you do abide, you shall surely bless. As surely as the branch abiding in a fruitful vine bears fruit, so surely, yea, much more surely, will a soul abiding in Christ with His fulness of blessing be made a blessing. The reason of this is easily understood. If Christ, the heavenly Vine, has taken the believer as a branch, then He has pledged Himself, in the very nature of things, to supply the sap and spirit and nourishment to make it bring forth fruit. "From ME is thy fruit found": these words derive new meaning from our parable. The soul need but have one care--to abide closely, fully, wholly. He will give the fruit. He works all that is needed to make the believer a blessing.

Abiding in Him, you receive of Him His Spirit of love and compassion towards sinners, making you desirous to seek their good. By nature the heart is full of selfishness. Even in the believer, his own salvation and happiness are often too much his only object. But abiding in Jesus, you come into contact with His infinite love; its fire begins to burn within your heart; you see the beauty of love; you learn to look upon loving and serving and saving your fellow-men as the highest privilege a disciple of Jesus can have. Abiding in Christ, your heart learns to feel the wretchedness of the sinner still in darkness, and the fearfulness of the dishonour done to your God. With Christ you begin to bear the burden of souls, the burden of sins not your own. As you are more closely united to Him, somewhat of that passion for souls which urged Him to Calvary begins to breathe within you, and you are ready to follow His footsteps, to forsake the heaven of your own happiness, and devote your life to win the souls Christ has taught you to love. The very spirit of the Vine is love; the spirit of love streams into the branch that abides in Him. The desire to be a blessing is but the beginning. As you undertake to work, you speedily become conscious of your own weakness and the difficulties in your way. Souls are not saved at your bidding. You are ready to be discouraged, and to relax your effort. But abiding in Christ, you receive new courage and strength for the work.

Believing what Christ teaches, that it is HE who through you will give His blessing to the world, you understand that you are but the feeble instrument through which the hidden power of Christ does its work, that His strength may be perfected and made glorious in your weakness. It is a great step when the believer fully consents to his own weakness, and the abiding consciousness of it, and so works faithfully on, fully assured that his Lord is working through him. He rejoices that the excellence of the power is of God, and not of us. Realizing his oneness with his Lord, he considers no longer his own weakness, but counts on the power of Him of whose hidden working within he is assured. It is this secret assurance that gives a brightness to his look, and a gentle firmness to his tone, and a perseverance to all his efforts, which of themselves are great means of influencing those he is seeking to win. He goes forth in the spirit of one to whom victory is assured; for this is the victory that overcometh, even our faith. He no longer counts it humility to say that God cannot bless his unworthy efforts. He claims and expects a blessing, because it is not he, but Christ in him, that worketh. The great secret of abiding in Christ is the deep conviction that we are nothing, and He is everything. As this is learnt, it no longer seems strange to believe that our weakness need be no hindrance to His saving power. The believer who yields himself wholly up to Christ for service in the spirit of a simple, childlike trust, will assuredly bring forth much fruit. He will not fear even to claim his share in the wonderful promise: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father." He no longer thinks that He cannot have a blessing, and must be kept unfruitful, that he may be kept humble. He sees that the most heavily laden branches bow the lowest down. Abiding in Christ, he has yielded assent to the blessed agreement between the Vine and the branches, that of the fruit all the glory shall be to the Husbandman, the blessed Father.

Let us learn two lessons. If we are abiding in Jesus, let us begin to work. Let us first seek to influence those around us in daily life. Let us accept distinctly and joyfully our holy calling, that we are even now to live as the servants of the love of Jesus to our fellow-men. Our daily life must have for its object the making of an impression favourable to Jesus. When you look at the branch, you see at once the likeness to the Vine. We must live so that somewhat of the holiness and the gentleness of Jesus may shine out in us. We must live to represent Him. As was the case with Him when on earth, the life must prepare the way for the teaching. What the Church and the world both need is this: men and women full of the Holy Ghost and of love, who, as the living embodiments of the grace and power of Christ, witness for Him, and for His power on behalf of those who believe in Him. Living so, with our hearts longing to have Jesus glorified in the souls He is seeking after, let us offer ourselves to Him for direct work. There is work in our own home. There is work among the sick, the poor, and the outcast. There is work in a hundred different paths which the Spirit of Christ opens up through those who allow themselves to be led by Him. There is work perhaps for us in ways that have not yet been opened up by others. Abiding in Christ, let us work. Let us work, not like those who are content if they now follow the fashion, and take some share in religious work. No; let us work as those who are growing more like Christ, because they are abiding in Him, and who, like Him, count the work of winning souls to the Father the very joy and glory of heaven begun on earth. And the second lesson is: If you work, abide in Christ. This is one of the blessings of work if done in the right spirit--it will deepen your union with your blessed Lord. It will discover your weakness, and throw you back on His strength. It will stir you to much prayer; and in prayer for others is the time when the soul, forgetful of itself, unconsciously grows deeper into Christ. It will make clearer to you the true nature of branch-life; its absolute dependence, and at the same

time its glorious sufficiency--independent of all else, because dependent on Jesus. If you work, abide in Christ. There are temptations and dangers. Work for Christ has sometimes drawn away from Christ, and taken the place of fellowship with Him. Work can sometimes give a form of godliness without the power. As you work, abide in Christ. Let a living faith in Christ working in you be the secret spring of all your work; this will inspire at once humility and courage. Let the Holy Spirit of Jesus dwell in you as the Spirit of His tender compassion and His divine power. Abide in Christ, and offer every faculty of your nature freely and unreservedly to Him, to sanctify it for Himself. If Jesus Christ is really to work through us, it needs an entire consecration of ourselves to Him, daily renewed. But we understand now, just this is abiding in Christ; just this it is that constitutes our highest privilege and happiness. To be a branch bearing much fruit--nothing less, nothing more--be this our only joy.

01.21. So will you have Power in Prayer

Chapter 21--SO WILL YOU HAVE POWER IN PRAYER

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. "-- John 15:7.

PRAYER is both one of the means and one of the fruits of union to Christ. As a means it is of unspeakable importance. All the things of faith, all the pleadings of desire, all the yearnings after a fuller surrender, all the confessions of shortcoming and of sin, all the exercises in which the soul gives up self and clings to Christ, find their utterance in prayer. In each meditation on abiding in Christ, as some new feature of what Scripture teaches concerning this blessed life is apprehended, the first impulse of the believer is at once to look up to the Father and pour out the heart into His, and ask from Him the full understanding and the full possession of what he has been shown in the Word. And it is the believer, who is not content with this spontaneous expression of his hope, but who takes time in secret prayer to wait until he has received and laid hold of what he has seen, who will really grow strong in Christ. However feeble the soul's first abiding, its prayer will be heard, and it will find prayer one of the great means of abiding more abundantly. But it is not so much as a means, but as a fruit of the abiding, that the Saviour mentions it in the parable of the Vine. He does not think so much of prayer--as we, alas! too exclusively do--as a means of getting blessing for ourselves, but as one of the chief channels of influence by which, through us as fellow-workers with God, the blessings of Christ's redemption are to be dispensed to the world. He sets before Himself and us the glory of the Father, in the extension of His Kingdom, as the object for which we have been made branches; and He assures us that if we but abide in Him, we shall be Israels, having power with God and man. Ours shall be the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man, availing much, like Elijah's for ungodly Israel. Such prayer will be the fruit of our abiding in Him, and the means of bringing forth much fruit. To the Christian who is not abiding wholly in Jesus, the difficulties connected with prayer are often so great as to rob him of the comfort and the strength it could bring. Under the guise of humility, he asks how one so unworthy could expect to have influence with the Holy One. He thinks of God's sovereignty, His perfect wisdom and love, and cannot see how his prayer can really have any distinct effect. He prays, but it is more because he cannot rest without prayer, than from a loving faith that the prayer will be heard. But what a blessed release from such questions and perplexities is given to the soul who is truly abiding in Christ! He realizes increasingly how it is in the real spiritual unity with Christ that we are accepted and heard. The union with the Son of God is a life union: we are in very deed one with Him--our prayer ascends as His prayer. It is because we abide in Him that we can ask what we will, and it is given to us.

There are many reasons why this must be so. One is, that abiding in Christ, and having His words abiding in us, teach us to pray in accordance with the will of God. With the abiding in Christ our self-will is kept down, the thoughts and wishes of nature are brought into captivity to the thoughts and wishes of Christ; likemindedness to Christ grows upon us--all our working and willing become

transformed into harmony with His. There is deep and oft-renewed heart-searching to see whether the surrender has indeed been entire; fervent prayer to the heart-searching Spirit that nothing may be kept back. Everything is yielded to the power of His life in us, that it may exercise its sanctifying influence even on ordinary wishes and desires. His Holy Spirit breathes through our whole being; and without our being conscious how, our desires, as the breathings of the divine life, are in conformity with the divine will, and are fulfilled. Abiding in Christ renews and sanctifies the will: we ask what we will, and it is given to us. In close connection with this is the thought, that the abiding in Christ teaches the believer in prayer only to seek the glory of God. In promising to answer prayer, Christ's one thought (see John 14:13) is this, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." In His intercession on earth (John 17:1-26), this was His one desire and plea; in His intercession in heaven, it is still His great object. As the believer abides in Christ, the Saviour breathes this desire into him. The thought, ONLY THE GLORY of GOD, becomes more and more the keynote of the life hid in Christ. At first this subdues, and quiets, and makes the soul almost afraid to dare entertain a wish, lest it should not be to the Father's glory. But when once its supremacy has been accepted, and everything yielded to it, it comes with mighty power to elevate and enlarge the heart, and open it to the vast field open to the glory of God. Abiding in Christ, the soul learns not only to desire, but spiritually to discern what will be for God's glory; and one of the first conditions of acceptable prayer is fulfilled in it when, as the fruit of its union with Christ, the whole mind is brought into harmony with that of the Son as He said: "Father, glorify Thy name."

Once more: Abiding in Christ, we can fully avail ourselves of the name of Christ. Asking in the name of another means that that other authorized me and sent me to ask, and wants to be considered as asking himself: he wants the favour done to him. Believers often try to think of the name of Jesus and His merits, and to argue themselves into the faith that they will be heard, while they painfully feel how little they have of the faith of His name. They are not living wholly in Jesus' name; it is only when they begin to pray that they want to take up that name and use it. This cannot be. The promise "Whatsoever ye ask in my name," may not be severed from the command, "Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." If the name of Christ is to be wholly at my disposal, so that I may have the full command of it for all I will, it must be because I first put myself wholly at His disposal, so that He has free and full command of me. It is the abiding in Christ that gives the right and power to use His name with confidence. To Christ the Father refuses nothing. Abiding in Christ, I come to the Father as one with Him. His righteousness is in me, His Spirit is in me; the Father sees the Son in me, and gives me my petition. It is not--as so many think--by a sort of imputation that the Father looks upon us as if we were in Christ, though we are not in Him. No; the Father wants to see us living in Him: thus shall our prayer really have power to prevail. Abiding in Christ not only renews the will to pray aright, but secures the full power of His merits to us.

Again: Abiding in Christ also works in us the faith that alone can obtain an answer. "According to your faith be it unto you": this is one of the laws of the kingdom. "Believe that ye receive, and ye shall have." This faith rests upon, and is rooted in the Word, but is something infinitely higher than the mere logical conclusion: God has promised, I shall obtain. No; faith, as a spiritual act, depends upon the words abiding in us as living powers, and so upon the state of the whole inner life. Without fasting and prayer (Mark 9:29), without humility and a spiritual mind (John 5:44), without a wholehearted obedience (1 John 3:22), there cannot be this living faith. But as the soul abides in

Christ, and grows into the consciousness of its union with Him, and sees how entirely it is He who makes it and its petition acceptable, it dares to claim an answer because it knows itself one with Him. It was by faith it learnt to abide in Him; as the fruit of that faith, it rises to a larger faith in all that God has promised to be and to do. It learns to breathe its prayers in the deep, quiet, confident assurance: We know we have the petition we ask of Him.

Abiding in Christ, further, keeps us in the place where the answer can be bestowed. Some believers pray earnestly for blessing; but when God comes and looks for them to bless them, they are not to be found. They never thought that the blessing must not only be asked, but waited for, and received in prayer. Abiding in Christ is the place for receiving answers. Out of Him the answer would be dangerous--we should consume it on our lusts (James 4:3). Many of the richest answers--say for spiritual grace, or for power to work and to bless--can only come in the shape of a larger experience of what God makes Christ to us. The fulness is IN Him; abiding in Him is the condition of power in prayer, because the answer is treasured up and bestowed in Him.

Believer, abide in Christ, for there is the school of prayer--mighty, effectual, answer-bringing prayer. Abide in Him, and you shall learn what to so many is a mystery: That the secret of the prayer of faith is the life of faith--the life that abides in Christ alone.

01.22. And in His Love

Chapter 22--AND IN HIS LOVE "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: abide ye in my love."-- John 15:9.[1]

BLESSED Lord, enlighten our eyes to see aright the glory of this wondrous word. Open to our meditation the secret chamber of THY LOVE, that our souls may enter in, and find there their everlasting dwelling-place. How else shall we know aught of a love that passeth knowledge?

Before the Saviour speaks the word that invites us to abide in His love, He first tells us what that love is. What He says of it must give force to His invitation, and make the thought of not accepting it an impossibility: "As the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you!"

"As the Father hath loved me." How shall we be able to form right conceptions of this love? Lord, teach us. God is love. Love is His very being. Love is not an attribute, but the very essence of His nature, the centre round which all His glorious attributes gather. It was because He was love that He was the Father, and that there was a Son. Love needs an object to whom it can give itself away, in whom it can lose itself, with whom it can make itself one. Because God is love, there must be a Father and a Son. The love of the Father to the Son is that divine passion with which He delights in the Son, and speaks, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The divine love is as a burning fire; in all its intensity and infinity it has but one object and but one joy, and that is the only-begotten Son. When we gather together all the attributes of God--His infinity, His perfection, His immensity, His majesty, His omnipotence--and consider them but as the rays of the glory of His love, we still fail in forming any conception of what that love must be. It is a love that passeth knowledge. And yet this love of God to His Son must serve, O my soul, as the glass in which you are to learn how Jesus loves you. As one of His redeemed ones, you are His delight, and all His desire is to you, with the longing of a love which is stronger than death, and which many waters cannot quench. His heart yearns after you, seeking your fellowship and your love. Were it needed, He could die again to possess you. As the Father loved the Son, and could not live without Him, could not be God the blessed without Him--so Jesus loves you. His life is bound up in yours; you are to Him inexpressibly more indispensable and precious than you ever can know. You are one with Himself. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." What a love!

It is an eternal love. From before the foundation of the world--God's Word teaches us this--the purpose had been formed that Christ should be the Head of His Church, that He should have a body in which His glory could be set forth. In that eternity He loved and longed for those who had been given Him by the Father; and when He came and told His disciples that He loved them, it was indeed not with a love of earth and of time, but with the love of eternity. And it is with that same infinite love that His eye still rests upon each of us here seeking to abide in Him, and in each breathing of that love there is indeed the power of eternity. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

It is a perfect love. It gives all, and holds nothing back. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." And just so Jesus loves His own: all He has is theirs. When it was needed, He sacrificed His throne and crown for you: He did not count His own life and blood too dear to give for you. His righteousness, His Spirit, His glory, even His throne, all are yours. This love holds nothing, nothing back, but, in a manner which no human mind can fathom, makes you one with itself. O wondrous love! to love us even as the Father loved Him, and to offer us this love as our everyday dwelling.

It is a gentle and most tender love. As we think of the love of the Father to the Son, we see in the Son everything so infinitely worthy of that love. When we think of Christ's love to us, there is nothing but sin and unworthiness to meet the eye. And the question comes: How can that love within the bosom of the divine life and its perfections be compared to the love that rests on sinners? Can it indeed be the same love? Blessed be God, we know it is so. The nature of love is always one, however different the objects. Christ knows of no other law of love but that with which His Father loved Him. Our wretchedness only serves to call out more distinctly the beauty of love, such as could not be seen even in heaven. With the tenderest compassion He bows to our weakness, with patience inconceivable He bears with our slowness, with the gentlest loving-kindness He meets our fears and our follies. It is the love of the Father to the Son, beautified, glorified, in its condescension, in its exquisite adaptation to our needs. And it is an unchangeable love. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee." The promise with which it begins its work in the soul is this: "I shall not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And just as our wretchedness was what first drew it to us, so the sin, with which it is so often grieved, and which may well cause us to fear and doubt, is but a new motive for it to hold to us all the more. And why? We can give no reason but this: "As the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you." And now, does not this love suggest the motive, the measure, and the means of that surrender by which we yield ourselves wholly to abide in Him? This love surely supplies a motive. Only look and see how this love stands and pleads and prays. Gaze, O gaze on the divine form, the eternal glory, the heavenly beauty, the tenderly pleading gentleness of the crucified love, as it stretches out its pierced hands and says, "Oh, wilt thou not abide with me? wilt thou not come and abide in me?" It points you up to the eternity of love whence it came to seek you. It points you to the Cross, and all it has borne to prove the reality of its affection, and to win you for itself. It reminds you of all it has promised to do for you, if you will but throw yourself unreservedly into its arms. It asks you whether, so far as you have come to dwell with it and taste its blessedness, it has not done well by you. And with a divine authority, mingled with such an inexpressible tenderness that one might almost think he heard the tone of reproach in it, it says, "Soul, as the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you: abide in my love." Surely there can be but one answer to such pleading: Lord Jesus Christ! here I am. Henceforth Thy love shall be the only home of my soul: in Thy love alone will I abide. That love is not only the motive, but also the measure, of our surrender to abide in it. Love gives all, but asks all. It does so, not because it grudges us aught, but because without this it cannot get possession of us to fill us with itself. In the love of the Father and the Son, it was so. In the love of Jesus to us, it was so. In our entering into His love to abide there, it must be so too; our surrender to it must have no other measure than its surrender to us. O that we understood how the love that calls us has infinite riches and fulness of joy for us, and that what we give up for its sake will be rewarded a

hundredfold in this life! Or rather, would that we understood that it is a LOVE with a height and a depth and a length and a breadth that passes knowledge! How all thought of sacrifice or surrender would pass away, and our souls be filled with wonder at the unspeakable privilege of being loved with such a love, of being allowed to come and abide in it for ever. And if doubt again suggest the question: But is it possible, can I always abide in His love? listen how that love itself supplies the only means for the abiding in Him: It is faith in that love which will enable us to abide in it. If this love be indeed so divine, such an intense and burning passion, then surely I can depend on it to keep me and to hold me fast. Then surely all my unworthiness and feebleness can be no hindrance. If this love be indeed so divine, with infinite power at its command, I surely have a right to trust that it is stronger than my weakness; and that with its almighty arm it will clasp me to its bosom, and suffer me to go out no more. I see how this is the one thing my God requires of me. Treating me as a reasonable being endowed with the wondrous power of willing and choosing, He cannot force all this blessedness on me, but waits till I give the willing consent of the heart. And the token of this consent He has in His great kindness ordered faith to be-that faith by which utter sinfulness casts itself into the arms of love to be saved, and utter weakness to be kept and made strong. O Infinite Love! Love with which the Father loved the Son! Love with which the Son loves us! I can trust thee, I do trust thee. O keep me abiding in Thyself.

[1] It is difficult to understand why in our English Bible one Greek word should in the first sixteen verses of John 15:1-27 have had three different translations: abide in John 15:4, continue in John 15:9, and remain in John 15:11 and John 15:16. The Revised Version has of course kept the one word, abide.

01.23. As Christ in the Father

Chapter 23--AS CHRIST IN THE FATHER

"As the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love, even as I abide in my Father's love."- John 15:9-10.

CHRIST had taught His disciples that to abide in Him was to abide in His love. The hour of His suffering is nigh, and He cannot speak much more to them. They doubtless have many questions to ask as to what that abiding in Him and His love is. He anticipates and meets their wishes, and gives them HIS OWN LIFE as the best exposition of His command. As example and rule for their abiding in His love, they have to look to His abiding in the Father's love. In the light of His union with the Father, their union with Him will become clear. His life in the Father is the law of their life in Him. The thought is so high that we can hardly take it in, and is yet so clearly revealed, that we dare not neglect it. Do we not read in John 6:1-71 (John 6:57), "As I live by the Father, even so he that eateth me, he shall live by me"? And the Saviour prays so distinctly (John 17:22), "that they may be one even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me." The blessed union of Christ with the Father and His life in Him is the only rule of our thoughts and expectations in regard to our living and abiding in Him.

Think first of the origin of that life of Christ in the Father. They were ONE--one in life and one in love. In this His abiding in the Father had its root. Though dwelling here on earth, He knew that He was one with the Father; that the Father's life was in Him, and His love on Him. Without this knowledge, abiding in the Father and His love would have been utterly impossible. And it is thus only that you can abide in Christ and His love. Know that you are one with Him--one in the unity of nature. By His birth He became man, and took your nature that He might be one with you. By your new birth you become one with Him, and are made partaker of His divine nature. The link that binds you to Him is as real and close as bound Him to the Father--the link of a divine life. Your claim on Him is as sure and always availing as was His on the Father. Your union with Him is as close. And as it is the union of a divine life, it is one of an infinite love. In His life of humiliation on earth He tasted the blessedness and strength of knowing Himself the object of an infinite love, and of dwelling in it all the day; from His own example He invites you to learn that herein lies the secret of rest and joy. You are one with Him: yield yourself now to be loved by Him; let your eyes and heart open to the love that shines and presses in on you on every side. Abide in His love.

Think then too of the mode of that abiding in the Father and His love which is to be the law of your life. "I kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love." His was a life of subjection and dependence and yet most blessed. To our proud self-seeking nature the thought of dependence and subjection suggests the idea of humiliation and servitude; in the life of love which the Son of God lived, and to which He invite us, they are the secret of blessedness. The Son is not afraid of losing aught by giving up all to the Father, for He knows that the Father loves Him, and can have no interest apart from that of the beloved Son. He knows that as complete as is the dependence on His part is the communication on the part of the Father of all He possesses. Hence when He

had said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, except He see the Father do it," He adds at once, "Whatsoever things the Father doeth, them also doeth the Son likewise: for the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." The believer who studies this life of Christ as the pattern and the promise of what his may be, learns to understand how the "Without me ye can do nothing," is but the forerunner of "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." We learn to glory in infirmities, to take pleasure in necessities and distresses for Christ's sake; for "when I am weak, then am I strong." He rises above the ordinary tone in which so many Christians speak of their weakness, while they are content to abide there, because he has learnt from Christ that in the life of divine love the emptying of self and the sacrifice of our will is the surest way to have all we can wish or will. Dependence, subjection, self-sacrifice, are for the Christian as for Christ the blessed path of life. Like as Christ lived through and in the Father, even so the believer lives through and in Christ.

Think of the glory of this life of Christ in the Father's love. Because He gave Himself wholly to the Father's will and glory, the Father crowned Him with glory and honour. He acknowledged Him as His only representative; He made Him partaker of His power and authority; He exalted Him to share His throne as God. And even so will it be with him who abides in Christ's love. If Christ finds us willing to trust ourselves and our interests to His love, if in that trust we give up all care for our own will and honour, if we make it our glory to exercise and confess absolute dependence on Him in all things, if we are content to have no life but in Him, He will do for us what the Father did for Him. He will lay of His glory on us: As the name of our Lord is Jesus is glorified in us, we are glorified in Him (2 Thessalonians 1:12). He acknowledges us as His true and worthy representatives; He entrusts us with His power; He admits us to His counsels, as He allows our intercession to influence His rule of His Church and the world; He makes us the vehicles of His authority and His influence over men. His Spirit knows no other dwelling than such, and seeks no other instruments for His divine work. Blessed life of love for the soul that abides in Christ's love, even as He in the Father's!

Believer! abide in the love of Christ. Take and study His relation to the Father as pledge of what thine own can become. As blessed, as mighty, as glorious as was His life in the Father, can yours be in Him. Let this truth, accepted under the teaching of the Spirit in faith, remove every vestige of fear, as if abiding in Christ were a burden and a work. In the light of His life in the Father, let it henceforth be to you a blessed rest in the union with Him, an overflowing fountain of joy and strength. To abide in His love, His mighty, saving, keeping, satisfying love, even as He abode in the Father's love--surely the very greatness of our calling teaches us that it never can be a work we have to perform; it must be with us as with Him, the result of the spontaneous outflowing of a life from within, and the mighty inworking of the love from above. What we only need is this: to take time and study the divine image of this life of love set before us in Christ. We need to have our souls still unto God, gazing upon that life of Christ in the Father until the light from heaven falls on it, and we hear the living voice of our Beloved whispering gently to us personally the teaching He gave to the disciples. Soul, be still and listen; let every thought be hushed until the word has entered your heart too: "Child! I love thee, even as the Father loved me. Abide in my love, even as I abide in the Father's love. Thy life on earth in me is to be the perfect counterpart of mine in the Father." And if the thought will sometimes come: Surely this is too high for us; can it be really true? only remember that the greatness of the privilege is justified by the greatness of the object He has

in view. Christ was the revelation of the Father on earth. He could not be this if there were not the most perfect unity, the most complete communication of all the Father had to the Son. He could be it because the Father loved Him, and He abode in that love. Believers are the revelation of Christ on earth. They cannot be this unless there be perfect unity, so that the world can know that He loves them and has sent them. But they can be it if Christ loves them with the infinite love that gives itself and all it has, and if they abide in that love.

Lord, show us Thy love. Make us with all the saints to know the love that passeth knowledge. Lord, show us in Thine own blessed life what it is to abide in Thy love. And the sight shall so win us, that it will be impossible for us one single hour to seek any other life than the life of abiding in Thy love.

01.24. Obeying His Commandments

Chapter 24--OBEYING HIS COMMANDMENTS

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."-- John 15:10.

How clearly we are taught here the place which good works are to occupy in the life of the believer! Christ as the beloved Son was in the Father's love. He kept His commandments, and so He abode in the love. So the believer, without works, receives Christ and is in Him; he keeps the commandments, and so abides in the love. When the sinner, in coming to Christ, seeks to prepare himself by works, the voice of the Gospel sounds, "Not of works." When once in Christ, lest the flesh should abuse the word, "Not of works," the Gospel lifts its voice as loud: "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (see Ephesians 2:9-10). To the sinner out of Christ, works may be his greatest hindrance, keeping him from the union with the Saviour. To the believer in Christ, works are strength and blessing, for by them faith is made perfect (James 2:22), the union with Christ is cemented, and the soul established and more deeply rooted in the love of God. "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him." "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." The connection between this keeping the commandments and the abiding in Christ's love is easily understood. Our union with Jesus Christ is not a thing of the intellect or sentiment, but a real vital union in heart and life. The holy life of Jesus, with His feelings and disposition, is breathed into us by the Holy Spirit. The believer's calling is to think and feel and will just what Jesus thought and felt and willed. He desires to be partaker not only of the grace but also of the holiness of His Lord; or rather, he sees that holiness is the chief beauty of grace. To live the life of Christ means to him to be delivered from the life of self; the will of Christ is to him the only path of liberty from the slavery of his own evil self-will. To the ignorant or slothful believer there is a great difference between the promises and commands of Scripture. The former he counts his comfort and his food; but to him who is really seeking to abide in Christ's love, the commands become no less precious, As much as the promises they are the revelation of the divine love, guides into the deeper experience of the divine life, blessed helpers in the path to a closer union with the Lord. He sees how the harmony of our will with His will is one of the chief elements of our fellowship with Him. The will is the central faculty in the Divine as in the human being. The will of God is the power that rules the whole moral as well as the natural world. How could there be fellowship with Him without delight in His will? It is only as long as salvation is to the sinner nothing but a personal safety, that he can be careless or afraid of the doing of God's will. No sooner is it to him what Scripture and the Holy Spirit reveal it to be--the restoration to communion with God and conformity to Him--than he feels that there is no law more natural or more beautiful than this: Keeping Christ's commandments the way to abide in Christ's love. His inmost soul approves when he hears the beloved Lord make the larger measure of the Spirit, with the manifestation of the Father and the Son in the believer, entirely dependent upon the keeping of His commandments (John 14:15-16; John 14:21; John 14:23).

There is another thing that opens to him a deeper insight and Secures a still more cordial acceptance of this truth. It is this, that in no other way did Christ Himself abide in the Father's love. In the life which Christ led upon earth, obedience was a solemn reality. The dark and awful power that led man to revolt from his God, came upon Him too, to tempt Him. To Him as man its offers of self-gratification were not matters of indifference; to refuse them, He had to fast and pray. He suffered, being tempted. He spoke very distinctly of not seeking to do His own will, as a surrender He had continually to make. He made the keeping of the Father's commandments the distinct object of His life, and so abode in His love. Does He not tell us, "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me; He hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." He thus opened to us the only path to the blessedness of a life on earth in the love of heaven; and when, as from our vine, His Spirit flows in the branches, this keeping the commands is one of the surest and highest elements of the life He inspires.

Believer! would you abide in Jesus, be very careful to keep His commandments. Keep them in the love of your heart. Be not content to have them in the Bible for reference, but have them transferred by careful study, by meditation and by prayer, by a loving acceptance, by the Spirit's teaching, to the fleshy tables of the heart. Be not content with the knowledge of some of the commands, those most commonly received among Christians, while others lie unknown and neglected. Surely, with your New Covenant privileges, you would not be behind the Old Testament saints who spoke so fervently: "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right." Be assured that there is still much of your Lord's will that you do not yet understand. Make Paul's prayer for the Colossians yours for yourself and all believers, "that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"; and that of wrestling Epaphras, "that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Remember that this is one of the great elements of spiritual growth--a deeper insight into the will of God concerning you. Imagine not that entire consecration is the end--it is only the beginning--of the truly holy life. See how Paul, after having (Romans 12:1) taught believers to lay themselves upon the altar, whole and holy burnt-offerings to their God, at once proceeds (ver. 2) to tell them what the true--altar-life is: being ever more and more "renewed in their mind to prove what is the good and perfect and acceptable will of God." The progressive renewal of the Holy Spirit leads to growing like-mindedness to Christ; then comes a delicate power of spiritual perception--a holy instinct--by which the soul "quick of understanding (marg. quick of scent) in the fear of the Lord," knows to recognise the meaning and the application of the Lord's commands to daily life in a way that remains hidden to the ordinary Christian. Keep them dwelling richly within you, hide them within your heart, and you shall taste the blessedness of the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night." Love will assimilate into your inmost being the commands as food from heaven. They will no longer come to you as a law standing outside and against you, but as the living power which has transformed your will into perfect harmony with all your Lord requires. And keep them in the obedience of your life. It has been your solemn vow--has it not?--no longer to tolerate even a single sin: "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments." Labour earnestly in prayer to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Ask earnestly for the discovery of every secret sin--of anything that is not in perfect harmony with the will of God. Walk up to the light you have faithfully and tenderly, yielding yourself in an unreserved surrender to obey all that the Lord has spoken. When Israel took that vow (Exodus 19:8; Exodus

24:7), it was only to break it all too soon. The New Covenant gives the grace to make the vow and to keep it too (Jeremiah 31:1-40). Be careful of disobedience even in little things. Disobedience dulls the conscience, darkens the soul, deadens our spiritual energies--therefore keep the commandments of Christ with implicit obedience. Be a soldier that asks for nothing but the orders of the commander. And if even for a moment the commandments appear grievous, just remember whose they are. They are the commandments of Him who loves you. They are all love, they come from His love, they lead to His love. Each new surrender to keep the commandments, each new sacrifice in keeping them, leads to deeper union with the will, the spirit, and the love of the Saviour. The double recompense of reward shall be yours--a fuller entrance into the mystery of His love--a fuller conformity to His own blessed life. And you shall learn to prize these words as among your choicest treasures: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, EVEN AS I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love."

01.25. That your joy may be full

Chapter 25--THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might abide in you, and that your joy might be full." -- John 15:11

ABIDING fully in Christ is a life of exquisite and overflowing happiness. As Christ gets more complete possession of the soul, it enters into the joy of its Lord. His own joy, the joy of heaven, becomes its own, and that in full measure, and as an ever-abiding portion. Just as joy on earth is everywhere connected with the vine and its fruit, so joy is an essential characteristic of the life of the believer who fully abides in Christ, the heavenly Vine.

We all know the value of joy. It alone is the proof that what we have really satisfies the heart. As long as duty, or self-interest, or other motives influence me, men cannot know what the object of my pursuit or possession is really worth to me. But when it gives me joy, and they see me delight in it, they know that to me at least it is a treasure. Hence there is nothing so attractive as joy, no preaching so persuasive as the sight of hearts made glad. Just this makes gladness such a mighty element in the Christian character: there is no proof of the reality of God's love and the blessing He bestows, which men so soon feel the force of, as when the joy of God overcomes all the trials of life. And for the Christian's own welfare, joy is no less indispensable: the joy of the Lord is his strength; confidence, and courage, and patience find their inspiration in joy. With a heart full of joy no work can weary, and no burden can depress; God Himself is strength and song.

Let us hear what the Saviour says of the joy of abiding in Him. He promises us His own joy: "My joy." As the whole parable refers to the life His disciples should have in Him when ascended to heaven, the joy is that of His resurrection life. This is clear from those other words of His (John 16:22): "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you." It was only with the resurrection and its glory that the power of the never-changing life began, and only in it that the never-ceasing joy could have its rise. With it was fulfilled the word: "Therefore thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The day of His crowning was the day of the gladness of His heart. That joy of His was the joy of a work fully and for ever completed, the joy of the Father's bosom regained, and the joy of souls redeemed. These are the elements of His joy; of them the abiding in Him makes us partakers. The believer shares so fully His victory and His perfect redemption, that his faith can without ceasing sing the conqueror's song: "Thanks be to God, who always causeth me to triumph." As the fruit of this, there is the joy of the undisturbed dwelling in the light of the Father's love--not a cloud to intervene if the abiding be unbroken. And then, with this joy in the love of the Father, as a love received, the joy of the love of souls, as love going out and rejoicing over the lost. Abiding in Christ, penetrating into the very depths of His life and heart, seeking for the most perfect oneness, these the three streams of His joy flow into our hearts. Whether we look backward and see the work He has done, or upward and see the reward He has in the Father's love that passeth knowledge, or forward in the continual accessions of joy as sinners are brought home, His joy is ours. With our feet on Calvary, our eyes

on the Father's countenance, and our hands helping sinners home, we have His joy as our own. And then He speaks of this joy as abiding--a joy that is never to cease or to be interrupted for a moment: "That my joy might abide in you." "Your joy no man taketh from you." This is what many Christians cannot understand. Their view of the Christian life is that it is a succession of changes, now joy and now sorrow. And they appeal to the experiences of a man like the Apostle Paul, as a proof of how much there may be of weeping, and sorrow, and suffering. They have not noticed how just Paul gives the strongest evidence as to this unceasing joy. He understood the paradox of the Christian life as the combination at one and the same moment of all the bitterness of earth and all the joy of heaven. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing": these precious golden words teach us how the joy of Christ can overrule the sorrow of the world, can make us sing while we weep, and can maintain in the heart, even when cast down by disappointment or difficulties, a deep consciousness of a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. There is but one condition: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you." The presence of Jesus, distinctly manifested, cannot but give joy. Abiding in Him consciously, how can the soul but rejoice and be glad? Even when weeping for the sins and the souls of others, there is the fountain of gladness springing up in the faith of His power and love to save. And this His own joy abiding with us, He wants to be full. Of the full joy our Saviour spoke thrice on the last night. Once here in the parable of the Vine: "These things have I spoken unto you that your joy might be full"; and every deeper insight into the wonderful blessedness of being the branch of such a Vine confirms His Word. Then He connects it (John 16:24) with our prayers being answered: "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." To the spiritual mind, answered prayer is not only a means of obtaining certain blessings, but something infinitely higher. It is a token of our fellowship with the Father and the Son in heaven, of their delight in us, and our having been admitted and having had a voice in that wondrous interchange of love in which the Father and the Son hold counsel, and decide the daily guidance of the children on earth. To a soul abiding in Christ, that longs for manifestations of His love, and that understands to take an answer to prayer in its true spiritual value, as a response from the throne to all its utterances of love and trust, the joy which it brings is truly unutterable. The word is found true: "Ask and ye shall receive, and your joy shall be full." And then the Saviour says, in His highpriestly prayer to the Father (John 17:13), "These things I speak, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." It is the sight of the great High Priest entering the Father's presence for us, ever living to pray and carry on His blessed work in the power of an endless life, that removes every possible cause of fear or doubt, and gives us the assurance and experience of a perfect salvation. Let the believer who seeks, according to the teaching of John 15:1-27, to possess the full joy of abiding in Christ, and according to John 16:1-33, the full joy of prevailing prayer, press forward to John 17:1-26. Let him there listen to those wondrous words of intercession spoken, that his joy might be full. Let him, as he listens to those words, learn the love that even now pleads for him in heaven without ceasing, the glorious objects for which it is pleading, and which through its all-prevailing pleading are hourly being realized, and Christ's joy will be fulfilled in him.

Christ's own joy, abiding joy, fulness of joy--such is the portion of the believer who abides in Christ. Why, O why is it that this joy has so little power to attract? The reason simply is: Men, yea, even God's children, do not believe in it. Instead of the abiding in Christ being looked upon as the happiest life that ever can be led, it is regarded as a life of self-denial and of sadness. They forget that the self-denial and the sadness are owing to the not abiding, and that to those who once yield

themselves unreservedly to abide in Christ as a bright and blessed life, their faith comes true--the joy of the Lord is theirs. The difficulties all arise from the want of the full surrender to a full abiding.

Child of God, who seekest to abide in Christ, remember what the Lord says. At the close of the parable of the Vine He adds these precious words: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might abide in you, and that your joy might be full." Claim the joy as part of the branch life--not the first or chief part, but as the blessed proof of the sufficiency of Christ to satisfy every need of the soul. Be happy. Cultivate gladness. If there are times when it comes of itself, and the heart feels the unutterable joy of the Saviour's presence, praise God for it, and seek to maintain it. If at other times feelings are dull, and the experience of the joy not such as you could wish it, still praise God for the life of unutterable blessedness to which you have been redeemed. In this, too, the word holds good: "According to your faith be it unto you." As you claim all the other gifts in Jesus, ever claim this one too--not for your own sake, but for His and the Father's glory. "My joy in you"; "that my joy may abide in you"; "my joy fulfilled in themselves"--these are Jesus' own words. It is impossible to take Him wholly and heartily, and not to get His joy too. Therefore, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice."

01.26. And in Love to the Brethren

Chapter 26--AND IN LOVE TO THE BRETHREN "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."-- John 15:12.

"Like as the Father loved me, EVEN so I have loved you; LIKE AS I have loved you, EVEN SO love ye one another." God became man; divine love began to run in the channel of a human heart; it becomes the love of man to man. The love that fills heaven and eternity is ever to be daily seen here in the life of earth and of time.

"This is my commandment," the Saviour says, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you." He sometimes spoke of commandments, but the love, which is the fulfilling of the law, is the all-including one, and therefore is called His commandment--the new commandment. It is to be the great evidence of the reality of the New Covenant, of the power of the new life revealed in Jesus Christ. It is to be the one convincing and indisputable token of discipleship: "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples"; "That they may be one in us, that the world may believe"; "That they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me." To the believer seeking perfect fellowship with Christ, the keeping of this commandment is at once the blessed proof that he is abiding in Him, and the path to a fuller and more perfect union.

Let us try to understand how this is so. We know that God is love, and that Christ came to reveal this, not as a doctrine but as a life. His life, in its wonderful self-abasement and self-sacrifice, was, above everything, the embodiment of divine love, the showing forth to men, in such human manifestations as they could understand, how God loves. In His love to the unworthy and the ungrateful, in His humbling Himself to walk among men as a servant, in His giving Himself up to death, He simply lived and acted out the life of the divine love which was in the heart of God. He lived and died to show us the love of the Father. And now, just as Christ was to show forth God's love, believers are to show forth to the world the love of Christ. They are to prove to men that Christ loves them, and in loving fills them with a love that is not of earth. They, by living and by loving just as He did, are to be perpetual witnesses to the love that gave itself to die. He loved so that even the Jews cried out, as at Bethany, "Behold how He loved!" Christians are to live so that men are compelled to say, "See how these Christians love one another." In their daily intercourse with each other, Christians are made a spectacle to God, and to angels, and to men; and in the Christlikeness of their love to each other, are to prove what manner of spirit they are of. Amid all diversity of character or of creed, of language or of station, they are to prove that love has made them members of one body, and of each other, and has taught them each to forget and sacrifice self for the sake of the other. Their life of love is the chief evidence of Christianity, the proof to the world that God sent Christ, and that He has shed abroad in them the same love with which He loved Him. Of all the evidences of Christianity, this is the mightiest and most convincing. This love of Christ's disciples to each other occupies a central position between their love to God and to all men. Of their love to God, whom they cannot see, it is the test. The love to one unseen may so

easily be a mere sentiment, or even an imagination; in the intercourse with God's children, love to God is really called into exercise, and shows itself in deeds that the Father accepts as done to Himself. So alone can it be proved to be true. The love to the brethren is the flower and fruit of the root, unseen in the heart, of love to God. And this fruit again becomes the seed of love to all men: intercourse with each other is the school in which believers are trained and strengthened to love their fellow-men, who are yet out of Christ, not simply with the liking that rests on points of agreement, but with the holy love that takes hold of the unworthiest, and bears with the most disagreeable for Jesus' sake. It is love to each other as disciples that is ever put in the foreground as the link between love to God alone and to men in general. In Christ's intercourse with His disciples this brotherly love finds the law of its conduct. As it studies His forgiveness and forbearance towards His friends, with the seven times seven as its only measure--as it looks to His unwearied patience and His infinite humility--as it sees the meekness and lowliness with which He seeks to win for Himself a place as their servant, wholly devoted to their interests--it accepts with gladness His command, "Ye should do as I have done" (John 13:15). Following His example, each lives not for Himself but for the other. The law of kindness is on the tongue, for love has vowed that never shall one unkind word cross its lips. It refuses not only to speak, but even to hear or to think evil; of the name and character of the fellow-Christian it is more jealous than of its own. My own good name I may leave to the Father; my brother's my Father has entrusted to me. In gentleness and loving kindness, in courtesy and generosity, in self-sacrifice and beneficence, in its life of blessing and of beauty, the divine love, which has been shed abroad in the believer's heart, shines out as it shone in the life of Jesus.

Christian! what say you of this your glorious calling to love like Christ? Does not your heart bound at the thought of the unspeakable privilege of thus showing forth the likeness of the Eternal Love? Or are you rather ready to sigh at the thought of the inaccessible height of perfection to which you are thus called to climb? Brother, sigh not at what is in very deed the highest token of the Father's love, that He has called us to be like Christ in our love, just as He was like the Father in His love. Understand that He who gave the command in such close connection with His teaching about the Vine and the abiding in Him, gave us in that the assurance that we have only to abide in Him to be able to love like Him. Accept the command as a new motive to a more full abiding in Christ. Regard the abiding in Him more than ever as an abiding in His love; rooted and grounded daily in a love that passeth knowledge, you receive of its fulness, and learn to love. With Christ abiding in you, the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in your heart, and you love the brethren, the most trying and unloveable, with a love that is not your own, but the love of Christ in you. And the command about your love to the brethren is changed from a burden into a joy, if you but keep it linked, as Jesus linked it, to the command about His love to you: "Abide in my love; love one another, as I have loved you."

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." Is not this now some of the much fruit that Jesus has promised we shall bear--in very deed a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol, with which we can prove to others that the land of promise is indeed a good land? Let us try in all simplicity and honesty to go out to our home to translate the language of high faith and heavenly enthusiasm into the plain prose of daily conduct, so that all men can understand it. Let our temper be under the rule of the love of Jesus: He can not alone curb it--He can make us gentle and patient. Let the vow, that not an unkind word about others shall ever be heard from our lips, be

laid trustingly at His feet. Let the gentleness that refuses to take offence, that is always ready to excuse, to think and hope the best, mark our intercourse with all. Let the love that seeks not its own, but ever is ready to wash others' feet, or even to give its life for them, be our aim as we abide in Jesus. Let our life be one of self-sacrifice, always studying the welfare of others, finding our highest joy in blessing others. And let us, in studying the divine art of doing good, yield ourselves as obedient learners to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By His grace, the most commonplace life can be transfigured with the brightness of a heavenly beauty, as the infinite love of the divine nature shines out through our frail humanity. Fellow-Christian, let us praise God! We are called to love as Jesus loves, as God loves.

"Abide in my love, and love as I have loved." Bless God, it is possible. The new holy nature we have, and which grows ever stronger as it abides in Christ the Vine, can love as He did. Every discovery of the evil of the old nature, every longing desire to obey the command of our Lord, every experience of the power and the blessedness of loving with Jesus' love, will urge us to accept with fresh faith the blessed injunctions: "Abide in me, and I in you"; "Abide in my love."

01.27. That you may not sin

Chapter 27--THAT YOU MAY NOT SIN "In him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not."-- 1 John 3:5-6.

"YE KNOW," the apostle had said, "that He was manifested to take away our sin," and had thus indicated salvation from sin as the great object for which the Son was made man. The connection shows clearly that the taking away has reference not only to the atonement and freedom from guilt, but to deliverance from the power of sin, so that the believer no longer does it. It is Christ's personal holiness that constitutes His power to effect this purpose. He admits sinners into life union with Himself; the result is, that their life becomes like His. "In Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." As long as he abides, and as far as he abides, the believer does not sin. Our holiness of life has its roots in the personal holiness of Jesus. "If the root be holy, so also are the branches." The question at once arises: How is this consistent with what the Bible teaches of the abiding corruption of our human nature, or with what John himself tells of the utter falsehood of our profession, if we say that we have no sin, that we have not sinned? (see 1 John 1:8; 1 John 1:10). It is just this passage which, if we look carefully at it, will teach us to understand our text aright. Note the difference in the two statements (1 John 1:8), "If we say that we have no sin," and (1 John 1:10), "If we say that we have not sinned." The two expressions cannot be equivalent; the second would then be an unmeaning repetition of the first. Having sin in 1 John 1:8 is not the same as doing sin in 1 John 1:10. Having sin is having a sinful nature. The holiest believer must each moment confess that he has sin within him--the flesh, namely, in which dwelleth no good thing. Sinning or doing sin is something very different: it is yielding to indwelling sinful nature, and falling into actual transgression. And so we have two admissions that every true believer must make. The one is that he has still sin within him (1 John 1:8); the second, that that sin has in former times broken out into sinful actions (1 John 1:10). No believer can say either, "I have no sin in me," or "I have in time past never sinned." If we say we have no sin at present, or that we have not sinned in the past, we deceive ourselves. But no confession, though we have sin in the present, is demanded that we are doing sin in the present too; the confession of actual sinning refers to the past. It may, as appears from 1 John 2:2, be in the present also, but is expected not to be. And so we see how the deepest confession of sin in the past (as Paul's of his having been a persecutor), and the deepest consciousness of having still a vile and corrupt nature in the present, may consist with humble but joyful praise to Him who keeps from stumbling. But how is it possible that a believer, having sin in him--sin of such intense vitality, and such terrible power as we know the flesh to have--that a believer having sin should yet not be doing sin? The answer is: "In Him is no sin. He that abideth in Him sinneth not." When the abiding in Christ becomes close and unbroken, so that the soul lives from moment to moment in the perfect union with the Lord its keeper, He does, indeed, keep down the power of the old nature, so that it does not regain dominion over the soul. We have seen that there are degrees in the abiding. With most Christians the abiding is so feeble and intermittent, that sin continually obtains the ascendancy, and brings the soul into subjection. The divine promise given to faith is: "Sin shall not have dominion over you." But with

the promise is the command: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body." The believer who claims the promise in full faith has the power to obey the command, and sin is kept from asserting its supremacy. Ignorance of the promise, or unbelief, or unwatchfulness, opens the door for sin to reign. And so the life of many believers is a course of continual stumbling and sinning. But when the believer seeks full admission into, and a permanent abode in Jesus, the Sinless One, then the life of Christ keeps from actual transgression. "In Him is no sin. He that abideth in Him sinneth not." Jesus does indeed save him from his sin--not by the removal of his sinful nature, but by keeping him from yielding to it.

I have read of a young lion whom nothing could awe or keep down but the eye of his keeper. With the keeper you could come near him, and he would crouch, his savage nature all unchanged, and thirsting for blood --trembling at the keeper's feet. You might put your foot on his neck, as long as the keeper was with you. To approach him without the keeper would be instant death. And so it is that the believer can have sin and yet not do sin. The evil nature, the flesh, is unchanged in its enmity against God, but the abiding presence of Jesus keeps it down. In faith the believer entrusts himself to the keeping, to the indwelling, of the Son of God; he abides in Him, and counts on Jesus to abide in Him too. The union and fellowship is the secret of a holy life: "In Him is no sin; he that abideth in Him sinneth not." And now another question will arise: Admitted that the complete abiding in the Sinless One will keep from sinning, is such abiding possible? May we hope to be able so to abide in Christ, say, even for one day, that we may be kept from actual transgressions? The question has only to be fairly stated and considered-- it will suggest its own answer. When Christ commanded us to abide in Him, and promised us such rich fruit-bearing to the glory of the Father, and such mighty power in our intercessions, can He have meant anything but the healthy, vigorous, complete union of the branch with the vine? When He promised that as we abide in Him He would abide in us, could He mean anything but that His dwelling in us would be a reality of divine power and love? Is not this way of saving from sin just that which will glorify Him?--keeping us daily humble and helpless in the consciousness of the evil nature, watchful and active in the knowledge of its terrible power, dependent and trustful in the remembrance that only His presence can keep the lion down. O let us believe that when Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you," He did indeed mean that, while we were not to be freed from the world and its tribulation, from the sinful nature and its temptations, we were at least to have this blessing fully secured to us--grace to abide wholly, only, even in our Lord. The abiding in Jesus makes it possible to keep from actual sinning; and Jesus Himself makes it possible to abide in Him.

Beloved Christian! I do not wonder if the promise of the text appears almost too high. Do not, I pray, let your attention be diverted by the question as to whether it would be possible to be kept for your whole life, or for so many years, without sinning. Faith has ever only to deal with the present moment. Ask this: Can Jesus at the present moment, as I abide in Him, keep me from those actual transgressions which have been the stain and the weariness of my daily life? You cannot but say: Surely He can. Take Him then at this present moment, and say, "Jesus keeps me now, Jesus saves me now." Yield yourself to Him in the earnest and believing prayer to be kept abiding, by His own abiding in you--and go into the next moment, and the succeeding hours, with this trust continually renewed. As often as the opportunity occurs in the moments between your occupations, renew your faith in an act of devotion: Jesus keeps me now, Jesus saves me now. Let failure and sin, instead of discouraging you, only urge you still more to seek your safety in

abiding in the Sinless One. Abiding is a grace in which you can grow wonderfully, if you will but make at once the complete surrender, and then persevere with ever larger expectations. Regard it as His work to keep you abiding in Him, and His work to keep you from sinning. It is indeed your work to abide in Him; but it is that, only because it is His work as Vine to bear and hold the branch. Gaze upon His holy human nature as what He prepared for you to be partaker of with Himself, and you will see that there is something even higher and better than being kept from sin--that is but the restraining from evil: there is the positive and larger blessing of being now a vessel purified and cleansed, of being filled with His fulness, and made the channel of showing forth His power, His blessing, and His glory.

NOTE IS DAILY SINNING AN INEVITABLE NECESSITY?

"Why is it that, when we possess a Saviour whose love and lower are infinite, we are so often filled with fear and despondency? We are wearied and faint in our minds, because we do not look stedfastly unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who is set down at the right hand of God--unto Him whose omnipotence embraces both heaven and earth, who is strong and mighty in His feeble saints.

"While we remember our weakness, we forget His all-sufficient power. While we acknowledge that apart from Christ we can do nothing, we do not rise to the height or depth of Christian humility: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. While we trust in the power of the death of Jesus to cancel the guilt of sin, we do not exercise a reliant and appropriating faith in the omnipotence of the living Saviour to deliver us from the bondage and power of sin in our daily life. We forget that Christ worketh in us mightily, and that, one with Him, we possess strength sufficient to overcome every temptation. We are apt either to forget our nothingness, and imagine that in our daily path we can live without sin, that the duties and trials of our everyday life can be performed and borne in our own strength; or we do not avail ourselves of the omnipotence of Jesus, who is able to subdue all things to Himself, and to keep us from the daily infirmities and falls which we are apt to imagine an inevitable necessity. If we really depended in all things and at all times on Christ, we would in all things and at all times gain the victory through Him whose power is infinite, and who is appointed by the Father to be the Captain of our salvation. Then all our deeds would be wrought, not merely before, but in God. We would then do all things to the glory of the Father, in the all-powerful name of Jesus, who is our sanctification. Remember that unto Him all power is given in heaven and on earth, and live by the constant exercise of faith in His power. Let us most fully believe that we have and are nothing, that with man it is impossible, that in ourselves we have no life which can bring forth fruit; but that Christ is all--that abiding in Him, and His word dwelling in us, we can bring forth fruit to the glory of the Father"--From Christ and the Church. Sermons by Adolph Saphir. The italics are not in the original.

01.28. As your Strength

Chapter 28--AS YOUR STRENGTH "All power is given UNTO ME in heaven and in earth."-- Matthew 28:18. [1] "Be strong IN THE LORD, and in the power of his might."-- Ephesians 6:10.

"My power is made perfect in weakness."-- 2 Corinthians 12:9 (R.V.).

THERE is no truth more generally admitted among earnest Christians than that of their utter weakness. There is no truth more generally misunderstood and abused. Here, as elsewhere, God's thoughts are heaven-high above man's thoughts. The Christian often tries to forget his weakness: God wants us to remember it, to feel it deeply. The Christian wants to conquer his weakness and to be freed from it: God wants us to rest and even rejoice in it. The Christian mourns over his weakness: Christ teaches His servant to say, "I take pleasure in infirmities; most gladly will I glory in my infirmities." The Christian thinks his weakness his greatest hindrance in the life and service of God: God tells us that it is the secret of strength and success. It is our weakness, heartily accepted and continually realized, that gives us our claim and access to the strength of Him who has said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." When our Lord was about to take His seat upon the throne, one of His last words was: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." Just as His taking His place at the right hand of the power of God was something new and true--a real advance in the history of the God-man--so was this clothing with all power. Omnipotence was now entrusted to the man Christ Jesus, that from henceforth through the channels of human nature it might put forth its mighty energies. Hence He connected with this revelation of what He was to receive, the promise of the share that His disciples would have in it: When I am ascended, ye shall receive power from on high (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). It is in the power of the omnipotent Saviour that the believer must find his strength for life and for work.

It was thus with the disciples. During ten days they worshipped and waited at the footstool of His throne. They gave expression to their faith in Him as their Saviour, to their adoration of Him as their Lord, to their love to Him as their Friend, to their devotion and readiness to work for Him as their Master. Jesus Christ was the one object of thought, of love, of delight. In such worship of faith and devotion their souls grew up into intensest communion with Him upon the throne, and when they were prepared, the baptism of power came. It was power within and power around. The power came to qualify for the work to which they had yielded themselves--of testifying by life and word to their unseen Lord. With some the chief testimony was to be that of a holy life, revealing the heaven and the Christ from whom it came. The power came to set up the Kingdom within them, to give them the victory over sin and self, to fit them by living experience to testify to the power of Jesus on the throne, to make men live in the world as saints. Others were to give themselves up entirely to the speaking in the name of Jesus. But all needed and all received the gift of power, to prove that now Jesus had received the Kingdom of the Father, all power in heaven and earth was indeed given to Him, and by Him imparted to His people just as they needed it, whether for a holy life or effective service. They received the gift of power, to prove to the world that the Kingdom of God, to which they professed to belong, was not in word but in power. By having power within,

they had power without and around. The power of God was felt even by those who would not yield themselves to it (Acts 2:43; Acts 4:13; Acts 5:13). And what Jesus was to these first disciples, He is to us too. Our whole life and calling as disciples find their origin and their guarantee in the words: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." What He does in and through us, He does with almighty power. What He claims or demands, He works Himself by that same power. All He gives, He gives with power. Every blessing He bestows, every promise He fulfils, every grace He works--all, all is to be with power. Everything that comes from this Jesus on the throne of power is to bear the stamp of power. The weakest believer may be confident that in asking to be kept from sin, to grow in holiness, to bring forth much fruit, he may count upon these his petitions being fulfilled with divine power. The power is in Jesus; Jesus is ours with all His fulness; it is in us His members that the power is to work and be made manifest. And if we want to know how the power is bestowed, the answer is simple: Christ gives His power in us by giving His life in us. He does not, as so many believers imagine, take the feeble life He finds in them, and impart a little strength to aid them in their feeble efforts. No; it is in giving His own life in us that He gives us His power. The Holy Spirit came down to the disciples direct from the heart of their exalted Lord, bringing down into them the glorious life of heaven into which He had entered. And so His people are still taught to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. When He strengthens them, it is not by taking away the sense of feebleness, and giving in its place the feeling of strength. By no means. But in a very wonderful way leaving and even increasing the sense of utter impotence, He gives them along with it the consciousness of strength in Him. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." The feebleness and the strength are side by side; as the one grows, the other too, until they understand the saying, "When I am weak, then am I strong; I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me." The believing disciple learns to look upon Christ on the throne, Christ the Omnipotent, as his life. He studies that life in its infinite perfection and purity, in its strength and glory; it is the eternal life dwelling in a glorified man. And when he thinks of his own inner life, and longs for holiness, to live wellpleasing unto God, or for power to do the Father's work, he looks up, and, rejoicing that Christ is his life, he confidently reckons that that life will work mightily in him all he needs. In things little and things great, in the being kept from sin from moment to moment for which he has learned to look, or in the struggle with some special difficulty or temptation, the power of Christ is the measure of his expectation. He lives a most joyous and blessed life, not because he is no longer feeble, but because, being utterly helpless, he consents and expects to have the mighty Saviour work in him. The lessons these thoughts teach us for practical life are simple, but very precious. The first is, that all our strength is in Christ, laid up and waiting for use. It is there as an almighty life, which is in Him for us, ready to flow in according to the measure in which it finds the channels open. But whether its flow is strong or feeble, whatever our experience of it be, there it is in Christ: All power in heaven and earth. Let us take time to study this. Let us get our minds filled with the thought: That Jesus might be to us a perfect Saviour, the Father gave Him all power. That is the qualification that fits Him for our needs: All the power of heaven over all the powers of earth, over every power of earth in our heart and life too. The second lesson is: This power flows into us as we abide in close union with Him. When the union is feeble, little valued or cultivated, the inflow of strength will be feeble. When the union with Christ is rejoiced in as our highest good, and everything sacrificed for the sake of maintaining it, the power will work: "His strength will be made perfect in our weakness." Our one care must therefore be to abide in Christ

as our strength. Our one duty is to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Let our faith cultivate large and clear apprehensions of the exceeding greatness of God's power in them that believe, even that power of the risen and exalted Christ by which He triumphed over every enemy (Ephesians 1:19-21). Let our faith consent to God's wonderful and most blessed arrangement: nothing but feebleness in us as our own, all the power in Christ, and yet within our reach as surely as if it were in us. Let our faith daily go out of self and its life into the life of Christ, placing our whole being at His disposal for Him to work in us. Let our faith, above all, confidently rejoice in the assurance that He will in very deed, with His almighty power, perfect His work in us. As we thus abide in Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of His power, will work mightily in us, and we too shall sing, "JEHOVAH is my strength and song: IN JEHOVAH I have righteousness and strength." "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

[1] The word power in this verse is properly authority (R.V.), but the two ideas are so closely linked, and the authority as a living divine reality is so inseparable from the power, that I have felt at liberty to retain the word power.

01.29. And not in Self

Chapter 29--AND NOT IN SELF "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." -- Romans 7:18. TO HAVE life in Himself is the prerogative of God alone, and of the Son, to whom the Father hath also given it. To seek life, not in itself, but in God, is the highest honour of the creature. To live in and to himself is the folly and guilt of sinful man; to live to God in Christ, the blessedness of the believer. To deny, to hate, to forsake, to lose his own life, such is the secret of the life of faith. "I live, yet NOT I, but Christ liveth in me"; "NOT I, but the grace of God which is with me": this is the testimony of each one who has found out what it is to give up his own life, and to receive instead the blessed life of Christ within us. There is no path to true life, to abiding in Christ, than that which our Lord went before us--through death. At the first commencement of the Christian life, but few see this. In the joy of pardon, they feel constrained to live for Christ, and trust with the help of God to be enabled to do so. They are as yet ignorant of the terrible enmity of the flesh against God, and its absolute refusal in the believer to be subject to the law of God. They know not yet that nothing but death, the absolute surrender to death of all that is of nature, will suffice, if the life of God is to be manifested in them with power. But bitter experience of failure soon teaches them the insufficiency of what they have yet known of Christ's power to save, and deep heart-longings are awakened to know Him better. He lovingly points them to His cross. He tells them that as there, in the faith of His death as their substitute, they found their title to life, so there they shall enter into its fuller experience too. He asks them if they are indeed willing to drink of the cup of which He drank--to be crucified and to die with Him. He teaches them that in Him they are indeed already crucified and dead--all unknowing, at conversion they became partakers of His death. But what they need now is to give a full and intelligent consent to what they received ere they understood it, by an act of their own choice to will to die with Christ. This demand of Christ's is one of unspeakable solemnity. Many a believer shrinks back from it. He can hardly understand it. He has become so accustomed to a low life of continual stumbling, that he hardly desires, and still less expects, deliverance. Holiness, perfect conformity to Jesus, unbroken fellowship with His love, can scarcely be counted distinct articles of his creed. Where there is not intense longing to be kept to the utmost from sinning, and to be brought into the closest possible union with the Saviour, the thought of being crucified with Him can find no entrance. The only impression it makes is that of suffering and shame: such a one is content that Jesus bore the cross, and so won for him the crown he hopes to wear. How different the light in which the believer who is really seeking to abide fully in Christ looks upon it. Bitter experience has taught him how, both in the matter of entire surrender and simple trust, his greatest enemy in the abiding life, is SELF. Now it refuses to give up its will; then again, by its working, it hinders God's work. Unless this life of self, with its willing and working, be displaced by the life of Christ, with His willing and working, to abide in Him will be impossible. And then comes the solemn question from Him who died on the cross: "Are you ready to give up self to the death?" You yourself, the living person born of God, are already in me dead to sin and alive to God; but are you ready now, in the power of this death, to mortify your members, to give up self entirely to its death of the cross, to be kept there until it be wholly destroyed? The question is a heart-searching one. Am I prepared to say that the old self shall no

longer have a word to say; that it shall not be allowed to have a single thought, however natural--not a single feeling, however gratifying--not a single wish or work, however right? Is this in very deed what He requires? Is not our nature God's handiwork, and may not our natural powers be sanctified to His service? They may and must indeed. But perhaps you have not yet seen how the only way they can be sanctified is that they be taken from under the power of self, and brought under the power of the life of Christ. Think not that this is a work that you can do, because you earnestly desire it, and are indeed one of His redeemed ones. No, there is no way to the altar of consecration but through death. As you yielded yourself a sacrifice on God's altar as one alive from the dead (Romans 6:13; Romans 7:1), so each power of your nature--each talent, gift, possession, that is really to be holiness to the Lord--must be separated from the power of sin and self, and laid on the altar to be consumed by the fire that is ever burning there. It is in the mortifying, the slaying of self, that the wonderful powers with which God has fitted you to serve Him, can be set free for a complete surrender to God, and offered to Him to be accepted, and sanctified, and used. And though, as long as you are in the flesh, there is no thought of being able to say that self is dead, yet when the life of Christ is allowed to take full possession, self can be so kept in its crucifixion place, and under its sentence of death, that it shall have no dominion over you, not for a single moment. Jesus Christ becomes your second self.

Believer! would you truly and fully abide in Christ, prepare yourself to part for ever from self, and not to allow it, even for a single moment, to have aught to say in your inner life. If you are willing to come entirely away out of self, and to allow Jesus Christ to become your life within you, inspiring all your thinking, feeling, acting, in things temporal and spiritual, He is ready to undertake the charge. In the fullest and widest sense the word life ever can have, He will be your life, extending His interest and influence to each one, even the minutest, of the thousand things that make up your daily life. To do this He asks but one thing: Come away out of self and its life, abide in Christ and the Christ life, and Christ will be your life. The power of His holy presence will cast out the old life. To this end give up self at once and for ever. If you have never yet dared to do it, for fear you might fail of your engagement, do it now, in view of the promise Christ gives you that His life will take the place of the old life. Try and realize that though self is not dead, you are indeed dead to self. Self is still strong and living, but it has no power over you. You, your renewed nature--you, your new self, begotten again in Jesus Christ from the dead--are indeed dead to sin and alive to God. Your death in Christ has freed you completely from the control of self: it has no power over you, except as you, in ignorance, or unwatchfulness, or unbelief, consent to yield to its usurped authority. Come and accept by faith simply and heartily the glorious position you have in Christ. As one who, in Christ, has a life dead to self, as one who is freed from the dominion of self, and has received His divine life to take the place of self, to be the animating and inspiring principle of your life, venture boldly to plant the foot upon the neck of this enemy of yours and your Lord's. Be of good courage, only believe; fear not to take the irrevocable step, and to say that you have once for all given up self to the death for which it has been crucified in Christ (Romans 6:6). And trust Jesus the Crucified One to hold self to the cross, and to fill its place in you with His own blessed resurrection life. In this faith, abide in Christ! Cling to Him; rest on Him; hope on Him. Daily renew your consecration; daily accept afresh your position as ransomed from your tyrant, and now in turn made a conqueror. Daily look with holy fear on the enemy, self, struggling to get free from the cross, seeking to allure you into giving it some little liberty, or else ready to deceive you by its profession of willingness now to do service to Christ. Remember, self seeking to serve God is

more dangerous than self refusing obedience. Look upon it with holy fear, and hide yourself in Christ: in Him alone is your safety. Abide thus in Him; He has promised to abide in you. He will teach you to be humble and watchful. He will teach you to be happy and trustful. Bring every interest of your life, every power of your nature, all the unceasing flow of thought, and will, and feeling, that makes up life, and trust Him to take the place that self once filled so easily and so naturally. Jesus Christ will indeed take possession of you and dwell in you; and in the restfulness and peace and grace of the new life you shall have unceasing joy at the wondrous exchange that has been made--the coming out of self to abide in Christ alone.

NOTE In his work on Sanctification, Marshall, in the twelfth chapter, on "Holiness through faith alone," puts with great force the danger in which the Christian is of seeking sanctification in the power of the flesh, with the help of Christ, instead of looking for it to Christ alone, and receiving it from Him by faith. He reminds us how there are two natures in the believer, and so two ways of seeking holiness, according as we allow the principles of the one or other nature to guide us. The one is the carnal way, in which we put forth our utmost efforts and resolutions, trusting Christ to help us in doing so. The other the spiritual way, in which, as those who have died, and can do nothing, our one care is to receive Christ day by day, and at every step to let Him live and work in us.

"Despair of purging the flesh or natural man of its sinful lusts and inclinations, and of practising holiness by your willing and resolving to do the best that lieth in your own power, and trusting on the grace of God and Christ to help you in such resolutions and endeavours. Rather resolve to trust on Christ to work in you to will and to do by His own power according to His own good pleasure. They that are convinced of their own sin and misery do commonly first think to tame the flesh, and to subdue and root out its lusts, and to make their corrupt nature to be better-natured and inclined to holiness by their struggling and wrestling with it; and if they can but bring their hearts to a full purpose and resolution to do the best that lieth in them, they hope that by such a resolution they shall be able to achieve great enterprises in the conquests of their lusts and performance of the most difficult duties. It is the great work of some zealous divines in their preachings and writings to stir up people to this resolution, wherein they place the chiefest turningpoint from sin to godliness. And they think that this is not contrary to the life of faith, because they trust in the grace of God through Christ to help them in all such resolutions and endeavours. Thus they endeavour to reform their old state, and to be made perfect in the flesh, instead of putting it off and walking according to the new state in Christ. They trust on low carnal things for holiness, and upon the acts of their own will, their purposes, resolutions, and endeavours, instead of Christ; and they trust to Christ to help them in this carnal way; whereas true faith would teach them that they are nothing, and that they do but labour in vain."

01.30. As the Surety of the Covenant

Chapter 30--AS THE SURETY OF THE COVENANT "Jesus was made a surety of a better testament."-- Hebrews 7:22 OF THE old Covenant, Scripture speaks as not being faultless, and God complains that Israel had not continued in it; and so He regarded them not (Hebrews 8:7-9). It had not secured its apparent object, in uniting Israel and God: Israel had forsaken Him, and He had not regarded Israel. Therefore God promises to make a New Covenant, free from the faults of the first, and effectual to realize its purpose. If it were to accomplish its end, it would need to secure God's faithfulness to His people, and His people's faithfulness to God. And the terms of the New Covenant expressly declare that these two objects shall be attained. "I will put my laws into their mind": thus God proposes to secure their unchanging faithfulness to Him. "Their sins I will remember no more" (see Hebrews 8:10-12): thus He assures His unchanging faithfulness to them. A pardoning God and an obedient people: these are the two parties who are to meet and to be eternally united in the New Covenant. The most beautiful provision of this New Covenant is that of the surety in whom its fulfilment on both parts is guaranteed. Jesus was made the surety of the better covenant. To man He became surety that God would faithfully fulfil His part, so that man could confidently depend upon God to pardon, and accept, and never more forsake. And to God He likewise became surety that man would faithfully fulfil his part, so that God could bestow on him the blessing of the covenant. And the way in which He fulfils His suretyship is this: As one with God, and having the fulness of God dwelling in His human nature, He is personally security to men that God will do what He has engaged. All that God has is secured to us in Him as man. And then, as one with us, and having taken us up as members into His own body, He is security to God that His interests shall be cared for. All that man must be and do is secured in Him. It is the glory of the New Covenant that it has in the Person of the God-man its living surety, its everlasting security. And it can easily be understood how, in proportion as we abide in Him as the surety of the covenant, its objects and its blessings will be realized in us.

We shall understand this best if we consider it in the light of one of the promises of the New Covenant. Take that in Jeremiah 32:40 : "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." With what wonderful condescension the infinite God here bows Himself to our weakness! He is the Faithful and Unchanging One, whose word is truth; and yet more abundantly to show to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, He binds Himself in the covenant that He will never change: "I will make an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from them." Blessed the man who has thoroughly appropriated this, and finds his rest in the everlasting covenant of the Faithful One! But in a covenant there are two parties. And what if man becomes unfaithful and breaks the covenant? Provision must be made, if the covenant is to be well ordered in all things and sure, that this cannot be, and that man too remain faithful. Man never can undertake to give such an assurance. And see, here God comes to provide for this too. He not only undertakes in the covenant that He will never turn from His people, but also to put His fear in their heart, that they do not depart from Him. In addition to His own obligations as one of the

covenanting parties, He undertakes for the other party too: "I WILL CAUSE you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). Blessed the man who understands this half of the covenant too! He sees that his security is not in the covenant which he makes with His God, and which he would but continually break again. He finds that a covenant has been made, in which God stands good, not only for Himself, but for man too. He grasps the blessed truth that his part in the covenant is to accept what God has promised to do, and to expect the sure fulfilment of the divine engagement to secure the faithfulness of His people to their God: "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

It is just here that the blessed work comes in of the surety of the covenant, appointed of the Father to see to its maintenance and perfect fulfilment. To Him the Father hath said, "I have given thee for a covenant of the people." And the Holy Spirit testifies, "All the promises of God IN Him are yea, and in Him are Amen, to the glory of God by us." The believer who abides in Him hath a divine assurance for the fulfilment of every promise the covenant ever gave.

Christ was made surety of a better testament. It is as our Melchisedec that Christ is surety (see Hebrews 7:1-28). Aaron and his sons passed away; of Christ it is witnessed that He liveth. He is priest in the power of an endless life. Because He continueth ever, He hath an unchangeable priesthood. And because He ever liveth to make intercession, He can save to the uttermost, He can save completely. It is because Christ is the Ever-living One that His suretyship of the covenant is so effectual. He liveth ever to make intercession, and can therefore save completely. Every moment there rise up from His holy presence to the Father, the unceasing pleadings which secure to His people the powers and the blessings of the heavenly life. And every moment there go out from Him downward to His people, the mighty influences of His unceasing intercession, conveying to them uninterruptedly the power of the heavenly life. As surety with us for the Father's favour, He never ceases to pray and present us before Him; as surety with the Father for us, He never ceases to work, and reveal the Father within us. The mystery of the Melchisedec priesthood, which the Hebrews were not able to receive (Hebrews 5:10-14), is the mystery of the resurrection life. It is in this that the glory of Christ as surety of the covenant consists: He ever liveth. He performs His work in heaven in the power of a divine, an omnipotent life. He ever liveth to pray; not a moment that as surety His prayers do not rise Godward to secure the Father's fulfilment to us of the covenant. He performs His work on earth in the power of that same life; not a moment that His answered prayers--the powers of the heavenly world--do not flow downward to secure for His Father our fulfilment of the covenant. In the eternal life there are no breaks--never a moment's interruption; each moment has the power of eternity in it. He ever, every moment, liveth to pray. He ever, every moment, liveth to bless. He can save to the uttermost, completely and perfectly, because He ever liveth to pray.

Believer! come and see here how the possibility of abiding in Jesus every moment is secured by the very nature of this ever-living priesthood of your surety. Moment by moment, as His intercession rises up, its efficacy descends. And because Jesus stands good for the fulfilment of the covenant--"I will put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me"--He cannot afford to leave you one single moment to yourself. He dare not do so, or He fails of His undertaking. Your unbelief may fail of realizing the blessing; He cannot be unfaithful. If you will but consider Him, and the power of that endless life after which He was made and is a High Priest, your faith will rise to believe that an endless, ever-continuing, unchangeable life of abiding in

Jesus, is nothing less than what is waiting you.

It is as we see what Jesus is, and is to us, that the abiding in Him will become the natural and spontaneous result of our knowledge of Him. If His life unceasingly, moment by moment, rises to the Father for us, and descends to us from the Father, then to abide moment by moment is easy and simple. Each moment of conscious intercourse with Him we simply say, "Jesus, surety, keeper, ever-living Saviour, in whose life I dwell, I abide in Thee." Each moment of need, or darkness, or fear, we still say, "O thou great High Priest, in the power of an endless, unchangeable life, I abide in Thee." And for the moments when direct and distinct communion with Him must give place to needful occupations, we can trust His suretyship, His unceasing priesthood, in its divine efficacy, and the power with which He saves to the uttermost, still to keep us abiding in Him.

01.31. The Glorified One

Chapter 31--THE GLORIFIED ONE

"Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."-- Colossians 3:3-4

HE THAT abides in Christ the Crucified One, learns to know what it is to be crucified with Him, and in Him to be indeed dead unto sin. He that abides in Christ the Risen and Glorified One, becomes in the same way partaker of His resurrection life, and of the glory with which He has now been crowned in heaven. Unspeaking are the blessings which flow to the soul from the union with Jesus in His glorified life. This life is a life of perfect victory and rest. Before His death, the Son of God had to suffer and to struggle, could be tempted and troubled by sin and its assaults: as the Risen One, He has triumphed over sin; and, as the Glorified One, His humanity has entered into participation of the glory of Deity. The believer who abides in Him as such, is led to see how the power of sin and the flesh are indeed destroyed: the consciousness of complete and everlasting deliverance becomes increasingly clear, and the blessed rest and peace, the fruit of such a conviction that victory and deliverance are an accomplished fact, take possession of the life. Abiding in Jesus, in whom he has been raised and set in the heavenly places, he receives of that glorious life streaming from the Head through every member of the body. This life is a life in the full fellowship of the Father's love and holiness. Jesus often gave prominence to this thought with His disciples. His death was a going to the Father. He prayed: "Glorify me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had with Thee." As the believer, abiding in Christ the Glorified One, seeks to realize and experience what His union with Jesus on the throne implies, he apprehends how the unclouded light of the Father's presence is His highest glory and blessedness, and in Him the believer's portion too. He learns the sacred art of always, in fellowship with His exalted Head, dwelling in the secret of the Father's presence. Further, when Jesus was on earth, temptation could still reach Him: in glory, everything is holy, and in perfect harmony with the will of God. And so the believer who abides in Him experiences that in this high fellowship his spirit is sanctified into growing harmony with the Father's will. The heavenly life of Jesus is the power that casts out sin. This life is a life of loving beneficence and activity. Seated on His throne, He dispenses His gifts, bestows His Spirit, and never ceases in love to watch and to work for those who are His. The believer cannot abide in Jesus the Glorified One, without feeling himself stirred and strengthened to work: the Spirit and the love of Jesus breathe the will and the power to be a blessing to others. Jesus went to heaven with the very object of obtaining power there to bless abundantly. He does this as the heavenly Vine only through the medium of His people as His branches. Whoever, therefore, abides in Him, the Glorified One, bears much fruit, for he receives of the Spirit and the power of the eternal life of his exalted Lord, and becomes the channel through which the fulness of Jesus, who hath been exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, flows out to bless those around him.

There is one more thought in regard to this life of the Glorified One, and ours in Him. It is a life of wondrous expectation and hope. It is so with Christ. He sits at the right hand of God, expecting till

all His enemies be made His footstool, looking forward to the time when He shall receive His full reward, when His glory shall be made manifest, and His beloved people be ever with Him in that glory. The hope of Christ is the hope of His redeemed: "I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also." This promise is as precious to Christ as it ever can be to us. The joy of meeting is surely no less for the coming bridegroom than for the waiting bride. The life of Christ in glory is one of longing expectation: the full glory only comes when His beloved are with Him. The believer who abides closely in Christ will share with Him in this spirit of expectation. Not so much for the increase of personal happiness, but from the spirit of enthusiastic allegiance to his King, he longs to see Him come in His glory, reigning over every enemy, the full revelation of God's everlasting love. "Till He come," is the watchword of every true-hearted believer. "Christ shall appear, and we shall appear with Him in glory."

There may be very serious differences in the exposition of the promises of His coming. To one it is plain as day that He is coming very speedily in person to reign on earth, and that speedy coming is his hope and his stay. To another, loving his Bible and his Saviour not less, the coming can mean nothing but the judgment day--the solemn transition from time to eternity, the close of history on earth, the beginning of heaven; and the thought of that manifestation of his Saviour's glory is no less his joy and his strength. It is Jesus, Jesus coming again, Jesus taking us to Himself, Jesus adored as Lord of all, that is to the whole Church the sum and the centre of its hope.

It is by abiding in Christ the Glorified One that the believer will be quickened to that truly spiritual looking for His coming, which alone brings true blessing to the soul. There is an interest in the study of the things which are to be, in which the discipleship of a school is often more marked than the discipleship of Christ the meek; in which contentings for opinions and condemnation of brethren are more striking than any signs of the coming glory. It is only the humility that is willing to learn from those who may have other gifts and deeper revelations of the truth than we, and the love that always speaks gently and tenderly of those who see not as we do, and the heavenliness that shows that the Coming One is indeed already our life, that will persuade either the Church or the world that this our faith is not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. To testify of the Saviour as the Coming One, we must be abiding in and bearing the image of Him as the Glorified One. Not the correctness of the views we hold, nor the earnestness with which we advocate them, will prepare us for meeting Him, but only the abiding in Him. Then only can our being manifested in glory with Him be what it is meant to be--a transfiguration, a breaking out and shining forth of the indwelling glory that had been waiting for the day of revelation.

Blessed life! "the life hid with Christ in God," "set in the heavenlies in Christ," abiding in Christ the glorified! Once again the question comes: Can a feeble child of dust really dwell in fellowship with the King of glory? And again the blessed answer has to be given: To maintain that union is the very work for which Christ has all power in heaven and earth at His disposal. The blessing will be given to him who will trust his Lord for it, who in faith and confident expectation ceases not to yield himself to be wholly one with Him. It was an act of wondrous though simple faith, in which the soul yielded itself at first to the Saviour. That faith grows up to clearer insight and faster hold of God's truth that we are one with Him in His glory. In that same wondrous faith, wondrously simple, but wondrously mighty, the soul learns to abandon itself entirely to the keeping of Christ's almighty power, and the actings of His eternal life. Because it knows that it has the Spirit of God dwelling within to communicate all that Christ is, it no longer looks upon it as a burden or a work, but allows

the divine life to have its way, to do its work; its faith is the increasing abandonment of self, the expectation and acceptance of all that the love and the power of the Glorified One can perform. In that faith unbroken fellowship is maintained, and growing conformity realized. As with Moses, the fellowship makes partakers of the glory, and the life begins to shine with a brightness not of this world.

Blessed life! it is ours, for Jesus is ours. Blessed life! we have the possession within us in its hidden power, and we have the prospect before us in its fullest glory. May our daily lives be the bright and blessed proof that the hidden power dwells within, preparing us for the glory to be revealed. May our abiding in Christ the Glorified One be our power to live to the glory of the Father, our fitness to share to the glory of the Son. AND NOW, LITTLE CHILDREN,

ABIDE IN HIM, THAT, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, WE MAY HAVE CONFIDENCE, AND NOT BE ASHAMED BEFORE HIM AT HIS COMING.

02.00. Absolute Surrender

Absolute Surrender by Andrew Murray

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02.01. Absolute Surrender

ABSOLUTE SURRENDER

"And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine and all that I have" (1 Kings 20:1-4).

Ahab gave what was asked of him by Benhadad - absolute surrender. I want to use these words: "My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have," as the words of absolute surrender with which every child of God ought to yield himself to his Father. We have heard it before, but we need to hear it very definitely-the condition of God's blessing is absolute surrender of all into His hands. Praise God! If our hearts are willing for that, there is no end to what God will do for us, and to the blessing God will bestow.

Absolute surrender-let me tell you where I got those words. I used them myself often, and you have heard them numerous times. But once, in Scotland, I was in a company where we were talking about the condition of Christ's Church, and what the great need of the Church and of believers is. There was in our company a godly Christian worker who has much to do in training other workers for Christ, and I asked him what he would say was the great need of the Church-the message that ought to be preached. He answered very quietly and simply and determinedly:

"Absolute surrender to God is the one thing." The words struck me as never before. And that man began to tell how, in the Christian workers with whom he had to deal, he finds that if they are sound on that point, they are willing to be taught and helped, and they always improve. Whereas, others who are not sound there very often go back and leave the work. The condition for obtaining God's full blessing is absolute surrender to Him. And now, I desire by God's grace to give to you this message-that your God in heaven answers the prayers which you have offered for blessing on yourselves and for blessing on those around you by this one demand: Are you willing to surrender yourselves absolutely into His hands? What is our answer to be? God knows there are hundreds of hearts who have said it, and there are hundreds more who long to say it but hardly dare to do so. And there are hearts who have said it, but who have yet miserably failed, and who feel themselves condemned because they did not find the secret of the power to live that life. May God have a word for all!

Let me say, first of all, that God claims it from us.

GOD EXPECTS YOUR SURRENDER

Yes, it has its foundation in the very nature of God. God cannot do otherwise. Who is God? He is the Fountain of life, the only Source of existence and power and goodness. Throughout the

universe there is nothing good but what God works. God has created the sun, the moon, the stars, the flowers, the trees, and the grass. Are they not all absolutely surrendered to God? Do they not allow God to work in them just what He pleases? When God clothes the lily with its beauty, is it not yielded up, surrendered, given over to God as He works in it its beauty? And God's redeemed children, oh, can you think that God can do His work if there is only half or a part of them surrendered? God cannot do it. God is life, love, blessing, power, and infinite beauty, and God delights in communicating Himself to every child who is prepared to receive Him. But ah! this one lack of absolute surrender is just the thing that hinders God. And now He comes, and as God, He claims it.

You know in daily life what absolute surrender is. You know that everything has to be given up to its special, definite object and service. I have a pen in my pocket, and that pen is absolutely surrendered to the one work of writing. That pen must be absolutely surrendered to my hand if I am to write properly with it. If another holds it partly, I cannot write properly. This coat is absolutely given up to me to cover my body. This building is entirely given up to religious services. And now, do you expect that in your immortal being, in the divine nature that you have received by regeneration, God can work His work, every day and every hour, unless you are entirely given up to Him? God cannot. The temple of Solomon was absolutely surrendered to God when it was dedicated to Him. And every one of us is a temple of God, in which God will dwell and work mightily on one condition-absolute surrender to Him. God claims it, God is worthy of it, and without it God cannot work His blessed work in us.

God not only claims it, but God will work it Himself.

GOD ACCOMPLISHES YOUR SURRENDER

I am sure there is many a heart that says: "Ah, but that absolute surrender implies so much!" Someone says: "Oh, I have passed through so much trial and suffering, and there is so much of the self-life still remaining. I dare not face entirely giving it up because I know it will cause so much trouble and agony."

Alas! alas! that God's children have such thoughts of Him, such cruel thoughts. I come with a message to those who are fearful and anxious. God does not ask you to give the perfect surrender in your strength, or by the power of your will; God is willing to work it in you. Do we not read: "it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Php 2:13)? And that is what we should seek-to go on our faces before God, until our hearts learn to believe that the everlasting God Himself will come in to turn out what is wrong. He will conquer what is evil, and work what is well pleasing in His blessed sight. God Himself will work it in you.

Look at the men in the Old Testament, like Abraham. Do you think it was by accident that God found that man, the father of the faithful and the friend of God? Do you think that it was Abraham himself, apart from God, who had such faith and such obedience and such devotion? You know it is not so. God raised him up and prepared him as an instrument for His glory. Did God not say to Pharaoh: "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power" (Exodus 9:16)? And if God said that of him, will God not say it far more of every child of His?

Oh, I want to encourage you, and I want you to cast away every fear. Come with that feeble desire. If there is the fear which says-"Oh, my desire is not strong enough. I am not willing for everything

that may come, and I do not feel bold enough to say I can conquer everything"-I implore you, learn to know and trust your God now. Say: "My God, I am willing that You should make me willing." If there is anything holding you back, or any sacrifice you are afraid of making, come to God now and prove how gracious your God is. Do not be afraid that He will command from you what He will not bestow.

God comes and offers to work this absolute surrender in you. All these searchings and hungerings and longings that are in your heart, I tell you, they are the drawings of the divine magnet, Christ Jesus. He lived a life of absolute surrender. He has possession of you; He is living in your heart by His Holy Spirit. You have hindered and hindered Him terribly, but He desires to help you to get a hold of Him entirely. And He comes and draws you now by His message and words. Will you not come and trust God to work in you that absolute surrender to Himself? Yes, blessed be God! He can do it, and He will do it.

God not only claims it and works it, but God accepts it when we bring it to Him.

GOD ACCEPTS YOUR SURRENDER

God works it in the secret of our heart; God urges us by the hidden power of His Holy Spirit to come and speak it out, and we have to bring and yield to Him that absolute surrender. But remember, when you come and bring God that absolute surrender, it may, as far as your feelings or your consciousness go, be a thing of great imperfection. You may doubt and hesitate and say:

"Is it absolute?"

But, oh, remember there was once a man to whom Christ had said: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). And his heart was afraid, and he cried out: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). That was a faith that triumphed over Satan, and the evil spirit was cast out. And if you come and say: "Lord, I yield myself in absolute surrender to my God," even though you do so with a trembling heart and with the consciousness: "I do not feel the power. I do not feel the determination. I do not feel the assurance," it will succeed. Do not be afraid, but come-just as you are. Even in the midst of your trembling the power of the Holy Spirit will work. Have you not yet learned the lesson that the Holy Spirit works with mighty power, while on the human side everything appears feeble? Look at the Lord Jesus Christ in Gethsemane. We read that He, "through the eternal Spirit" (Hebrews 9:14), offered Himself a sacrifice unto God. The Almighty Spirit of God was enabling Him to do it. And yet what agony and fear and exceeding sorrow came over Him, and how He prayed! Externally, you can see no sign of the mighty power of the Spirit, but the Spirit of God was there. And even so, while you are feeble and fighting and trembling, with faith in the hidden work of God's Spirit do not fear, but yield yourself. And when you do yield yourself in absolute surrender, let it be with the faith that God does now accept it. That is the great point, and that is what we so often miss-that believers should be thus occupied with God in this matter of surrender. Be occupied with God. We want to get help, every one of us, so that in our daily life God will be clearer to us, God will have the right place, and be "all in all." And if we are to have that through life, let us begin now and look away from ourselves and look up to God. Let each believe- I, a poor worm on earth and a trembling child of God, full of failure, sin, and fear, bow here, and no one knows what passes through my heart. I simply say, "Oh God, I accept Your terms. I have pleaded for blessing on myself and others. I have

accepted Your terms of absolute surrender." While your heart says that in deep silence, remember there is a God present that takes note of it, and writes it down in His book. There is a God present who at that very moment takes possession of you. You may not feel it, you may not realize it, but God takes possession if you will trust Him. God not only claims it and works it and accepts it when I bring it, but God maintains it.

GOD MAINTAINS YOUR SURRENDER That is the great difficulty with many. People say: "I have often been stirred at a meeting or at a convention, and I have consecrated myself to God. But it has passed away. I know it may last for a week or for a month, but it fades away. After a time it is all gone." But listen! It is because you do not believe what I am now going to tell you and remind you of. When God has begun the work of absolute surrender in you, and when God has accepted your surrender, then God holds Himself bound to care for it and to keep it. Will you believe that? In this matter of surrender, there are: God and 1-1 a worm, God the everlasting and omnipotent Jehovah. Worm, will you be afraid to trust yourself to this mighty God now? God is willing. Do you not believe that He can keep you continually, day by day, and moment by moment?

Moment by moment I'm kept in His love;

Moment by moment I've life from above.

If God allows the sun to shine on you moment by moment, without intermission, will God not let His life shine on you every moment? And why have you not experienced it? Because you have not trusted God for it, and you do not surrender yourself absolutely to God in that trust. A life of absolute surrender has its difficulties. I do not deny that. Yes, it has something far more than difficulties: it is a life that with men is absolutely impossible. But by the grace of God, by the power of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, it is a life to which we are destined, and a life that is possible for us, praise God! Let us believe that God will maintain it.

Some of you have read the words of that aged saint who, on his ninetieth birthday, told of all God's goodness to him- I mean George Muller. What did he say he believed to be the secret of his happiness and of all the blessing which God had given him? He said he believed there were two reasons. The one was that he had been enabled by grace to maintain a good conscience before God day by day. The other was that he was a lover of God's Word. Ah, yes, a good conscience is complete obedience to God day by day, and fellowship with God everyday in His Word and prayer-that is a life of absolute surrender.

Such a life has two sides-on one side, absolute surrender to work what God wants you to do; on the other side, to let God work what He wants to do.

First, to do what God wants you to do.

Give yourselves up absolutely to the will of God. You know something of that will; not enough, far from all. But say absolutely to the Lord God: "By Your grace I desire to do Your will in everything, every moment of every day." Say: "Lord God, not a word upon my tongue but for Your glory. Not a movement of my temper but for Your glory. Not an affection of love or hate in my heart but for Your glory, and according to Your blessed will."

Someone says: "Do you think that possible?"

I ask, What has God promised you, and what can God do to fill a vessel absolutely surrendered to Him? Oh, God wants to bless you in a way beyond what you expect. From the beginning, ear has not heard, neither has the eye seen, what God has prepared for them that wait for Him (1 Corinthians 2:9). God has prepared unheard-of-things, blessings much more wonderful than you can imagine, more mighty than you can conceive. They are divine blessings. Oh, say now:

"I give myself absolutely to God, to His will, to do only what God wants."

It is God who will enable you to carry out the surrender.

And, on the other side, come and say: "I give myself absolutely to God, to let Him work in me to will and to do of His good pleasure, as He has promised to do."

Yes, the living God wants to work in His children in a way that we cannot understand, but that God's Word has revealed. He wants to work in us every moment of the day. God is willing to maintain our life. Only let our absolute surrender be one of simple, childlike., and unbounded trust.

GOD BLESSES WHEN YOU SURRENDER This absolute surrender to God brings wonderful blessings.

What Ahab said to his enemy, King Benhadad-"My lord, O king, according to thy word I am thine, and all that I have" will we not say to our God and loving Father? If we do say it, God's blessing will come upon us. God wants us to be separate from the world. We are called to come out from the world that hates God. Come out for God, and say: "Lord, anything for You." If you say that with prayer, and speak that into God's ear, He will accept it, and He will teach you what it means.

I say again, God will bless you. You have been praying for blessing. But do remember, there must be absolute surrender. At every tea-table you see it. Why is tea poured into that cup? Because it is empty, and given up for the tea. But put ink or vinegar or wine into it, and will they pour the tea into the vessel? And can God fill you, can God bless you if you are not absolutely surrendered to Him? He cannot. Let us believe God has wonderful blessings for us if we will but stand up for God and say, be it with a trembling will, yet with a believing heart:

"O God, I accept Your demands. I am Yours and all that I have. Absolute surrender is what my soul yields to You by divine grace."

You may not have such strong, clear feelings of surrender as you would like to have, but humble yourselves in His sight, and acknowledge that you have grieved the Holy Spirit by your self-will, selfconfidence, and self-effort. Bow humbly before Him in the confession of that, and ask Him to break the heart and to bring you into the dust before Him. Then, as you bow before Him, just accept God's teaching that in your flesh "there dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18), and that nothing will help you except another life which must come in. You must deny self once and for all. Denying self must every moment be the power of your life, and then Christ will come in and take possession of you. When was Peter delivered? When was the change accomplished? The change began with Peter weeping, and the Holy Spirit came down and filled his heart.

God the Father loves to give us the power of the Spirit. We have the Spirit of God dwelling within us. We come to God confessing that, and praising God for it, and yet confessing how we have grieved the Spirit. And then we bow our knees to the Father to ask that He would strengthen us

with all might by the Spirit in the inner man, and that He would fill us with His mighty power. And as the Spirit reveals Christ to us, Christ comes to live in our hearts forever, and the self-life is cast out.

Let us bow before God in humility, and in that humility confess before Him the state of the whole Church. No words can tell the sad state of the Church of Christ on earth. I wish I had words to speak what I sometimes feel about it. Just think of the Christians around you. I do not speak of nominal Christians, or of professing Christians, but I speak of hundreds and thousands of honest, earnest Christians who are not living a life in the power of God or to His glory. So little power, so little devotion or consecration to God, so little perception of the truth that a Christian is a man utterly surrendered to God's will! Oh, we want to confess the sins of God's people around us, and to humble ourselves.

We are members of that sickly body. The sickliness of the body will hinder us and break us down, unless we come to God. We must, in confession, separate ourselves from partnership with worldliness, with coldness toward each other. We must give ourselves up to be entirely and wholly for God.

How much Christian work is being done in the spirit of the flesh and in the power of self! How much work, day by day, in which human energy-our will and our thoughts about the work-is continually manifested, and in which there is little waiting upon God and upon the power of the Holy Spirit! Let us make a confession. But as we confess the state of the Church, and the feebleness and sinfulness of work for God among us, let us come back to ourselves. Who is there who truly longs to be delivered from the power of the self-life, who truly acknowledges that it is the power of self and the flesh, and who is willing to cast all at the feet of Christ? There is deliverance.

I heard of one who had been an earnest Christian, and who spoke about the "cruel" thought of separation and death. But you do not think that, do you? What are we to think of separation and death? This-death was the path to glory for Christ. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross. The cross was the birthplace of His everlasting glory. Do you love Christ? Do you long to be in Christ, and yet not like Him? Let death be to you the most desirable thing on earth-death to self, and fellowship with Christ. Separation-do you think it a hard thing to be called to be entirely free from the world, and by that separation to be united to God and His love, by separation to become prepared for living and walking with God every day? Surely one ought to say: "Anything to bring me to separation, to death, for a life of full fellowship with God and Christ."

Come and cast this self-life and flesh-life at the feet of Jesus. Then trust Him. Do not worry yourselves with trying to understand all about it, but come in the living faith that Christ will come into you with the power of His death and the power of His life. Then the Holy Spirit will bring the whole Christ-Christ crucified and risen and living in glory-into your heart.

02.02. The Fruit of the Spirit is Love

"THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE"

I want to look at the fact of a life filled with the Holy Spirit more from the practical side. I want to show how this life will reveal itself in our daily walk and conduct.

Under the Old Testament you know the Holy Spirit often came upon men as a divine Spirit of revelation to reveal the mysteries of God, or for power to do the work of God. But He did not dwell in them then. Now, many just want the Old Testament gift of power for work. But, they know very little of the New Testament gift of the indwelling Spirit, animating and renewing the whole life. When God gives the Holy Spirit, His great object is the formation of a holy character. It is a gift of a holy mind and spiritual disposition, and what we need, above everything else, is to say:

"I must have the Holy Spirit sanctifying my whole inner life if I am really to live for God's glory. "

You might say that when Christ promised the Spirit to the disciples, He did so that they might have power to be witnesses. True, but then they received the Holy Spirit in such heavenly power and reality that He took possession of their whole being at once and so fitted them as holy men for doing the work with power as they had to do it. Christ spoke of power to the disciples, but it was the Spirit filling their whole being that worked the power.

I wish now to dwell upon the passage found in Galatians 5:22 :

"The fruit of the Spirit is love."

We read that "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10), and my desire is to speak on love as a fruit of the Spirit with a twofold object. One is that this word may be a searchlight in our hearts, and give us a test by which to try all our thoughts about the Holy Spirit and all our experience of the holy life. Let us try ourselves by this word. Has this been our daily habit, to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of love? "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Has it been our experience that the more we have of the Holy Spirit, the more loving we become? In claiming the Holy Spirit, we should make this the first object of our expectation. The Holy Spirit comes as a Spirit of love.

Oh, if this were true in the Church of Christ, how different her state would be! May God help us to get hold of this simple, heavenly truth that the fruit of the Spirit is a love which appears in the life. Just as the Holy Spirit gets real possession of the life, the heart will be filled with real, divine, universal love.

One of the great causes why God cannot bless His Church is the lack of love. When the body is divided, there cannot be strength. In the time of their great religious wars, when Holland stood out so nobly against Spain, one of their mottoes was: "Unity gives strength." It is only when God's people stand as one body, one before God in the fellowship of love, one toward another in deep affection, one before the world in a love that the world can see-it is only then that they will have

power to secure the blessing which they ask of God. Remember that if a vessel that ought to be one whole is cracked into many pieces, it cannot be filled. You can take one part of the vessel and dip out a little water into that, but if you want the vessel full, the vessel must be whole. That is literally true of Christ's Church. And if there is one thing we must pray for still, it is this-Lord, melt us together into one by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit, who at Pentecost made them all of one heart and one soul, do His blessed work among us. Praise God, we can love each other in a divine love, for "the fruit of the Spirit is love." Give yourselves up to love, and the Holy Spirit will come; receive the Spirit, and He will teach you to love more.

GOD IS LOVE Now, why is it that the fruit of the Spirit is love? Because God is love (1 John 4:8). And what does that mean?

It is the very nature and being of God to delight in communicating Himself. God has no selfishness; God keeps nothing to Himself. God's nature is to be always giving. You see it, in the sun and the moon and the stars, in every flower, in every bird in the air, in every fish in the sea. God communicates life to His creatures. And the angels around His throne, the seraphim and cherubim who are flames of fire where does their glory come from? It comes from God because He is love, and He imparts to them part of His brightness and His blessedness. And we, His redeemed children-God delights to pour His love into us. Why? Because, as I said, God keeps nothing for Himself. From eternity God had His only begotten Son, and the Father gave Him all things, and nothing that God had was kept back. "God is love."

One of the old Church fathers said that we cannot better understand the Trinity than as a revelation of divine love-the Father, the loving One, the Fountain of love-the Son, the beloved one, the Reservoir of love, in whom the love was poured out-and the Spirit, the living love that united both and then overflowed into this world. The Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son is love. And when the Holy Spirit comes to us and to other men, will He be less a Spirit of love than He is in God? It cannot be; He cannot change His nature. The Spirit of God is love, and "the fruit of the Spirit is love."

MANKIND NEEDS LOVE

Why is that so? That was the one great need of mankind, that was the thing which Christ's redemption came to accomplish: to restore love to this world. When man sinned, why was it that he sinned? Selfishness triumphed-he sought self instead of God. And just look! Adam at once begins to accuse the woman of having led him astray. Love to God had gone; love to man was lost. Look again: of the first two children of Adam, the one becomes a murderer of his brother. Does that not teach us that sin had robbed the world of love? Ah! what a proof the history of the world has been of love having been lost! There may have been beautiful examples of love even among the heathen, but only as a little remnant of what was lost. One of the worst things sin did for man was to make him selfish, for selfishness cannot love. The Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven as the Son of God's love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). God's Son came to show what love is, and He lived a life of love here on earth in fellowship with His disciples, in compassion over the poor and miserable, in love even to His enemies. And, He died the death of love. And when He went back to heaven, whom did He send down? The Spirit of love, to come and banish selfishness and envy and pride, and bring the love of God into the hearts of men. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." And what was the preparation for the

promise of the Holy Spirit? You know that promise as found in the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel. But remember what precedes in the thirteenth chapter. Before Christ promised the Holy Spirit, He gave a new commandment, and about that new commandment He said wonderful things. One thing was: "Even as I have loved you, so love ye one another." To them His dying love was to be the only law of their conduct and fellowship with each other. What a message to those fishermen, to those men full of pride and selfishness! "Learn to love each other," said Christ, "as I have loved you." And by the grace of God they did it. When Pentecost came, they were of one heart and one soul. Christ did it for them. And now He calls us to live and to walk in love. He demands that though a man hate you, still you love him. True love cannot be conquered by anything in heaven or on earth. The more hatred there is, the more love triumphs through it all and shows its true nature. This is the love that Christ commanded His disciples to exercise.

What more did He say? "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

You all know what it is to wear a badge. And Christ said to His disciples in effect: "I give you a badge, and that badge is love. That is to be your mark. It is the only thing in heaven or on earth by which men can know me." Do we not begin to fear that love has fled from the earth? That if we were to ask the world: "Have you seen us wear the badge of love?." the world would say: "No, what we have heard of the Church of Christ is that there is not a place where there is no quarreling and separation." Let us ask God with one heart that we may wear the badge of Jesus' love. God is able to give it.

LOVE CONQUERS SELFISHNESS "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Why? Because nothing but love can expel and conquer our selfishness.

Self is the great curse, whether in its relation to God, or to our fellow-men in general, or to fellowChristians, thinking of ourselves and seeking our own. Self is our greatest curse. But, praise God, Christ came to redeem us from self. We sometimes talk about deliverance from the self-life-and thank God for every word that can be said about it to help us, But I am afraid some people think deliverance from the self-life means that now they are no longer going to have any trouble in serving God. They forget that deliverance from self-life means to be a vessel overflowing with love to everybody all the day. And there you have the reason why many people pray for the power of the Holy Spirit. They get something, but oh, so little! because they prayed for power for work, and power for blessing, but they have not prayed for power for full deliverance from self. That means not only the righteous self in fellowship with God, but the unloving self in fellowship with men. And there is deliverance. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." I bring you the glorious promise of Christ that He is able to fill our hearts with love. A great many of us try hard at times to love. We try to force ourselves to love, and I do not say that is wrong; it is better than nothing. But the end of it is always very sad. "I fail continually," many must confess. And what is the reason? The reason is simply this-they have never learned to believe and accept the truth that the Holy Spirit can pour God's love into their heart. That blessed text has often been limited!-"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Romans 5:5). It has often been understood in this sense: It means the love of God to me. Oh, what a limitation! That is only the beginning. The love of God is always the love of God in its entirety, in its fullness as an indwelling power. It is a love of God to me that leaps back to Him in love, and overflows to my fellow-men in love-God's love to me, and my love to God, and

my love to my fellowmen. The three are one; you cannot separate them. Do believe that the love of God can be shed abroad in your heart and mind so that we can love all the day.

"Ah!" you say, "how little I have understood that!"

Why is a lamb always gentle? Because that is its nature. Does it cost the lamb any trouble to be gentle? No. Why not? It is so beautiful and gentle. Has a lamb to study to be gentle? No. Why does that come so easy? It is its nature. And a wolf-why does it cost a wolf no trouble to be cruel, and to put its fangs into the poor lamb or sheep? Because that is its nature. It does not have to summon up its courage; the wolfnature is. there. And how can I learn to love? I cannot learn to love until the Spirit of God fills my heart with God's love, and I begin to long for God's love in a very different sense from which I have sought it so selfishly-as a comfort, a joy, a happiness, and a pleasure to myself. I will not learn it until I realize that "God is love," and to claim and receive it as an indwelling power for self-sacrifice. I will not love until I begin to see that my glory, my blessedness, is to be like God and like Christ, in giving up everything in myself for my fellow-men. May God teach us this! Oh, the divine blessedness of the love with which the Holy Spirit can fill our hearts! "The fruit of the Spirit is love."

LOVE IS GOD'S GIFT Once again I ask, Why must this be so? And my answer is: Without this we cannot live the daily life of love.

How often, when we speak about the consecrated life, we have to speak about temper, and people have sometimes said: "You make too much of temper."

I do not think we can make too much of it. Think for a moment of a clock and of what its hands mean. The hands tell me what is within the clock, and if I see that the hands stand still, or that the hands point wrong, or that the clock is slow or fast, I say that something inside the clock is not working properly. And temper is just like the revelation that the clock gives of what is within. Temper is a proof whether the love of Christ is filling the heart or not. How many there are who find it easier in church, or in prayer meeting, or in work for the Lord-diligent, earnest work-to be holy and happy than in the daily life with wife and children. How many find it easier to be holy and happy outside the home than in it! Where is the love of God? In Christ. God has prepared for us a wonderful redemption in Christ, and He longs to make something supernatural of us. Have we learned to long for it, ask for it, and expect it in its fullness?

Then there is the tongue! We sometimes speak of the tongue when we talk of the better life, and the restful life, but just think what liberty many Christians give to their tongues. They say:

"I have a right to think what I like." When they speak about each other, when they speak about their neighbors, when they speak about other Christians, how often there are sharp remarks! God keep me from saying anything that would be unloving. God shut my mouth if I am not to speak in tender love. But what I am saying is a fact. How often sharp criticism, sharp judgment, hasty opinion, unloving words, secret contempt of each other, secret condemnation of each other are found among Christians who are banded together in work! Oh, just as a mother's love covers her children and delights in them and has the tenderest compassion with their foibles or failures, so there ought to be in the heart of every believer a motherly love toward every brother and sister in Christ. Have you aimed at that? Have you sought it? Have you ever pleaded for it? Jesus Christ said: "As I have loved you that. ye also love one another" (John 13:34). And He did not put that

among the other commandments, but He said in effect:

"That is a new commandment, the one commandment: Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

It is in our daily life and conduct that the fruit of the Spirit is love. From that comes all the graces and virtues in which love is manifested-joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness-no sharpness or hardness in your tone, no unkindness or selfishness, meekness before God and man. You see that all these are the gentler virtues. I have often thought as I read those words in Colossians, "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Colossians 3:12), that if we had written this, we should have put in the foreground the strong virtues, such as zeal, courage, and diligence. But we need to see how the gentler, the most tender virtues are especially connected with dependence on the Holy Spirit. These are indeed heavenly graces. They never were found in the heathen world. Christ was needed to come from heaven to teach us. Your blessedness is long-suffering, meekness, kindness; your glory is humility before God. The fruit of the Spirit that He brought from heaven out of the heart of the crucified Christ, and that He gives in our heart, is first and foremost-love.

You know what John says: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another; God dwelleth in us" (1 John 4:12). That is, I cannot see God, but as a compensation I can see my brother, and if I love him, God dwells in me. Is that really true? That I cannot see God, but I must love my brother, and God will dwell in me? Loving my brother is the way to real fellowship with God. You know what John further says in that most solemn test, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20). There is a brother, a most unlovable man. He worries you every time you meet him. He is of the very opposite disposition to yours. You are a careful businessman, and you have to associate with him in your business. He is most untidy, unbusiness-like. You say:

"I cannot love him."

Oh, friend, you have not learned the lesson that Christ wanted to teach above everything. Let a man be what he will, you are to love him. Love is to be the fruit of the Spirit all the day and every day. Yes, listen! If you don't love that unlovable man whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen? You can deceive yourself with beautiful thoughts about loving God. You must prove your love to God by your love to your brother; that is the one standard by which God will judge your love to Him. If the love of God is in your heart, you will love your brother. The fruit of the Spirit is love. And what is the reason that God's Holy Spirit cannot come in power? Is it not possible?

You remember the comparison I used in speaking of the vessel. I can dip a little water into a small vessel, but if a vessel is to be full, it must be unbroken. And the children of God, wherever they come together, to whatever church or mission or society they belong, must love each other intensely, or the Spirit of God cannot do His work. We talk about grieving the Spirit of God by worldliness and ritualism and formality and error and indifference. But, I tell you, the one thing above everything that grieves God's Spirit is this lack of love. Let every heart search itself, and ask

that God may search it. OUR LOVE SHOWS GOD'S POWER

Why are we taught that "the fruit of the Spirit is love"? Because the Spirit of God has come to make our daily life an exhibition of divine power and a revelation of what God can do for His children. In the second and the fourth chapters of Acts, we read that the disciples were of one heart and of one soul. During the three years they had walked with Christ, they never had been in that spirit. All Christ's teaching could not make them of one heart and one soul. But the Holy Spirit came from heaven and shed the love of God in their hearts, and they were of one heart and one soul. The same Holy Spirit that brought the love of heaven into their hearts must fill us, too. Nothing less will do. Even as Christ did, one might preach love for three years with the tongue of an angel, but that would not teach any man to love unless the power of the Holy Spirit should come upon him to bring the love of heaven into his heart.

Think of the Church at large. What divisions! Think of the different bodies. Take the question of holiness, take the question of the cleansing blood, take the question of the baptism of the Spirit-what differences are caused among dear believers by such questions! That there are differences of opinion does not trouble me. We do not have the same constitution and temperament and mind. But how often hate, bitterness, contempt, separation, and unlovingness are caused by the holiest truths of God's Word! Our doctrines, our creeds, have been more important than love. We often think we are valiant for the truth, and we forget God's command to speak the truth in love. And it was so in the time of the Reformation between the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches. What bitterness there was in regard to communion, which was meant to be the bond of union among all believers! And so, through the ages, the very dearest truths of God have become mountains that have separated us.

If we want to pray in power, and if we want to expect the Holy Spirit to come down in power, and if we indeed want God to pour out His Spirit, we must enter into a covenant with God that we will love one another with a heavenly love. Are you ready for that? Only that is true love that is large enough to take in all God's children, the most unloving and unlovable and unworthy and unbearable and trying. If my vow-absolute surrender to God-was sincere, then it must mean absolute surrender to the divine love to fill me. I must be a servant of love to love every child of God around me. "The fruit of the Spirit is love."

Oh, God did something wonderful when He gave Christ, at His right hand, the Holy Spirit to come down out of the heart of the Father and His everlasting love. And how we have degraded the Holy Spirit into a mere power by which we have to do our work! God forgive us! Oh, that the Holy Spirit might be held in honor as a power to fill us with the very life and nature of God and of Christ!

CHRISTIAN WORK REQUIRES LOVE

"The fruit of the Spirit is love." I ask once again, Why is it so? And the answer comes: That is the only power in which Christians really can do their work. Yes, it is love that we need. We want not only love that is to bind us to each other, but we want a divine love in our work for the lost around us. Oh, do we not often undertake a great deal of work-just as men undertake work of philanthropy-from a natural spirit of compassion for our fellow-men? Do we not often undertake Christian work because our minister. or friend calls us to it? And do we not often perform Christian work with a certain zeal but without having had a baptism of love?

People often ask: "What is the baptism of fire?"

I have answered more than once: "I know no fire like the fire of God, the fire of everlasting love that consumed the sacrifice on Calvary." The baptism of love is what the Church needs, and to get that we must begin at once to get down on our faces before God in confession, and plead:

"Lord, let love from heaven flow down into my heart. I am giving up my life to pray and live as one who has, given himself up for the everlasting love to dwell in and fill him."

Ali, yes, if the love of God were in our hearts, what a difference it would make! There are hundreds of believers who say:

"I work for Christ, and I feel I could work much harder, but I do not have the gift. I do not know how or where to begin. I do not know what I can do."

Brother, sister, ask God to baptize you with the Spirit of love, and love will find its way. Love is a fire that will burn through every difficulty. You may be a shy, hesitating person, who cannot speak well, but love can burn through everything. God fills us with love! We need it for our work.

You have read many a touching story of love expressed, and you have said, How beautiful! I heard one not long ago. A lady had been asked to speak at a Rescue Home where there were a number of poor women. As she arrived there and passed by the window with the matron, she saw a wretched woman sitting outside, and asked:

"Who is that?" The matron answered: "She has been into the house thirty or forty times, and she has always gone away again. Nothing can be done with her, she is so low and hard." But the lady said: "She must come in." The matron then said: "We have been waiting for you, and the company is assembled, and you have only an hour for the address." The lady replied: "No, this is of more importance"; and she went outside where the woman was sitting and said:

"My sister, what is the matter?"

"I am not your sister," was the reply. The the lady laid her hand on her, and said: "Yes, I am your sister, and I love you"; and so she spoke until the heart of the poor woman was touched. The conversation lasted some time, and the company was waiting patiently. Ultimately, the lady brought the woman into the room. There was the poor, wretched, degraded creature, full of shame. She would not sit on a chair, but sat down on a stool beside the speaker's seat, and she let her lean against her, with her arms around the poor woman's neck, while, she spoke to the assembled people. And that love touched the woman's heart; she had found one who really loved her, and that love gave access to the love of Jesus.

Praise God! there is love on earth in the hearts of God's children; but oh, that there were more!

O God, baptize our ministers with a tender love, and our missionaries, our Bible readers, our workers, and our young men's and young women's associations. Oh, that God would begin with us now, and baptize us with heavenly love!

LOVE INSPIRES INTERCESSION Once again. It is only love that can fit us for the work of intercession.

I have said that love must fit us for our work. Do you know what the hardest and the most important work is that has to be done for this sinful world? It is the work of intercession, the work of going to God and taking time to lay hold of Him. A man may be an earnest Christian, an earnest minister, and a man may do good, but alas! how often he has to confess that he knows little of what it is to tarry with God. May God give us the great gift of an intercessory spirit, a spirit of prayer and supplication! Let me ask you in the name of Jesus not to let a day pass without praying for all saints, and for all God's people.

I find there are Christians who think little of that. I find there are prayer unions where they pray for the members, and not for all believers. I pray you, take time to pray for the Church of Christ. It is right to pray for the heathen, as I have already said. God help us to pray more for them. It is right to pray for missionaries and for evangelistic work and for the unconverted. But Paul did not tell people to pray for the heathen or the unconverted. Paul told them to pray for believers. Do make this your first prayer every day: "Lord, bless Thy saints everywhere." The state of Christ's Church is indescribably low. Plead for God's people that He would visit them, plead for each other, plead for all believers who are trying to work for God. Let love fill your heart. Ask Christ to pour fresh love into you everyday. Try to grasp, by the Holy Spirit of God: I am separated unto the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit is love. God help us to understand it. May God grant that we learn day by day to wait more quietly upon Him. We must not wait upon God only for ourselves, or the power to do so will soon be lost. But, we must give ourselves up to the ministry and the love of intercession, and pray more for God's people in general, for God's people around us, for the Spirit of love in ourselves and in them, and for the work of God we are connected with. The answer will surely come, and our waiting upon God will be a source of untold blessing and power. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Have you a lack of love to confess before God? Then make confession and say before Him, "O Lord, my lack of heart, my lack of love-I confess it." And then, as you cast that lack at His feet, believe that the blood cleanses you, that Jesus comes in His mighty, cleansing, saving power to deliver you, and that He will give His Holy Spirit. "The Fruit of the Spirit is love."

02.03. Separated unto the Holy Spirit

SEPARATED UNTO THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen ... and Saul. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me -Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

"And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia" (Acts 13:1-4). In the story of our text, we find some precious thoughts to guide us to what God would have of us, and what God would do for us. The great lesson of the verses quoted is this: The Holy Spirit is the director of the work of God upon the earth. And what we should do if we are to rightly work for God, and if God is to bless our work, is to see that we stand in a right relationship with the Holy Spirit. We must see that we give Him the place of honor that belongs to Him everyday. In all our work and (what is more) in all our Private, inner life, the Holy Spirit must always have the first place. Let me point out to you some of the precious thoughts our passage suggests.

First of all, we see that God has His own plans with regard to His Kingdom. His church at Antioch had been established. God had certain plans and intentions with regard to Asia and with regard to Europe. He had conceived them; they were His, and He made them known to His servants. Our great Commander organizes every campaign, and His generals and officers do not always know the great plans. They often receive sealed orders, and they have to wait for Him to reveal their contents. God in heaven has wishes and a will, in regard to any work that ought to be done, and to the way in which it has to be done. Blessed is the man who receives God's secrets and works under Him.

Some years ago, at Wellington, South Africa, where I live, we opened a Mission Institute-what is counted there a fine, large building. At our opening services, the principal said something that I have never forgotten. He remarked:

"Last year we gathered here to lay the foundation stone, and what was there then to be seen? Nothing but rubbish and stones and bricks and ruins of an old building that had been pulled down. There we laid the foundation stone, and very few knew what the building was that was to rise. No one knew it perfectly in every detail except one man, the architect. In his mind it was all clear, and as the contractor and the mason and the carpenter came to do their work, they took their orders from him. The humblest laborer had to be obedient to orders. The structure rose, and this beautiful building has been completed. And just so," he added, "this building that we open today is but laying the foundation of a work of which only God knows what is to become." But God has His workers and His plans clearly mapped out. Our position is to wait so that God may communicate to us as much of His will as is needful.

We simply have to be faithful in obedience, carrying out His orders. God has a plan for His Church on earth. But alas! we too often make our own plan. We think that we know what ought to be done. We ask God first to bless our feeble efforts, instead of absolutely refusing to go unless God goes before us. God has planned for the work and the extension of His Kingdom. The Holy Spirit has had that work given in charge to Him, "The work whereunto I have called them." May God, therefore, help us all to be afraid of touching "the ark of God" (2 Samuel 6:6), except as we are led by the Holy Spirit.

Then the second thought-God is willing and able to reveal to His servants what His will is.

Yes, blessed be God, communications still come down from heaven! As we read here what the Holy Spirit said, so the Spirit will still speak to His Church and His people. In these latter days, He has often done it. He has come to individual men, and by His divine teaching He has led them out into fields of labor that others could not at first understand or approve. He has led them into ways and methods that did not appeal to the majority. But the Holy Spirit still, in our time, teaches His people. Thank God, in our foreign missionary societies and in our home missions, and in a thousand forms of work, the guiding of the Holy Spirit is known. But (we are all ready, I think, to confess) He is too little known. We have not learned to wait upon Him enough, and so we should make a solemn declaration before God: Oh God, we want to wait more for You to show us Your will. Do not ask God only for power. Many a Christian has his own plan of working, but God must send the power. The man works in his own will, and God must give the grace-the one reason why God often gives so little grace and so little success. But let us all take our place before God, and say:

"What is done in the will of God, the strength of God will not be withheld from it. What is done in the will of God must have the mighty blessing of God." And so let our first desire be to have the will of God revealed.

If you ask me, Is it any easy thing to get these communications from heaven, and to understand them? I can give you the answer. It is easy to those who are in proper fellowship with heaven, and who understand the art of waiting on God in prayer. How often we ask: How can a person know the will of God? And people want, when they are in perplexity, to pray very earnestly so that God would answer them at once. But God can only reveal His will to a heart that is humble and tender and empty. God can only reveal His will in perplexities and special difficulties to a heart that has learned to obey and honor Him loyally in little things and in daily life. That brings me to the third thought- Note the disposition to which the Spirit reveals God's will.

What do we read here? There were a number of men ministering to the Lord and fasting, and the Holy Spirit came and spoke to them. Some people understand this passage as they would in reference to a missionary committee of our day. We see there is an open field, and we have had our missions in other fields. We are going to get on to that field. We have virtually settled that, and we pray about it. But the position was a very different one in those former days. I doubt whether any of them thought of Europe (for later on even Paul himself tried to go back into Asia) until the night vision called him by the will of God. Look at those men. God had done wonders. He had extended the Church to Antioch, and He had given rich and large blessing. Now, here were these men ministering to the Lord, serving Him with prayer and fasting. What a deep conviction they have-"It must all come directly from heaven. We are in fellowship with the risen Lord; we must

have a close union with Him, and somehow He will let us know what He wants." And there they were, empty, ignorant, helpless, glad, and joyful, but deeply humbled.

"O Lord," they seem to say, "we are Your servants, and in fasting and prayer we wait upon You. What is Your will for us?" Was it not the same with Peter? He was on the housetop, fasting and praying, and little did he think of the vision and the command to go to Caesarea. He was ignorant of what his work might be.

It is in hearts entirely surrendered to the Lord Jesus, separating themselves from the world, and even from ordinary religious exercises, and giving themselves up in intense prayer to look to their Lord, that the heavenly will of God will be made manifest.

You know that word fasting occurs a second time (in the third verse): "They fasted and prayed." When you pray, you love to go into your closet, according to the command of Jesus, and shut the door. You shut out business and company and pleasure and anything that can distract, and you want to be alone with God. But in one way, even the material world follows you there. You must eat. These men wanted to shut themselves out from the influences of the material and the visible, and they fasted. What they ate was simply enough to supply the wants of nature. In the intensity of their souls, they thought to give expression to their letting go of everything on earth in their fasting before God. Oh, may God give us that intensity of desire-that separation from everything-because we want to wait upon God, that the Holy Spirit may reveal to us God's blessed will. The fourth thought- What is now the will of God as the Holy Spirit reveals it? It is contained in one phrase: Separation unto the Holy Spirit. That is the keynote of the message from heaven.

"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. The work is mine; and I care for it; and I have chosen these men and called them; and I want you who represent the Church of Christ upon earth to set them apart unto me."

Look at this heavenly message in its twofold aspect. The men were to be set apart to the Holy Spirit, and the Church was to do this separating work. The Holy Spirit could trust these men to do it in a right spirit. There they were abiding in fellowship with the heavenly. The Holy Spirit could say to them, "Do the work of separating these men." And these were the men the Holy Spirit had prepared, and He could say of them, "Let them be separated unto me."

Here we come to the very root-the very life of the need of Christian workers. The question is: What is needed so that the power of God would rest on us more mightily? What is needed so that the blessing of God would be poured out more abundantly among those poor, wretched people and perishing sinners among whom we labor? And the answer from heaven is:

"I want men separated unto the Holy Spirit."

What does that imply? You know that there are two spirits on earth. Christ said, when He spoke about the Holy Spirit: "The world cannot receive him" (John 14:17). Paul said: "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is of God" (1 Corinthians 2:12). That is the great want in every worker-the spirit of the world going out, and the Spirit of God coming in to take possession of the inner life and of the whole being.

I am sure there are workers who often cry to God for the Holy Spirit to come upon them as a Spirit of power for their work. When they feel that measure of power, and receive blessing, they thank

God for it. But God wants something more and something higher. God wants us to seek for the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of power in our own heart and life, to conquer self and cast out sin, and to work the blessed and beautiful image of Jesus into us.

There is a difference between the power of the Spirit as a gift and the power of the Spirit for the grace of a holy life. A man may often have a measure of the power of the Spirit, but if there is not a large measure of the Spirit as the Spirit of grace and holiness, the defect will be evident in his work. He may be made the means of conversion, but he never will help people on to a higher standard of spiritual life. When he passes away, a great deal of his work may pass away, too. But a man who is separated unto the Holy Spirit is a man who is given up to say:

"Father, let the Holy Spirit have full dominion over me, in my home, in my temper, in every word of my tongue, in every thought of my heart, in every feeling toward my fellow-men. Let the Holy Spirit have entire possession." Is that what has been the longing and the covenant of your heart with your God-to be a man or a woman separated and given up unto the Holy Spirit? I pray you listen to the voice of heaven: "Separate me," said the Holy Spirit. Yes, separated unto the Holy Spirit. May God grant that the Word may enter into the very depths of our being to search us, and if we discover that we have not come out from the world entirely-if God discloses to us that selflife, self-will, self-exaltation are there-let us humble ourselves before Him.

Man, woman, brother, sister, you are a worker separated unto the Holy Spirit. Is that true? Has that been your longing desire? Has that been your surrender? Has that been what you have expected through faith in the power of our Risen and Almighty Lord Jesus? If not, here is the call of faith, and here is the key of blessing-separated unto the Holy Spirit. God write the word in our hearts!

I said the Holy Spirit spoke to that church as a church capable of doing that work. The Holy Spirit trusted them. God grant that our churches, our missionary societies, and our workers' unions, that all our directors and councils and committees may be men and women who are fit for the work of separating workers unto the Holy Spirit. We can ask God for that, too.

Then comes my fifth thought, and it is this: This holy partnership with the Holy Spirit in this work becomes a matter of consciousness and of action.

These men, what did they do? They set apart Paul and Barnabas, and then it is written of the two that they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Silica. Oh, what fellowship! The Holy Spirit in heaven doing part of the work, men on earth doing the other part. After the ordination of the men on earth, it is written in God's inspired Word that they were sent forth by the Holy Spirit. And see how this partnership calls to new prayer and fasting. They had for a certain time been ministering to the Lord and fasting, perhaps days. The Holy Spirit speaks, and they have to do the work and to enter into partnership, and at once they come together for more prayer and fasting. That is the spirit in which they obey the command of their Lord. And that teaches us that it is not only in the beginning of our Christian work, but all along, that we need to have our strength in prayer. If there is one thought with regard to the Church of Christ which at times comes to me with overwhelming sorrow; if there is one thought in regard to my own life of which I am ashamed; if there is one thought of which I feel that the Church of Christ has not accepted and not grasped; if there is one thought which makes me pray to God: "Oh, teach us by Your grace, new things"-it is

the wonderful power that prayer is meant to have in the Kingdom. We have so little availed ourselves of it.

We have all- read the expression of Christian in Bunyan's great work, when he found he had the key in his breast that should unlock the dungeon. We have the key that can unlock the dungeon of atheism for us. The Holy Spirit, into whose hands God has put the work, has been called "the executive of the Holy Trinity." The Holy Spirit has not only power, but He has the Spirit of love. He is brooding over this dark world and every sphere of work in it, and He is willing to bless. And why is there not more blessing? There can be only one answer. We have not honored the Holy Spirit as we should have done. Is there one who can say that that is not true? Is not every thoughtful heart ready to cry: "God forgive me that I have not honored the Holy Spirit as I should have done, that I have grieved Him, that I have allowed self, the flesh, and my own will to work where the Holy Spirit should have been honored! May God forgive me that I have allowed self, the flesh, and the will to actually have the place that God wanted the Holy Spirit to have."

Oh, the sin is greater than we know! No wonder that there is so much feebleness and failure in the Church of Christ!

02.04. Peter's Repentance

PETER'S REPENTANCE

"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:61-62). That was the turning point in the life of Peter. Christ had said to him: "Thou canst not follow me now" (John 13:36). Peter was not in a fit state to follow Christ, because he had not been brought to an end of himself. He did not know himself, and he therefore could not follow Christ. But when he went out and wept bitterly, then came the great change. Christ previously said to him: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). Here is the point Where Peter was converted from self to Christ.

I thank God for the story of Peter. I do not know a man in the Bible who gives us greater comfort. When we look at his character, so full of failures, and at what Christ made him by the power of the Holy Spirit, there is hope for every one of us. But remember, before Christ could fill Peter with the Holy Spirit and make a new man of him, he had to go out and weep bitterly; he had to be humbled. If we want to understand this, I think there are four points that we must look at. First, let us look at Peter the devoted disciple of Jesus; next, at Peter as he lived the life of self; then, at Peter in his repentance; and last, at what Christ made of Peter by the Holy Spirit.

PETER THE DEVOTED DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

Christ called Peter to forsake his nets and follow Him. Peter did it at once, and afterward he could rightly say to the Lord:

"We have forsaken all and followed thee" (Matthew 19:27).

Peter was a man of absolute surrender; he gave up all to follow Jesus. Peter was also a man of ready obedience. You remember Christ said to him, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets." Peter the fisherman knew there were no fish there, for they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing; but he said: "At thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:4-5). He submitted to the word of Jesus. Further, he was a man of great faith. When he saw Christ walking on the sea, he said: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee" (Mat 14:-28). At the voice of Christ, he stepped out of the boat and walked on the water. And Peter was a man of spiritual insight. When Christ asked the disciples: "Whom say ye that I am?"

Peter was able to answer: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Christ said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:15-17). And Christ spoke of him as the rock man, and of his having the keys of the Kingdom. Peter was a splendid man, a devoted disciple of Jesus, and if he were living now, everyone would say that he was an advanced Christian. And yet how much there was wanting in Peter!

PETER LIVING THE LIFE OF SELF

You recollect that just after Christ had said to him: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," Christ began to speak about His sufferings, and Peter dared to say, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." Then Christ had to say: "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matthew 16:22-23).

There was Peter in his self-will, trusting his own wisdom, and actually forbidding Christ to go and die. Where did that come from? Peter trusted in himself and his own thoughts about divine things. We see later on, more than once, that the disciples questioned who should be the greatest among them. Peter was one of them, and he thought he had a right to the very first place. He sought his own honor above the others. The life of self was strong in Peter. He had left his boats and his nets, but not his old self. When Christ had spoken to him about His sufferings, and said: "Get thee behind me, Satan," He followed it up by saying: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). No man can follow Him unless he does that. Self must be utterly denied. What does that mean? When Peter denied Christ, we read that he said three times: "I know Him not" (Luke 22:57). In other words he said, "I have nothing to do with Him; He and I are not friends. I deny having any connection with Him." Christ told Peter that he must deny self. Self must be ignored, and its every claim rejected. That is the root of true discipleship. But Peter did not understand it and could not obey it. And what happened? When the last night came, Christ said to him:

"Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice" (Mark 14:30). But with self-confidence Peter said: "Though all shall be offended, yet will not I. I am ready to go with thee, to prison and to death" (Mark 14:29; Luke 22:33).

Peter meant it honestly, and he really intended to do it; but Peter did not know himself. He did not believe he was as bad as Jesus said he was.

We perhaps think of individual sins that come between us and God. But what are we to do with that self-life which is all unclean-our very nature? What are we to do with that flesh that is entirely under the power of sin? Deliverance from that is what we need. Peter knew it not, and therefore it was in selfconfidence that he went forth and denied his Lord.

Notice how Christ uses that word deny twice. He said to Peter the first time, "Deny himself" (Matthew 16:24); He said to Peter the second time, "Thou shalt deny me" (Matthew 26:34). It is either of the two. There is no other choice for us; we must either deny self or deny Christ. There are two great powers fighting each other-the self-nature in the power of sin, and Christ in the power of God. Either of these must rule within us.

It was self that made the devil. He was an angel of God, but he wanted to exalt self. He became a devil in hell. Self was the cause of the fall of man. Eve wanted something for herself, and so our first parents fell into all the wretchedness of sin. We, their children, have inherited an awful nature of sin.

PETER'S REPENTANCE

Peter denied his Lord three times, and then the Lord looked upon him. That look of Jesus broke Peter's heart. The terrible sin that he had committed, the terrible failure that had come, and the

depth into which he had fallen suddenly opened up before him. Then, "Peter went out and wept bitterly."

Oh! who can tell what that repentance must have been? During the following hours of that night, and the next day-when he saw Christ crucified and buried, and the next day, the Sabbath-oh, what hopeless despair and shame he must have felt!

"My Lord is gone; my hope is gone; and I denied my Lord. After that life of love, after that blessed fellowship of three years, I denied my Lord. God have mercy upon me!"

I do not think we can imagine the depth of humiliation Peter sank into then. But that was the turning point and the change. On the first day of the week, Christ was seen by Peter, and in the evening He met him with the others. Later on at the Sea of Galilee, He asked him: "Lovest thou me?" (John 21:17). Peter was made sad by the thought that the Lord reminded him of having denied Him three times, and said in sorrow, but in uprightness: "Lord, thou knowest. all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21:17).

PETER TRANSFORMED

Now, Peter was prepared for deliverance from self, and that is my last thought. You know Christ took him with the others to the footstool of the throne, and told them to wait there. Then, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came, and Peter was a changed man. I do not want you to think only of the change in Peter, in that boldness, that power, that insight into the Scriptures, and that blessing with which he preached that day. Thank God for that. But there was something deeper and better which happened to Peter. His whole nature was changed. The work that Christ began in Peter when He looked upon him was perfected when he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

If you want to see that, read the first epistle of Peter. You know wherein Peter's failings lay. When he said to Christ, in effect: "Thou never canst suffer; it cannot be"-it showed he did not have a conception of what it was to pass through death into life. Christ said: "Deny thyself," and in spite of that he denied his Lord. When Christ warned him: "Thou shalt deny me" (Matthew 26:34), and he insisted that he never would, Peter showed how little he understood what there was in himself. But when I read his epistle and hear him say: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter 4:14), then I say that it is not the old Peter, but that it is the very Spirit of Christ breathing and speaking within him.

I read again how he says: "Hereunto were ye called, to suffer, because Christ also suffered" (1 Peter 2:21). I understand what a change had come over Peter. Instead of denying Christ, he found joy and pleasure in having self denied, crucified, and given up to the death. And therefore, we read in Acts that when he was called before the Council he could boldly say: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and that he could return with the other disciples and rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's name.

You remember his self-exaltation; but now he has found out that "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:4). Again he tells us to be "subject one to another, and be clothed with humility" (1 Peter 5:5).

Dear friend, I implore you, look at Peter utterly changed-the self-pleasing, the self-trusting, the self-seeking Peter, full of sin, continually getting into trouble, foolish and impetuous, now filled with

the Spirit and the life of Jesus. Christ had done it for him by the Holy Spirit. And now, what is the point in my having thus very briefly pointed to the story of Peter? That story must be the history of every believer who is really to be made a blessing by God. That story is a prophecy of what everyone can receive from God in heaven.

Now, let us just glance hurriedly at what these lessons teach us. The first lesson is this- You may be a very earnest, godly, devoted believer, in whom the power of the flesh is still very strong. That is a very solemn truth. Peter, before he denied Christ, had cast out devils and had healed the sick. Yet, the flesh had power; and, the flesh had room in him. Oh, beloved, we have to realize that it is because there is so much of that self-life in us that the power of God cannot work in us as mightily as He desires that it should work. Do you realize that the great God is longing to double His blessing, to give tenfold blessing through us? But there is something hindering Him, and that something is a proof of nothing but the self-life. We talk about the pride of Peter, and the impetuosity of Peter, and the self confidence of Peter. It is all rooted in that one word, self Christ had said, "Deny self," and Peter had never understood, and never obeyed. Every failing came out of that.

What a solemn thought, and what an urgent plea for us to cry: Oh God, do show this to us so that none of us may be living the self-life! It has happened to people who have been Christians for years; it has happened to people who have perhaps occupied prominent positions-God found them out and taught them to find out about themselves. They became utterly ashamed and fell broken before God. Oh, the bitter shame and sorrow and pain and agony that came to them, until at last they found that there was deliverance! Peter went out and wept bitterly. There may be many godly people in whom the power of the flesh still rules. And then my second lesson is - It is the work of our blessed Lord Jesus to disclose the power of self.

How was it that Peter-the carnal Peter, self-willed Peter, Peter with the strong self-love-ever became a man of Pentecost and the writer of his epistles? It was because Christ placed him in charge, and Christ watched over him, and Christ taught and blessed him. The warnings that Christ had given him were part of the training. Last of all, there came that look of love. In His suffering, Christ did not forget him, but turned around and looked upon him, and "Peter went out and wept bitterly." And the Christ who led Peter to Pentecost is waiting today to take charge of every heart that is willing to surrender itself to Him. Are there not some saying: "Ah! that is the problem with me; it is always the self-life, self-comfort, self-consciousness, self-pleasing, and self will. How am I to get rid of it?" My answer is: It is Christ Jesus who can rid you of it. No one else but Christ Jesus can give deliverance from the power of self. And what does He ask you to do? He asks that you should humble yourself before Him.

02.05. Impossible with Man, Possible with God

IMPOSSIBLE WITH MAN, POSSIBLE WITH GOD "And he said, the things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

Christ had said to the rich young ruler, "Sell all that thou hast ... and come, follow me." The young man went away sorrowful. Christ then turned to the disciples, and said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" The disciples, we read, were greatly astonished, and answered: "Who, then, can be saved?" And Christ gave this blessed answer: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:22-27). The text contains two thoughts-that in the question of salvation and of following Christ by a holy life, it is impossible for man to do it. And then alongside that is the thought-- What is impossible with man is possible with God.

These two thoughts mark the two great lessons that man has to learn in the Christian life. It often takes a long time to learn the first lesson-that in the Christian life man can do nothing, that salvation is impossible to man. And often a man learns that, and yet he does not learn the second lesson-what has been impossible to him is possible with God. Blessed is the man who learns both lessons! The learning of them marks stages in the Christian's life.

MAN CANNOT The one stage is when a man is trying to do his utmost and fails, when a man tries to do better and falls again, when a man tries much more and always fails. And yet, very often he does not even then learn the lesson: With man it is impossible to serve God and Christ. Peter spent three years in Christ's school, and he never learned, it is impossible, until he had denied his Lord, went out, and wept bitterly. Then he learned it.

Just look for a moment at a man who is learning this lesson. At first, he fights against it. Then, he submits to it, but reluctantly and in despair. At last, he accepts it A, llll ngly and rejoices in it. At the beginning of the Christian life, the young convert has no conception of this truth. He has been converted; he has the joy of the Lord in his heart; he begins to run the race and fight the battle. He is sure he can conquer, for he is earnest and honest, and God will help him. Yet, somehow, very soon he fails where he did not expect it, and sin gets the better of him. He is disappointed, but he thinks: "I was not cautious enough. I did not make my resolutions strong enough." And again he vows, and again he prays, and yet he fails. He thinks: "Am I not, a redeemed man? Have I not the life of God within me?" And he thinks again: "Yes, and I have Christ to help me. I can live the holy life." At a later period, he comes to another state of mind. He begins to see such a life is impossible, but he does not accept it. There are multitudes of Christians who come to this point: "I cannot." They then think that God never expected them to do what they cannot do. If you tell them that God does expect it, it is a mystery to them. A good many Christians are living a low life-a life of failure and of sin-instead of rest and victory, because they began to say: "I cannot, it is impossible." And yet they do not understand it fully. So, under the impression, I cannot, they give way to despair. They will do their best, but they never expect to get on very far. But God leads His children on to a third stage. A man comes to take, it is impossible, in its full truth, and yet at the

same time says: "I must do it, and I will do it-it is impossible for man, and yet I must do it." The renewed will begins to exercise its whole power, and in intense longing and prayer begins to cry to God: "Lord, what is the meaning of this? How am I to be freed from the power of sin?"

It is the state of the regenerate man in Romans, chapter seven. There you will find the Christian man trying his very utmost to live a holy life. God's law has been revealed to him as reaching down into the very depth of the desires of the heart. The man can dare to say:

"I delight in the law of God after the inward man. To will what is good is present with me. My heart loves the law of God, and my will has chosen that law." Can a man like that fail, with his heart full of delight in God's law and with his will determined to do 'What is right? Yes. That is what Romans, chapter seven teaches us. There is something more needed. Not only must I delight in the law of God after the inward man and will what God wills, but I need a divine omnipotence to work it in me. And that is what the apostle Paul teaches in Php 2:13 : "It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Note the contrast. In Romans, chapter seven, the regenerate man says: "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18). But in Philippians, chapter two, you have a man who has been led on farther. He is a man who understands that when God has worked the renewed will, God will give the power to accomplish what that will desires. Let us receive this as the first great lesson in the spiritual life: "It is impossible for me, my God. Let there be an end of the flesh and all its powers, an end of self, and let it be my glory to be helpless.

Praise God for the divine teaching that makes us helpless! When you thought of absolute surrender to God, were you not brought to an end of yourself? Did you not feel that you could see how you actually could live as a -nan absolutely surrendered to God every moment of the day-at your table, in your house, in your business, in the midst of trials and temptations? I pray you learn the lesson now. If you felt you could not do it, you are on the right road, if you let yourselves be led. Accept that position, and maintain it before God: "My heart's desire and delight, O God, is absolute surrender, but I cannot perform it. It is impossible for me to live that life. it is beyond me." Fall down and learn that when you are utterly helpless, God will come to work in you not only to will, but also to do.

GOD CAN Now comes the second lesson. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. "

I said a little while ago that there is many a man who has learned the lesson, it is impossible with men, and then he gives up in helpless despair. He lives a wretched Christian life, without joy or strength or victory. And why? Because he does not humble himself to learn that other lesson: With God all things are possible. Your Christian life is to be a continuous proof that God works impossibilities. Your Christian life is to be a series of impossibilities made possible and actual by God's almighty power. That is what the Christian needs. He has an almighty God that he worships, and he must learn to understand that he does not need a little of God's power. But, he needs-with reverence be it said-the whole of God's omnipotence to keep him right, and to live like a Christian. The whole of Christianity is a work of God's omnipotence. Look at the birth of Christ Jesus. That was a miracle of divine power, and it was said to Mary: "With God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37). It was the omnipotence of God. Look at Christ's resurrection. We are taught that it

was according to the exceeding greatness of His mighty power that God raised Christ from the dead.

Every tree must grow on the root from which it springs. An oak tree three hundred years old grows all the time on the one root from which it had its beginning. Christianity had its beginning in the omnipotence of God. In every soul, Christianity must have its continuance in that omnipotence. All the possibilities of the higher Christian life have their origin in a new understanding of Christ's power to work all God's will in us.

I want to call on you now to come and worship an almighty God. Have you learned to do it? Have you learned to deal so closely with an almighty God that you know omnipotence is working in you? In outward appearance there is often little sign of it. The apostle Paul said: "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and ... my preaching was ... in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:3-4). From the human side there was feebleness; from the divine side there was divine omnipotence. And that is true of every godly life. If we would only learn that lesson better, and give a wholehearted, undivided surrender to it, we would learn what blessedness there is in dwelling every hour and every moment with an almighty God. Have you ever studied in the Bible the attribute of God's omnipotence? You know that it was God's omnipotence that created the world, and created light out of darkness, and created man. But have you studied God's omnipotence in the works of redemption?

Look at Abraham. When God called him to be the father of that people out of which Christ was to be born, He said to him: "I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). And God trained Abraham to trust Him as the omnipotent One. Whether it was his going out to a land that he did not know, or his faith as a pilgrim midst the thousands of Canaanites-his faith said: "This is my land." Whether it was his faith in waiting twenty-five years for a son in his old age, against all hope, or whether it was the raising up of Isaac from the dead on Mount Moriah when he was going to sacrifice him-Abraham believed God. He was strong in faith, giving glory to God, because he accounted Him who had promised able to perform. The cause of the weakness of your Christian life is that you want to work it out partly, and to let God help you. And that cannot be. You must come to be utterly helpless, to let God work. He will work gloriously. It is this that we need if we are indeed to be workers for God. I could go through Scripture and prove to you how Moses, when he led Israel out of Egypt; how Joshua, when he brought them into the land of Canaan; how all God's servants in the Old Testament counted on the omnipotence of God doing impossibilities. And this God lives today; and this God is the God of every child of His. And yet some of us want God to give us a little help while we do our best, instead of coming to understand what God wants, and to say: "I can do nothing. God must and will do all." Have you said: "In worship, in work, in sanctification, in obedience to God, I can do nothing of myself, and so my place is to worship God, and to believe that He will work in me every moment"? Oh, may God teach us this! Oh, that God would by His grace show you what a God you have, and to what a God you have entrusted yourself-an omnipotent God. He is willing, with His whole omnipotence, to place Himself at the disposal of every child of His! Will we not take the lesson of the Lord Jesus, and say: "Amen; the things which are impossible with men are possible with God"?

Remember what we have said about Peter, his selfconfidence, self-power, self-will, and how he came to deny his Lord. You feel, "Ah! there is the self-life; there is the fleshlife that rules in me!"

And now, have you believed that there is deliverance from that? Have you believed that Almighty God is able to reveal Christ in your heart, to let the Holy Spirit rule in you so that the self-life will not have power or dominion over you? Have you coupled the two together- and, with tears of penitence and with deep humiliation and feebleness, cried out: "O God, it is impossible to me; man cannot do it, but glory to Your name, it is possible with God"? Have you claimed deliverance? Do it now. Put yourself afresh in absolute surrender into the hands of a God of infinite love. As infinite as His love is His power to do it.

GOD WORKS IN MAN But again, we come to the question of absolute surrender, and feel that that is lacking in the Church of Christ. That is why the Holy Spirit cannot fill us, and why we cannot live as people entirely separated unto the Holy Spirit. That is why the flesh and the self-life cannot be conquered. We have never understood what it is to be absolutely surrendered to God as Jesus was. I know that many earnestly and honestly say: "Amen, I accept the message of absolute surrender to God." Yet they think: "Will that ever be mine? Can I count on God to make me one of whom it will be said in heaven, on earth, and in hell, he lives in absolute surrender to God?" Brother, sister, "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Do believe that, when He takes charge of you in Christ, it is possible for God to make you a man of absolute surrender. And God is able to maintain that. He is able to let you rise from bed every morning of the week with that blessed thought directly or indirectly: "I am in God's charge. My God is working out my life for me."

Some are weary of thinking about sanctification. You pray; you have longed and cried for it; and yet, it appeared so far off! You are so conscious of how distant the holiness and humility of Jesus is. Beloved friends, the one doctrine of sanctification that is scriptural and real and effectual is: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." God can sanctify men. By His almighty and sanctifying power, God can keep them every moment. Oh, that we might get a step nearer to our God now! Oh, that the light of God might shine, and that we might know our God better!

I could go on to speak about the life of Christ in us-living like Christ, taking Christ as our Savior from sin, and as our life and strength. It is God in heaven who can reveal that in you. What does that prayer of the apostle Paul say: "That he would grant you according to riches of his glory, to be strength- ened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16)? Do you not see that it is an omnipotent God working by His omnipotence in the heart of His believing children, so that Christ can become an indwelling Savior? You have tried to grasp it, understand it, and to believe it, and it would not come. It was because you had not been brought to believe that "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God." And so I trust that the word spoken about love may have brought many to see that we must have an inflowing of love in quite a new way. Our heart must be filled with life from above- from the Fountain of everlasting love-if it is going to overflow all day. Then it will be just as natural for us to love our fellow-men as it is natural for the lamb to be gentle and the wolf to be cruel. When I am brought to such a state that the more a man hates and speaks evil of me--the more unlikable and unlovable a man is the more I will love him. When I am brought to such a state that the more obstacles, hatred, and ingratitude surround me, the more the power of love can triumph in me. Until I am brought to see these, I am not saying: "It is impossible with men." But if you have been led to say: "This message has spoken to me about a love utterly beyond my power. It is absolutely impossible"-then we can come to God and say: "It is

possible with You."

Some are crying to God for a great revival. I can say that this is the unceasing prayer of my heart. Oh, if God would only revive His believing people! I cannot think of the unconverted formalists of the Church or of the infidels and skeptics or of all the wretched and perishing around me, without my heart pleading: "My God, revive Your Church and people." It is not for a lack of reason that thousands of hearts yearn after holiness and consecration. It is a forerunner of God's power. God works to will and then He works to do. These yearnings are a witness and a proof that God has worked to will. Oh, let us in faith believe that the omnipotent God will work to do among His people more than we can ask. "Unto him," Paul said, "that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, unto him be glory" (Ephesians 3:20-21). Let our hearts say that. Glory to God, the omnipotent One, who can do above what we dare to ask or think!

"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." All around you there is a world of sin and sorrow, and Satan is there. But remember, Christ is on the throne; Christ is stronger; Christ has conquered; and Christ will conquer. But wait on God. My text casts us down: "The things which are impossible with men", but it ultimately lifts us up high-"are possible with God." Get linked to God. Adore and trust Him as the omnipotent One, not only for your own life, but for all the souls that are entrusted to you. Never pray without adoring His omnipotence, saying: "Mighty God, I claim Your almightiness. " And the answer to the prayer will come. Like Abraham you will become strong in faith, giving glory to God, because you account Him who has promised able to perform.

02.06. O wretched man that I am!

"O WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM!"

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24-25).

You know the wonderful location that this text has in the epistle to the Romans. It stands here at the end of the seventh chapter as the gateway into the eighth. In the first sixteen verses of the eighth chapter, the name of the Holy Spirit is found sixteen times. You have there the description and promise of the life that a child of God can live in the power of the Holy Spirit. This begins in the second verse: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). From that, Paul goes on to speak of the great privileges of the child of God who is to be led by the Spirit of God. The gateway into all this is found at the end of chapter seven: "O wretched man that I am!" There you have the words of a man who has come to the end of himself. He has in the previous verses described how he had struggled and wrestled in his own power to obey the holy law of God, and had failed. But in answer to his own questions, he now finds the true answer and cries out: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." From that he goes on to speak of what that deliverance is that he has found.

I want, from these words, to describe the path by which a man can be led out of the spirit of bondage into the spirit of liberty. You know how distinctly it is said: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear" (Romans 8:15). We are continually warned that this is the great danger of the Christian life, to go again into bondage. I want to describe the path by which a man can get out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rather, I want to describe the man himself.

First, these words are the language of a regenerate man; second, of a weak man; third, of a wretched man; and fourth, of a man on the border of complete liberty. **THE REGENERATE MAN**

There is much evidence of regeneration from the fourteenth verse of chapter seven on to the twenty-third verse. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Romans 7:17). That is the language of a regenerate man—a man who knows that his heart and nature have been renewed, and that sin is now a power in him that is not himself. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Romans 7:22). That again is the language of a regenerate man. He dares to say when he does evil: "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth me." It is of great importance to understand this, In the first two great sections of the epistle, Paul deals with justification and sanctification. In dealing with justification, he lays the foundation of the doctrine in the teaching about sin. He does not speak of the singular sin, but of the plural, sins—the actual transgressions. In the second part of the fifth chapter, he begins to deal with sin, not as actual transgression, but as a power. Just imagine what a loss it would have been to us if we did not have this second half of the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans—if Paul had omitted in his teaching this vital question of the sinfulness of the believer. We should 'have missed the question we all want

answered as to sin in the believer. What is the answer? The regenerate man is one in whom the will has been renewed, and who can say: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." **THE WEAK MAN**

Here is the great mistake made by many Christian people—they think that when there is a renewed will, it is enough. But that is not the case. This regenerate man tells us: "I will to do what is good, but the power to perform I find not." How often people tell us that if you set yourself determinedly, you can perform what you will! But this man was as determined as any man can be, and yet he made the confession: "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not" (Romans 7:18).

But, you ask: "How is it God makes a regenerate man utter such a confession? He being with a right will, with a heart that longs to do good, and longs to do its very utmost to love God?"

Let us look at this question. What has God given us our will for? Had the angels who fell, in their own will, the strength to stand? Surely, no. The will of man is nothing but an empty vessel in which the power of God is to be made manifest. Man must seek in God all that is to be. You have it in the second chapter of the epistle to the Philippians, and you have it here also, that God's work is to work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Here is a man who appears to say: "God has not worked to do in me." But we are taught that God works both to will and to do. How is the apparent contradiction to be reconciled?

You will find that in this passage (Romans 7:6-25), the name of the Holy Spirit does not occur once, nor does the name of Christ occur. The man is wrestling and struggling to fulfill God's law. Instead of the Holy Spirit and of Christ, the law is mentioned nearly twenty times. In this chapter, it shows a believer doing his very best to obey the law of God with his regenerate will. Not only this; but you will find the little words, I, me, my, occur more than forty times. It is the regenerate I in its weakness seeking to obey the law without being filled with the Spirit. This is the experience of almost every saint. After conversion, a man begins to do his best, and he fails. But if we are brought into the full light, we no longer need to fail. Nor need we fail at all if we have received the Spirit in His fullness at conversion.

God allows that failure so that the regenerate man should be taught his own utter inability. It is in the course of this struggle that the sense of our utter sinfulness comes to us. It is God's way of dealing with us. He allows man to strive to fulfill the law so that, as he strives and wrestles, he may be brought to this: "I am a regenerate child of God, but I am utterly helpless to obey His law." See what strong words are used all through the chapter to describe this condition: "I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14); "I see another law in my members bringing me into captivity" (Romans 7:23); and last of all, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). This believer who bows here in deep contrition is utterly unable to obey the law of God. **THE WRETCHED MAN** Not only is the man who makes this confession a regenerate and a weak man, but he is also a wretched man. He is utterly unhappy and miserable. What is it that makes him so utterly miserable? It is because God has given him a nature that loves Himself. He is deeply wretched because he feels he is not obeying his God. He says, with brokenness of heart: "It is not I that do it, but I am under the awful power of sin, which is holding me down. It is I, and yet not I: alas! alas! it is myself; so closely am I bound up with it, and so closely is it intertwined with my very nature." Blessed be God when a man learns to say: "O wretched man that I am!" from

the depth of his heart. He is on the way to the eighth chapter of Romans.

There are many who make this confession a pillow for sin. They say that if Paul had to confess his weakness and helplessness in this way, who are they that they should try to do better? So the call to holiness is quietly set aside. Pray God that every one of us would learn to say these words in the very spirit in which they are written here! When we hear sin spoken of as the abominable thing that God hates, do not many of us wince before the word? If only all Christians who go on sinning and sinning would take this verse to heart. If ever you utter a sharp word say: "O wretched man that I am!" And every time you lose your temper, kneel down and understand that God never meant His child to remain in this state. If only we would take this word into our daily life, and say it every time we are touched about our own honor! If only we would take it into our hearts every time we say sharp things, and every time we sin against the Lord God, and against the Lord Jesus Christ in His humility and in His obedience and in His self-sacrifice! Pray God that we could forget everything else, and cry out: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Why should you say this whenever you commit sin? Because it is when a man is brought to this confession that deliverance is at hand. And remember, it was not only the sense of being weak and taken captive that made him wretched. It was, above all, the sense of sinning against his God. The law was doing its work, making sin exceedingly sinful in his sight. The thought of continually grieving God became utterly unbearable. It was this that brought forth the piercing cry: "O wretched man!" As long as we talk and reason about our inability and our failure, and only try to find out what Romans, chapter seven, means, it will profit us little. But once every sin gives new intensity to the sense of wretchedness, and we feel our whole state as one of not only helplessness, but actual, exceeding sinfulness, we will be pressed not only to ask: "Who shall deliver us?" but to cry: "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord." THE ALMOST-DELIVERED MAN The man has tried to obey the beautiful law of God. He has loved it; he has wept over his sin; and he has tried to conquer. He has tried to overcome fault after fault, but every time he has ended in failure. What did he mean by "the body of this death"? Did he mean, my body when I die? Surely not. In the eighth chapter, you have the answer to this question in the words: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). That is the body of death from which he is seeking deliverance. And now he is on the brink of deliverance! In, the twentythird verse of the seventh chapter, we have the words: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." It is a captive that cries: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body I of this death?" He is a man who feels himself bound. But look to the contrast in the second verse of the eighth chapter: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." That is the deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord, the liberty to the captive which the Spirit brings. Can you keep captive any longer a man made free by the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"? But you say, the regenerate man did not have the Spirit of Jesus when he spoke in the sixth chapter. Yes, he did not know what the Holy Spirit could do for him.

God does not work by His Spirit as He works by a blind force in nature. He leads His people on as reasonable, intelligent beings. Therefore, when He wants to give us that Holy Spirit whom He has promised, He first brings us to the end of self brings us to the conviction that though we have been striving to obey the law, we have failed. When we have come to the end of that, then He shows us

that in the Holy Spirit we have the power of obedience, the power of victory, and the power of real holiness. God works to will, and He is ready to work to do, but many Christians misunderstand this. They think because they have the will, it is enough, and that now they are able to do. This is not so. The new will is a permanent gift, an attribute of the new nature. The power to do is not a permanent gift, but must be received each moment from the Holy Spirit. It is the man who is conscious of his own weakness as a believer who will learn that by the Holy Spirit he can live a holy life. This man is on the brink of that great deliverance; the way has been prepared for the glorious eighth chapter. I now ask this solemn question: Where are you living? With you, is it, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" with now and then a little experience of the power of the Holy Spirit? Or is it, "I thank God through Jesus Christ! The law of the Spirit hath set me free from the law of sin and of death"?

What the Holy Spirit does is to give the victory. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). It is the Holy Spirit who does this-the third Person of the Godhead. It is He who, when the heart is opened wide to receive Him, comes in and reigns there, and mortifies the deeds of the body, day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment.

I want to bring this to a point. Remember, dear friend, what we need is to come to decision and action. There are in Scripture two very different sorts of Christians. The Bible speaks in Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians about yielding to the flesh; and that is the life of tens of thousands of believers. All their lack of joy in the Holy Spirit, and their lack of the liberty He gives, is just owing to the flesh. The Spirit is within them, but the flesh rules the life. To be led by the Spirit of God is what they need. If only I could make every child of His realize what it means that the everlasting God has given His dear Son, Christ Jesus, to watch over you every day, and that what you have to do is to trust. If only I could make His children understand that the work of the Holy Spirit is to enable you every moment to remember Jesus, and to trust Him! The Spirit has come to keep the link with Him unbroken every moment. Praise God for the Holy Spirit! We are so accustomed to thinking of the Holy Spirit as a luxury, for special times, or for special ministers and men. But the Holy Spirit is necessary for every believer, every moment of the day. Praise God you have Him, and that He gives you the full experience of the deliverance in Christ as He makes you free from the power of sin. Who longs to have the power and the liberty of the Holy Spirit? Oh, brother, bow before God in one final cry of despair: "O God, must I go on sinning this way forever? Who shall deliver me, O wretched man that I am! from the body of this death?" Are you ready to sink before God in that cry and seek the power of Jesus to live and work in you? Are you ready to say: "I thank God through Jesus Christ"?

What good does it do that we go to church or attend conventions, that we study our Bibles and pray, unless our lives are filled with the Holy Spirit? That is what God wants. Nothing else will enable us to live a life of power and peace. When a minister or parent is using the catechism, and a question is asked, an answer is expected. How sad that many Christians are content with the question put here: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" but never give the answer.

Instead of answering, they are silent. Instead of saying: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," they are forever repeating the question without the answer. If you want the path to the full deliverance of Christ, and the liberty of the Spirit-the glorious liberty of the children of God-take it

through the seventh chapter of Romans. Then say: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Do not be content to remain ever groaning, but say: "I, a wretched man, thank God, through Jesus Christ. Even though I do not see it all, I am going to praise God. "

There is deliverance; there is the liberty of the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God is "joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

02.07. Having begun in the Spirit

"HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT" The words from which I wish to address you, you will find in the epistle to the Galatians, the third chapter, the second and third verses: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish?" And then comes my text-"Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" When we speak of the quickening or the deepening or the strengthening of the spiritual life, we are thinking of something that is feeble and wrong and sinful. It is a great thing to take our place before God with the confession: "Oh, God, our spiritual life is not what it should be!" May God work that in your heart, reader. As we look around at the Church, we see so many indications of feebleness, failure, sin, and shortcoming. They compel us to ask: Why is it? Is there any necessity for the Church of Christ to be living in such a low state? Or is it actually possible that God's people should be living always in the joy and strength of their God?

Every believing heart must answer: It is possible.

Then comes the great question: Why is it, how is it to be accounted for, that God's Church as a whole is so feeble, and that the great majority of Christians are not living up to their privileges? There must be a reason for it. Has God not given Christ His Almighty Son to be the Keeper of every believer, to make Christ an ever-present reality, and to impart and communicate to us all that we have in Christ? God has given His Son, and God has given His Spirit. How is it that believers do not live up to their privileges? In more than one of the epistles, we find a very solemn answer to that question. There are epistles, such as the first to the Thessalonians, where Paul writes to the Christians, in effect: "I want you to grow, to abound, to increase more and more." They were young, and there were things lacking in their faith. But their state was so far satisfactory, gave him such great joy, that he writes time after time: "I pray God that you may abound more and more; I write to you to increase more and more" (1 Thessalonians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:10). But there are other epistles where he takes a very different tone, especially the epistle to the Corinthians and to the Galatians, and he tells them in many different ways what the one reason was that they were not living as Christians ought to live. Many were under the power of the flesh. My text is one example. He reminds them that by the preaching of faith they had received the Holy Spirit. He had preached Christ to them; they had accepted that Christ and had received the Holy Spirit in power. But what happened? Having begun in the Spirit, they tried to perfect the work that the Spirit had begun in the flesh by their own effort. We find the same teaching in the epistle to the Corinthians.

Now, we have here a solemn discovery of what the great need is in the Church of Christ. God has called the Church of Christ to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. But the Church is living, for the most part, in the power of human flesh, and of will and energy and effort apart from the Spirit of God. I do not doubt that this is the case with many individual believers. And oh, if God will use me to give you a message from Him, my one message will be this: "If the Church will return to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is her strength and her help, and if the Church will return to give

up everything, and wait on God to be filled with the Spirit, her days of beauty and gladness will return. We will see the glory of God revealed among us." This is my message to every individual believer: "Nothing will help you unless you come to understand that you must live every day under the power of the Holy Spirit." God wants you to be a living vessel in whom the power of the Spirit is to be manifested every hour and every moment of your life. God will enable you to be that.

Now, let us try to learn what this word to the Galatians teaches us-some very simple thoughts. It shows us how (1) the beginning of the Christian life is receiving the Holy Spirit. It shows us (2) what great danger there is of forgetting that we are to live know what it is, since that time, to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us try to take hold of this great truth: The beginning of the true Christian life is to receive the Holy Spirit. And the work of every Christian minister is that which was the work of Paul-to remind his people that they received the Holy Spirit, and must live according to His guidance and in His power.

If those Galatians who received the Holy Spirit in power were tempted to go astray by that terrible danger of perfecting in the flesh what had been begun in the Spirit, how much more danger do those Christians run who hardly ever know that they have received the Holy Spirit. How much more danger is there for those who, if they know it as a matter of belief, hardly ever think of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and hardly ever praise God for it!

NEGLECTING THE HOLY SPIRIT But now look, in the second place, at the great danger.

You may all know what shunting is on a railway. A locomotive with its train may be traveling in a certain direction, and the points at some place may not be properly opened or closed, and unobservingly it is shunted off to the right or to the left. And if that takes place, for instance, on a dark night, the train goes in the wrong direction, and the people might never know it until they have gone some distance. And just so, God gives Christians the Holy Spirit with this intention-that every day, all their life, should be lived in the power of the Spirit. A man cannot live one hour of a godly life unless by the power of the Holy Spirit. He may live a proper, consistent life, as people call it, an irreproachable life, a life of virtue and diligent service. But to live a life acceptable to God, in the enjoyment of God's salvation and God's love, to live and walk in the power of the new life-he cannot do it unless he is guided by the Holy Spirit every day and every hour. But now listen to the danger. The Galatians received the Holy Spirit, but what was begun by the Spirit they tried to perfect in the flesh. How? They fell back again under Judaizing teachers who told them they must be circumcised. They began to seek their religion in external observances. And so Paul uses that expression about those teachers who had them circumcised so "that they may glorify in your flesh" (Galatians 6:13).

You sometimes hear the expression used, religious flesh. What is meant by that? It is simply an expression made to give utterance to these thoughts: My human nature and my human will and my human effort can be very active in religion. After being converted, and after receiving the Holy Spirit, I may begin in my own strength to try to serve God.

I may be very diligent and doing a great deal, and yet all the time it is more the work of human flesh than of God's Spirit. What a solemn thought, that man can, without noticing, be shunted off from the line of the Holy Spirit onto the line of the flesh.

How solemn it is that man can be most diligent and make great sacrifices, and yet it is all in the power of the human will! Ah, the great question for us to ask of God in self-examination is that we may be shown whether our Christian life is lived more in the power of the flesh than in the power of the Holy Spirit. A man may be a preacher, he may work most diligently in his ministry, a man may be a Christian worker, and others may say of him that he makes great sacrifices, and yet you can feel there is something lacking. You feel that he is not a spiritual man; there is no spirituality about his life. How many Christians there are about whom no one would ever think of saying: "What a spiritual man he is!" Ah! there is the weakness of the Church of Christ. It is all in that one word-flesh.

Now, the flesh may manifest itself in many ways. It may be manifested in fleshly wisdom. My mind may be most active about Christianity. I may preach or write or think or meditate, and delight in being occupied with things in God's Book and in God's Kingdom. Yet, the power of the Holy Spirit may be markedly absent. I fear that if you take the preaching throughout the Church of Christ and ask why there is so little converting power in the preaching of the Word, why there is so much work and often so little result for eternity, why the Word has so little power to build up believers in holiness and in consecration-the answer will be: It is the absence of the power of the Holy Spirit. And why is this? There can be no other reason except that the flesh and human energy have taken the place that the Holy Spirit ought to have. That was true of the Galatians; it was true of the Corinthians. You know Paul said to them: "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual men, but as unto carnal" (1 Corinthians 3:1). And you know how often in the course of his epistle he had to reprove and condemn them for strife and for divisions.

LACKING THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT A third thought: What are the proofs or indications that a church like the Galatians, or a Christian, is serving God in the power of the flesh-is perfecting in the flesh what was begun in the Spirit? The answer is very easy. Religious self effort always ends in sinful flesh. What was the state of those Galatians? They were striving to be justified by the works of the law. And yet they were quarreling and in danger of devouring one another. Count the number of expressions that the apostle uses to indicate their want of love. You will find more than twelve-envy, jealousy, bitterness, strife, and all sorts of others. Read in the fourth and fifth chapters what he says about that. You see how they tried to serve God in their own-strength, and they failed utterly. All this religious effort resulted in failure. The power of sin and the sinful flesh got the better of them. Their whole condition was one of the saddest that could be thought of. This comes to us with unspeakable solemnity.

There is a complaint everywhere in the Christian Church of the lack of a high standard of integrity and godliness, even among the professing members of Christian churches. I remember a sermon which I heard preached on commercial morality. But let us not speak only of the commercial morality or immorality; let us go into the homes of Christians. Think of the life to which God has called His children, and which He enables them to live by the Holy Spirit. Think of how much there is of unlovingness, temper, sharpness, and bitterness. Think how often there is strife among the members of churches, and how much there is of envy, jealousy, sensitiveness, and pride. Then we are compelled to say: "Where are marks of the presence of the Spirit of the Lamb of God?" Wanting, sadly wanting!

Many people speak of these things as though they were the natural result of our feebleness and cannot be helped. Many people speak of these things as sins, yet have given up the hope of conquering them. Many people speak of these things in the church around them, and do not see the least prospect of ever having the things changed. There is no prospect until there is a radical change, until the Church of God begins to see that every sin in the believer comes from the flesh—from a fleshly life midst our Christian activities, from a striving in self-effort to serve God. We will fail until we learn to make confession, and until we begin to see that we must somehow or other get God's Spirit in power back to His Church. Where did the Church begin in Pentecost? There they began in the Spirit. But, how the Church of the next century went off into the flesh! They thought to perfect the Church in the flesh. Do not let us think, because the blessed Reformation restored the great doctrine of justification by faith, that the power of the Holy Spirit was then fully restored. If it is our belief that God is going to have mercy on His Church in these last ages, it will be because the doctrine and the truth about the Holy Spirit will not only be studied, but sought after with a whole heart. It is not only because that truth will be sought after, but because ministers and congregations will be found bowing before God in deep abasement with one cry: "We have grieved God's Spirit. We have tried to be Christian churches with as little as possible of God's Spirit. We have not sought to be churches filled with the Holy Spirit."

All the feebleness in the Church is owing to the refusal of the Church to obey its God. And why is that so? I know your answer. You say: "We are too feeble and too helpless, and we vow to obey, but somehow we fail." Ah yes, you fail because you do not accept the strength of God. God alone can work out His will in you. You cannot work out God's will, but His Holy Spirit can. Until the Church and the believers grasp this, and cease trying by human effort to do God's will, and wait upon the Holy Spirit to come with all His omnipotent and enabling power, the Church will never be what God wants her to be. It will never be what God is willing to make of her.

YIELDING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT I come now to my last thought, that question: What is the way to restoration?

Beloved friend, the answer is simple and easy. If that train has been shunted off, there is nothing for it to do but to come back to the point at which it was led away. The Galatians had no other way in returning but to come back to where they had gone wrong. They had to come back from all religious effort in their own strength, and from seeking anything by their own work, and to yield themselves humbly to the Holy Spirit. There is no other way for us as individuals. Is there any brother or sister whose heart is conscious: "My life knows little of the power of the Holy Spirit"? I come to you with God's message that you can have no conception of what your life would be in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is too high, too blessed, and too wonderful. But I bring you the message that just as truly as the everlasting Son of God came to this world and did His wonderful works, that just as truly as on Calvary He died and brought about your redemption by His precious blood, so can the Holy Spirit come into your heart. With His divine power, He may sanctify you and enable you to do God's blessed will, and fill your heart with joy and strength. But, we have forgotten; we have grieved; we have dishonored the Holy Spirit; and, He has not been able to do His work. But I bring you the message: The Father in heaven loves to fill His children with His Holy Spirit. God longs to give each one individually, separately, the power of the Holy Spirit for daily life. The command comes to us individually, unitedly. God wants us as His children to arise and place our sins before Him, and to call on Him for mercy. Oh, are you so foolish? Having begun in the

Spirit, are you perfecting in the flesh that which was begun in the Spirit? Let us bow in shame, and confess before God how our fleshly religion, our self-effort and self-confidence, have been the cause of every failure.

I have often been asked by young Christians: "Why is it that I fail so? I did so solemnly vow with my whole heart, and did desire to serve God. Why have I failed?" To such I always give this answer: "My dear friend, you are trying to do in your own strength what Christ alone can do in you." And when they tell me: "I am sure I knew Christ alone could do it; I was not trusting in myself," my answer is: "You were trusting in yourself, or you could not have failed. If you had trusted Christ, He could not fail." Oh, this perfecting in the flesh what was begun in the Spirit runs far deeper through us than we know. Let us ask God to show us that it is only when we are brought to utter shame and emptiness that we will be prepared to receive the blessing that comes from on high. And so I come with these two questions. Are you living, beloved brother-minister-I ask it of every minister of the Gospel-under the power of the Holy Spirit? Are you living as an anointed, Spirit-filled man in your ministry and your life before God? Oh friends, our place is an awful one. We have to show people what God will do for us, not in our words and teaching, but in our life. God help us to do it!

I ask it of every member of Christ's Church and of every believer: Are you living a life under the power of the Holy Spirit day by day? Or are you attempting to live without that? Remember, you cannot. Are you consecrated, given up to the Spirit to work in you and to live in you? Oh, come and confess every failure of temper, every failure of tongue however small. Confess every failure owing to the absence of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the power of self. Are you consecrated, are you given up to the Holy Spirit?

If your answer is no, then I come with a second question-Are you willing to be consecrated? Are you willing to give yourself up to the power of the Holy Spirit? You well know that the human side of consecration will not help you. I may consecrate myself a hundred times with all the intensity of my being, and that will not help me. What will help me is this-that God from heaven accepts and seals the consecration. And now are you willing to give yourselves up to the Holy Spirit? You can do it now. A great deal may still be dark and dim, and beyond what we understand. You may feel nothing; but come. God alone can work the change. God alone, who gave us the Holy Spirit, can restore the Holy Spirit in power into our life. God alone can "strengthen us with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). And to every waiting heart that will make the sacrifice, and give up everything, and give time to cry and pray to God, the answer will come. The blessing is not far off. Our God delights in helping us. He will enable us to perfect, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, what was begun in the Spirit.

02.08. Kept by the Power of God

KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD The words from which I speak, you will find in 1 Peter, chapter one, verse five. The third, fourth, and fifth verses are: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which ...hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible . . . reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The words of my text are: "Kept by the power of God through faith."

There we have two wonderful, blessed truths about the way a believer is kept unto salvation. One truth is, Kept by the power of God; and the other truth is, Kept through faith. We should look at the two sides-at God's side and His almighty power, offered to us to be our Keeper every moment of the day; and at the human side, we have nothing to do but in faith to let God do His keeping work. We are begotten again to an inheritance kept in heaven for us. We are kept here on earth by the power of God.

We see there is a double keeping-the inheritance kept for me in heaven, and I on earth kept for the inheritance there. Now, as to the first part of this -keeping, there is no doubt and no question. God keeps the inheritance in heaven very wonderfully and perfectly, and it is waiting there safely. And the same God keeps me for the inheritance. That is what I want to understand. It is very foolish for a father to take great trouble to have an inheritance for his children, and to keep it for them, if he does not keep them for it. Think of a man spending all of his time and making every sacrifice to amass money, and as he gets his tens of thousands, you ask him why it is that he sacrifices himself so. His answer is: "I want to leave my children a large inheritance, and I am keeping it for them." If you were then to hear that that man takes no trouble to educate his children, that he, allows them to run around the street wild, and to go in paths of sin and ignorance and folly, what would you think of him? Would you not say: "Poor man! he is keeping an inheritance for his children, but he is not keeping or preparing his children for the inheritance!" And there are so many Christians who think: "My God is keeping the inheritance for me." But they cannot believe: "My God is keeping me for that inheritance." The same power, the same love, the same God doing the double work.

Now, I want to speak about a work God does upon us, keeping us for the inheritance. I have already said that we have two very simple truths: the one, the divine side-we are kept by the power of God; the other, the human side-we are kept through faith.

KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD

Look at the divine side: Christians are kept by the power of God. 1) Keeping Includes All. Think, first of all, that this keeping is all inclusive.

What is kept? You are kept. How much of you? The whole being. Does God keep one part of you and not another? No. Some people have an idea that this is a sort of vague, general keeping, and that God will keep them in such a way that when they die they will get to heaven. But they do not

apply that word kept to everything in their being and nature. And yet that is what God wants.

Here I have a watch. Suppose that this watch had been borrowed from a friend, and he said to me: "When you go to Europe, I will let you take it with you, but mind you keep it safely and bring it back." And suppose I damage the watch, and had the hands broken, and the face defaced, and some of the wheels and springs spoiled, and took it back in that condition, and handed it to my friend. He would say: "Ah, but I gave you that watch on condition that you would keep it."

"Have I not kept it? There is the watch."

"But I did not want you to keep it in that general way, so that you should bring me back only the shell of the watch, or the remains. I expected you to keep every part of it." And so God does not want to keep us in this general way, so that at the last, somehow or other, we will be saved as by fire, and just get into heaven. But the keeping power and the love of God applies to every part of our being.

There are some people who think God will keep them in spiritual things, but not in temporal things. This latter, they say, lies outside of His realm. Now, God sends you to work in the world, but He did not say: "I must now leave you to go and earn your own money, and to get your livelihood for yourself." He knows you are not able to keep yourself. But God says: "My child, there is no work you are to do, and no business in which you are engaged, and not a cent which you are to spend, but I, your Father, will take that up into my keeping." God not only cares for the spiritual, but for the temporal, also. The greater part of the life of many people must be spent, sometimes eight or nine or ten hours a day, amid the temptations and distractions of business. But God will care for you there. The keeping of God includes all.

There are other people who think: "Ah! in time of trial God keeps me. But in times of prosperity I do not need. His keeping; then I forget Him and let Him go." Others, again, think the very opposite. They think: "In time of prosperity, when things are smooth and quiet, I am able to cling to God. But when heavy trials come, somehow or other my will rebels, and God does not keep me then."

Now, I bring you the message that in prosperity as in adversity, in the sunshine as in the dark, your God is ready to keep you all the time. Then again, there are others who think of this keeping thus: "God will keep me from doing very great wickedness, but there are small sins I cannot expect God to keep me from. There is the sin of temper. I cannot expect God to conquer that." When you hear of some man who has been tempted and gone astray or fallen into drunkenness or murder, you thank God for His keeping power. "I might have done the same as that man," you say, "if God had not kept me." And you believe He kept you from drunkenness and murder. And why do you not believe that God can keep you from outbreaks of temper? You thought that this was of less importance. You did not remember that the great commandment of the New Testament is-"Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34). And when your temper and hasty judgment and sharp words came out, you sinned against the highest law-the law of God's love. And yet you say: "God will not, God cannot"-no, you will not say, God cannot; but you say, "God does not keep me from that." You perhaps say: "He can; but there is something in me that cannot attain to it, and which God does not take away."

I want to ask you, Can believers live a holier life than is generally lived? Can believers experience the keeping power of God all day, to keep them from sin? Can believers be kept in fellowship with

God? And I bring you a message from the Word of God, in these words: Kept by the power of God. There is no qualifying clause to them. The meaning is, that if you will entrust yourself entirely and absolutely to the omnipotence of God, He will delight in keeping you.

Some people think that they can never reach the point that every word of their mouth would be to the glory of God. But it is what God wants of them; it is what God expects of them. God is willing to set a watch at the door of their mouth. If God will do that, can He not keep their tongue and their lips? He can. That is what God is going to do for those who trust Him. God's keeping is all-inclusive. Let everyone who longs to live a holy life think about all their needs, their weaknesses, their shortcomings, and their sins, and say deliberately: "Is there any sin that my God cannot keep me from?" And the heart will have to answer: "No, God can keep me from every sin."

2) Keeping Requires Power. Second, if you want to understand this keeping, remember that it is not only an all-inclusive keeping, but it is an almighty keeping.

I want to get that truth burned into my soul. I want to worship God until my whole heart is filled with the thought of His omnipotence. God is almighty, and the Almighty God offers Himself to work in my heart-to do the work of keeping me. I want to get linked .with omnipotence, or rather, linked to the omnipotent One--the living God--and to have my place in the hollow of His hand. You read the Psalms, and you think of the wonderful thoughts in many of the expressions that David uses. For instance, when he speaks about being our God, our Fortress, our Refuge, our strong Tower, our Strength, and our Salvation. David had wonderful views of how the everlasting God is Himself the hiding place of the believing soul. David had a beautiful understanding of how God takes the believer and keeps him in the very hollow of His hand--in the secret of His pavilion--under the shadow of His wings, under His very feathers. And there David lived. And we, who are the children of Pentecost, who have known Christ, His blood, and the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, why is it that we know so little of what it is to walk step by step with the Almighty God as our Keeper? Have you ever thought that, in every action of grace in your heart, you have the whole omnipotence of God engaged to bless you? When I come to a man and he gives me a gift of money; I get it and go away with it. He has given me something of his. The rest he keeps for himself. But that is not the way with the power of God. God can part with nothing of His own power, and therefore I can experience the power and goodness of God only so far as I am in contact and fellowship with Him. And when I come into contact and fellowship with Him, I come into contact and fellowship with the whole omnipotence of God. I have the omnipotence of God to help me every day. A son has, perhaps, a very rich father, and as the former is about to commence business the father says: "You can have as much money as you want for your undertaking." All the father has is at the disposal of the son. And that is the way with God, your Almighty God. You can hardly take it in; you feel like such a little worm. His omnipotence is needed to keep a little worm! Yes, His omnipotence is needed to keep every little worm that lives in the dust, and also to keep the universe. Therefore, His omnipotence is much more needed in keeping your soul and mine from the power of sin.

Oh, if you want to grow in grace, do learn to begin here. In all your judgments and meditations and thoughts and deeds and questions and studies and prayers, learn to be kept by your Almighty God. What is the Almighty God not going to do for the child that trusts Him? The Bible says: "Above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). It is omnipotence you must learn to know and

trust. Then you will live as a Christian ought to live. How little we have learned to study God, and to understand that a godly life is a life full of God. It is a life that loves God and waits on Him, trusts Him, and allows Him to bless it! We cannot do the will of God except by the power of God. God gives us the first experience of His power to prepare us to long for more, and to come and claim all that He can do. God helps us to trust Him every day.

3) Keeping Is Continuous Another thought. This keeping is not only all inclusive and omnipotent, but also continuous and unbroken.

People sometimes say: "For a week or a month God has kept me very wonderfully. I have lived in the light of His countenance, and I can say what joy I have had in fellowship with Him. He has blessed me in my work for others. He has given me souls, and at times I felt as if I were carried heavenward on eagle wings. But it did not continue. It was too good; it could not last." And some say: "It was necessary that I should fall to keep me humble." And others say: "I know it was my own fault; but somehow you cannot always live up in the heights." Oh, beloved, why is it? Can there be any reason why the keeping of God should not be continuous and unbroken? Just think. All life is in unbroken continuity. If my life were stopped for half an hour, I would be dead, and my life gone. Life is a continuous thing, and the life of God is the life of His Church. The life of God is His almighty power working in us. And God comes to us as the Almighty One, and without any condition He offers to be my Keeper. His keeping means that day by day, moment by moment, God is going to keep us.

If I were to ask you the question: "Do you think God is able to keep you one day from actual transgression?" you would answer: "I not only know He is able to do it, but I think He has done it. There have been days in which He has kept my heart in His holy presence. There have also been days when, though I have always had a sinful nature within me, He has kept me from conscious, actual transgression."

Now, if He can do that for an hour or a day, why not for two days? Oh! let us make God's omnipotence as revealed in His Word the measure of our expectations. Has God not said in His Word: "I, the Lord, do keep it, and will water it every moment" (Isaiah 27:3)? What can that mean? Does "every moment" mean every moment? Did God promise of that vineyard or red wine that every moment He would water it so that the heat of the sun and the scorching wind might never dry it up? Yes. In South Africa, they sometimes make a graft, and above it they tie a bottle of water, so that now and then there will be a drop to saturate what they have put about it. And so the moisture is kept there unceasingly until the, graft has had time to take, and resist the heat of the sun. Will our God, in His tenderhearted love toward us, not keep us every moment when He has promised to do so? Oh! if we once got hold of the thought: Our whole spiritual life is to be God's doing-"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his pleasure" (Php 2:13). Once we get faith to expect that from God, God will do all for us. The keeping is to be continuous. Every morning, God will meet you as you wake. It is not a question: If I forget to wake in the morning with the thought of Him, what will come of it? If you trust your waking to God, God will meet you in the mornings as you wake with His divine sunshine and life. He will give you the consciousness that through the day you have got God to continually take charge of you with His almighty power. And God will meet you the next day and every day. Never mind if, in the practice of fellowship, failure sometimes comes. If you maintain your position-and say: "Lord, I am going to expect You to do

Your utmost, and I am going to trust You day by day to keep me absolutely," your faith will grow stronger and stronger. You will know the keeping power of God in unbrokenness.

KEPT THROUGH FAITH And now the other side-Believing. "Kept by the power of God through faith." How must we look at this faith?

4) Faith Implies Helplessness Let me say, first of all, that this faith means utter inability and helplessness before God. At the bottom of all faith there is a feeling of helplessness. If I have a bit of business to transact, perhaps to buy a house, the lawyer must do the work of getting the transfer of the property in my name. He must make all the arrangements. I cannot do that work, and, in trusting that agent, I confess I cannot do it. And so faith always means helplessness. In many cases it means: I can do it with a great deal of trouble, but another can do it better. But in most cases it is utter helplessness: another must do it for me. And that is the secret of the spiritual life. A man must learn to say: "I give up everything. I have tried and longed and thought and prayed, but failure has come. God has blessed me and helped me, but still, in the long run, there has been so much sin and sadness." What a change comes when a man is thus broken down into utter helplessness and self-despair, and says, "I can do nothing!"

Remember Paul. He was living a blessed life, and he had been taken up into the third heaven. Then the thorn in the flesh came, "a messenger of Satan to buffet me" (2 Corinthians 12:7). And what happened? Paul could not understand it, and three times he prayed to the Lord to take it away. But the Lord said, in effect: "No, it is possible that you might exalt yourself. Therefore, I have sent you this trial to keep you weak and humble." And Paul then learned a lesson that he never forgot-to rejoice in his infirmities. He said that the weaker he was the better it was for him. For when he was weak, he was strong in his Lord Christ. Do you want to enter what people call "the higher life"? Then go a step lower down. I remember Dr. Boardman telling how once he was invited by a gentleman to go to a factory where they made fine shot. I believe the workmen did so by pouring down molten lead from a great height. This gentleman wanted to take Dr. Boardman up to the top of the tower to see how the work was done. The doctor came to the tower, he entered by the door, and began going upstairs. But when he had gone a few steps, the gentleman called out: "That is the wrong way. You must come down this way. That stair is locked up." The gentleman took him downstairs a good many steps, and there an elevator was ready to take him to the top. He said: "I have learned a lesson that going down is often the best way to get up."

Ah, yes, God will have to bring us down very low. A sense of emptiness and despair and nothingness will have to come upon us. It is when we sink down in utter helplessness that the everlasting God will reveal Himself in His power. Then our hearts will learn to trust God alone.

What is it that keeps us from trusting Him perfectly?

Many say: "I believe what you say, but there is one difficulty. If my trust were perfect and always abiding, all would come right, for I know God will honor trust. But how am I to get that trust?" My answer is: "By the death of self. The great hindrance to trust is self-effort. So long as you have got your own wisdom and thoughts and strength, You cannot fully trust God. But when God breaks you down, when everything begins to grow dim before your eyes and you see that you understand nothing, then God is coming near. If you will bow down in nothingness and wait on God, He will become all." As long as we are something, God cannot be all. His omnipotence cannot do its full

work. That is the beginning of faith-utter despair of self, a ceasing from man and everything on earth and finding our hope in God alone.

5) Faith Is Rest And then, next, we must understand that faith is rest. In the beginning of the faith-life, faith is struggling. But as long as faith is struggling, faith has not attained its strength. But when faith in its struggling gets to the end of itself, and throws itself upon God and rests on Him, then joy and victory come.

Perhaps I can make it plainer if I tell the story of how the Keswick Convention began. Canon Battersby was an evangelical clergyman of the Church of England for more than twenty years. He was a man of deep and tender godliness, but he did not have the consciousness of rest and victory over sin. He was often deeply saddened by the thought of stumbling and failure and sin. When he heard about the possibility of victory, he felt it was desirable, but it was as if he could not attain it. On one occasion, he heard an address on "Rest and Faith" from the story of the nobleman who came from Capernaum to Cana to ask Christ to heal his child. In the address, it was shown that the nobleman believed that Christ could help him in a general way. But he came to Jesus a good deal by way of an experiment. He hoped Christ would help him, but he did not have any assurance of that help. But what happened? When Christ said to him: "Go thy way, for thy child liveth" (John 4:50), that man believed the word that Jesus spoke. He rested in that word. He had no proof that his child was well again, and he had to walk back seven hours' journey to Capernaum. He walked back, and on the way met his servant, and got the first news that the child was well. The servant told him that at one o'clock on the afternoon of the previous day, at the very time that Jesus spoke to him, the fever left the child. That father rested on the word of Jesus and His work, and he went down to Capernaum and found his child well. He praised God, and he and his whole house became believers and disciples of Jesus. Oh, friends, that is faith! When God comes to me with the promise of His keeping, and I have nothing on earth to trust in, I say to God: "Your word is enough. I am kept by the power of God." That is faith, that is rest. When Canon Battersby heard that address, he went home that night, and in the darkness of the night he found rest. He rested on the word of Jesus. And the next morning, in the streets of Oxford, he said to a friend: "I have found it!" Then he went and told others, and asked that the Keswick Convention might commence. He said that those at the convention, along with himself, should simply testify what God had done.

It is a great thing when a man comes to rest on God's almighty power for every moment of his life. It is also great when he does so in the midst of temptations to temper and haste and anger and unlovingness and pride and sin. It is a great thing in the face of these to enter into a covenant with the omnipotent Jehovah--not on account of anything that any man says, or of anything that my heart feels--but on the strength of the Word of God: "Kept by the power of God through faith."

Oh, let us say to God that we are going to prove Him to the very utmost. Let us say: We ask You for nothing more than You can give, but we want nothing less. Let us say: My God, let my life be a proof of what the omnipotent God can do. Let these be the two dispositions of our souls every day--deep helplessness, and simple, childlike rest.

6) Faith Needs Fellowship That brings me to just one more thought in regard to faith. Faith implies fellowship with God.

Many people want to take the Word and believe that, but do not think it is so necessary to fellowship with God. Ah, no! you cannot separate God from His Word. No goodness or power can be received separate from God. If you want to get into this life of godliness, you must take time for fellowship with God. People sometimes tell me: "My life is one of such scurry and bustle that I have no time for fellowship with God." A dear missionary said to me: "People do not know how we missionaries are tempted. I get up at five o'clock in the morning, and there are the natives waiting for their orders for work. Then, I have to go to the school and spend hours there. Then, there is other work, and sixteen hours rush along. I hardly get time to be alone with God."

Ah! there is the need. I pray you, remember two things. I have not told you to trust the omnipotence of God as a thing, and I have not told you to trust the Word of God as a written book. I have told you to go to the God of omnipotence and the God of the Word. Deal with God as that nobleman dealt with the living Christ. Why was he able to believe the word that Christ spoke to him? Because in the very eyes and tone and voice of Jesus, the Son of God, he saw and heard something which made him feel that he could trust Him. And that is what Christ can do for you and me. Do not try to stir and arouse faith from within. How often I have tried to do that, and made a fool of myself! You cannot stir up faith from the depths of your heart. Leave your heart, and look into the face of Christ. Listen to what He tells you about how He will keep you. Look up into the face of your loving Father, and take time every day with Him. Begin a new life with the deep emptiness and poverty of a man who has got nothing, and who wants to get everything from Him—with the deep restfulness of a man who rests on the living God, the omnipotent Jehovah. Try God, and prove Him if He will not open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that there will not be room to receive it.

I close by asking if you are willing to fully experience the heavenly keeping for the heavenly inheritance? Robert Murray M'Cheyne says, somewhere: "Oh, God, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be made." And if that prayer is in your heart, come now, and let us enter into a covenant with the everlasting and omnipotent Jehovah afresh. In great helplessness, but in great restfulness, let us place ourselves in His hands. And then, as we enter into our covenant, let us have the one prayer—that we may fully believe that the everlasting God is going to be our companion. Let us believe that He will hold our hand every moment of the day. He is our Keeper, watching over us without a moment's interval. He is our Father, delighting to reveal Himself in our souls always. He has the power to let the sunshine of His love be with us all day. Do not be afraid that because you have your business you cannot have God with you always. Learn the lesson that the natural sun shines on you all day, and you enjoy its light. Wherever you are you have got the sun; God makes certain that it shines on you. And God will make certain that His own divine light shines on you, and that you will abide in that light, if you will only trust Him for it. Let us trust God to do that with a great and entire trust. Here is the omnipotence of God, and here is faith reaching out to the measure of that omnipotence. We can say: "All that that omnipotence can do, I am going to trust my God for." Are not the two sides of this heavenly life wonderful? God's omnipotence covers me, and my will in its littleness rests in that omnipotence, and rejoices in it!

Moment by moment, I'm kept in His love;

Moment by moment, I've life from above;

Looking to Jesus, the glory doth shine;

Moment by moment, Oh, Lord, I am thine!

02.09. Ye are the branches

"YE ARE THE BRANCHES" AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIAN WORKERS

Everything depends on our being right in Christ. If I want good apples, I must have a good apple tree. If I care for the health of the apple tree, the apple tree will give me good apples. And it is just so with our Christian life and work. If our life with Christ is right, all will come out right. Instruction and suggestion and help and training in the different departments of the work may be needed; all that has value. But in the long run, the greatest essential is to have the full life in Christ—in other words, to have Christ in us, working through us. I know how much there is to disturb us, or to cause anxious questionings. But the Master has such a blessing for every one of us and such perfect peace and rest. He has such joy and strength if we can only come into, and be kept in, the right attitude toward Him.

I will take my text from the parable of the Vine and the Branches, in John, chapter fifteen, verse five: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Especially these words: "Ye are the branches."

What a simple thing it is to be a branch, the branch of a tree, or the branch of a vine! The branch grows out of the vine, or out of the tree, and there it lives and grows and, in due time, bears fruit. It has no responsibility except to receive sap and nourishment from the root and stem. And if only we knew, by the Holy Spirit, about our relationship to Jesus Christ, our work would be changed into the brightest and most heavenly thing on earth. Instead of there ever being soul-weariness or exhaustion, our work would be like a new experience, linking us to Jesus as nothing else can. For, is it not true that often our work comes between us and Jesus? What folly! The very work that He has to do in me, and I for Him, I take up in such a way that it separates me from Christ. Many a laborer in the vineyard has complained that he has too much work, and not enough time for close communion with Jesus. He complains that his usual work weakens his inclination for prayer, and that his many conversations with men darken the spiritual life. Sad thought, that the bearing of fruit should separate the branch from the vine! That must be because we have looked on our work as something other than the branch bearing fruit. May God deliver us from every false thought about the Christian life.

Now, just a few thoughts about this blessed branch-life.

ABSOLUTE DEPENDENCE In the first place, it is a life of absolute dependence. The branch has nothing; it just depends on the vine for everything. Absolute dependence is one of the most solemn and precious of thoughts. A great German theologian wrote two large volumes some years ago to show that the whole of Calvin's theology is summed up in that one principle of absolute dependence upon God; and he was right. Another great writer has said that absolute, unalterable dependence upon God alone is the essence of the religion of angels. It should also be that of men. God is everything to the angels, and He is willing to be everything to the Christian. If I can learn to depend on God every moment of the day, everything will come right. You will receive the higher life if you depend absolutely on God.

Now, here we find it with the vine and the branches. Every vine you ever see, or every bunch of grapes that come to your table, let it remind you that the branch is absolutely dependent on the vine. The vine has to do the work, and the branch enjoys the fruit of it.

What has the vine to do? It has to do a great work. It has to send its roots out into the soil and hunt under the ground-the roots often extend a long way out-for nourishment, and to drink in the moisture. Put certain elements of manure in certain directions, and the vine sends its roots there. Then, its roots or stems turn the moisture and manure into that special sap which makes the fruit that is borne. The vine does the work, and the branch has just to receive the sap from the vine. The sap is then changed into grapes. I have been told that at Hampton Court, London, there was a vine that sometimes bore a couple of thousand bunches of grapes. People were astonished at its large growth and rich fruitage. Afterward, the cause was discovered. The Thames River flows nearby, so the vine had stretched its roots hundreds of yards under the ground until it had come to the riverside. There, in all the rich slime of the riverbed, it had found rich nourishment, and obtained moisture. The roots had drawn the sap all that distance up and up into the vine. As a result, there was the abundant, rich harvest. The vine had the work to do, and the branches had just to depend on the vine and receive what it gave. Is that literally true of my Lord Jesus? Must I understand that when I have to work, when I have to preach a sermon or address a Bible class or go out and visit the poor, neglected ones, that all the responsibility of the work is on Christ? That is exactly what Christ wants you to understand. Christ desires that in all your work the very foundation should be the simple, blessed consciousness: Christ must care for all. And how does He fulfill the trust of that dependence? He does it by sending down the Holy Spirit-not now and then only as a special gift. But remember, the relationship between the vine and the branches is such that hourly, daily, unceasingly, the living connection is maintained. The sap does not flow for a time, and then stop, and then flow again. Instead, moment to moment, the sap flows from the vine to the branches. And just so, my Lord Jesus wants me to take that blessed position as a worker. Morning by morning and day by day and hour by hour and step by step-in every work-I have to go out to abide before Him in the simple, utter helplessness of one who knows nothing. I must be as one who is nothing, and can do nothing. Oh, beloved workers, study that word nothing. You sometimes sing: "Oh, to be nothing, nothing"; but have you really studied that word and prayed every day and worshipped God in the light of it? Do you know the blessedness of that word nothing?

If I am something, then God is not everything; but when I become nothing, God can become all. The everlasting God in Christ can reveal Himself fully. That is the higher life. We need to become nothing. Someone has well said that the seraphim and cherubim are flames of fire because they know they are nothing, and they allow God to put His fullness and His glory and brightness into them. Oh, become nothing in deep reality, and, as a worker, study only one thing-to become poorer and lower and more helpless, that Christ may work all in you.

Workers, here is your first lesson: learn to be nothing, learn to be helpless. The man who has got something is not absolutely dependent. But the man who has got nothing is absolutely dependent. Absolute dependence on God is the secret of all power in work. The branch has nothing but what it gets from the vine. You and I can have nothing but what we get from Jesus.

DEEP RESTFULNESS But second, the life of the branch is not only a life of entire dependence, but also of deep restfulness. That little branch, if it could think, feel, and speak, and if we could say: "Come, branch of the vine, I want to learn from you how I can be a true branch of the living Vine," what would it answer? The little branch would whisper: "Man, I hear that you are wise, and I know that you can do a great many wonderful things. I know you have much strength and wisdom given to you, but I have one lesson for you. With all your hurry and effort in Christ's work, you never prosper. The first thing you need is to come and rest in your Lord Jesus. That is what I do. Since I grew out of that vine, I have spent years and years, and all I have done is just to rest in the vine. When the time of spring came I had no anxious thought or care. The vine began to pour its sap into me, and to give the bud and leaf. And when summer came, I had no care; and in the great heat, I trusted the vine to bring moisture to keep me fresh. And in the time of harvest, when the owner came to pluck the grapes, I had no care. If there was anything in the grapes not good, the owner never blamed the branch; the blame was always on the vine. And if you would be a true branch of Christ, the living Vine, just rest on Him. Let Christ bear the responsibility."

You say: "Won't that make me slothful?"

I tell you it will not. No one who learns to rest on the living Christ can become slothful. The closer your contact with Christ, the more the Spirit of His zeal and love will be borne in upon you. But, oh, begin to work in the midst of your entire dependence by adding to that deep restfulness. A man sometimes tries and tries to be dependent on Christ, but he worries himself about this absolute dependence. He tries and he cannot get it. But let him sink down into entire restfulness every day. In Thy strong hand I lay me down. So shall the work be done; For who can work so wondrously As the Almighty One?

Workers, take your place every day at the feet of Jesus, in the blessed peace and rest that come from the knowledge- I have no care, my cares are His! I have no fear, He cares for all my fears.

Come, children of God, and understand that it is the Lord Jesus who wants to work through you. You complain of the lack of fervent love. It will come from Jesus. He will give the divine love in your heart with which you can love people. That is the meaning of the assurance: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5); and of that other word: "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). Christ can give you a fountain of love so that you cannot help loving the most wretched and the most ungrateful, or those who have wearied you. Rest in Christ, who can give wisdom and strength. You do not know how that restfulness will often prove to be the very best part of your message. You plead with people and you argue, and they get the idea: "There is a man arguing and striving with me." But if you will let the deep rest of God come over you-the rest in Christ Jesus, the peace and the rest and holiness of heaven-that restfulness will bring a blessing to the heart, even more than the words you speak.

MUCH FRUITFULNESS But third, the branch teaches a lesson of much fruitfulness. The Lord Jesus Christ repeated the word fruit often in that parable. He spoke, first, of fruit, and then of more fruit, and then of much fruit. Yes, you are ordained not only to bear fruit, but to bear much fruit. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:8). In the first place, Christ said: "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman" (John 15:1). God will watch over the connection between Christ and the branches. It is in the power of God through Christ that we are to bear fruit.

Oh, Christians, you know this world is perishing for lack of workers. And it lacks more than workers. Many workers are saying, some more earnestly than others: "We need not only more workers, but we need our workers to have a new power a different life-so that we workers would be able to bring more blessing." Children of God, I appeal to you. You know what trouble you take, say, in a case of sickness. You have a beloved friend apparently in danger of death, and nothing can refresh that friend so much as a few grapes. But, they are out of season. Still, what trouble you will take to get the grapes that are to be the nourishment of this dying friend! And, there are people around who never go to church, and so many who go to church, but do not know Christ. And yet, the heavenly grapes-the grapes of the heavenly Vine-are not to be had at any price except as the child of God bears them out of his inner life in fellowship with Christ. Except the children of God are filled with the sap of the heavenly Vine, except they are filled with the Holy Spirit and the love of Jesus, they cannot bear much of the real heavenly grape. We all confess there is a great deal of work, a great deal of preaching, teaching, and visiting, a great deal of machinery, and a great deal of earnest effort of every kind. But, there is not much manifestation of the power of God in it.

What is wanting? The close connection between the worker and the heavenly Vine is lacking. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has blessings that He could pour on tens of thousands who are perishing. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has power to provide the heavenly grapes. But "Ye are the branches," and you cannot bear heavenly fruit unless you are in close connection with Jesus Christ. Do not confuse work and fruit. There may be a good deal of work for Christ that is not the fruit of the heavenly Vine. Do not seek for work only. Oh! study this question of fruit-bearing. It means the very life, power, spirit, and love within the heart of the Son of God. It means the heavenly Vine Himself coming into your hearts and mine.

You know there are different sorts of grapes, each with a different name. Every vine provides exactly that peculiar aroma and juice which gives the grape its particular flavor and taste. Just so, there is in the heart of Christ Jesus a life, a love, a Spirit, a blessing, and a power for men, that are entirely heavenly and divine, and that will come down into our hearts. Stand in close connection with the heavenly Vine and say: "Lord Jesus, nothing less than the sap that flows through You, nothing less than the Spirit of Your divine life is what we ask. Lord Jesus, I pray, let Your Spirit flow through me in all my work for You." I tell you again that the sap of the heavenly Vine is nothing but the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the life of the heavenly Vine. What you must get from Christ is nothing less than a strong inflow of the Holy Spirit. You need it exceedingly, and you want nothing more than that. Remember that. Do not expect Christ to give a bit of strength here, and a bit of blessing yonder, and a bit of help over there. As the vine does its work in giving its own peculiar sap to the branch, so expect Christ to give His own Holy Spirit into your heart. Then you will bear much fruit. Perhaps you have only begun to bear fruit, and are listening to the word of Christ in the parable, "more fruit," "much fruit." Remember, that in order for you to bear more fruit, you just require more of Jesus in your life and heart.

We ministers of the Gospel, how we are in danger of getting into a condition of work, work, work! And we pray over it, but the freshness, buoyancy, and joy of the heavenly life are not always present. Let us seek to understand that the life of the branch is a life of much fruit, because it is a life rooted in Christ, the living, heavenly Vine.

CLOSE COMMUNION And fourth, the life of the branch is a life of close communion.

Let us again ask: What has the branch to do? You know that precious, inexhaustible word that Christ used-Abide. Your life is to be an abiding life. And how is the abiding to be? It is to be just like the branch in the vine, abiding every minute of the day. The branches are in close communion, in unbroken communion, with the vine, from January to December. And can I not live every day-it is to me an almost terrible thing that we should ask the question-in abiding communion with the heavenly Vine?

You say: "But I am so occupied with other things."

You may have ten hours' hard work daily, during which your brain has to be occupied with temporal things. God orders it so. But the abiding work is the work of the heart, not of the brain. It is the work of the heart clinging to and resting in Jesus, a work in which the Holy Spirit links us to Christ Jesus. Oh, do believe that deeper down than the brain, deep down in the inner life, you can abide in Christ, so that every moment you are free, the consciousness will come: "Blessed Jesus, I am still in You." If you will learn for a time to put aside other work and to get into this abiding contract with the heavenly Vine, you will find that fruit will come. What is the application to our life of this abiding communion? What does it mean? It means close fellowship with Christ in secret prayer. I am sure there are Christians who do long for the higher life, and who sometimes have received a great blessing. I am sure there are those who have at times found a great inflow of heavenly joy and a great outflow of heavenly gladness. Yet, after a time, it has passed away. They have not understood that close, personal communion with Christ is an absolute necessity for daily life. Take time to be alone with Christ. Nothing in heaven or earth can free you from the necessity for that, if you are to be happy and holy Christians.

Oh! how many Christians look on it as a burden and a tax, a duty and a difficulty, to often be alone with God! That is the great hindrance to our Christian life everywhere. We need more quiet fellowship with God. I tell you in the name of the heavenly Vine that you cannot be healthy branches-branches into which the heavenly sap can flow-unless you take plenty of time for communion with God. If you are not willing to sacrifice time to get alone with Him, and to give Him time everyday to work in you, and to keep up the link of connection between you and Himself, He cannot give you that blessing of His unbroken fellowship. Jesus Christ asks you to live in close communion with Him. Let every heart say: "O Christ, it is this I long for. It is this I choose." And He will gladly give it to you.

ABSOLUTE SURRENDER And then finally, the life of the branch is a life of absolute surrender.

These words, absolute surrender, are great and solemn. I believe we do not fully understand their meaning. But yet the little branch preaches it. "Have you anything to do, little branch, besides bearing grapes?" "No, nothing."

"Are you fit for nothing?"

Fit for nothing! The Bible says that a bit of vine cannot even be used as a pen. It is fit for nothing but to be burned. "And now, what do you understand, little branch, about your relationship to the vine?" "My relationship is just this: I am utterly given up to the vine, and the vine can give me as much or as little sap as it chooses. Here I am, at its disposal, and the vine can do with me what it likes."

Oh, friends, we need this absolute surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. The more I speak, the more I feel that this is one of the most difficult points to make clear. It is also one of the most important and needful points to explain what this absolute surrender is. It is often an easy thing for a man or a number of men to come out and offer themselves up God for entire consecration, saying: "Lord, it is my desire to give myself up entirely to You." That is of great value, and often brings very rich blessing. But the one question I ought to study quietly is: What is meant by absolute surrender?

It means that, as literally as Christ was given up entirely to God, I am given up entirely to Christ. Is that too strong? Some think so. Some think that can never be. They cannot believe that just as entirely and absolutely as Christ gave up His life to do nothing but seek the Father's pleasure, and depend on the Father absolutely and entirely, I am to do nothing but to seek the pleasure of Christ. But that is actually true. Christ Jesus came to breathe His own Spirit into us. He came to help us find our very highest happiness in living entirely for God, just as He did. Oh, beloved brethren, if that is the case, then I ought to say: "Yes, as true as it is of that little branch of the vine, by God's grace, I would have it to be true of me. I would live day by day that Christ may be able to do with me what He will."

Ah! here comes the terrible mistake that lies at the bottom of so much of our own Christianity. A man thinks: "I have my business and family duties, and my responsibilities as a citizen. All this I cannot change. And now alongside all this, I am to take Christianity and the service of God as something that will keep me from sin. God help me to perform my duties properly!" This is not right. When Christ came, He bought the sinner with His blood. If there was a slave market here and I were to buy a slave, I would take that slave away to my own house from his old surroundings. He would live at my house as my personal property, and I could order him about all day. And if he were a faithful slave, he would live as having no will and no interests of his own. His one care would be to promote the well-being and honor of his master. And in like manner I, who have been bought with the blood of Christ, have been bought to live every day with the one thought-How can I please my Master? Oh, we find the Christian life so difficult because we seek God's blessing while we live in our own will. We desire to live the Christian life according to our own liking. We make our own plans and choose our own work. Then, we ask the Lord Jesus to come in and make sure that sin will not conquer us too much, and that we will not go too far wrong. We ask Him to come in and give us so much of His blessing. But our relationship to Jesus ought to be such that we are entirely at His disposal. Every day we are to come to Him humbly and straightforwardly and say: "Lord, is there anything in me that is not according to Your will, that has not been ordered by You, or that is not entirely given up to You?"

Oh, if we could wait patiently, I tell you what the result would be. A relationship between us and Christ would spring up. It would be so close and so tender that afterward we would be amazed at how we formerly could have lived with the idea: "I am surrendered to Christ." We would feel how distant our fellowship with Him had previously been. We would understand that He can, and does indeed, come and take actual possession of us, and give us unbroken fellowship all day. The branch calls us to absolute surrender.

Now I do not speak so much about the giving up of sins. There are people who need that, people who have got violent tempers, bad habits, and actual sins which they from time to time commit, and which they have never given up into the very bosom of the Lamb of God. I pray you, if you are

branches of the living Vine, do not keep one sin back. I know there are a great many difficulties about this question of holiness. I know that all do not think exactly the same with regard to it. To me, that would be a matter of comparative indifference if I could see that all are honestly longing to be free from every sin. But I am afraid that unconsciously there are often compromises in hearts, with the idea that we cannot be without sin. There are those who think that we must sin a little every day; we cannot help it. Oh, that people would actually cry to God: "Lord, do keep me from sin!" Give yourself utterly to Jesus, and ask Him to do His very utmost for you in keeping you from sin.

There is a great deal in our work, in our church, and in our surroundings that we found in the world when we were born into it. It has grown all around us and we think that it is all right, that it cannot be changed. We do not come to the Lord Jesus and ask Him about it. Oh! I advise you, Christians, bring everything into relationship with Jesus, and say: "Lord, everything in my life has to be in most complete harmony with my position as a branch of You, the blessed Vine."

Let your surrender to Christ be absolute. I do not understand that word surrender fully. It gets new meanings every now and then. It enlarges immensely from time to time. But I advise you to speak it out: "Absolute surrender to You, Oh Christ, is what I have chosen." And Christ will show you what is not according to His mind, and lead you on to deeper and higher blessedness. In conclusion, let me gather up all in one sentence. Christ Jesus said: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." In other words: "I, the living One who have so completely given Myself to you, am the Vine. It is impossible to trust Me too much. I am the Almighty Worker, full of a divine life and power."

You are the branches of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is in your heart the consciousness that you are not a strong, healthy, fruit-bearing branch-not closely linked with Jesus, not living in Him as you should be-then listen to Him say: "I am the Vine; I will receive you. I will draw you to Myself; I will bless you. I will strengthen you; I will fill you with My Spirit. I, the Vine, have taken you to be My branches. I have given Myself utterly to you; children, give yourselves utterly to Me. I have surrendered Myself as God absolutely to you. I became man and died for you that I might be entirely yours. Come and surrender yourselves entirely to be Mine."

What shall our answer be? Oh, let it be prayer from the depths of our heart, that the living Christ may take each one of us and link us closely to Himself. Let our prayer be that He, the living Vine, will so link each of us to Himself that we will go away with our hearts singing: "He is my Vine, and I am His branch-I want nothing more-now that I have the everlasting Vine." Then, when you get alone with Him, worship and adore Him; praise and trust Him; love Him and wait for His love. "You are my Vine, and I am Your branch. It is enough; my soul is satisfied."

Glory to His blessed name!

03.00. Divine Healing

Divine Healing by Andrew Murray

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Preface

"The publication of this work may be regarded as a testimony of my faith in divine healing. After being stopped for more than two years in the exercise of my ministry, I was healed by the mercy of God in answer to the prayer of those who see in Him 'the Lord that healeth thee' (Exodus 15:26).

"This healing, granted to faith, has been the source of rich spiritual blessing to me. I have clearly seen that the Church possesses in Jesus, our Divine Healer, an inestimable treasure, which she does not yet know how to appreciate. I have been convinced anew of that which the Word of God teaches us in this matter, and of what the Lord expects of us; and I am sure that if Christians learned to realize practically the presence of the Lord that healeth, their spiritual life would thereby be developed and sanctified. I can therefore no longer keep silence, and I publish here a series of meditations, with the view of showing, according to the Word of God, that 'the prayer of faith' (James 5:15) is the means appointed by God for the cure of the sick, that this truth is in perfect accord with Holy Scripture, and that the study of this truth is essential for everyone who would see the Lord manifest His power and His glory in the midst of His children." - ANDREW MURRAY

03.01. Pardon and Healing

CHAPTER 1 Pardon and Healing

“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house” (Matthew 9:6). In man two natures are combined. He is at the same time spirit and matter, heaven and earth, soul and body. For this reason, on one side he is the son of God, and on the other he is doomed to destruction because of the Fall; sin in his soul and sickness in his body bear witness to the right which death has over him. It is the twofold nature which has been redeemed by divine grace. When the Psalmist calls upon all that is within him to bless the Lord for His benefits, he cries, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, who . . . forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases” (Psalms 103:3). When Isaiah foretells the deliverance of his people, he adds, “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity” (Isaiah 33:24). This prediction was accomplished beyond all anticipation when Jesus the Redeemer came down to this earth. How numerous were the healings wrought by Him who was come to establish upon earth the kingdom of heaven! Whether by His own acts or whether afterwards by the commands which He left for His disciples, does He not show us clearly that the preaching of the Gospel and the healing of the sick went together in the salvation which He came to bring? Both are given as evident proof of His mission as the Messiah: “The blind receive their sight and the lame walk., and the poor have the Gospel preached to them” (Matthew 11:5). Jesus, who took upon Him the soul and body of man, delivers both in equal measure from the consequences of sin. This truth is nowhere more evident or better demonstrated than in the history of the paralytic. The Lord Jesus begins by saying to him, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” after which He adds, “Arise and walk.” The pardon of sin and the healing of sickness complete one the other, for in the eyes of God, who sees our entire nature, sin and sickness are as closely united as the body and the soul. In accordance with the Scriptures, our Lord Jesus has regarded sin and sickness in another light than we have. With us sin belongs to the spiritual domain; we recognize that it is under God’s just displeasure, justly condemned by Him, while sickness, on the contrary, seems only a part of the present condition of our nature, and to have nothing to do with God’s condemnation and His righteousness. Some go so far as to say that sickness is a proof of the love and grace of God. But neither the Scripture nor yet Jesus Christ Himself ever spoke of sickness in this light, nor do they ever present sickness as a blessing, as a proof of God’s love which should be borne with patience. The Lord spoke to the disciples of divers sufferings which they should have to bear, but when He speaks of sickness, it is always as of an evil caused by sin and Satan, and from which we should be delivered. Very solemnly He declared that every disciple of His would have to bear his cross (Matthew 16:24), but He never taught one sick person to resign himself to be sick. Everywhere Jesus healed the sick, everywhere He dealt with healing as one of the graces belonging to the kingdom of heaven. Sin in the soul and sickness in the body both bear witness to the power of Satan, and “the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

Jesus came to deliver men from sin and sickness that He might make known the love of the Father. In His actions, in His teaching of the disciples, in the work of the apostles, pardon and healing are always to be found together. Either the one or the other may doubtless appear more in relief, according to the development or the faith of those to whom they spoke. Sometimes it was healing which prepared the way for the acceptance of forgiveness, sometimes it was forgiveness which preceded the healing, which, coming afterwards, became a seal to it. In the early part of His ministry, Jesus cured many of the sick, finding them ready to believe in the possibility of their healing. In this way He sought to influence hearts to receive Himself as He who is able to pardon sin. When He saw that the paralytic could receive pardon at once, He began by that which was of the greatest importance; after which came the healing which put a seal on the pardon which had been accorded to him.

We see, by the accounts given in the Gospels, that it was more difficult for the Jews at that time to believe in the pardon of their sins than in divine healing. Now it is just the contrary. The Christian Church has heard so much of the preaching of the forgiveness of sins that the thirsty soul easily receives this message of grace; but it is not the same with divine healing; that is rarely spoken of; the believers who have experienced it are not many. It is true that healing is not given in this day as in those times, to the multitudes whom Christ healed without any previous conversion. In order to receive it, it is necessary to begin by confession of sin and the purpose to live a holy life. This is without doubt the reason why people find more difficulty to believe in healing than in forgiveness; and this is also why those who receive healing receive at the same time new spiritual blessing, feel more closely united to the Lord Jesus, and learn to love and serve Him better. Unbelief may attempt to separate these two gifts, but they are always united in Christ. He is always the same Savior both of the soul and of the body, equally ready to grant pardon and healing. The redeemed may always cry: "Bless the Lord, O my soul., who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalms 103:3).

03.02. Because of Your Unbelief

CHAPTER 2 Because of Your Unbelief “Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?”

“And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you~~ (Matthew 17:19-20). When the Lord Jesus sent His disciples into different parts of Palestine, He endued them with a double power, that of casting out unclean spirits and that of healing all sickness and all infirmity (Matthew 10:1). He did the same for the seventy who came back to Him with joy, saying, “Lord, even the spirits are subject unto us through thy name” (Luke 10:17). On the day of the Transfiguration, while the Lord was still upon the mountain, a father brought his son who was possessed with a demon, to His disciples, beseeching them to cast out the evil spirit, but they could not. When, after Jesus had cured the child, the disciples asked Him why they had been unable to do it themselves as in other cases, He answered them, “because of your unbelief.” It was, then, their unbelief, and not the will of God which had been the cause of their defeat. In our days divine healing is very little believed in, because it has almost entirely disappeared from the Christian Church. One may ask the reason, and here are the two answers which have been given. The greater number think that miracles, the gift of healing included, should be limited to the time of the primitive Church, that their object was to establish the first foundation of Christianity, but that from that time circumstances have altered. Other believers say unhesitatingly that if the Church has lost these gifts, it is by her own fault; it is because she has become worldly that the Spirit acts but feebly in her; it is because she has not remained in direct and habitual relation with the full power of the unseen world; but that if she were to see anew springing up within her men and women who live the life of faith and of the Holy Spirit, entirely consecrated to their God, she would see again the manifestation of the same gifts as in former times. Which of these two opinions coincides the most with the Word of God? Is it by the will of God that the “gifts of healing” have been suppressed, or is it rather man who is responsible for it? Is it the will of God that miracles should not take place? Will He in consequence of this no longer give the faith which produces them? Or again, is it the Church which has been guilty of lacking faith?

What Saith the Scripture? The Bible does not authorize us, either by the words of the Lord or His apostles, to believe that the gifts of healing were granted only to the early times of the Church; on the contrary, the promises which Jesus made to the apostles when He gave them instructions concerning their mission, shortly before His ascension, appear to us applicable to all times (Mark 16:15—18). Paul places the gift of healing among the operations of the Holy Spirit. James gives a precise command on this matter without any restriction of time. The entire Scriptures declare that these graces will be granted according to the measure of the Spirit and of faith.

It is also alleged that at the outset of each new dispensation God works miracles, that it is His ordinary course of action; but it is nothing of the kind. Think of the people of God in the former

dispensation, in the time of Abraham, all through the life of Moses, in the exodus from Egypt, under Joshua, in the time of the Judges and of Samuel, under the reign of David and other godly kings up to Daniel's time; during more than a thousand years miracles took place.

But, it is said, miracles were much more necessary in the early days of Christianity than later. But what about the power of heathenism even in this day, wherever the Gospel seeks to combat it? It is impossible to admit that miracles should have been more needful for the heathen in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-12) than for the heathen of Africa in the present day. And if we think of the ignorance and unbelief which reign even in the midst of the Christian nations, are we not driven to conclude that there is a need for manifest acts of the power of God to sustain the testimony of believers and to prove that God is with them? Besides, among believers themselves, how much of doubt, how much of weakness there is! How their faith needs to be awakened and stimulated by some evident proof of the presence of the Lord in their midst. One part of our being consists of flesh and blood; it is therefore in flesh and blood that God wills to manifest His presence. In order to prove that it is the Church's unbelief which has lost the gift of healing, let us see what the Bible says about it. Does it not often put us on our guard against unbelief, against all which can estrange and turn us from our God? Does not the history of the Church show us the necessity of these warnings? Does it not furnish us with numerous examples of backward steps, of world pleasing, in which faith grew weak in the exact measure in which the spirit of the world took the upper hand? For such faith is only possible to him who lives in the world invisible. Until the third century the healings by faith in Christ were numerous, but in the centuries following they became more infrequent. Do we not know from the Bible that it is always unbelief which hinders the mighty working of God?

Oh, that we could learn to believe in the promises of God! God has not gone back from His promises; Jesus is still He who heals both soul and body; salvation offers us even now healing and holiness, and the Holy Spirit is always ready to give us some manifestations of His power. Even when we ask why this divine power is not more often seen, He answers us: 'Because of your unbelief' The more we give ourselves to experience personally sanctification by faith, the more we shall also experience healing by faith. These two doctrines walk abreast. The more the Spirit of God lives and acts in the soul of believers, the more will the miracles multiply by which He works in the body. Thereby the world can recognize what redemption means.

03.03. Jesus and the Doctors

CHAPTER 3 Jesus and the Doctors

Mark 5:25-34

We may be thankful to God for having given us doctors. Their vocation is one of the most noble, for a large number of them seek truly to do, with love and compassion, all they are able to alleviate the evils and sufferings which burden humanity as a result of sin. There are even some who are zealous servants of Jesus Christ, and who seek also the good of their patients' souls. Nevertheless it is Jesus Himself who is always the first, the best, the greatest Physician.

Jesus heals diseases in which earthly physicians can do nothing, for the Father gave Him this power when He charged Him with the work of our redemption. Jesus, in taking upon Him our human body, delivered it from the dominion of sin and Satan; He has made our bodies temples of the Holy Ghost and members of His own body (1 Corinthians 6:15; 1 Corinthians 6:19), and even in our day how many have been given up by the doctors as incurable, how many cases of tuberculosis, of gangrene, of paralysis, of dropsy, of blindness and of deafness, have been healed by Him! Is it not then astonishing that so small a number of the sick apply to Him? The method of Jesus is quite another than that of earthly physicians. They seek to serve God in making use of remedies which are found in the natural world, and God makes use of these remedies according to natural law, according to the natural properties of each, while the healing which proceeds from Jesus is of a totally different order; it is by divine power, the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus heals. Thus the difference between these two modes of healing is very marked. That we may understand it better, let us take an example; here is a physician who is an unbeliever, but extremely clever in his profession; many sick people owe their healing to him. God gives this result by means of the prescribed remedies, and the physician's knowledge of them. Here is another physician who is a believer, and who prays God's blessing on the remedies which he employs. In this case also a large number are healed, but neither in the one case nor the other does the healing bring with it any spiritual blessing. They will be preoccupied, even the believing among them, with the remedies which they use, much more than with what the Lord may be doing with them, and in such a case their healing will be more hurtful than beneficial. On the contrary, when it is Jesus only to whom the sick person applies for healing, he learns to reckon no longer upon remedies, but to put himself into direct relation with His love and His almightiness. In order to obtain such healing, he must commence by confessing and renouncing his sins, and exercising a living faith. Then healing will come directly from the Lord, who takes possession of the sick body, and it thus becomes a blessing for the soul as well as for the body.

"But is it not God who has given remedies to man?" it is asked. "Does not their power come from Him?" Without doubt; but on the other hand, is it not God who has given us His Son with all power to heal? Shall we follow the way of natural law with all those who do not yet know Christ, and also with those of His children whose faith is still too weak to abandon themselves to His almightiness; or rather do we choose the way of faith, receiving healing from the Lord and from the Holy Spirit,

seeing therein the result and the proof of our redemption? The healing which is wrought by our Lord Jesus brings with it and leaves behind it more real blessing than the healing which is obtained through physicians. Healing has been a misfortune to more persons than one. On a bed of sickness serious thoughts had taken possession, but from the time of his healing how often has a sick man been found anew far from the Lord! It is not thus when it is Jesus who heals. Healing is granted after confession of sin; therefore it brings the sufferer nearer to Jesus, and establishes a new link between him and the Lord, it causes him to experience His love and power, it begins within him a new life of faith and holiness. When the woman who had touched the hem of Christ's garment felt that she was healed, she learned something of what divine love means. She went away with the words: "Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace."

O you who are suffering from some sickness, know that Jesus the sovereign Healer is yet in our midst. He is close to us, and He is giving anew to His Church manifest proofs of His presence. Are you ready to break with the world, to abandon yourself to Him with faith and confidence? Then fear not, remember that divine healing is a part of the life of faith. If nobody around you can help you in prayer, if no "elder" is at hand to pray the prayer of faith, fear not to go yourself to the Lord in the silence of solitude, like the woman who touched the hem of His garment. Commit to Him the care of your body. Get quiet before Him and like the poor woman say, "I will be healed." Perhaps it may take some time to break the chains of your unbelief, but assuredly none that wait on Him shall be ashamed (Psalms 25:3)

03.04. Health and Salvation by the Name of Jesus

CHAPTER 4 Health and Salvation by the Name of Jesus Acts 3:16; Acts 4:10; Acts 4:12 When after Pentecost, the paralytic was healed through Peter and John at the gate of the temple, it was “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” that they said to him, “Rise up and walk,” and as soon as the people in their amazement ran together to them, Peter declared that it was the name of Jesus which had so completely healed the man. As the result of this miracle and of Peter’s discourse, many people who had heard the Word believed (Acts 4:4). On the morrow Peter repeated these words before the Sanhedrin, “By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth... doth this man stand here before you whole”; and then he added, “There is none other name under heaven..., whereby we must be saved.” This statement of Peter’s declares to us that the name of Jesus both heals and saves. We have here a teaching of the highest import for divine healing.

We see that healing and health form part of Christ’s salvation. Does not Peter clearly state this in his discourse to the Sanhedrin where, having spoken of healing, he immediately goes on to speak of salvation by Christ? (Acts 4:10; Acts 4:12). In heaven even our bodies will have their part in salvation; salvation will not be complete for us until our bodies shall enjoy the full redemption of Christ. Why then should we not believe in this work of redemption here below? Even already here on earth, the health of our bodies is a fruit of the salvation which Jesus has acquired for us.

We see also that health as well as salvation is to be obtained by faith. The tendency of man by nature is to bring about his salvation by his works, and it is only with difficulty that he comes to receive it by faith; but when it is a question of the healing of the body, he has still more difficulty in seizing it. As to salvation, he ends it by accepting it because by no other means can he open the door of heaven; while for the body, he makes use of well-known remedies. Why then should he seek for divine healing? Happy is he who comes to understand that it is the will of God; that God wills to manifest the power of Jesus, and also to reveal to us His Fatherly love; to exercise and to confirm our faith, and to make us prove the power of redemption in the body as well as in the soul. The body is part of our being; even the body has been saved by Christ; therefore it is in our body that our Father wills to manifest the power of redemption, and to let men see that Jesus lives. Oh, let us believe in the name of Jesus! Was it not in the name of Jesus that perfect health was given to the impotent man? And were not these words: “Thy faith hath saved thee,” pronounced when the body was healed? Let us seek then to obtain divine healing.

Wherever the Spirit acts with power, there He works divine healings. Would it not seem that if ever miracles were superfluous, it was at Pentecost, for then the word of the apostles worked mightily, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was abundant? Well, it is precisely because the Spirit acted powerfully that His working must needs be visible in the body. If divine healing is seen but rarely in our day, we can attribute it to no other cause than that the Spirit does not act with power. The unbelief of worldlings and the want of zeal among believers stop His working. The healings which God is giving here and there are the precursory signs of all the spiritual graces which are promised to us, and it is only the Holy Spirit who reveals the almightiness of the name of Jesus to operate

such healings. Let us pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit, let us place ourselves unreservedly under His direction, and let us seek to be firm in our faith in the name of Jesus, whether for preaching salvation or for the work of healing.

God grants healing to glorify the name of Jesus. Let us seek to be healed by Jesus that His name may be glorified. It is sad to see how little the power of His name is recognized, how little it is the end of preaching and of prayer. Treasures of divine grace, of which Christians deprive themselves by their lack of faith and zeal, are hidden in the name of Jesus. It is the will of God to glorify His Son in the Church; and He will do it wherever He finds faith. Whether among believers, or whether among the heathen, He is ready with virtue from on high to awaken consciences, and to bring hearts to obedience. God is ready to manifest the all-power of His Son, and to do it in a striking way in body as well as in soul. Let us believe it for ourselves, let us believe it for others, for the circle of believers around us, and also for the Church in the whole world. Let us give ourselves to believe with firm faith in the power of the name of Jesus, let us ask great things in His name, counting on His promise, and we shall see God still do wonders by the name of His holy Son.

03.05. Not by our own Power

CHAPTER 5 Not by Our Own Power

“And when Peter saw it he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?” (Acts 3:12). As soon as the impotent man had been healed at the gate of the temple through Peter and John, the people ran together unto them. Peter, seeing this miracle was attributed to their power and holiness, loses no time in setting them right by telling them that all the glory of this miracle belongs to Jesus, and that it is He in whom we must believe.

Peter and John were undoubtedly full of faith and of holiness; perhaps even they may have been the most holy and zealous servants of God in their time, otherwise God might not have chosen them as instruments in this case of healing. But they knew that their holiness of life was not of themselves, that it was of God through the Holy Spirit. They think so little of themselves that they ignore their own holiness and know only one thing—that all power belongs to their Master. They hasten, then, to declare that in this thing they count for nothing, that it is the work of the Lord alone. This is the object of divine healing: to be a proof of the power of Jesus, a witness in the eyes of men of what He is, proclaiming His divine intervention, and attracting hearts to Him. “Not by our own power or holiness.” Thus it becomes those to speak whom the Lord is pleased to use in helping others by their faith.

It is necessary to insist on this because of the tendency of believers to think the contrary. Those who have recovered their health in answer to “the prayer of faith,” “the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working” (James 5:16, R.V.), are in danger of being too much occupied with the human instrument which God is pleased to employ, and to think that the power lies in man’s piety.

Doubtless the prayer of faith is the result of real godliness, but those who possess it will be the first to acknowledge that it does not come from themselves, nor from any effort of their own. They fear to rob the Lord of the least particle of the glory which belongs to Him, and they know that if they do so, they will compel Him to withdraw His grace from them. It is their great desire to see the souls which God has blessed through them enter into a direct and increasingly intimate communion with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, since that is the result which their healing should produce. Thus they insist that it is not caused by their own power or holiness.

Such testimony on their part is necessary to reply to the erroneous accusations of unbelievers. The Church of Christ needs to hear clearly announced that it is on account of her worldliness and unbelief that she has lost these spiritual gifts of healing (1 Corinthians 12:9) and that the Lord restores to those who, with faith and obedience, have consecrated their lives to Him. This grace cannot reappear without being preceded by a renewal of faith and of holiness. But then, says the world, and with it a large number of Christians, “You are laying claim to the possession of a higher order of faith and holiness, you consider yourselves holier than others.” To such accusations this

word of Peter is the only reply before God and man, confirmed by a life of deep and real humility: "Not by our own power or holiness." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake" (Psalms 115:1). Such a testimony is also necessary in view of our own heart and of the wiles of Satan. As long as, through the Church's unfaithfulness, the gifts of healing are but rarely given, those children of God who have received these gifts are in danger of priding themselves upon them, and of imagining that they have in themselves something exceptionally meritorious. The enemy does not forget to persecute them by such insinuations, and woe unto them if they listen to him. They are not ignorant of his Y devices; therefore they need to pray continually to the Lord to keep them in humility, the true means of obtaining continually more grace. If they persevere in humility, they will recognize that the more God makes use of them, the more also will they be penetrated with the conviction that it is God alone who works by them, and that all the glory belongs to Him. "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Such is their watchword. Finally, this testimony is useful for the feeble ones who long for salvation, and who desire to receive Christ as their Healer. They hear of full consecration and entire obedience, but they form a false idea of it. They think they must in themselves attain to a high degree of knowledge and of perfection, and they fall a prey to discouragement. No, no; it is not by our own power or holiness that we obtain these graces, but by a faith quite simple, a childlike faith, which knows that it has no power nor holiness of its own, and which commits itself completely to Him who is faithful, and whose almightiness can fulfill His promise. Oh, let us not seek to do or to be anything of ourselves! It is only as we feel our own powerlessness, and expect all from God and His Word that we realize the glorious way in which the Lord heals sickness "by faith in his name."

03.06. According to the Measure of Faith

CHAPTER 6 According to the Measure of Faith

“And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour” (Matthew 8:13). This passage of Scripture brings before us one of the principal laws of the kingdom of heaven. In order to understand God’s ways with His people, and our relations with the Lord, it is needful to understand this law thoroughly and not to deviate from it. Not only does God give or withhold His gifts according to the faith or unbelief of each, but they are granted in greater or lesser measure, only in proportion to the faith which receives them. God respects the right to decide which He has conferred on man. Therefore He can only bless us in the measure in which each yields himself up to His divine working, and opens all his heart to Him. Faith in God is nothing else than the full opening of the heart to receive everything from God; therefore man can only receive divine grace according to his faith; and this applies as much to divine healing as to any other grace of God. This truth is confirmed by the spiritual blessings which may result from sickness. Two questions are often asked: (1) Is it not God’s will that His children should sometimes remain in a prolonged state of sickness? (2) Since it is a recognized thing that divine healing brings with it greater spiritual blessing than the sickness itself, why does God allow certain of His children to continue sick through many years, and while in this condition give them blessing in sanctification, and in communion with Himself? The answer to these two questions is that God gives to His children according to their faith. We have already had occasion to remark that in the same degree in which the Church has become worldly, her faith in divine healing has diminished until at last it has disappeared. Believers do not seem to be aware that they may ask God for the healing of their sickness, and that thereby they may be sanctified and fitted for His service. They have come to seek only submission to His will and to regard sickness as a means to be separate from the world. In such conditions the Lord gives them what they ask. He would have been ready to give them yet more, to grant them healing in answer to the prayer of faith, but they lacked the faith to receive it. God always meets His children where they are, howsoever weak they may be. The sick ones, therefore, who have desired to receive Him with their whole heart, will have received from Him the fruit of the sickness in their desire that their will should be conformed to the will of God. They might have been able to receive healing, in addition, as a proof that God accepted their submission; if this has not been so, it is because faith has failed them to ask for it.

“As thou hast believed so be it done unto thee.” These words give the reply to yet another question: How can you say that divine healing brings with it so much of spiritual blessing, when one sees that the greater number of those who were healed by the Lord Jesus received nothing more than a deliverance from their present sufferings, without giving any proof that they were also spiritually blessed? Here again, as they believed, so was it done unto them. A good number of sick people, having witnessed the healing of others, gained confidence in Jesus just far enough to be healed, and Jesus granted them their request, without adding other blessings for their souls. Before His ascension the Lord had not as free an entrance as He now has into the heart of man,

because “the Holy Ghost was not yet given” (John 7:39). The healing of the sick was then hardly more than a blessing for the body. It was only later, in the dispensation of the Spirit, that the conviction and confession of sin have become for the believer the first grace to be received, the essential condition for obtaining healing, as St. Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Corinthians, and James in his to the twelve tribes scattered abroad (1 Corinthians 11:31-32; James 5:16). Thus the degree of spiritual grace which it is possible for us to receive depends upon the measure of our faith, whether it be for its external manifestation, or especially whether for its influence upon our inner life.

We recommend for every suffering one who is looking for healing, and who seeks to know Jesus as his divine Healer, not to let himself be hindered by his unbelief, not to doubt the promises of God, and thus to be “strong in faith giving glory to God” as is His due. “As thou hast believed so be it done unto thee.” If with all your heart you trust in the living God you will be abundantly blessed; do not doubt it. The part of faith is always to lay hold on just that which appears impossible or strange to human eyes. Let us be willing to be considered fools for Christ’s sake (1 Corinthians 4:10). Let us not fear to pass for weak-minded in the eyes of the world and of such Christians as are ignorant of these things, because, on the authority of the Word of God, we believe that which others cannot yet admit. Do not, then, let yourself be discouraged in your expectation even though God should delay to answer you, or if your sickness be aggravated. Once having placed your foot firmly on the immovable rock of God’s own Word, and having prayed the Lord to manifest His almightiness in your body because you are one of the members of His Body, and the temple of the Holy Ghost, persevere in believing in Him with the firm assurance that He has undertaken for you, that He has made Himself responsible for your body, and that His healing virtue will come to glorify Him in you.

03.07. The Way of Faith

CHAPTER 7 The Way of Faith

“And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

These words have been a help and strength to thousands of souls in their pursuit of salvation and the gifts of God. Notice that it is in relation to an afflicted child that they were pronounced, in the fight of faith when seeking healing from the Lord Jesus. In them we see that in one and the same soul there can arise a struggle between faith and unbelief, and that it is not without a struggle that we come to believe in Jesus and in His all-power to heal the sick. In this we find the needful encouragement for realizing the Savior’s power.

I speak here especially to sufferers who do not doubt the power or the will of the Lord Jesus to heal in this day without the use of earthly remedies, but who lack the boldness to accept healing for themselves. They believe in the divine power of Christ, they believe in a general manner His good will to heal; they have acquired, either by the Scriptures, or by facts of healings by the Lord alone which have taken place in our days, the intellectual persuasion that the Lord can help even them, but they shrink back from accepting healing, and from saying with faith, “The Lord has heard me, I know that He is healing me.”

Take notice first that without faith no one can be healed. When the father of the afflicted child said to Jesus, “If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us,” Jesus replied: “If thou canst believe.” Jesus had the power to heal and He was ready to do it, but He casts responsibility on the man. “If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth” (R.V.). In order to obtain your healing from Jesus, it is not enough to pray. Prayer without faith is powerless. It is “the prayer of faith” which saves the sick (James 5:15). If you have already asked for healing from the Lord, or if others have asked it for you, you must, before you are conscious of any change, be able to say with faith, “On the authority of God’s Word I have the assurance that He hears me and that I shall be healed.” To have faith means in your case to surrender your body absolutely into the Lord’s hands, and to leave yourself entirely to Him. Faith receives healing as a spiritual grace which proceeds from the Lord even while there is no conscious change in the body. Faith can glorify God and say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul. . . which healeth all my diseases” (Psalms 103:1—3). The Lord requires this faith that He may heal. But how is such faith to be obtained? Tell your God the unbelief which you find in your heart, and count on Him for deliverance from it. Faith is not money by which your healing can be purchased from the Lord. It is He who desires to awaken and develop in you the necessary faith. “Help my unbelief,” cried the father of the child. It was his ardent desire that his faith should not come short. Confess to the Lord all the difficulty you have to believe Him on the ground of His Word; tell Him you want to be rid of this unbelief, that you bring it to Him with a will to hearken only to His Word. Do not lose time in deploring your unbelief, but look to Jesus. The light of His countenance will enable you to find the power to believe in Him (Psalms 44:3). He calls on you to trust in Him; listen to Him, and by His grace faith will triumph in you. Say

to Him, "Lord, I am still aware of the unbelief which is in me. I find it difficult to believe that I am sure of my healing because I possess Him who works it. And, nevertheless, I want to conquer this unbelief. Thou, Lord, wilt give me the victory. I desire to believe, I will believe, by Thy grace I dare to say I can believe. Yes, Lord, I believe, for Thou comest to the help of my unbelief." It is when we are in intimate communion with the Lord, and when our heart responds to His, that unbelief is overcome and conquered.

It is needful also to testify to the faith one has. Be resolved to believe that which the Lord says to you, to believe, above all, that which He is. Lean wholly upon His promises. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). Look to Jesus, who "bare our sickness" (Matthew 8:17), and who healed all who came to Him; count on the Holy Spirit to manifest in your heart the presence of Jesus who is also now in heaven, and to work also in your body the power of His grace. Praise the Lord without waiting to feel better, or to have more faith. Praise Him, and say with David, "O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me" (Psalms 30:2). Divine healing is a spiritual grace which can only be received spiritually and by faith, before feeling its effect on the body. Accept it, then, and give glory to God. When the Lord Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the child, he rent him sore, so that he was as one dead, inasmuch as many said, "He is dead." If, therefore, your sickness does not yield at once, if Satan and your own unbelief attempt to get the upper hand, do not heed them, cling closely to Jesus your Healer, and He will surely heal you.

03.08. Your Body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit

CHAPTER 8 Your Body Is the Temple of the Holy Ghost 1 Corinthians 6:15; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

The Bible teaches us that the Body of Christ is the company of the faithful. These words are taken generally in their spiritual sense, while the Bible asks us positively whether we know not that our bodies are the members of Christ. In the same way, when the Bible speaks of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or of Christ, we limit Their presence to the spiritual part of our being—our soul, or our heart. Nevertheless the Bible says expressly, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?” When the Church understands that the body also has part in the redemption which is by Christ, by which it ought to be brought back to its original destiny, to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, to serve as His instrument, to be sanctified by His presence, she will also recognize all the place which divine healing has in the Bible and in the counsels of God. The account of the creation tells us that man is composed of three parts. God first formed the body from the dust of the earth, after which He breathed into it “the breath of life.” He caused His own life, His Spirit, to enter into it. By this union of Spirit with matter, the man became a “living soul.” The soul, which is essentially the man, finds its place between the body and the spirit; it is the link which binds them together. By the body the soul finds itself in relation to the external world; by the spirit, with the world invisible and with God. By means of the soul, the spirit can subject the body to the action of the heavenly powers and thus spiritualize it; by means of the soul, the body also can act upon the spirit and attract it earthwards. The soul, subject to the solicitations of both spirit and body, is in a position to choose between the voice of God, speaking by the Spirit, or the voice of the world, speaking through the senses. This union of spirit and body forms a combination which is unique in the creation~ it makes man to be the jewel of God’s work. Other creatures had existed already; some, like angels, were all spirit, without any material body, and others, like the animals, were only flesh, possessing a body animated with a living soul, but devoid of spirit. Man was destined to show that the material body, governed by the spirit, was capable of being transformed by the power of the Spirit of God, and of being thus led to participate of heavenly glory.

We know what sin and Satan have done with this possibility of gradual transformation. By means of the body, the spirit was tempted, seduced, and became a slave of sense. We know also what God has done to destroy the work of Satan and to accomplish the purpose of creation. “The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). God prepared a body for His Son (Hebrews 10:5). “The word was made flesh” (John 1:14). “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). And now Jesus, raised up from the dead with a body as free from sin as His spirit and His soul, communicates to our body the virtue of His glorified body. The Lord’s Supper is “the communion of the body of Christ”; and our bodies are “the members of Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 6:15; 1 Corinthians 12:27).

Faith puts us in possession of all that the death of Christ and His resurrection have procured for us, and it is not only in our spirit and our soul that the life of the risen Jesus manifests its presence here below; it is in the body also that it would act according to the measure of our faith.

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?” Many believers represent to themselves that the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our body as we dwell in a house. Nothing of the kind. I can dwell in a house without its becoming part of my being. I may leave it without suffering; no vital union exists between my house and me. It is not thus with the presence of our soul and spirit in our body. The life of a plant lives in and pervades every part of it; and our soul is not limited to dwell in such or such part of the body, the heart or the head, for instance, but penetrates throughout, even to the end of the lowest members. The life of the soul pervades the whole body; the life throughout proves the presence of the soul. It is in like manner that the Holy Ghost comes to dwell in our body. He penetrates its entirety. He animates and possesses us infinitely more than we can imagine. In the same way in which the Holy Spirit brings to our soul and spirit the life of Jesus, His holiness, His joy, His strength, He comes also to impart to the sick body all the vigorous vitality of Christ as soon as the hand of faith is stretched out to receive it. When the body is fully subject to Christ, crucified with Him, renouncing all self-will and independence, desiring nothing but to be the Lord’s temple, it is then that the Holy Spirit manifests the power of the risen Savior in the body. Then only can we glorify God in our body, leaving Him full freedom to manifest therein His power, to show that He knows how to set His temple free from the domination of sickness, sin, and Satan.

03.09. The Body for the Lord

CHAPTER 9 The Body for the Lord 1 Corinthians 6:13

One of the most learned of theologians has said that corporeity is the end of the ways of God. As we have already seen, this is indeed what God has accomplished in creating man. It is this which makes the inhabitants of heaven wonder and admire when they contemplate the glory of the Son. Clothed with a human body, Jesus has taken His place forever upon the throne of God, to partake of His glory. It is this which God has willed. It shall be recognized in that day when regenerated humanity, forming the body of Christ, shall be truly and visibly the temple of the living God (2 Corinthians 6:16), and when all creation in the new heavens and new earth shall share the glory of the children of God. The material body shall then be wholly sanctified, glorified by the Spirit; and this body, thus spiritualized, shall be the highest glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His redeemed.

It is in anticipation of this new condition of things that the Lord attaches a great importance to the indwelling and sanctification of our bodies, down here, by His Spirit. So little is this truth understood by believers that less still do they seek for the power of the Holy Spirit in their bodies. Many of them also, believing that this body belongs to them, use it as it pleases them. Not understanding how much the sanctification of the soul and spirit depends upon the body, they do not grasp all the meaning of the words, "The body is for the Lord," in such a way as to receive them in obedience.

"The body is for the Lord." What does this mean? The apostle has just said, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them." Eating and drinking afford the Christian an opportunity of carrying out this truth, "The body is for the Lord." He must indeed learn to eat and drink to the glory of God. By eating, sin and the Fall came about. It was also through eating that the devil sought to tempt our Lord. Thus Jesus Himself sanctified His body in eating only according to the will of His Father (Matthew 4:4). Many believers fail to watch over their bodies—fail to observe a holy sobriety so as to avoid rendering their bodies unfit for the service of God. Eating and drinking should never impede communion with God; their purpose is, rather, to facilitate communion by maintaining the body in its normal condition. The apostle speaks also of fornication, this sin which defiles the body, and which is in direct opposition to the words, "The body is for the Lord." It is not simply incontinence outside the married state, but in that state also, which is meant here; all voluptuousness, all want of sobriety of whatsoever kind is condemned in these words: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19). In the same way, all of what goes to maintain the body—to clothe it, strengthen it, rest it in sleep, or afford it enjoyment—should be placed under the control of the Holy Spirit. As under the Old Covenant, the temple was constructed solely for God, and for His service, even so our body has been created for the Lord and for Him alone.

One of the chief benefits then of divine healing will be to teach us that our body ought to be set free from the yoke of our own will to become the Lord's property. God does not grant healing to our

prayers until He has attained the end for which He has permitted the sickness. He wills that this discipline should bring us into a more intimate communion with Him; He would make us understand that we have regarded our body as our own property, while it belonged to the Lord; and that the Holy Spirit seeks to sanctify all its actions. He leads us to understand that if we yield our body unreservedly to the influence of the Holy Spirit, we shall experience His power in us, and He will heal us by bringing into our body the very life of Jesus; He leads us, in short, to say with full conviction, "The body is for the Lord."

There are believers who seek after holiness, but only for the soul and spirit. In their ignorance they forget that the body and all its systems of nerves—that the hand, the ear, the eyes, the mouth—are called to testify directly to the presence and the grace of God in them. They have not sufficiently taken in these words: "Your bodies are the members of Christ." "If by the Spirit ye make to die the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (1 Corinthians 6:15; Romans 8:13, R.V., margin). "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23, R.V.). Oh, what a renewing takes place in us when, by His own touch, the Lord heals our bodies, when He takes possession of them, and when by His Spirit He becomes life and health to them! It is with an indescribable consciousness of holiness, of fear and of joy that the believer can then offer his body a living sacrifice to receive healing, and to have for his motto these words: "The body is for the Lord."

03.10. The Lord for the Body

CHAPTER 10 The Lord for the Body 1 Corinthians 6:13

There is reciprocity in God's relations with man. That which God has been for me, I ought in my turn to be for Him. And that which I am for Him, He desires again to be for me. If, in His love, He gives Himself fully to me, it is in order that I may lovingly give myself fully to Him. In the measure in which I more or less really surrender to Him all my being, in that measure also He gives Himself more really to me. God thus leads the believer to understand that this abandonment of Himself involves the body, and the more our life bears witness that the body is for the Lord, the more also we experience that the Lord is for the body. In saying, "The body is for the Lord," we express the desire to regard our body as wholly consecrated, offered in sacrifice to the Lord, and sanctified by Him. In saying, "The Lord is for the body," we express the precious certainty that our offering has been accepted, and that, by His Spirit, the Lord will impart to our body His own strength and holiness, and that henceforth He will strengthen and keep us. This is a matter of faith. Our body is material, weak, feeble, sinful, mortal. Therefore it is difficult to grasp all at once the full extent of the words, "The Lord is for the body." It is the Word of God which explains to us the way to assimilate. The body was created by the Lord and for the Lord. Jesus took upon Him an earthly body. In His body He bore our sins on the cross, and thereby set our body free from the power of sin. In Christ the body has been raised again, and seated on the throne of God. The body is the habitation of the Holy Spirit; it is called to eternal partnership in the glory of heaven. Therefore, with certainty, and in a wide and universal sense, we can say, "Yes, the Lord Jesus, our Savior, is for the body." This truth has many applications. In the first place, it is a great help in practical holiness. More than one sin derives its strength from some physical tendency. The converted drunkard has a horror for intoxicating drinks, but, notwithstanding, his appetites are sometimes a snare to him, gaining victory over his new convictions. If, however, in the conflict he gives over his body with confidence to the Lord, all physical appetite, all desire to drink will be overcome. Our temper also often results from our physical constitution. A nervous, irritable system produces words which are sharp, harsh, and wanting in love. But let the body with this physical tendency be taken to the Lord, and it will soon be experienced that the Holy Spirit can mortify the risings of impatience, and sanctify the body, rendering it blameless.

These words, "The Lord is for the body," are applicable also to the physical strength which the Lord's service demands of us. When David cries, "It is God that girdeth me with strength," he means physical strength, for he adds: "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet... mine arms do bend a bow of brass" (Psalms 18:33-34, R.V.). Again in these words:

"The Lord is the strength of my life" (Psalms 27:1), it does not mean only the spiritual man but the entire man. Many believers have experienced that the promise, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:31), touches the body, and that the Holy Spirit increases the physical strength. But it is especially in divine healing that we see the truth of these words: "The Lord is for the body." Yes, Jesus, the sovereign and merciful Healer, is always ready to save and

cure. There was in Switzerland, some years ago, a young girl with tuberculosis and near death. The doctor had advised a milder climate, but she was too weak to take the journey. She learned that Jesus is the Healer of the sick. She believed the good news, and one night when she was thinking of this subject it seemed to her that the body of the Lord drew near to her, and that she ought to take these words literally, "His body for our body." From this moment she began to improve. Some time after she began to hold Bible readings, and later on she became a zealous and much-blessed worker for the Lord among women. She had learned to understand that the Lord is for the body.

Dear sick one, the Lord has shown thee by sickness what power sin has over the body. By thy healing He would also show thee the power of redemption of the body. He calls thee to show that which thou hast not understood hitherto, that "the body is for the Lord." Therefore give Him thy body. Give it Him with thy sickness and with the sin, which is the original source of sickness. Believe always that the Lord has taken charge of this body, and He will manifest with power that He really is the Lord, who is for the body. The Lord, who has Himself taken upon Him a body here on earth and regenerated it, from the highest heaven, where He now is, clothed with His glorified body, sends us His divine strength, willing thus to manifest His power in our body.

03.11. Do not Consider your Body

CHAPTER 11 Do Not Consider Your Body

Romans 4:19-21 When God promised to give Abraham a son, the patriarch would never have been able to believe in this promise if he had considered his own body, already aged and worn out. However, he would see nothing but God and His promise, the power and faithfulness of God who guaranteed him the fulfillment of His promise. This enables us to lay hold of all the difference there is between the healing which is expected from earthly remedies and the healing which is looked for from God only. When we have recourse to remedies for healing, all the attention of the sick one is upon the body, considering the body, while divine healing calls us to turn away our attention from the body, and to abandon ourselves, soul and body, to the Lord's care, occupying ourselves with Him alone. This truth equally enables us to see the difference between the sickness retained for blessing and the healing received from the Lord. Some are afraid to take the promise in James 5:1-20 in its literal sense, because they say sickness is more profitable to the soul than health. It is true that in the case of healing obtained by earthly remedies, many people would be more blessed in remaining ill than in recovering health, but it is quite otherwise when healing comes directly from the hand of God. In order to receive divine healing, sin must be so truly confessed and renounced, one must be so completely surrendered to the Lord, self must be so really yielded up to be wholly in His hands, and the will of Jesus to take charge of the body must be so firmly counted on that the healing becomes the commencement of a new life of intimate communion with the Lord.

Thus we learn to give up to Him entirely the care of the health, and the smallest indication of the return of the evil is regarded as a warning not to consider our body, but to be occupied with the Lord only.

What a contrast this is from the greater number of sick people who look for healing from remedies. If some few of them have been sanctified by the sickness, having learned to lose sight of themselves, how many more are there who are drawn by the sickness itself to be constantly occupied with themselves and with the condition of their body. What infinite care they exercise in observing the least symptom, favorable or unfavorable! What a constant preoccupation to them is their eating and drinking, the anxiety to avoid this or that! How much they are taken up with what they consider due to them from others, whether they are sufficiently thought of, whether well enough nursed, whether visited often enough! How much time is thus devoted to considering the body and what it exacts, rather than the Lord and the relations which He seeks to establish with their souls! Oh, how many are they who, through sickness, are occupied almost exclusively with themselves!

All this is totally different when healing is looked for in faith from the loving God. Then the first thing to learn is: Cease to be anxious about the state of your body, you have trusted it to the Lord and He has taken the responsibility. If you do not see a rapid improvement immediately, but on the contrary the symptoms appear to be more serious, remember that you have entered on a path of

faith, and therefore you ought not to consider the body, but cling only to the living God. The commandment of Christ, "Be not anxious . . . for your body" (Matthew 6:25, R.V.), appears here in a new light. When God called Abraham not to consider his own body, it was that He might call him to the greatest exercise of faith which could be, that he might learn to see only God and His promise. Sustained by his faith, he gave glory to God, convinced that God would do what He had promised. Divine healing is a marvelous tie to bind us to the Lord. At first one may fear to believe that the Lord will stretch forth His mighty hand and touch the body; but in studying the Word of God the soul takes courage and confidence. At last one decides, saying, I yield up my body into the hands of God; and I leave the care of it to Him. Then the body and its sensations are lost sight of, and only the Lord and His promise are in view.

Dear reader, wilt thou also enter upon this way of faith, very superior to that which it is the habit to call natural? Walk in the steps of Abraham. Learn from him not to consider thine own body, and not to doubt through unbelief. To consider the body gives birth to doubts, while clinging to the promise of God and being occupied with Him alone gives entrance into the way of faith, the way of divine healing, which glorifies God.

03.12. Discipline and Sanctification

CHAPTER 12 Discipline and Sanctification

“God chasteneth us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness” (Hebrews 12:10). “If a man... purge himself., he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, prepared unto every good work” (2 Timothy 2:21). To sanctify anything is to set apart, to consecrate, to God and to His service. The temple at Jerusalem was holy, that is to say, it was consecrated, dedicated to God that it might serve Him as a dwelling place. The vessels of the temple were holy, because they were devoted to the service of the temple; the priests were holy, chosen to serve God and ready to work for Him. In the same way the Christian ought also to be sanctified, at the Lord’s disposal, “ready to do every good work.” When the people of Israel went out of Egypt, the Lord reclaimed them for His service as a holy people. “Let my people go that they may serve me” (Exodus 7:16), He said to Pharaoh. Set free from their hard bondage, the children of Israel were debtors to enter at once upon the service of God, and to become His happy servants. Their deliverance was the road which led to their sanctification.

Again in this day, God is forming for Himself a holy people, and it is that we may torn part of them that Jesus sets us free. He “gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14, R.V.). It is the Lord who breaks the chains by which Satan would hold us in bondage. He would have us free, wholly free to serve Him. He wills to save us, to deliver both the soul and the body, that each of the members of the body may be consecrated to Him and placed unreservedly at His disposal. A large number of Christians do not yet understand all this, they do not know how to take in that the purpose of their deliverance is that they may be sanctified, prepared to serve their God. They make use of their life and their members to procure their own satisfaction; consequently they do not feel at liberty to ask for healing with faith. It is therefore to chasten them—that they may be brought to desire sanctification—that the Lord permits Satan to inflict sickness upon them and by it keep them chained and prisoners (Luke 13:11; Luke 13:16). God chastens us “for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness,” and that we may be sanctified, “meet for the Master’s use” (Hebrews 12:10, R.V.; 2 Timothy 2:21). The discipline which inflicts the sickness brings great blessings with it. It is a call to the sick one to reflect; it leads him to see that God is occupied with him, and seeks to show him what there is which still separates him from Himself. God speaks to him, He calls him to examine his ways, to acknowledge that he has lacked holiness, and that the purpose of the chastisement is to make him partaker of His holiness. He awakens within him the desire to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit down into the inmost recesses of his heart, that he may be enabled to get a clear idea of what his life has been up to the present time, a life of self-will, very unlike the holy life which God requires of him. He leads him to confess his sins, to entrust them to the Lord Jesus, to believe that the Savior can deliver him from them. He urges him to yield to Him, to consecrate his life to Him, to die to himself that he may be able to live unto God.

Sanctification is not something which you can accomplish yourself; it cannot even be produced by God in you as something which you can possess and contemplate in yourself. No, it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of holiness alone who can communicate His holiness to you and renew it continually. Therefore it is by faith you can become “partakers of his holiness.” Having understood that Jesus has been made unto you of God sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30), and that it is the Holy Spirit’s work to impart to you His holiness which was manifested in His life on earth, surrender yourself to Him by faith that He may enable you to live that life from hour to hour. Believe that the Lord will by His Spirit lead you into, and keep you in this life of holiness and of consecration to God’s service. Live thus in the obedience of faith, always attentive to His voice, and the guidance of His Spirit. From the time that this Fatherly discipline has led the sick one to a life of holiness, God has attained His purpose, and He will heal him who asks it in faith. Our earthly parents “for a few days chastened us.... All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous: yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness” (Hebrews 12:10-11, R.V.). Yes, it is when the believer realizes this peaceable fruit of righteousness that he is in a condition to be delivered from the chastisement.

Oh, it is because believers still understand so little that sanctification means an entire consecration to God that they cannot really believe that healing will quickly follow the sanctification of the sick one. Good health is too often for them only a matter of personal comfort and enjoyment which they may dispose of at their will, but God cannot thus minister to their selfishness. If they understood better that God requires of His children that they should be “sanctified and meet for the Master’s use,” they would not be surprised to see Him giving healing and renewed strength to those who have learned to place all their members at His disposal, willing to be sanctified and employed in His service by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of healing is also the Spirit of sanctification.

03.13. Sickness and Death

CHAPTER 13 Sickness and Death Psalms 91:3; Psalms 91:6; Psalms 91:16; Psalms 92:14 This objection is often made to the words of the apostle James, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick": If we have the promise of being always healed in answer to prayer, how can it be possible to die? And some add: How can a sick person know whether God, who fixes the time of our life, has not decided that we shall die by such a sickness? In such a case, would not prayer be useless, and would it not be a sin to ask for healing?

Before replying, we would remark that this objection touches not such as believe in Jesus as the Healer of the sick, but the Word of God itself, and the promise so clearly declared in the epistle of James and elsewhere. We are not at liberty to change or to limit the promises of God whenever they present some difficulty to us; neither can we insist that they shall be clearly explained to us before we can bring ourselves to believe what they state. It is for us to begin by receiving them without resistance; then only can the Spirit of God find us in the state of mind in which we can be taught and enlightened.

Furthermore, we would remark that in considering a divine truth which has been for a long time neglected in the Church, it can hardly be understood at the outset. It is only little by little that its importance and bearing are discerned. In measure as it revives, after it has been accepted by faith, the Holy Spirit will accompany it with new light. Let us remember that it is by the unbelief of the Church that divine healing has left her. It is not on the answers of such or such a one that faith in Bible truths should be made to depend. "There arises light in the darkness" (Psalms 112:4) for the "upright" who are ready to submit themselves to the Word of God. To the first objection it is easy to reply. Scripture fixes seventy or eighty years as the ordinary measure of human life. The believer who receives Jesus as the Healer of the sick will rest satisfied then with the declaration of the Word of God. He will feel at liberty to expect a life of seventy years, but not longer. Besides, the man of faith places himself under the direction of the Spirit, which will enable him to discern the will of God if something should prevent his attaining the age of seventy. Every rule has its exceptions, in the things of heaven as in the things of earth. Of this, therefore, we are sure according to the Word of God, whether by the words of Jesus or by those of James, that our heavenly Father wills, as a rule, to see His children in good health that they may labor in His service. For the same reason He wills to set them free from sickness as soon as they have made confession of sin and prayed with faith for their healing. For the believer who has walked with his Savior, strong with the strength which proceeds from divine healing, and whose body is consequently under the influence of the Holy Spirit, it is not necessary that when his time comes to die, he should die of sickness. To "fall asleep in Jesus Christ," such is the death of the believer when the end of his life is come. For him death is only sleep after fatigue, the entering into rest. The promise, "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:3), is addressed to us who live under the New Covenant. The more the believer has learned to see in the Savior Him who "took our infirmities" the more he has the liberty to claim the literal fulfillment of the promises: "With long life will I satisfy him"; "They shall bring forth fruit in old age,

they shall be fat and flourishing.” The same text applies to the second objection. The sick one sees in God’s Word that it is His will to heal His children after the confession of their sins, and in answer to the prayer of faith. It does not follow that they shall be exempt from other trials; but as for sickness, they are healed of it because it attacks the body, which is become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. The sick one should then desire healing that the power of God may be made manifest in him, and that he may serve Him in accomplishing His will. In this he clings to the revealed will of God, and for that which is not revealed he knows that God will make known His mind to His servants who walk with Him. We would insist here that faith is not a logical reasoning which ought in some way to oblige God to act according to His promises. It is rather the confiding attitude of the child who honors his Father, who counts upon His love to see Him fulfilling His promises, and who knows that He is faithful to communicate to the body as well as to the soul the new strength which flows from the redemption, until the moment of departure is come.

03.14. The Holy Spirit the Spirit of Healing

CHAPTER 14 The Holy Spirit the Spirit of Healing 1 Corinthians 12:4; 1 Corinthians 12:9; 1 Corinthians 12:11

What is it that distinguishes the children of God? What is their glory? It is that God dwells in the midst of them and reveals Himself to them in power (Exodus 33:16; Exodus 34:9-10). Under the New Covenant this dwelling of God in the believer is still more manifest than in former times. God sends the Holy Spirit to His Church, which is the Body of Christ, to act in her with power, and her life and her prosperity depend on Him. The Spirit must find in her unreserved, full liberty, that she may be recognized as the Church of Christ, the Lord's Body. In every age the Church may look for manifestations of the Spirit, for they form our indissoluble unity; "one body and one Spirit" (Ephesians 4:4). The Spirit operates variously in such or such a member of the Church. It is possible to be filled with the Spirit for one special work and not for another. There are also times in the history of the Church when certain gifts of the Spirit are given with power, while at the same time ignorance or unbelief may hinder other gifts. Wherever the life more abundant of the Spirit is to be found, we may expect Him to manifest all His gifts. The gift of healing is one of the most beautiful manifestations of the Spirit. It is recorded of Jesus, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth... who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10:38). The Holy Spirit in Him was a healing Spirit, and He was the same in the disciples after Pentecost. Thus the words of our text express what was the continuous experience of the early Church (compare attentively Acts 3:7; Acts 4:30; Acts 5:12; Acts 5:15-16; Acts 6:8; Acts 8:7; Acts 9:41; Acts 14:9-10; Acts 16:18-19; Acts 19:12; Acts 28:8-9). The abundant pouring out of the Spirit produced abundant healings. What a lesson for the Church in our days!

Divine healing is the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ's redemption extends it~ powerful working to the body, and the Holy Spirit is responsible both to transmit it to and maintain it in us. Our body shares in the benefit of the redemption, and even now it can receive the pledge of it by divine healing. It is Jesus who heals, Jesus who anoints and baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Jesus, who baptized His disciples with the same Spirit, is He who sends us the Holy Spirit here on earth—either to keep sickness away from us, or to restore us to health when sickness has taken hold upon us.

Divine healing accompanies the sanctification by the Spirit. It is to make us holy that the Holy Spirit makes us partakers of Christ's redemption. Hence His name "Holy." Therefore the healing which He works is an intrinsic part of His divine mission, and He bestows it either to lead the sick one to be converted and to believe (Acts 4:29-30; Acts 5:12; Acts 5:14; Acts 6:7-8; Acts 8:6-8) or to confirm his faith if he is already converted, He constrains him thus to renounce sin, and to consecrate himself entirely to God and to His service (1 Corinthians 10:31; James 5:15-16; Hebrews 12:10).

Divine healing tends to glorify Jesus. It is God's will that His Son should be glorified, and the Holy Spirit does this when He comes to show us what the redemption of Christ does for us. The

redemption of the mortal body appears almost more marvelous than that of the immortal soul. In these two ways God wills to dwell in us through Christ, and thus to triumph over the flesh. As soon as our body becomes the temple of God through the Spirit, Jesus is glorified.

Divine healing takes place wherever the Spirit of God works in power. Proofs of this are to be found in the lives of the Reformers, and in those of certain Moravians in their best times. But there are yet other promises touching the pouring out of the Holy Spirit which have not been fulfilled up to this time. Let us live in a holy expectation, praying the Lord to accomplish them in us.

03.15. Persevering Prayer

CHAPTER 15 Persevering Prayer

Luke 18:1-8 The necessity of praying with perseverance is the secret of all spiritual life. What a blessing to be able to ask the Lord for such and such a grace until He gives it, knowing with certainty that it is His will to answer prayer, but what a mystery for us in the call to persevere in prayer, to knock in faith at His door, to remind Him of His promises, and to do so without wearying until He arises and grants us our petition! Is not the assurance that our prayer can obtain from the Lord that which He would not otherwise give the evident proof that man has been created in the image of God, that he is His friend, that he is His fellow worker, and that the believers who together form the Body of Christ participate in this manner in His intercessory work? It is to Christ's intercession that the Father responds, and to which He grants His divine favors.

More than once the Bible explains to us the need for persevering prayer. There are many grounds, the chief of which is the justice of God. God has declared that sin must bear its consequences; sin therefore has rights over a world which welcomes and remains enslaved by it. When the child of God seeks to quit this order of things, it is necessary that the justice of God should consent to this; time therefore is needed that the privileges which Christ has procured for the believers should weigh before God's tribunal. Besides this, the opposition of Satan, who always seeks to prevent the answer to prayer, is a reason for it (Daniel 10:12-13). The only means by which this unseen enemy can be conquered is faith. Standing firmly on the promises of God, faith refuses to yield, and continues to pray and wait for the answer, even when it is delayed, knowing that the victory is sure (Ephesians 6:12-18).

Finally, perseverance in prayer is needful for ourselves. Delay in the answer is intended to prove and strengthen our faith; it ought to develop in us the steadfast will which will no longer let go the promises of God, but which renounces its own side of things to trust in God alone. It is then that God, seeing our faith, finds us ready to receive His favor and grants it to us. He will avenge speedily, even though He tarry. Yes, notwithstanding all the needful delays, He will not make us wait a moment too long. If we cry unto Him day and night, He will avenge us speedily. This perseverance in prayer will become easy to us as soon as we fully understand what faith is. Jesus teaches us in these words, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). When the Word of God authorizes us to ask anything, we ought at once to believe that we receive it. God gives it to us; this we know by faith, and we can say between God and us that we have received it, although it might be only later that we are permitted to realize the effects here on earth. It is before having seen or experienced anything whatsoever that faith rejoices in having received, perseveres in praying, and waits until the answer is manifest. But even after having believed that we are heard, it is good to persevere until it has become an accomplished fact. This is of great importance in obtaining divine healing. Sometimes, it is true, the healing is immediate and complete; but it may happen that we have to wait, even when a sick person has been able to ask for it in faith. Sometimes also the first symptoms of healing are

immediately manifest; but afterwards the progress is slow, and interrupted by times when it is arrested or when the evil returns. In such cases it is important for both the sick person and those who pray with him to believe in the efficacy of persevering prayer, even though they may not understand the mystery of it. That which God appears at first to refuse, He grants later to the prayer of the Canaanitish woman, to the prayer of the "widow," to that of the friend who knocks at midnight (Matthew 15:22; Luke 18:3; Luke 11:5). Without regarding either change or answer, the faith which is grounded on the Word of God, and which continues to pray with importunity, ends by gaining the victory. "Shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you he will avenge them speedily." God knows how to delay all the time which is necessary, and nevertheless to act speedily without waiting more than is needful. The same two things should belong to our faith. Let us lay hold with a holy promptitude of the grace which is promised us, as if we had already received it; let us await with untiring patience the answer which is slow to come. Such faith belongs to living in Him. It is in order to produce in us this faith that sickness is sent to us, and that the healing is granted to us, for such faith above all glorifies God.

03.16. Let Him that is Healed Glorify God

CHAPTER 16 Let Him That Is Healed Glorify God

It is a prevalent idea that piety is easier in sickness than in health; that silence and suffering incline the soul to seek the Lord and enter into communion with Him better than the distractions of active life; that, in fact, sickness throws us more upon God. For these reasons sick people hesitate to ask for healing from the Lord; for they say to themselves, "How can we know whether sickness may not be better for us than health?" To think thus is to ignore that the healing and its fruits are divine. Let us try to understand that though a healing through ordinary means may at times run the risk of making God relax His hand, divine healing, on the contrary, binds us more closely to Him. Thus it comes to pass that in our day, as in the time of the early ministry of Jesus Christ, the believer who has been healed by Him can glorify Him far better than the one who remains sick. Sickness can only glorify God in the measure in which it gives occasion to manifest His power (John 9:3; John 11:4). The sufferer who is led by his sufferings to give glory to God, does it, so to speak, by constraint. If he had health and liberty to choose, it is quite possible that his heart would turn back to the world. In such a case the Lord must keep him on one side; his piety depends on his sickly condition. This is why the world supposes that religion is hardly efficacious anywhere but in sick chambers or death beds, and for such as have no need to enter into the noise and stir of ordinary life. In order that the world may be convinced of the power of religion against temptation, it must see the believer who is in good health walking in calmness and holiness even in the midst of work and of active life. Doubtless very many sick people have glorified God by their patience in suffering, but He can be still more glorified by a health which He has sanctified.

"Why then," we are asked, "should those who have been healed in answer to the prayer of faith glorify the Lord more than such as have been healed through earthly remedies?" Here is the reason. Healing by means of remedies shows us the power of God in nature; but it does not bring us into living and direct contact with Him; while divine healing is an act proceeding from God, without anything but the Holy Spirit. In this latter, contact with God is the thing which is essential, and it is for this reason that examination of the conscience and the confession of sins should be the preparation for it (1 Corinthians 11:30-32; James 5:15-16). One who is so healed is called to consecrate himself quite anew and entirely to the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19). All this depends upon the act of faith which lays hold of the Lord's promise, which yields to Him, and which does not doubt that the Lord at once takes possession of what is consecrated to Him. This is why the continuance of health received depends on the holiness of the life, and the obedience in seeking always the good pleasure of the divine Healer (Exodus 15:26).

Health obtained under such conditions ensures spiritual blessings. The mere restoration to health by ordinary means does not. When the Lord heals the body it is that He may take possession of it and make it a temple that He may dwell in. The joy which then fills the soul is indescribable. It is not only the joy of being healed; it is joy mingled with humility, and a holy enthusiasm which recognizes the touch of the Lord and receives a new life from Him. In the exuberance of his joy the

healed one exalts the Lord, he glorifies Him by word and deed, and all his life is consecrated to his God.

It is evident that these fruits of healing are not the same for all, and that sometimes there are steps made backwards. The life of the healed one has a solidarity with the life of believers around him. Their doubts and their inconsistencies may in time tend to make his steps totter, although this generally results in a new beginning. Each day he discovers and recognizes afresh that his life is the Lord's life; he enters into a more intimate and more joyous communion with Him; he learns to live in habitual dependence upon Jesus, and receives from Him that strength which results from a more complete consecration.

Oh, what may not the Church become when she lives in this faith, when every sick person shall recognize in sickness a call to be holy, and to expect from the Lord a manifestation of His presence, when healings shall be multiplied, producing in each a witness of the power of God, all ready to cry with the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul.... Who healeth all thy diseases."

03.17. The Need for a Manifestation of God's Power

CHAPTER 17 The Need for a Manifestation of God's Power

Acts 4:29-31 Is it permissible to pray in this way now, to ask the Lord, "Grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal" (R.V.)? Let us look into this question. Does not the Word of God meet with as many difficulties in our days as then, and are not the needs now equally pressing? Let us picture to ourselves the apostles in the midst of Jerusalem and her unbelief; on the one hand the rulers of the people and their threatenings; on the other, the blinded multitude refusing to believe in the Crucified. Now the world is no longer so openly hostile to the Church because it has lost its fear of her, but its flattering words are more to be dreaded than its hatred. Dissimulation is sometimes worse than violence. And is not a Christianity of mere form, in the sleep of indifference, just as inaccessible as an openly resisting Judaism? God's servants need even in the present day, in order that the Word may be preached with all boldness, that the power of God should be evidently manifested among them. Is not the help of God as necessary now as then? The apostles knew well that it was not the eloquence of their preaching which caused the truth to triumph, but they knew the necessity for the Holy Spirit to manifest His presence by miracles. It was needful that the living God should stretch forth His hand, that there might be healings, miracles, and signs in the name of His holy Son Jesus. It was only thus that His servants rejoiced, and, strengthened by His presence, could speak His Word with boldness and teach the world to fear His name. Do not the divine promises concern us also? The apostles counted on these words of the Lord before He ascended, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.., and these signs shall follow them which believe.., they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover" (Mark 16:15; Mark 16:17-18). This charge indicates the divine vocation of the Church; the promise which follows it shows us what is her armor, and proves to us that the Lord acts in concert with her. It was because the apostles counted on this promise that they prayed the Lord to grant them this proof of His presence. They had been filled with the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, but they still needed the supernatural signs which His power works. The same promise is as much for us, for the command to preach the Gospel cannot be severed from the promise of divine healing with which it is accompanied. It is nowhere to be found in the Bible that this promise was not for future times. In all ages God's people greatly need to know that the Lord is with them, and to possess the irrefutable proof of it. Therefore this promise is for us; let us pray for its fulfillment.

Ought we to reckon on the same grace? We read in the Acts when the apostles had prayed, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people... and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 4:31; Acts 5:12-15). Oh, what joy and what new strength would God's people receive today if anew the Lord should thus stretch forth His hand! How many wearied and discouraged laborers grieve that they do not see more results, more blessings on their labors! What life would come into their faith if signs of this kind should arise to prove to them that God is with them! Many who are indifferent would be

led to reflect, more than one doubter would regain confidence, and all unbelievers would be reduced to silence. And the poor heathen! How he would awake if he saw by facts that which words had not enabled him to lay hold of, if he were forced to acknowledge that the Christian's God is the living God who doeth wonders, the God of love who blesses!

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, Church of Christ! Although thou hast lost by thy unfaithfulness the joy of seeing allied to the preaching of the Word the hand of the Lord stretched out to heal, the Lord is ready to grant thee this grace anew. Acknowledge that it is thine own unbelief which has so long deprived thee of it, and pray for pardon. Clothe thyself with the strength of prayer.

“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake as in the ancient days” (Isaiah 51:9).

03.18. Sin and Sickness

CHAPTER 18 Sin and Sickness

“The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed” (James 5:15-16).

Here, as in other Scriptures, the pardon of sins and the healing of sickness are closely united. James declares that pardon of sins will be granted with the healing; and for this reason he desires to see confession of sin accompany the prayer which claims healing. We know that confession of sin is indispensable to obtain from God the pardon of sin: it is not less so to obtain healing. Un-confessed sin presents an obstacle to the prayer of faith; in any case, the sickness may soon reappear, and for this reason. The first care of a physician, when he is called to treat a patient, is to diagnose the cause of the disease. If he succeeds he stands a better chance to combat it. Our God also goes back to the primary cause of all sickness—that is, sin. It is our part to confess and God’s to grant the pardon which removes this first cause, so that healing can take place. In seeking for healing by means of earthly remedies, the first thing to do is to find a clever physician, and then to follow his prescriptions exactly; but in having recourse to the prayer of faith, it is needful to fix our eyes, above all, upon the Lord, and to ascertain how we stand with Him. James therefore points out to us a condition which is essential to the recovery of our health; namely, that we confess and forsake sin.

Sickness is a consequence of sin. It is because of sin that God permits it; it is in order to show us our faults, to chasten us, and purify us from them. Sickness is therefore a visible sign of God’s judgment upon sin. It is not that the one who is sick is necessarily a greater sinner than another who is in health. On the contrary, it is often the most holy among the children of God whom He chastens, as we see from the example of Job. Neither is it always to check some fault which we can easily determine: it is especially to draw the attention of the sick one to that which remains in him of the egotism of the “old man” and of all which hinders him from a life entirely consecrated to his God. The first step which the sick one has to take in the path of divine healing will be therefore to let the Holy Spirit of God probe his heart and convince him of sin. After which will come, also, humiliation, decision to break with sin, and confession. To confess our sins is to lay them down before God as in Achan’s case (Joshua 7:23), to subject them to His judgment, with the fixed purpose to fall into them no more. A sincere confession will be followed by a new assurance of pardon.

“If he has committed sins they shall be forgiven him.” When we have confessed our sins, we must receive also the promised pardon, believing that God gives it in very deed. Faith in God’s pardon is often vague in the child of God. Either he is uncertain, or he returns to old impressions, to the time when he first received pardon; but the pardon which he now receives with confidence, in answer to the prayer of faith, will bring him new life and strength. The soul then rests under the efficacy of the blood of Christ, receives from the Holy Spirit the certainty of the pardon of sin, and that therefore

nothing remains to hinder the Savior from filling him with His love and with His grace. God's pardon brings with it a divine life which acts powerfully upon him who receives it. When the soul has consented to make a sincere confession and has obtained pardon, it is ready to lay hold of the promise of God; it is no longer difficult to believe that the Lord will raise up His sick one. It is when we keep far from God that it is difficult to believe; confession and pardon bring us quite near to Him. As soon as the cause of the sickness has been removed, the sickness itself can be arrested. Now it is easy for the sick one to believe that if the Lord necessarily subjected the body to the chastisement of the sins committed, He also wills that, the sin being pardoned, this same body should receive the grace which manifests His love. His presence is revealed, a ray of life, of His divine life, comes to quicken the body, and the sick one proves that as soon as he is no longer separated from the Lord, the prayer of faith does save the sick.

03.19. Jesus Bore our Sickness

CHAPTER 19 Jesus Bore Our Sickness

“Surely he hath borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows.... My righteous servant shall justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities... . He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because. . . he bare the sin of many” (Isaiah 53:4; Isaiah 53:11-12, R.V.). Do you know this beautiful chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, which has been called the fifth Gospel? In the light of the Spirit of God, Isaiah describes beforehand the sufferings of the Lamb of God, as well as the divine graces which would result from them. The expression “to bear” could not but appear in this prophecy. It is, in fact, the word which must accompany the mention of sin, whether as committed directly by the sinner, or whether as transmitted to a substitute. The transgressor, the priest, and the expiatory victim must all bear the sin. In the same way, it is because the Lamb of God has borne our sins that God smote Him for the iniquity of us all. Sin was not found in Him, but it was put upon Him; He took it voluntarily upon Him. And it is because He bore it—and that, in bearing it, He put an end to it—that He has the power to save us. “My righteous servant shall justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities . . . he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because . . . he bare the sin of many” (Isaiah 53:11-12). It is, therefore, because our sins have been borne by Jesus Christ that we are delivered from them as soon as we believe this truth; consequently we need no longer bear them ourselves. In this same chapter (Isaiah 53:1-12) the expression “to bear” occurs twice, but in relation to two different things. It is said not only that the Lord’s righteous Servant has borne our sins (Isaiah 53:12), but also that He has borne our sicknesses (vs. 4, R.V., margin). Thus His bearing our sicknesses forms an integral part of the Redeemer’s work as well as bearing our sins. Although Himself without sin He has borne our sins, and He has done as much for our sicknesses. The human nature of Jesus could not be touched by sickness because it remained holy. We never find in the account of His life any mention of sickness. Participating in all the weaknesses of our human nature, hunger, thirst, fatigue and sleep, because all these things are not the consequence of sin, He still had no trace of sickness. As He was without sin, sickness had no hold on Him, and He could die only a violent death and that by His voluntary consent. Thus it is not in Him but on Him that we see sickness as well as sin; He took them upon Him and bore them of His own free will. In bearing them and taking them upon Him, He has by this very fact triumphed over them, and has acquired the right of delivering His children from them.

Sin had attacked and ruined equally the soul and the body. Jesus came to save both. Having taken upon Him sickness as well as sin, He is in a position to set us free from the one as well as the other, and that He may accomplish this double deliverance He expects from us only one thing: our faith. As soon as a sick believer understands the purport of the words, “Jesus has borne my sins,” he does not fear to say also: “I need no longer bear my sins, they are upon me no longer.” In the same way as soon as he has fully taken in and believed for himself that Jesus has borne our sicknesses, he does not fear to say: “I need no longer bear my sickness; Jesus in bearing sin bore also sickness which is its consequence; for both He has made propitiation, and He delivers me from both.”

I have myself witnessed the blessed influence which this truth exercised one day upon a sick woman. For seven years she had been almost continually bedfast. A sufferer from tuberculosis, epilepsy, and other sicknesses, she had been assured that no hope of cure remained for her. She was carried into the room where the late Mr. W. E. Boardman was holding a Sunday evening service for the sick, and was laid in a half-fainting condition on the sofa. She was too little conscious to remember anything of what took place until she heard the words, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:17), and then she seemed to hear the words, "If He has borne your sicknesses, why then bear them yourself? Get up." But she thought—if I attempt to get up, and fall upon the ground, what will they think of me? But the inward voice began again:

"If He has borne my sins, why should I have to bear them?" To the astonishment of all who were present, she arose, and, although still feeble, sat down in a chair by the table. From that moment her healing made rapid progress. At the end of a few weeks she had no longer the appearance of an invalid, and later on her strength was such that she could spend many hours a day in visiting the poor. With what joy and love she could then speak of Him who was "the strength of her life" (Psalms 27:1). She had believed that Jesus had borne her sicknesses as well as her sins, and her faith was not put to confusion. It is thus that Jesus reveals Himself as a perfect Savior to all those who will trust themselves unreservedly to Him.

03.20. Is Sickness a Chastisement?

CHAPTER 20 Is Sickness a Chastisement?

“For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep. For if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:30-32, R.V.). In writing to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul must needs reprove them for the manner in which they observed the Lord’s Supper, drawing upon themselves the chastisements of God. Here, therefore, we see sickness as a judgment of God, a chastisement for sin. Paul sees it to be a real chastisement since he afterwards says: “chastened by the Lord,” and he adds that it is in order to hinder them from falling yet deeper into sin, to prevent them from being “condemned with the world,” that they are thus afflicted. He warns them that if they would be neither judged nor chastened by the Lord, that if by such examination they discovered the cause of the sickness and condemned their sins, the Lord would no longer need to exercise severity. Is it not evident that here sickness is a judgment of God, a chastisement of sin, and that we may avoid it in examining and condemning ourselves?

Yes, sickness is, more often than we believe it, a judgment, a chastisement for sin. God “doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men” (Lamentations 3:33). It is not without a cause that He deprives us of health. Perhaps it may be to render us attentive to some sin which we can recognize: “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (John 5:14); perhaps because God’s child has become entangled in pride and worldliness; or it may be that self-confidence or caprice have been mixed with his service for God. It is again quite possible that the chastisement may not be directed against any particular sin, but that it may be the result of the preponderance of sin which weighs upon the entire human race. When (John 9:3), in the case of the man born blind, the disciples asked the Lord, “Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” and He answered, “Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents,” He does not by any means say that there is no relation between sin and sickness, but He teaches us not to accuse every sick person of sin. In any case, sickness is always a discipline which ought to awaken our attention to sin, and turn us from it. Therefore a sick person should begin by condemning, or discerning himself (1 Corinthians 11:31), by placing himself before his heavenly Father with a sincere desire to see anything which could have grieved Him, or could have rendered the chastisement necessary. So doing he may count assuredly on the Holy Spirit’s light, who will clearly show him his failure. Let him be ready at once to renounce what he may discern, and to place himself at the Lord’s disposal to serve Him with perfect obedience, but let him not imagine that he can conquer sin by his own efforts. No, that is impossible to him. But let him, with all his power of will, be on God’s side in renouncing what is sin in His sight, and let him believe that he is accepted of Him. So doing he will be yielding himself, consecrating himself anew to God, willing to do only His holy will in all things.

Scripture assures us that if we thus examine ourselves the Lord will not judge us. Our Father only chastens His child as far as needful. God seeks to deliver us from sin and self; as soon as we

understand Him and break with these, sickness may cease; it has done its work. We must come to see what the sickness means, and recognize in it the discipline of God. One may recognize vaguely that he commits sins while scarcely attempting to define what they are; or if he does, he may not believe it is possible to give them up; and if he decides to renounce them, he may fail to count on God that He will put an end to the chastisement. And yet, how glorious is the assurance which Paul's words here give us!

Dear sick one, dost thou understand that thy heavenly Father has something to reprove in thee? He would have thy sickness help thee to discover it, and the Holy Spirit will guide thee in the search. Then renounce at once what He may point out to thee. Thou wouldst not have the smallest shade remain between thy Father and thee. It is His will to pardon thy sin and to heal thy sickness. In Jesus we have both pardon and healing; they are two sides of His redemptive work. He calls thee to live a life of dependence upon Him in a greater degree than hitherto. Abandon thyself then to Him in a complete obedience, and walk henceforth as a little child in following His steps. It is with joy that thy heavenly Father will deliver thee from chastisement, that He will reveal Himself to thee as thy Healer, that He will bring thee nearer to Him by this new tie of His love, that He will make thee obedient and faithful in serving Him. If, as a wise and faithful Father, He has been obliged to chasten thee, it is also as a Father that He wills thy healing, and that He desires to bless and keep thee henceforth.

03.21. God's Prescription for the Sick

CHAPTER 21 God's Prescription for the Sick

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:14-15). This text, above all others, is that which most clearly declares to the sick what they have to do in order to be healed. Sickness and its consequences abound in the world. What joy, then, for the believer to learn from the Word of God the way of healing for the sick! The Bible teaches us that it is the will of God to see His children in good health. The Apostle James has no hesitation in saying that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." May the Lord teach us to hearken and to receive with simplicity what His Word tells us!

Notice, first, that James here makes a distinction between affliction (or suffering) and sickness. He says (James 5:13): "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray" (R.V.). He does not specify what shall be requested in such a case; still less does he say that deliverance from suffering shall be asked. No; suffering which may arise from various exterior causes is the portion of every Christian. Let us therefore understand that the object of James is to lead the tried believer to ask for deliverance only with a spirit of submission to the will of God, and, above all, to ask the patience which he considers to be the privilege of the believer (James 1:2-4, James 1:12; James 5:7-8). But in dealing with the words, "Is any sick among you?" James replies in quite another manner. Now he says with assurance that the sick one may ask for healing with confidence that he shall obtain it, and the Lord will hear him. There is therefore a great difference between suffering and sickness. The Lord Jesus spoke of suffering as being necessary, as being willed and blessed of God; while He says of sickness that it ought to be cured. All other suffering comes to us from without, and will only cease when Jesus shall triumph over the sin and evil which are in the world; while sickness is an evil in the body itself, in this body saved by Christ that it may become the temple of the Holy Spirit, and which, consequently, ought to be healed as soon as the sick believer receives by faith the working of the Holy Spirit, the very life of Jesus in him.

What is the direction here given to the sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let the elders pray for him. In the time of James there were physicians, but it is not to them the sick believer must turn. The elders then were the pastors and leaders of the churches, called to the ministry not because they had passed through schools of theology, but because they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and well known for their piety and for their faith. Why should their presence be needed by the sick one? Could not his friends have prayed? Yes; but it is not so easy for everybody to exercise the faith which obtains healing, and, doubtless, that is one reason why James desired that men should be called whose faith was firm and sure. Besides this, they were representatives to the sick one of the Church, the collective body of Christ, for it is the communion of believers which invites the Spirit to act with power. In short, they should, after the pattern of the great Shepherd of the sheep, care for the flock as He does, identify themselves with the sick one,

understand his trouble, receive from God the necessary discernment to instruct him and encourage him to persevere in faith. It is, then, to the elders of the Church that the healing of the sick is committed, and it is they, the servants of the God who pardons iniquities and heals diseases (Psalms 103:1-22), who are called to transmit to others the Lord's graces for soul and body.

Finally, there is a promise still more direct— that of healing; the apostle speaks of it as the certain consequence of the prayer of faith. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." This promise ought to stimulate in every believer the desire and expectation of healing. Receiving these words with simplicity and as they are written, ought we not to see in them an unlimited promise, offering healing to whomsoever shall pray in faith? The Lord teach us to study His Word with the faith of a truly believing heart!

03.22. The Lord that Healeth Thee

CHAPTER 22 The Lord That Healeth Thee

“I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee” (Exodus 15:26).

How often have we read these words, without daring to take them for ourselves, and without expectation that the Lord would fulfill them to us! We have seen in them that the people of God ought to be exempt from the diseases inflicted upon the Egyptians, and we have believed that this promise applied only to the Old Testament, and that we who live under the economy of the New Testament cannot expect to be kept from or healed of sickness by the direct intervention of the Lord! As, however, we were obliged to recognize the superiority of the New Covenant, we have come, in our ignorance, to allege that sickness often brings great blessings, and that consequently God had done well to withdraw what He had formerly promised, and to be no longer for us what He was for Israel, “The Lord that healeth thee.” But in our day we see the Church awakening and acknowledging her mistake. She sees that it is under the New Covenant that the Lord Jesus passed on His power of healing to His disciples. She is beginning to see that in charging His Church to preach the Gospel to every creature, He has promised to be with her “always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20), and as the proof of His presence, His disciples should have the power to lay hands on the sick, and they should be healed (Mark 16:15-18). She sees, moreover, that in the days following Pentecost, the miraculous pouring out of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by miraculous healings, which were evident proof of the blessings brought about by the power from on high (Acts 3:16; Acts 5:12; Acts 9:40). There is nothing in the Bible to make her believe that the promise made to Israel has been since retracted, and she hears from the mouth of the Apostle James this new promise:

“The prayer of faith shall save [or heal] the sick” (James 5:15). She knows that at all times it has been unbelief which has limited (or set bounds to) the Holy One of Israel (Psalms 78:41), and she asks herself if it is not unbelief which hinders in these days this manifestation of the power of God. Who can doubt it? It is not God or His Word which are to blame here; it is our unbelief which prevents the miraculous power of the Lord, and which holds Him back from healing as in past times. Let our faith awake, let it recognize and adore in Christ the all-power of Him who says, “I am the Lord which healeth thee.” It is by the works of God that we can best understand what His Word tells us; the healings which again are responding to the prayer of faith confirm, by gloriously illustrating, the truth of His promise.

Let us learn to see in the risen Jesus the divine Healer, and let us receive Him as such. In order that I may recognize in Jesus my justification, my strength, and my wisdom, I must grasp by faith that He is really all this to me; and equally when the Bible tells me that Jesus is the sovereign Healer, I must myself appropriate this truth, and say, “Yes, Lord, it is Thou who art my Healer.” And why may I hold Him as such? It is because He gives Himself to me, that I am “one plant with him” (Romans 6:5, French ver.), and that, inseparably united to Him, I thus possess His healing

power; it is because His love is pleased to load His beloved with His favors, to communicate Himself with all His heart to all who desire to receive Him. Let us believe that He is ready to extend the treasure of blessing, contained in the name, "The Lord that healeth thee," to all who know and who can trust in this divine name. This is the treatment for the sick indicated by the law of His kingdom. When I bring my sickness to the Lord, I do not depend on what I see, on what I feel or what I think, but on what He says. Even when everything appears contrary to the expected healing, even if it should not take place at the time or in the way that I had thought I should receive it, even when the symptoms seem only to be aggravated, my faith, strengthened by the very waiting, should cling immovably to this word which has gone out of the mouth of God, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." God is ever seeking to make us true believers. Healing and health are of little value if they do not glorify God, and serve to unite us more closely with Him; thus in the matter of healing our faith must always be put to the proof. He who counts on the name of his God, who can hear Jesus saying to him, "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John 11:40), will have the joy of receiving from God Himself the healing of the body, and of seeing it take place in a manner worthy of God, and conformably to His promises. When we read these words, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," let us not fear to answer eagerly, "Yes, Lord, Thou art the Lord that healeth me."

03.23. Jesus Heals the Sick

CHAPTER 23 Jesus Heals the Sick

“He healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying: Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses” (Matthew 8:16-17). In a preceding chapter we have studied the words of the prophet Isaiah. If the reader has still any doubt as to the interpretation of it which has been given, we remind him of that which the Holy Spirit caused the evangelist St. Matthew to write about it. It is expressly said regarding all the sick ones whom Jesus healed, “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet.” It was because Jesus had taken on Him our sicknesses that He could, that He ought to heal them. If He had not done so, one part of His work of redemption would have remained powerless and fruitless. This text of the Word of God is not generally understood in this way. It is the generally accepted view that the miraculous healings done by the Lord Jesus are to be looked upon only as the proof of His mercy, or as being the symbol of spiritual graces. They are not seen to be a necessary consequence of redemption, although that is what the Bible declares. The body and the soul have been created to serve together as a habitation of God; the sickly condition of the body is, as well as that of the soul, a consequence of sin, and that is what Jesus came to bear, to expiate and to conquer. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, it was not in the character of the Son of God that He cured the sick, but as the Mediator who had taken upon Him and borne sickness, and this enables us to understand why Jesus gave so much time to His healing work, and why also the evangelists speak of it in a manner so detailed. Read for example what Matthew says about it: “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good tidings of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those that were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them” (Matthew 4:23-24). “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matthew 9:35). “And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease” (Matthew 10:1). When the disciples of John the Baptist came to ask Jesus if He were the Messiah, that He might prove it to them, He replied: “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them” (Matthew 11:5). After the cure of the withered hand, and the opposition of the Pharisees who sought to destroy Him, we read that “great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all” (Matthew 12:15). When later, the multitude had followed Him into a desert place, it is said, “And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick” (Matthew 14:14). Farther on: “They sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole” (Matthew 14:35-36). It is said also of the sick

which were among the multitudes that they “cast them down at Jesus’ feet and he healed them,” and Matthew adds: “Inasmuch that the multitudes wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel” (Matthew 15:30-31). And finally when He came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan, “Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there” (Matthew 19:2).

Let us add to these many texts those which give us in detail the account of healings wrought by Jesus, and let us ask ourselves if these healings afford us only the proof of His power during His life here on earth, or if they are not much rather the undoubted and continual result of His work of mercy and of love, the manifestation of His power of redemption which delivers the soul and body from the dominion of sin? Yes; that was in very deed the purpose of God. If, then, Jesus bore our sicknesses as an integral part of the redemption, if He has healed the sick “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias,” and if His Savior-heart is always full of mercy and of love, we can believe with certainty that to this very day it is the will of Jesus to heal the sick in answer to the prayer of faith.

03.24. Fervent and Effectual Prayer

CHAPTER 24 Fervent and Effectual Prayer

“Pray for one another that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elijah was a man of like passions (or nature] with us and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and it rained, not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (James 5:16-18).

James knew that a faith which obtains healing is not the fruit of human nature; therefore he adds that the prayer must be “fervent.” Only such can be efficacious. In this he stands upon the example of Elijah, a man of the same nature (“subject to like passions”) as we are, drawing therefore the inference that our prayer can be and ought to be of the same nature as his. How then did Elijah pray? This will throw some light upon what the prayer of faith should be.

Elijah had received from God the promise that rain was about to fall upon the earth (1 Kings 18:1), and he had declared this to Ahab. Strong in the promise of his God, he mounts Carmel to pray (1 Kings 18:42; James 5:18). He knows, he believes that God’s will is to send rain, and nevertheless he must pray, or the rain will not come. His prayer is no empty form; it is a real power, the efficacy of which is about to make itself felt in heaven. God wills that it shall rain, but the rain will only come at Elijah’s request, a request repeated with faith and perseverance until the appearance of the first cloud in the sky. In order that the will of God shall be accomplished, this will must on one side be expressed by a promise, and on the other it must be received and laid hold of by the believer who prays. He therefore must persevere in prayer that he may show his God that his faith expects an answer, and will not grow weary until it is obtained. This is how prayer must be made for the sick. The promise of God, “The Lord will raise him up,” must be rested on, and His will to heal recognized. Jesus Himself teaches us to pray with faith which counts on the answer of God; He says to us: “All things whatsoever ye pray for, and ask for, believe that ye have received them and ye shall have them”~ (Mark 11:24, R.V.). After the prayer of faith which receives beforehand that which God has promised, comes the prayer of perseverance, which does not lose sight of that which has been asked until God has fulfilled His promise (1 Kings 18:43). There may be some obstacle which hinders the fulfillment of the promise; whether on the side of God and His righteousness (Deuteronomy 9:18), or on the side of Satan, and his constant opposition to the plans of God, something which may still impede the answer to the prayer (Daniel 10:12-13). It may be also that our faith needs to be purified (Matthew 15:22-28). Whatever it may be, our faith is called to persevere until the answer comes. He who prays six times fervently and stops there, when he ought to have prayed seven times (2 Kings 13:18-19), deprives himself of the answer to his prayer.

Perseverance in prayer, a perseverance which strengthens the faith of the believer against all which may seem opposed to the answer, is a real miracle; it is one of the impenetrable mysteries of the life of faith. Does it not say to us that the Savior’s redeemed one is in very deed His friend, a member of His body, and that the government of the world and the gifts of divine grace depend in

some sense upon his prayers? Prayer, therefore, is no vain form. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, who intercedes here on earth in us and by us, and as such, it is as efficacious, as indispensable as the work of the Son interceding for us before the throne of God. It might seem strange that after having prayed with the certainty of being heard, and having seen therein the will of God, we should still need to continue in prayer. Nevertheless it is so. In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed three times in succession. On Carmel Elijah prayed seven times; and we, if we believe the promise of God without doubting, shall pray until we receive the answer. Both the importunate friend at midnight and the widow who besieged the unjust judge are examples of perseverance in seeking the end in view.

Let us learn from Elijah's prayer to humble ourselves, to recognize why the power of God cannot be more manifested in the Church, whether in the healing of the sick, or in conversion, or sanctification. "Ye have not because ye ask not" (James 4:2). Let it also teach us patience. In the cases where healing is delayed, let us remember that obstacles may exist over which only perseverance in prayer can triumph. Faith which ceases to pray, or which is allowed to relax in its fervor, cannot appropriate that which God has nevertheless given. Let not our faith in the promises of Scripture be shaken by those things which are as yet beyond our reach. God's promise remains the same: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." May the prayer of Elijah strengthen our faith. Let us remember that we have to imitate them who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Hebrews 6:12). If we learn to persevere in prayer, its fruit will be always more abundant, always more evident, and we shall obtain, as Jesus obtained when He was on earth, healing of the sick, often immediate healing, which shall bring glory to God.

03.25. Intercessory Prayer

CHAPTER 25 Intercessory Prayer

“Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working” (James 5:16, R.V.).

James begins by speaking to us of the prayers of the elders of the church; but here he addresses all believers in saying: “Pray one for another that ye may be healed.” Having already spoken of confession and pardon, he still adds: “Pray one for another.” This shows us that the prayer of faith which asks for healing is not the prayer of one isolated believer, but that it ought to unite the members of the body of Christ in the communion of the Spirit. God certainly hears the prayer of each one of His children as soon as it is presented to Him with living faith, but the sick one does not always possess such faith as this. Therefore, that the Holy Spirit may come to act with power, there must generally be the union of several members of the body of Christ unitedly claiming His presence. This dependence on our brethren should be exercised in two ways. First of all we must confess our faults to any whom we may have wronged, and receive pardon from them. But besides this, if one who is sick has been brought to see in such or such a sin which he has committed the cause of his sickness, and to recognize in it a chastening of God, he ought in such a case to acknowledge his sin before the elders or brethren in Christ who pray for him, and who are thus enabled to do so with more light and more faith. Such confession will be also a touchstone which tests the sincerity of his repentance, for it is easier to confess our sins to God than to man. Before he will do it, his humiliation must needs be real and his repentance sincere. The result will be a closer communion between the sick one and those who intercede for him, and their faith will be quickened anew.

“Pray one for another that ye may be healed.” Does not this clearly answer that which one so often hears said: What is the use in going to M. Zeller in Switzerland, Dr. Cullis in America, or to Bethshan in London? Does not the Lord hear prayer in whatsoever place it is offered? Yes; without any doubt wherever a prayer in living faith rises up to God, it finds Him ready to grant healing; but the Church has so neglected to believe in this truth that it is a rare thing in the present day to find Christians capable of praying in this manner. Thus we cannot be too grateful to the Lord that He has inspired certain believers with the desire to consecrate their lives, in part, to witness to the truth of divine healing. Their words and their faith awaken faith in the heart of many sick ones who, without their help, would never arrive at it. It is precisely these very people who always say to everybody:

“The Lord is everywhere to be found.” Let Christians learn not to neglect the least part of the marvelous power of their God, and He will be able to manifest to all that He is always the “Lord which healeth thee” (Exodus 15:26). Let us take heed to obey the Word of God, to confess one to another, and to pray one for another that we may be healed.

James notes here still another essential condition to successful prayer: it must be the prayer of the righteous. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." The Scripture tells us that "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [Jesus] is righteous" (1 John 3:7). James himself was surnamed "The Just," on account of his piety and the tenderness of his conscience. Whether an "elder" or a simple believer, it is only after one is wholly surrendered to God and living in obedience to His will that one can pray effectually for the brethren. John says as much: "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do the things which are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22). It is therefore the prayer of one who lives in intimate communion with God which "availeth much." It is to such prayer that God will grant the answer, which He would not be able to give to such other of His children.

We often hear these words quoted: "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much," but very rarely is it taken in connection with its context, or remembered that it is most especially divine healing which is in question here. Oh, may the Lord raise up in His Church many of these righteous men, animated with living faith, whom He can use to glorify Jesus as the divine Healer of the sick!

03.27. Obedience and Health

CHAPTER 27 Obedience and Health

“There made he for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee” (Exodus 15:25-26).

It was at Marah that the Lord gave to His people this ordinance. Israel was just released from the yoke of Egypt when their faith was put to the proof in the desert by the waters of Marah. It was after He had sweetened the bitter waters that the Lord promised He would not put upon the children of Israel any of the diseases which He had brought upon the Egyptians so long as they would obey Him. They would be exposed to other trials, they might sometimes suffer the need of bread and of water, and encounter great dangers; all these things might come upon them in spite of their obedience, but sickness might not touch them. In a world still under the power of Satan, they might be a butt for attacks coming from without, but their bodies would not be oppressed with sickness, for God had delivered them from it. Had He not said, “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God... I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee”? Again elsewhere, “Ye shall serve the Lord your God, ... and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee” (Exodus 23:25; read also Leviticus 26:14; Leviticus 26:16; Deuteronomy 7:15; Deuteronomy 7:23; Deuteronomy 28:15—61). This calls our attention to a truth of the greatest importance: the intimate relations which exist between obedience and health, between sanctification which is the health of the soul, and the divine healing which ensures the health of the body—both are comprised in the salvation that comes from God. It is noteworthy that in several languages these three words, salvation, healing, and sanctification, are derived from the same root and present the same fundamental thought. (For instance, the German Heil, salvation; Heilung, healing; Heilichung, sanctification.) Salvation is the redemption which the Savior has obtained for us, health is the salvation of the body which also comes to us from the Divine Healer, and lastly, sanctification reminds us that true salvation and true health consist in being holy as God is holy. Thus it is in giving health to the body and sanctification to the soul that Jesus is really the Savior of His people. Our text clearly declares the relation which exists between holiness of life and the healing of the body. The expressions which bear this out seem to be purposely multiplied: “If thou wilt diligently hearken.., if thou wilt do that which is right.., if thou wilt give ear... if thou wilt keep all his statutes, I will not send any sickness upon thee.”

Here we have the key to all true obedience and holiness. We often think we know well the will of God revealed in His Word; but why does not this knowledge bring forth obedience? It is because in order to obey we must begin by hearkening. “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God.., and give ear... .” As long as the will of God reaches me through the voice of man, or through the reading of a book, it may have but little power with me, while if I enter into direct

communion with God, and listen to His voice, His commandment is quickened with living power to facilitate its accomplishment. Christ is the living Word and the Holy Spirit is His voice. Listening to His voice means to renounce all our own will and wisdom, to close the ear to every other voice so as to expect no other direction but that of the Holy Spirit. One who is redeemed is like a servant or child, who needs to be directed; he knows that he belongs entirely to God, and that all his being, spirit, soul and body, ought to glorify God. But he is equally conscious that this is above his strength, and that he needs to receive, hour by hour, the direction which he needs. He knows also that the divine commandment, as long as it is a dead letter to him, cannot impart to him strength and wisdom, and that it is only as he attentively gives ear that he will obtain the desired strength; therefore, he listens and learns thus to observe the laws of God. This life of attention and action, of renouncement and of crucifixion, constitutes a holy life. The Lord brings us to it in the first place by sickness, and makes us understand that which we are lacking, and then also by the healing which calls the soul to this life of continual attention to the voice of God.

Most Christians see nothing more in divine healing than a temporal blessing for the body, while in the promise of our holy God its end is to make us holy. The call to holiness sounds daily stronger and more clearly in the Church. More and more believers are coming to understand that God wants them to be like Christ; and the Lord is beginning again to make use of His healing virtue, seeking thereby to show us that still in our own days the Holy One of Israel is "the Lord that healeth thee," and that it is His will to keep His people both in health of body and in obedience.

Let him who looks for healing from the Lord receive it with joy. It is not a legal obedience which is required of him, an obedience depending upon his own strength. No; God asks of him, on the contrary, the abandonment of a little child, the attention which hearkens and consents to be led. This is what God expects of him; and the healing of the body will be the result of this childlike faith, for the Lord will reveal Himself to him as the mighty Savior who heals the body and sanctifies the soul.

03.28. Job's Sickness and Healing

CHAPTER 28 Job's Sickness and Healing

"So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (Job 2:7). The veil which hides from us the unseen world is lifted for a moment in the mysterious history of Job; it reveals to us heaven and hell busily occupied with God's servants upon earth. We see in it the temptations peculiar to sickness, and how Satan makes use of them to dispute with God, and to seek the perdition of the soul of man, while God, on the contrary, seeks to sanctify it by the very same trial. In the case of Job, we see in God's light the source from which sickness proceeds, what is the result which it should have, and how it is possible to be delivered from it.

Whence comes sickness; from God or from Satan? Opinions on this point vastly differ. Some hold that it is sent of God, others see in it the work of the wicked one. Both are in error as long as they hold their view to the exclusion of that held by the other party, while both are in the right if they admit that there are two sides to this question. Let us say then that sickness comes from Satan, but that it cannot exist without the permission of God. On the one hand the power of Satan is that of an oppressor who has not himself any right to pounce upon man and attack him, and on the other hand the claims of Satan on man are legitimate in that the righteousness of God decrees that he who yields himself to Satan places himself under his domination.

Satan is the prince of the kingdom of darkness and of sin; sickness is the consequence of sin. Herein is constituted the right of Satan over the body of sinful man. He is the prince of this world, so recognized by God, until such time as he shall be legally conquered and dethroned. Consequently he has a certain power over all those who remain down here under his jurisdiction. He then it is who torments men with sickness, and seeks thereby to turn them from God, and to work their ruin.

But, we would hasten to say, the power of Satan is far from being almighty; he can do nothing without God's authorization. God permits him to do all he does in tempting men, even believers, but it is in order that the trial may bring forth in them the fruit of holiness. It is also said that Satan has the power of death (Hebrews 2:14), that he is everywhere at work where death reigns, and nevertheless he has no power to decide as to the death of God's servants without the express will of God. It is even so with sickness. Because of sin, sickness is the work of Satan, but as the supreme direction of this world belongs to God, it can also be regarded as the work of God. All who are acquainted with the Book of Job know how very clearly this is brought out there.

What ought to be the result of sickness? The result will be good or evil according as God or Satan shall have the victory in us. Under Satan's influence, a sick person sinks always deeper in sin. He does not recognize sin to be the cause of the chastisement, and he occupies himself exclusively with himself and with his sufferings. He desires nothing but to be healed, without dreaming of a desire for deliverance from sin. On the contrary wherever God gains the victory, sickness leads the

sufferer to renounce himself, and to abandon himself to God. The history of Job illustrates this. His friends accused him, unjustly, of having committed sins of exceptional gravity, and by them to have drawn upon himself his terrible sufferings. It was, however, no such thing, since God Himself had borne him witness that he was “perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil” (Job 2:3). But in defending himself Job went too far. Instead of humbling himself in abasement before the Lord, and recognizing his hidden sins, he sought in all self-righteousness to justify himself. It was not until the Lord appeared to him that he came to say, “I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6). To him sickness became a signal blessing in bringing him to know God in quite a new way, and to humble himself more than ever before Him. This is the blessing which God desires that we also may receive whenever He permits Satan to strike us with sickness, and this end is attained by all sufferers who abandon themselves unreservedly to Him.

How are we to be delivered from sickness? A father never prolongs the chastisement of his child beyond the time necessary. God, also, who has His purpose in permitting sickness, will not prolong the chastisement longer than is needful to attain His end. As soon as Job had understood Him, from the time that he condemned himself and repented in dust and ashes, through hearkening to what God had revealed to him of Himself, the chastisement was at an end. God Himself delivered him from Satan’s hand and healed him of his sickness. Would that the sick in our day understood that God has a distinct purpose in permitting the chastisement, and that as soon as it is attained, as soon as the Holy Spirit shall have led them to confess and forsake their sins and to consecrate themselves entirely to the service of the Lord, the chastisement will no longer be needed—that the Lord could and would deliver them! God makes use of Satan as a wise government makes use of a jailer. He only leaves His children in his power for the given time; after which His good will is to associate us in the redemption of Him who has conquered Satan, who has withdrawn us from his domination in bearing in our stead our sins and our sicknesses.

03.29. The Prayer of Faith

CHAPTER 29 The Prayer of Faith “The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up” (James 5:15). The prayer of faith! Only once does this expression occur in the Bible, and it relates to the healing of the sick. The Church has adopted this expression, but she hardly ever has recourse to the prayer of faith except for the sake of obtaining other graces; while according to Scripture it is especially intended for the healing of the sick. Does the Apostle expect healing through the prayer of faith alone, or should it be accompanied by the use of remedies? This is generally the question which is raised. It is easily decided, if we take into consideration the power of the Church’s spiritual life in the early ages: the gifts of healing bestowed on the Apostles by the Lord, augmented by the subsequent pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:30; Acts 5:15-16), what Paul says of these gifts of healing by the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9), what James here insists upon when, in order to strengthen the reader in the expectation of faith, he recalls Elijah’s prayer and God’s wonderful answer (James 5:14-17). Does not all this clearly show that the believer is to look for healing in response to the prayer of faith alone, and without the addition of remedies?

Another question will arise: Does the use of remedies exclude the prayer of faith? To this we believe our reply should be: No, for the experience of a large number of believers testifies that in answer to their prayers God has often blessed the use of remedies, and made them a means of healing.

We come here to a third question: Which is then the line to follow, that we may prove with the greatest certainty, and according to the will of God, the efficacy of the prayer of faith? Is it, according to James, in setting aside all remedies or in using remedies as believers do for the most part? In a word, is it with or without remedies that the prayer of faith best obtains the grace of God? Which of these two methods will be most directly to the glory of God and for blessing to the sick one? Is it not perfectly simple to reply that if the prescription and the promise in James apply to believers of our time, they will find blessing in receiving them just as they were given to believers then, conforming to them on all points, expecting healing only from the Lord Himself, without having any recourse to remedies besides? It is, in fact, in this sense that Scripture always speaks of effectual faith and of the prayer of faith.

Both the laws of nature and the witness of Scripture show us that God often makes use of intermediary agencies to manifest His glory, but whether by experience or by Scripture, we know also that under the power of the fall, and the empire of our senses, our tendency is to attach more importance to the remedies than to the direct action of God. It often happens that remedies so occupy us as to intercept the presence of our God and turn us away from Him. Thus the laws and the properties of nature, which were destined to bring us back to God, have the contrary effect. This is why the Lord in calling Abraham to be the father of His chosen people had not recourse to the laws of nature (Romans 4:17-21). God would form for Himself a people of faith, living more in the unseen than in the things visible; and in order to lead them into this life it was necessary to take away their confidence in ordinary means. We see therefore that it was not by the ordinary

ways which He has traced in nature that God led Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, the Judges, David and many other kings of Israel. His object was to teach them by this to confide only in Him, to know Him as He is: "Thou art the God that doest wonders" (Psalms 77:14).

God wills to act in a similar way with us. It is when we seek to walk according to His prescription in James 5:1-20, abandoning the things which are seen (2 Corinthians 4:18) to lay hold of the promise of God, and so receive directly from Him the desired healing, that we discover how much importance we have attached to earthly remedies. Doubtless there are Christians who can make use of remedies without damage to their spiritual life, but the larger number of them are apt to count much more on the remedies than on the power of God. Now the purpose of God is to lead His children into a more intimate communion with Christ, and this is just what does happen when by faith we commit ourselves to Him as our sovereign Healer, counting solely on His invisible presence. Renouncing remedies strengthens faith in an extraordinary manner. Healing becomes, then, far more than sickness, a source of numberless spiritual blessings. It makes real to us what faith can accomplish, it establishes a new tie between God and the believer, and commences in him a life of confidence and dependence. The body equally with the soul is placed under the power of the Holy Spirit, and the prayer of faith, which saves the sick, thus leads us to a life of faith, strengthened by the assurance that God manifests His presence in our earthly life.

03.30. Anointing in the Name of the Lord

CHAPTER 30 Anointing in the Name of the Lord

“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:14).

Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” These words have given rise to controversy. Some have sought to infer from them that, very far from prescribing recourse to the prayer of faith alone, without the use of remedies, St. James had, on the contrary, mentioned anointing with oil as a remedy to be employed, and that to anoint in the name of the Lord had no other signification than to rub the patient with oil. But as this prescription applies to all kinds of sickness, this would be to attribute to oil a miraculous virtue against all sickness. Let us see what the Scripture tells us about anointing with oil, and what sense it attaches to these two words.

It was the custom of the people in the East to anoint themselves with oil when they came out of the bath; it was most refreshing in a hot climate. We see also that all those who were called to the special service of God were to be anointed with oil, as a token of their consecration to God, and of the grace they should receive from Him to fulfill their vocation. Thus the oil which was used to anoint the priests and the tabernacle was looked upon as “most holy” (Exodus 30:22-32), and wherever the Bible speaks of anointing with oil, it is an emblem of holiness and consecration. Nowhere in the Bible do we find any proof that oil was used as a remedy.

Once indeed the anointing with oil is mentioned in connection with sickness, but its place there was evidently as a religious ceremony and not as a remedy. In Mark 6:13 we read that the twelve “cast out many devils and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.” Here the healing of the sick runs parallel with the casting out of devils: both the result of miraculous power. Such was the kind of mission which Jesus commanded His disciples when He sent them two and two: “He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease” (Matthew 10:1). Thus it was the same power which permitted them either to cast out devils or to heal the sick. But let us seek to discover what was symbolized by the anointing administered by the twelve. In the Old Testament, oil was the symbol of the gift of the Holy Spirit: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me,” etc. (Isaiah 61:1). It is said of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power” (Acts 10:38), and it is said of believers: “Ye have an unction [anointing, R.V.] from the Holy One” (1 John 2:20). Sometimes man feels the need of a visible sign, appealing to his senses, which may come to his aid to sustain his faith, and enable him to grasp the spiritual meaning. The anointing therefore should symbolize to the sick one the action of the Holy Spirit who gives the healing. Do we then need the anointing as well as the prayer of faith? It is the Word of God which prescribes it, and it is in order to follow out its teachings that most of those who pray for healing receive the anointing; not that they regard it as indispensable, but to show that they are ready to submit to the Word of God in all things. In the last promise made by the Lord Jesus, He ordains the laying on of hands, not the anointing, to accompany the

communication of healing virtue (Mark 16:18). When Paul circumcised Timothy, and when he took upon himself a special vow, it was to prove that he had no objection to observing the institutions of the Old Covenant so long as the liberty of the Gospel did not thereby suffer loss. In the same way, James, the head of the Church of Jerusalem, faithful in preserving as far as possible the institutions of his fathers, continued the system of the Holy Spirit. And we also should regard it, not as a remedy, but as a pledge of the mighty virtue of the Holy Spirit, as a means of strengthening faith, a point of contact and of communion between the sick one and the members of the Church who are called to anoint him with oil.

“I am the Lord that healeth thee” (Exodus 15:26).

03.31. Full Salvation Our High Priviledge

CHAPTER 31 Full Salvation Our High Privilege

Luke 15:31

Please turn with me to Luke 15:31 : the Father said, “Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.”

Some time ago, when at Northfield, I was told by Mr. Moody that the best thing that he had heard at Keswick two years ago was this verse—given by some parting minister as a closing or parting text and Mr. Moody said to himself, “Why did I not see that before?”

We may talk a great deal, and write a great deal, about the father’s love to the prodigal, but when we think of the way he treated the elder brother, it brings to our hearts a truer sense of the wonderful love of the father; therefore I want to speak on this verse.

I suppose there are not a few Christians here who have got “full salvation”; but perhaps more than half those present have not got it, and, if I were to ask you, “Have you got it?” you would probably say, “I don’t understand what you mean by it, what is it?” Well, the great object of our Convention is to bring you to see that full salvation is waiting for you now, that God wants you to experience it, and, if you feel you have not got it, we wish to show you how wrong it is to be without it, and then to show you how to come out of the wrong life into the right one here and now. Oh, may all who have not got the experience pray very humbly, “Oh, my Father, bring me into the full enjoyment of Thy full salvation.”

First, the high privilege of God’s children.

Second, the low experience of many of them.

Third, the cause of this great discrepancy.

Fourth, the way of restoration, or how to get full salvation.

First, then, the elder son, being ever with his father, had, if he liked, the privilege of two things: unceasing fellowship and unlimited partnership. But he was worse than the prodigal, for, although always at home, yet he had never known, nor enjoyed, nor understood the privileges that were his. All this fullness of fellowship had been waiting for and offered to him, but not received. While the prodigal was away from home in the far country, his elder brother was far from the enjoyment of home, while he was at home.

Unceasing Fellowship. An earthly father loves his child, and delights to make his child happy. “God is love,” and He delights to pour out His own nature to His people. So many people talk about God hiding His face; but there are only two things that ever caused God to do so—sin or unbelief. Nothing else can. It is the very nature of the sun to shine, and it can’t help shining on and on. “God is love,” and, speaking with all reverence, He can’t help loving. We see His goodness toward the

ungodly, and His compassion on the erring, but His fatherly love is manifested toward all His children. “Ever with me”; but, you say, “Is it possible to be always happy and dwelling with God?” Yes, certainly, and there are many Scripture promises as to this. Look at the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we read of “boldness to enter within the veil”; how often, too, does David speak of hiding “in the secret of his tabernacle,” and “dwelling under the shadow of the Almighty.” My message is that the Lord your God desires to have you living continually in the light of His countenance. Your business, your temper, your circumstances, of which you complain as hindering, are they stronger than God? If you come and ask God to shine in and upon you, you will see and prove that He can do it, and that you as a believer may walk all the day and every day in the light of His love. That is “full salvation.” “‘Ever with Thee’; I never knew it, Lord, and so I did not enjoy it, but I do now.”

Unlimited Partnership—“All I have is thine.” The elder son complained of the father’s gracious reception of the prodigal, of all the feasting and rejoicing over his return, while to him had never been given a kid that he might make merry with his friends. The father, in the tenderness of his love, answers him, “Son, you were always in my house; you had only to ask and you would have got all you desired and required.” And that is what our Father says to all His children. But you are saying, “I am so weak, I cannot conquer my sins, I can’t manage to keep right, I can’t do this and the other thing.” No, but God can; and all the time He is saying to you: “All I have is thine; for in Christ I have given it to you. All the Spirit’s power and wisdom, all the riches of Christ, all the love of the Father; there is nothing that I have but is thine; I as God am God, that I may love, keep, and bless thee.” Thus God speaks, but it seems all a dream to some. Why are you so poor? God’s Word is sure, and does He not promise all this? See in John, John 14:1-31, John 15:1-27, John 16:1-33, how He tells us that we may have wonderful answers to prayer if we come in Jesus’ name and abide in Him. Do we really believe that it is possible for a Christian to live such a life?

Now, we have looked at this high privilege which is for all, so we pass on to consider our second point: The Low Experience of many of God’s dear children. What is it? Just living in poverty and starvation. The elder son, the child of a rich man, living in utter poverty!—“never had a kid,” while all that was his father’s was his—just exactly the state of many a child of God. The way He wants us to live is in the fullest fellowship of all His blessings, yet what a contrast!

Ask some if their lives are full of joy; why, they don’t even believe it is possible to be always happy and holy. “How could we get on thus in business?” they say; and they imagine that the life of fullest blessing possible to them must be one of sighing and sadness and sorrow.

I asked a dear woman at the Cape—a devoted Christian woman—how she was getting on. She answered that in her experience it was sometimes light and sometimes darkness, and argued that, as this was so in nature, the same thing held good in the kingdom of grace. So she just gave herself up to a wretched experience. But I don’t read in the Bible that there is to be any night or darkness in the believer’s experience; on the contrary, I read, “thy sun shall no more go down”; yet there are many who actually believe that there is nothing so good for them. As I said already, nothing can hide God from us but sin and unbelief. If you are in spiritual poverty, and there is no joy, no experience of victory over sin, temper, wandering, why is it so? “Oh,” you say, “I’m too weak, I must fall.” But does not the Scripture say that He is “able to keep you from falling [stumbling]”? A minister once told me That, although God is able, the verse does not say He is

willing to do it. God does not mock us, beloved; if He says He is “able,” then it is a proof of His willingness to do it. Do let us believe God’s Word and examine our own experience in the light of it.

Again, are you working and bearing much fruit for God, and do people by your life see and say, “God is with that man, keeping him humble, pure, and heavenly minded”? Or are they forced to confess that you are just a very ordinary Christian, easily provoked, worldly, and not heavenly minded? That is not the life God wants us to live, brethren. We have a rich Father, and as no true earthly father would like to see his child in rags, or without shoes and proper clothing, etc., neither does our God; but He wishes to fill up our life with richest and choicest blessings. How many Sunday school teachers there are who teach, and teach, and hope for the conversion of their scholars, but yet they can’t say God uses them to the conversion of any of them. They enjoy no close fellowship with God, no victory over sin, no power to convince the world. To which class do you belong? The low-level, or the fully possessed? Confess it today. These two sons represent two classes of Christians: the prodigal—away backslidden; the elder son—out of full fellowship with God. They were alike poor, and the elder son needed as great a change as did the prodigal; he needed to repent and confess and claim his full privileges; and so ought all low-level Christians to repent, confess, and claim full salvation. Oh, both of you, come today and say, “Father, I have sinned.”

Now, we ask, What is the cause of this terrible discrepancy? Why the great difference in the experience, I wonder? Ask yourself, “What is the reason I am not enjoying this full blessing? God’s Word speaks of it, others speak of it, and I see some who are living in it.” Oh, do ask the reason; come to God and say: “Why is it I never live the life You want me to live?”

You will find the answer in our story. The elder son had an un-childlike spirit, and entertained wrong thoughts about his father; and, if you had known the real character of your Father, your life would have been all right. You have, as it were, said, “I never got a kid to make merry; my Father is rich, but He never gives. I have prayed quite enough, but God does not answer me. I hear other people say that God fills and satisfies them, but He never does that for me.” A dear minister told me once that such a life was not for everybody, that it was of God’s sovereignty to give this to whomsoever He pleased. Friends, there is no doubt as to God’s sovereignty. He dispenses His gifts as He will; we are not all Pauls or Peters; places at the right and left hand of God are prepared for whomsoever He will. But this is not a matter of divine sovereignty; it is a question of child’s heritage. The Father’s love offers to give to every child in actual experience His full salvation. Now look at an earthly father. His children are of various ages, but all have equal right to the joy of their father’s countenance. True, he gives to his son of twenty years more money than to the son of five, and he has more to speak of to the boy of fifteen than to the child of three; but, as regards his love toward them, it is all the same, and in their privileges as children they are all alike. And God’s love to His dear children is all the same. Oh, do not try to throw the blame on God, but say, “I have had hard thoughts of Thee, O God, and I have sinned. As a father I have done for my children what I did not believe God was able and willing to do for me, and I have been lacking in childlike faith.” Oh, do believe in the love, the willingness and power of God to give you full salvation, and a change must surely come.

Now let us consider the Way of Restoration: how to get out of this poor experience. The prodigal repented and so must those children of God who have been living within sight of, but not enjoying,

His promises. Conversion is generally sudden and a long repentance is usually a long impenitence. Many in the Church of Christ think it must take a long time to get into full salvation. Yes, it will take a long time if you are to do it yourself—indeed, you never will. No, no, friend, if you come and trust God it can be done in a moment. By God's grace give yourself up to Him. Don't say, "What's the use? It will do no good"; but put yourself, as you are in sin and weakness, into the bosom of your Father. God will deliver you, and you will find that it is only one step out of the darkness into the light. Say, "Father, what a wretch I have been, in being with Thee and yet not believing Thy love to me!"

Yes, I come today with a call to "repent"; addressed, not to the unsaved, but to those who know what it is to be pardoned. For have you not sinned in the hard thoughts you have had of God, and is there not a longing, a thirsting and hungering after something better? Come, then, repent, and just believe that God does blot out the sin of your unbelief. Do you believe it? Oh, do not dishonor God by unbelief, but come today and confidently claim full salvation. Then trust in Him to keep you. This seems difficult to some; but there is no difficulty about it. God will shine His light upon you always, saying, "Son, thou art ever with me"; and all you have to do is to dwell in and walk in that light.

I began by saying there are two classes of Christians: those who enjoy full salvation, and those who do not understand about it. Well, if it is not clear to you, ask God to make it clear. But if you do understand about it, remember it is a definite act. Just let yourself go into the arms of God; hear Him say, "All is thine"; then you say, "Praise God, I believe, I accept, I give up myself to Him, and I believe God gives Himself now to me!"

03.32. "Ye are the Branches"

CHAPTER 32 "Ye Are the Branches"

"Ye are the branches" (John 15:5).

What a simple thing it is to be a branch— the branch of a tree, or the branch of a vine! The branch grows out of the vine, or out of the tree, and there it lives and in due time bears fruit. It has no responsibility except just to receive from the root and stem sap and nourishment. And if we only by the Holy Spirit knew our relationship to Jesus Christ, our work would be changed into the brightest and most heavenly thing upon earth. Instead of there ever being soul-weariness or exhaustion, our work would be like a new experience, linking us to Jesus as nothing else can. For, alas! is it not often true that our work comes between us and Jesus? What folly! The very work He has to do in me, and I for Him, I take up in such a way that it separates me from Christ. Many a laborer in the vineyard has complained that he has too much work, and no time for close communion with Jesus, and that his usual work weakens his inclination for prayer, and that his too much intercourse with men darkens the spiritual life. Sad thought, that the bearing of fruit should separate the branch from the vine! That must be because we have looked upon our work as something else than the branch bearing fruit. May God deliver us from every false thought about the Christian life!

Now, just a few thoughts about this blessed branch-life. In the first place it is a life of absolute dependence. The branch has nothing: it just depends upon the vine for everything. That word, absolute dependence, is one of the most solemn and large and precious of words. A great German theologian wrote two large volumes some years ago, to show that the whole of Calvin's theology is summed up in that one principle of absolute dependence upon God; and he was right. If you can learn every moment of the day to depend upon God, everything will come right. You will get the higher life if you depend absolutely upon God.

Must I understand that when I have got to work, when I have to preach a sermon, or address a Bible class, or go out and visit the poor neglected ones, that all the responsibility of the work is on Christ? That is exactly what Christ wants you to understand. Christ desires that in all your work the very foundation should be the simple, blessed consciousness: Christ must care for all. And how does He fulfill the trust of that dependence? He does it by sending down the Holy Spirit—not now and then only as a special gift, for remember the relation between the vine and the branches is such that hourly, daily, unceasingly, there is the living connection maintained. The sap does not flow for a time, and then stop, and then flow again, but from moment to moment the sap flows from the vine to the branches. And just so, my Lord Jesus wants me to take that blessed position as a worker, and, morning by morning and day by day and hour by hour and step by step, in every work I have to go out to, just to abide before Him in the simple, utter helplessness of one who knows nothing, and is nothing, and can do nothing.

Absolute dependence upon God is the secret of all power in work. The branch has nothing but what it gets from the vine, and you and I can have nothing but what we get from Jesus. But

secondly, the life of the branch is not only a life of entire dependence, but of deep restfulness. Oh, that little branch, if it could think, and if it could feel, and if it could speak—and if we could have a little branch today to talk to us, and if we would say: “Come, branch of the vine, tell me, I want to learn from thee how I can be a true branch of the living Vine,” what would it answer? The little branch would whisper: “Man, I hear that you are wise, and I know that you can do a great many wonderful things. I know you have much strength and wisdom given to you, but I have one lesson for you. With all your hurry and effort in Christ’s work you never prosper. The first thing you need is to come and rest in your Lord Jesus. That is what I do. Since I grew out of that vine I have spent years and years, and all I have done is just to rest in the vine. When the time of spring came I had no anxious thought nor care. The vine began to pour its’ sap into me, and to give the bud and leaf. And when the time of summer came I had no care, and in the great heat I trusted the vine to bring moisture to keep me fresh. And in the time of harvest, when the owner came to pluck the grapes, I had no care. If there was anything in the grapes not good, the owner never blamed the branch; the blame was always on the vine. And if you would be a true branch of Christ, the living Vine, just rest on Him. Let Christ bear the responsibility.”

You say: “Won’t that make me slothful?” I tell you it will not. No one who learns to rest upon the living Christ can become slothful, for the closer your contact with Christ the more of the Spirit of His zeal and love will be borne in upon you. But, oh! begin to work in the midst of your entire dependence by adding to it deep restfulness. A man sometimes tries and tries to be dependent upon Christ, but he worries himself about this absolute dependence: he tries and he cannot get it. But let him sink down into entire restfulness every day.

Rest in Christ, who can give wisdom and strength, and you do not know how that restfulness will often prove to be the very best part of your message. You plead with people and you argue, and they get the idea: There is a man arguing and striving with me. They only feel: Here are two men dealing with each other. But if you will let the deep rest of God come over you, the rest in Christ Jesus, the peace and rest and holiness of heaven, that restfulness will bring a blessing to the heart, even more than the words you speak. But a third thought. The branch teaches a lesson of much fruitfulness. You know the Lord Jesus repeated that word “fruit” often in that parable; He spoke first of fruit, and then of more fruit, and then of much fruit. Yes, you are ordained not only to bear fruit, but to bear much fruit. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” In the first place, Christ said: “I am the Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman who has charge of Me and you.” He who will watch over the connection between Christ and the branches is God; and it is in the power of God, through Christ, that we are to bear fruit.

O Christians! you know this world is perishing for the lack of workers. And it needs not only more workers. The workers are saying, some more earnestly than others, “We need not only more workers, but we need that our workers should have a new power, a different life—that the workers should be able to bring more blessing.”

What is wanting? There is wanting the close connection between the worker and the heavenly Vine. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has blessings that He could pour on tens of thousands who are perishing. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has power to provide the heavenly grapes. But “ye are the branches,” and you cannot bear heavenly fruit unless you are in close connection with Jesus Christ. Do not confound work and fruit. There may be a good deal of work for Christ that is not the

fruit of the heavenly Vine. Do not seek for work only. Oh! study this question of fruit-bearing. It means the very life and the very power and the very Spirit and the very love within the heart of the Son of God—it means the heavenly Vine Himself coming into your heart and mine.

Stand in close connection with the heavenly Vine and say: “Lord Jesus, nothing less than the sap that flows through Thyself, nothing less than the Spirit of Thy divine life is what we ask. Lord Jesus, I pray Thee let Thy Spirit flow through me in all my work for Thee.” I tell you again that the sap of the heavenly Vine is nothing but the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is nothing but the life of the heavenly Vine, and what you must get from Christ is nothing less than a strong inflow of the Holy Spirit. You need it exceedingly, and you want nothing more than that. Remember that. Do not expect Christ to give a bit of strength here, and a bit of blessing yonder, and a bit of help over there. As the vine does its work in giving its own peculiar sap to the branch, so expect Christ to give His own Holy Spirit into your heart, and then you will bear much fruit. And if you have only begun to bear fruit, and are listening to the word of Christ in the parable, “more fruit,” “much fruit,” remember that in order that you should bear more fruit you just require more of Jesus in your life and heart. A fourth thought. The life of the branch is a life of close communion. Let us again ask: What has the branch to do? You know that precious, inexhaustible word that Christ used: Abide. Your life is to be an abiding life. And how is the abiding to be? It is to be just like the branch in the vine, abiding every minute of the day. There are the branches, in close communion, in unbroken communion, with the vine, from January to December. And cannot I live every day—it is to me an almost terrible thing that we should ask the question— cannot I live in abiding communion with the heavenly Vine? You say, “But I am so much occupied with other things.” You may have ten hours’ hard work daily, during which your brain has to be occupied with temporal things; God orders it so. But the abiding work is the work of the heart, not of the brain, the work of the heart clinging to and resting in Jesus, a work in which the Holy Spirit links us to Christ Jesus. Oh, do believe that deeper down than the brain, deep down in the inner life, you can abide in Christ, so that every moment you are free the consciousness will come: Blessed Jesus, I am still in Thee. If you will learn for a time to put aside other work and to get into this abiding contact with the heavenly Vine, you will find that fruit will come.

What is the application to our life with regard to this abiding communion? What does it mean? It means close fellowship with Christ in secret prayer. I am sure there are Christians who do long for the higher life, and who sometimes have got a great blessing, and have at times found a great inflow of heavenly joy and a great outflow of heavenly gladness; and yet after a time it has passed away. They have not understood that close, personal, actual communion with Christ is an absolute necessity for daily life. Take time to be alone with Christ. Nothing in heaven or earth can free you from the necessity for that, if you are to be happy and holy Christians.

Oh, how many Christians look upon it as a burden, and a tax, and a duty, and a difficulty to get much alone with God! That is the great hindrance to our Christian life everywhere. We need more quiet fellowship with God, and I tell you in the name of the heavenly Vine that you cannot be healthy branches, branches into which the heavenly sap can flow, unless you take plenty of time for communion with God. If you are not willing to sacrifice time to get alone with Him, and give Him time every day to work in you, and to keep up the link of connection between you and Himself, He cannot give you that blessing of His unbroken fellowship. Jesus Christ asks you to live in close communion with Him. Let every heart say: “O Christ, it is this I long for, it is this I choose.” And He

will gladly give it to you. And then my last thought. The life of the branch is a life of entire surrender. This word, entire surrender, is a great and solemn word, and I believe we do not understand its meaning. But yet the little branch preaches it. "Have you anything to do, little branch, beside bearing grapes?" "No, nothing." "Are you fit for nothing?" "Fit for nothing! The Bible says that a bit of vine cannot even be used as a pen; it is fit for nothing but to be burned." "And now, what do you understand, little branch, about your relation to the vine?" "My relation is just this: I am utterly given up to the vine, and the vine can give me as much or as little sap as it chooses. Here I am at its disposal, and the vine can do with me what it likes!"

Oh, we need this entire surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the most difficult points to make clear, and one of the most important and needful points to explain—what this entire surrender is. It is an easy thing for a man or a number of men to offer themselves up to God for entire consecration, and to say, "Lord, it is my desire to give up myself entirely to Thee." That is of great value and often brings very rich blessing. But the one question I ought to study quietly is: What is meant by entire surrender? It means that just as literally as Christ was given up entirely to God, I am given up entirely to Christ. Is that too strong? Some of you think so. Some think that never can be; that just as entirely and absolutely as Christ gave up His life to do nothing but seek the Father's pleasure, and depend on the Father absolutely and entirely, I am to do nothing but to seek the pleasure of Christ. But that is actually true. Christ Jesus came to breathe His own Spirit into us, to make us find our very highest happiness in living entirely for God, just as He did. O beloved brethren, if that is the case, then I ought to say: "Yes, as true as it is of that little branch of the vine, so true, by God's grace, I would have it be of me. I would live day by day that Christ may be able to do with me what He will."

Ah! here comes the terrible mistake that lies at the bottom of so much of our own religion. A man thinks: "I have my business and family duties, and my relations as a citizen, and all this I cannot change. And now alongside of all this I am to take in religion and the service of God as something that will keep me from sin. God help me to perform my duties properly!" That is not right. When Christ came, He came and bought the sinner with His blood. If there was a slave market here and I were to buy a slave, I should take that slave away to my own house from his old surroundings, and he would live at my house as my personal property, and I could order him about all the day. And if he were a faithful slave he would live as having no will and no interests of his own, his one care being to promote the well-being and honor of his master. And in like manner I, who have been bought with the blood of Christ, have been bought to live every day with the one thought—How can I please my Master?

Oh, we find the Christian life so difficult because we seek for God's blessing while we live in our own will. We would be glad to live the Christian life according to our own liking. We make our own plans and choose our own work, and then we ask the Lord Jesus to come in and take care that sin shall not conquer us too much, and that we shall not go too far wrong; we ask Him to come in and give us so much of His blessing. But our relation to Jesus ought to be such that we are entirely at His disposal, and every day come to Him humbly and straightforwardly, and say: "Lord, is there anything in me that is not according to Thy will, that has not been ordered by Thee, or that is not entirely given up to Thee?" Oh, if we would wait and wait patiently, there would spring up a relationship between us and Christ so close and so tender that we should afterwards be amazed how far distant our intercourse with Him had previously been.

I know there are a great many difficulties about this question of holiness; I know that all do not think exactly the same with regard to it. But that would be to me a matter of comparative indifference if I could see that all are honestly longing to be free from every sin. But I am afraid that unconsciously there are in hearts often compromises with the idea: "We cannot be without sin; we must sin a little every day—we cannot help it." Oh, that people would actually cry to God: "Lord, do keep me from sin!" Give yourself utterly to Jesus, and ask Him to do His very utmost for you in keeping you from sin. In conclusion, let me gather up all in one word. Christ Jesus said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." In other words: "I, the living One who have so completely given Myself to you, am the Vine. You cannot trust Me too much. I am the Almighty Worker, full of a divine life and power." Christians, you are the branches of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is in your heart the consciousness: "I am not a strong, healthy, fruit-bearing branch, I am not closely linked with Jesus, I am not living in Him as I should be"— then listen to Him saying: "I am the Vine, I will receive you, I will draw you to Myself, I will bless you, I will strengthen you, I will fill you with My Spirit. I, the Vine, have taken you to be My branches; I have given Myself utterly to you; children, give yourselves utterly to Me. I have surrendered Myself as God absolutely to you; I became Man and died for you that I might be entirely yours. Come and surrender yourselves entirely to be Mine."

What shall our answer be? Oh, let it be a prayer from the depths of our heart, that the living Christ may take each one of us and link us close to Himself. Let our prayer be that He, the living Vine, shall so link each of us to Himself that we shall go on our way with our hearts singing: "He is my Vine, and I am His branch; I want nothing more— now I have the everlasting Vine." Then when you get alone with Him, worship and adore Him, praise and trust Him, love Him and wait for His love. "Thou art my Vine, and I am Thy branch. It is enough, my soul is satisfied." Glory to His blessed name!

04.00. George Muller and the Secret of His Power in Prayer

George Muller And The Secret Of His Power In Prayer by Andrew Murray Author's Foreword
WHEN God wishes anew to teach His Church a truth that is not being understood or practised, He mostly does so by raising some man to be in word and deed a living witness to its blessedness. And so God has raised up in this nineteenth century, among others, George Muller to be His witness that He is indeed the Hearer of prayer.

I know of no way in which the principal truths of Gods word in regard to prayer can be more effectually illustrated and established than a short review of his life and of what he tells of his prayer-experiences.

04.01. Chapter 1 - STARTING THE SCHOOL

Not long after his settlement at Bristol, THE SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTION FOR HOME AND ABROAD was established for aiding in Day, Sunday School, Mission and Bible work. Of this Institution the Orphan Home work, by which Mr. Muller is best known, became a branch. It was in 1834 that his heart was touched by the case of an orphan brought to Christ in one of the schools, but who had to go to a poorhouse where its spiritual wants would not be cared for. Meeting shortly after with a life of Franke, he writes (Nov, 20, 1835): Today I have had it very much laid on my heart no longer merely to think about the establishment of an Orphan Home, but actually to set about it, and I have been very much in prayer respecting it, in order to ascertain the Lords mind. May God make it plain. And again, Nov. 25: I have been again much in prayer yesterday and today about the Orphan Home, and am more and more convinced that it is of God. May He in mercy guide me. The three chief reasons are:

1. That God may be glorified, should He be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust Him; and that thus the faith of His children may be strengthened.
2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless and motherless children.
3. Their temporal welfare.

After some months of prayer and waiting on God, a house was rented, with room for thirty children, and in course of time three more, containing in all 120 children. The work was carried on it this way for ten years, the supplies for the needs of the orphans being asked and received of God alone. It was often a time of sore need and much prayer, but a trial of faith more precious than of gold was found unto praise and honour and glory of God. The Lord was preparing His servant for greater things. By His providence and His Holy Spirit, Mr. Muller was led to desire, and to wait upon God till he received from Him, the sure promise of 15,000 for a Home to contain 300 children. This first home was opened in 1849. In 1858, a second and third Home, for 950 more orphans, was opened, costing 35,000. And in 1869 and 1870, a fourth and a fifth home, for 850 more, at an expense of 50,000, making the total number of the orphans 2100. In addition to this work, God has given him almost as much as for the building of the Orphan Homes, and the maintenance of the orphans, for other work, the support of schools and missions, Bible and tract circulation. In all he has received from God, to be spent in His work, during these fifty years, more than one million pounds sterling. How little he knew, let us carefully notice, that when he gave up his little salary of 35 a year in obedience to the leading of Gods word and the Holy Spirit, what God was preparing to give him as the reward of obedience and faith; and how wonderfully the word was to be fulfilled to him: Thou hast been faithful over few things; I will set thee over many things. And these things have happened for an ensample to us. God calls us to be followers of George Muller, even as he is of Christ. His God is our God; the same promises are for us; the same service of love and faith in which he laboured is calling for us on every side. Let us in connection with our lessons in the school of prayer study the way in which God gave George Muller such power as a man of prayer: we shall find in it the most remarkable illustration of some of the lessons which we have been

studying with the blessed Master in the word. We shall specially have impressed upon us His first great lesson, that if we will come to Him in the way He has pointed out, with definite petitions, made known to us by the Spirit through the word as being according to the will of God, we may most confidently believe that whatsoever we ask it shall be done.

04.02. Chapter 2 - MULLER'S BIOGRAPHY

He was born in Prussia on 25th September 1805, and is thus now eighty years of age. His early life, even after having entered the University of Halle as a theological student, was wicked in the extreme. Led by a friend one evening, when just twenty years of age, to a prayer meeting, he was deeply impressed, and soon after brought to know the Saviour. Not long after he began reading missionary papers, and in course of time offered himself to the London Society for promoting Christianity to the Jews. He was accepted as a student, but soon found that he could not in all things submit to the rules of the Society, as leaving too little liberty for the leading of the Holy Spirit. The connection was dissolved in 1830 by mutual consent, and he became the pastor of a small congregation at Teignmouth. In 1832 he was led to Bristol, and it was as pastor of Bethesda Chapel that he was led to the Orphan Home and other work, in connection with which God has so remarkably led him to trust His word and to experience how God fulfils that word. A few extracts in regard to his spiritual life will prepare the way for what we specially wish to quote of his experiences in reference to prayer. In connection with this I would mention, that the Lord very graciously gave me, from the very commencement of my divine life, a measure of simplicity and of childlike disposition in spiritual things, so that whilst I was exceedingly ignorant of the Scriptures, and was still from time to time overcome even by outward sins, yet I was enabled to carry most minute matters to the Lord in prayer. And I have found godliness profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Though very weak and ignorant, yet I had now, by the grace of God, some desire to benefit others, and he who so faithfully had once served Satan, sought now to win souls for Christ.

It was at Teignmouth that he was led to know how to use Gods word , and to trust the Holy Spirit as the Teacher given by God to make that word clear. He writes:

God then began to show me that the word of God alone is our standard of judgment in spiritual things; that it can be explained only by the Holy Spirit; and that in our day, as well as in former times. He is the Teacher of His people. The office of the Holy Spirit I had not experimentally understood before that time.

It was my beginning to understand this latter point in particular, which had a great effect on me; for the Lord enabled me to put it to the test of experience, by laying aside commentaries, and almost every other book and simply reading the word of God and studying it. The result of this was, that the first evening that I shut myself into my room, to give myself to prayer and meditation over the Scriptures, I learned more in a few hours than I had done during a period of several months previously. But the particular difference was that I received real strength for my soul in so doing. I now began to try by the test of the Scriptures the things which I had learned and seen, and found that only those principles which stood the test were of real value. Of obedience to the word of God, he writes as follows, in connection with his being baptized: It had pleased God, in His abundant mercy, to bring my mind into such a state, that I was willing to carry out into my life whatever I should find in the Scriptures. I could say, I will do His will, and it was on that account, I believe, that

I saw which doctrine is of God. And I would observe here, by the way, that the passage to which I have just alluded (John 7:17) has been a most remarkable comment to me on many doctrines and precepts of our most holy faith. For instance: Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you (Matthew 5:39-44). Sell that ye have, and give alms (Luke 12:33). Owe no man any thing, but to love one another (Romans 13:8). It may be said, Surely these passages cannot be taken literally, for how then would the people of God be able to pass through the world The state of mind enjoined in John 7:17 will cause such objections to vanish. WHOSOEVER IS WILLING TO ACT OUT these commandments of the Lord LITERALLY, will, I believe, be led with me to see that to take them LITERALLY is the will of God. Those who do so take them will doubtless often be brought into difficulties, hard to the flesh to bear, but these will have a tendency to make them constantly feel that they are strangers and pilgrims here, that this world is not their home, and thus to throw them more upon God, who will assuredly help us through any difficulty into which we may be brought by seeking to act in obedience to His word. This implicit surrender to God's word led him to certain views and conduct in regard to money, which mightily influenced his future life. They had their root in the conviction that money was a Divine stewardship, and that all money had therefore to be received and dispensed in direct fellowship with God Himself. This led him to the adoption of the following four great rules:

1. Not to receive any fixed salary, both because in the collecting of it there was often much that was at variance with the freewill offering with which Gods service is to be maintained, and in the receiving of it a danger of placing more dependence on human sources of income than in the living God Himself.
2. Never to ask any human being for help, however great the need might be, but to make his wants known to the God who has promised to care for His servants and to hear their prayer.
3. To take this command (Luke 12:33) literally, Sell that thou hast and give alms, and never to save up money, but to spend all God entrusted to him on Gods poor, on the work of His kingdom.
4. Also to take Romans 13:8, Owe no man anything, literally, and never to buy on credit, or be in debt for anything, but to trust God to provide. This mode of living was not easy at first. But Muller testifies it was most blessed in bringing the soul to rest in God, and drawing it into closer union with Himself when inclined to backslide. For it will not do, it is not possible, to live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God, to draw down from heaven everything one needs for the life that now is. Not long after his settlement at Bristol, THE SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTION FOR HOME AND ABROAD was established for aiding in Day, Sunday School, Mission and Bible work. Of this Institution the Orphan Home work, by which Mr. Muller is best known, became a branch. It was in 1834 that his heart was touched by the case of an orphan brought to Christ in one of the schools, but who had to go to a poorhouse where its spiritual wants would not be cared for. Meeting shortly after with a life of Franke, he writes (Nov, 20, 1835): Today I have had it very much laid on my heart no longer merely to think about the establishment of an Orphan Home, but actually to set about it, and I have been very much in prayer respecting it, in

order to ascertain the Lords mind. May God make it plain. And again, Nov. 25: I have been again much in prayer yesterday and today about the Orphan Home, and am more and more convinced that it is of God. May He in mercy guide me. The three chief reasons are:

1. That God may be glorified, should He be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust Him; and that thus the faith of His children may be strengthened.
2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless and motherless children.
3. Their temporal welfare.

After some months of prayer and waiting on God, a house was rented, with room for thirty children , and in course of time three more, containing in all 120 children. The work was carried on it this way for ten years, the supplies for the needs of the orphans being asked and received of God alone. It was often a time of sore need and much prayer, but a trial of faith more precious than of gold was found unto praise and honour and glory of God. The Lord was preparing His servant for greater things. By His providence and His Holy Spirit, Mr. Muller was led to desire, and to wait upon God till he received from Him, the sure promise of 15,000 for a Home to contain 300 children. This first Home was opened in 1849. In 1858, a second and third Home, for 950 more orphans, was opened, costing 35,000. And in 1869 and 1870, a fourth and a fifth Home, for 850 more, at an expense of 50,000, making the total number of the orphans 2100. In addition to this work, God has given him almost as much as for the building of the Orphan Homes, and the maintenance of the orphans, for other work, the support of schools and missions, Bible and tract circulation. In all he has received from God, to be spent in His work, during these fifty years, more than one million pounds sterling. How little he knew, let us carefully notice, that when he gave up his little salary of 35 a year in obedience to the leading of Gods word and the Holy Spirit, what God was preparing to give him as the reward of obedience and faith; and how wonderfully the word was to be fulfilled to him: Thou hast been faithful over few things; I will set thee over many things. And these things have happened for an ensample to us. God calls us to be followers of George Muller, even as he is of Christ. His God is our God; the same promises are for us; the same service of love and faith in which he laboured is calling for us on every side. Let us in connection with our lessons in the school of prayer study the way in which God gave George Muller such power as a man of prayer: we shall find in it the most remarkable illustration of some of the lessons which we have been studying with the blessed Master in the word. We shall specially have impressed upon us His first great lesson, that if we will come to Him in the way He has pointed out, with definite petitions, made known to us by the Spirit through the word as being according to the will of God, we may most confidently believe that whatsoever we ask it shall be done.

04.03. Chapter 3 - PRAYER AND THE WORD OF GOD

We have more than once seen that Gods listening to our voice depends upon our listening to His voice. We must not only have a special promise to plead, when we make a special request, but our whole life must be under the supremacy of the word: the word must be dwelling in us. The testimony of George Muller on this point is most instructive. He tells us how the discovery of the true place of the word of God, and the teaching of the Spirit with it, was the commencement of a new era in his spiritual life. Of it he writes: Now the scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God Himself has condescended to become an author, and I am ignorant about that precious book which His Holy Spirit has caused to be written through the instrumentality of His servants, and it contains that which I ought to know, and the knowledge of which will lead me to true happiness; therefore I ought to read again and again this most precious book, this book of books, most earnestly, most prayerfully, and with much meditation; and in this practice I ought to continue all the days of my life. For I was aware, though I read it but little, that I knew scarcely anything of it. But instead of acting thus and being led by my ignorance of the word of God to study it more, my difficulty in understanding it, and the little enjoyment I had in it, made me careless of reading it (for much prayerful reading of the word gives not merely more knowledge, but increases the delight we have in reading it); and thus, like many believers, I practically preferred, for the first four years of my divine life, the works of uninspired men to the oracles of the living God. The consequence was that I remained a babe, both in knowledge and grace. In knowledge, I say; for all true knowledge must be derived, by the Spirit, from the word. And as I neglected the word, I was for nearly four years so ignorant, that I did not clearly know even the fundamental points of our holy faith. And this lack of knowledge most sadly kept me back from walking steadily in the ways of God. For when it pleased the Lord in August 1829 to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk became very different. And though ever since that I have very much fallen short of what I might and ought to be, yet by the grace of God I have been enabled to live much nearer to Him than before. If any believers read this who practically prefer other books to the Holy Scriptures, and who enjoy the writings of men much more than the word of God, may they be warned by my loss. I shall consider this book to have been the means of doing much good, should it please the Lord, through its instrumentality, to lead some of His people no longer to neglect the Holy Scriptures, but to give them that preference which they have hitherto bestowed on the writings of men.

Before I leave this subject, I would only add: If the reader understands very little of the word of God, he ought to read it very much; for the Spirit explains the word by the word. And if he enjoys the reading of the word little, that is just the reason why he should read it much; for the frequent reading of the Scriptures creates a delight in them, so that the more we read them, the more we desire to do so. Above all, he should seek to have it settled in his own mind that God alone by His Spirit can teach him, and that therefore, as God will be inquired of for blessings, it becomes him to seek Gods blessing previous to reading, and also whilst reading. He should have it, moreover, settled in his mind that although the Holy Spirit is the best and sufficient Teacher, yet that this Teacher does not always teach immediately when we desire it, and that therefore we may have to

entreat Him again and again for the explanation of certain passages; but that He will surely teach us at last, if indeed we are seeking for light prayerfully, patiently, and with a view to the glory of God.

We find in his journal frequent mention made of his spending two and three hours in prayer over the word for the feeding of his spiritual life. As the fruit of this, when he had need of strength and encouragement in prayer, the individual promises were not to him so many arguments from a book to be used with God, but living words which he had heard the Fathers living voice speak to him, and which he could now bring to the Father in living faith.

04.04. Chapter 4 - PRAYER AND THE WILL OF GOD

One of the greatest difficulties with young believers is to know how they can find out whether what they desire is according to Gods will. I count it one of the most precious lessons God wants to teach through the experience of George Muller, that He is willing to make know, of things of which His word says nothing directly, that they are His will for us, and that we may ask them. The teaching of the Spirit, not without or against the word, but as something above and beyond it, in addition to it, without which we cannot see Gods will, is the heritage of every believer. It is through THE WORD, AND THE WORD ALONE, that the Spirit teaches, applying the general principles or promises to our special need. And it is THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT ALONE, who can really make the word a light on our path, whether the path of duty in our daily walk, or the path of faith in our approach to God. Let us try and notice in what childlike simplicity and teachableness it was that the discovery of Gods will was so surely and so clearly made known to His servant. With regard to the building of the first Home and the assurance he had of its being Gods will, he writes in May 1850, just after it had been opened, speaking of the great difficulties there were, and how little likely it appeared to nature that they would be removed: But while the prospect before me would have been overwhelming had I looked at it naturally, I was never even for once permitted to question how it would end. For as from the beginning I was sure it was the will of God that I should go to the work of building for Him this large Orphan Home, so also from the beginning I was as certain that the whole would be finished as if the Home had been already filled. The way in which he found out what was God's will, comes out with special clearness in his account of the building of the second Home; and I ask the reader to study with care the lesson the narrative conveys: Dec. 5, 1850. Under these circumstances I can only pray that the Lord in His tender mercy would not allow Satan to gain an advantage over me. By the grace of God my heart says: Lord, if I could be sure that it is Thy will that I should go forward in this matter, I would do so cheerfully; and, on the other hand, if I could be sure that these are vain, foolish, proud thoughts, that they are not from Thee, I would, by Thy grace, hate them, and entirely put them aside. My hope is in God: He will help and teach me. Judging, however, from His former dealings with me, it would not be a strange thing to me, nor surprising, if He called me to labour yet still more largely in this way. The thoughts about enlarging the Orphan work have not yet arisen on account of an abundance of money having lately come in; for I have had of late to wait for about seven weeks upon God, whilst little, very little comparatively, came in, i.e. about four times as much was going out as came in; and, had not the Lord previously sent me large sums, we should have been distressed indeed. Lord! How can Thy servant know Thy will in this matter? Wilt Thou be pleased to teach him!

December 11. During the last six days, since writing the above, I have been, day after day, waiting upon God concerning this matter. It has generally been more or less all the day on my heart. When I have been awake at night, it has not been far from my thoughts. Yet all this without the least excitement. I am perfectly calm and quiet respecting it. My soul would be rejoiced to go forward in this service, could I be sure that the Lord would have me to do so; for then, notwithstanding the numberless difficulties, all would be well; and His Name would be magnified.

On the other hand, were I assured that the Lord would have me to be satisfied with my present sphere of service, and that I should not pray about enlarging the work, by His grace I could, without an effort, cheerfully yield to it; for He has brought me into such a state of heart, that I only desire to please Him in this matter. Moreover, hitherto I have not spoken about this thing even to my beloved wife, the sharer of my joys, sorrows, and labours for more than twenty years; nor is it likely that I shall do so for some time to come: for I prefer quietly to wait on the Lord, without conversing on this subject, in order that thus I may be kept the more easily, by His blessing, from being influenced by things from without. The burden of my prayer concerning this matter is, that the Lord would not allow me to make a mistake, and that He would teach me to do His will.

December 26. Fifteen days have elapsed since I wrote the preceding paragraph. Every day since then I have continued to pray about this matter, and that with a goodly measure of earnestness, by the help of God. There has passed scarcely an hour during these days, in which, whilst awake, this matter has not been more or less before me. But all without even a shadow of excitement. I converse with no one about it. Hitherto have I not even done so with my dear wife. For this I refrain still, and deal with God alone about the matter, in order that no outward influence and no outward excitement may keep me from attaining unto a clear discovery of His will. I have the fullest and most peaceful assurance that He will clearly show me His will. This evening I have had again an especially solemn season for prayer, to seek to know the will of God. But whilst I continue to entreat and beseech the Lord, that He would not allow me to be deluded in this business, I may say I have scarcely any doubt remaining on my mind as to what will be the issue, even that I should go forward in this matter. As this, however, is one of the most momentous steps that I have ever taken, I judge that I cannot go about this matter with too much caution, prayerfulness, and deliberation. I am in no hurry about it. I could wait for years, by Gods grace, were this His will, before even taking one single step toward this thing, or even speaking to anyone about it; and, on the other hand, I would set to work tomorrow, were the Lord to bid me do so. This calmness of mind, this having no will of my own in the matter, this only wishing to please my Heavenly Father in it, this only seeking His and not my honour in it; this state of heart, I say, is the fullest assurance to me that my heart is not under a fleshly excitement, and that, if I am helped thus to go on, I shall know the will of God to the full. But, while I write this, I cannot but add at the same time, that I do crave the honour and the glorious privilege to be more and more used by the Lord. I desire to be allowed to provide scriptural instruction for a thousand orphans, instead of doing so for 300. I desire to expound the Holy Scriptures regularly to a thousand orphans, instead of doing so to 300. I desire that it may be yet more abundantly manifest that God is still the Hearer and Answerer of prayer, and that He is the living God now as He ever was and ever will be, when He shall simply, in answer to prayer, have condescended to provide me with a house for 700 orphans and with means to support them. This last consideration is the most important point in my mind. The Lords honor is the principal point with me in this whole matter; and just because this is the case, if He would be more glorified by not going forward in this business, I should by His grace be perfectly content to give up all thoughts about another Orphan House. Surely in such a state of mind, obtained by the Holy Spirit, Thou, O my Heavenly Father, wilt not suffer Thy child to be mistaken, much less deluded. By the help of God I shall continue further day by day to wait upon Him in prayer, concerning this thing, till He shall bid me act.

Jan. 2, 1851. A week ago I wrote the preceding paragraph. During this week I have still been helped day by day, and more than once every day, to seek the guidance of the Lord about another Orphan House. The burden of my prayer has still been, that He in His great mercy would keep me from making a mistake. During the last week the book of Proverbs has come in the course of my Scripture reading, and my heart has been refreshed in reference to this subject by the following passages: Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths (Proverbs 3:5, 6). By the grace of God I do acknowledge the Lord in all my ways, and in this thing in particular; I have therefore the comfortable assurance that He will direct my paths concerning this part of my service, as to whether I shall be occupied in it or not. Further: The integrity of the upright shall preserve them (Proverbs 11:3). By the grace of God I am upright in this business. My honest purpose is to get glory to God. Therefore I expect to be guided aright. Further: Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established (Proverbs 16:3). I do commit my works unto the Lord, and therefore expect that my thoughts will be established. My heart is more and more coming to a calm, quiet, and settled assurance, that the Lord will condescend to use me still further in the orphan work. Here Lord is Thy servant. When later he decided to build two additional houses, Nos. 4 and 5, he writes thus again: Twelve days have passed away since I wrote the last paragraph. I have still day by day been enabled to wait upon the Lord with reference to enlarging the Orphan work, and have been during the whole of this period also in perfect peace, which is the result of seeking in this thing only the Lord's honour and the temporal and spiritual benefit of my fellow men. Without an effort could I by His grace put aside all thoughts about this whole affair, if only assured that it is the will of God that I should do so; and, on the other hand, would at once go forward, if He would have it be so. I have still kept this matter entirely to myself. Though it be now about seven weeks, since day by day, more or less, my mind has been exercised about it, and since I have been daily praying about it, yet not one human being knows of it. As yet I have not even mentioned it to my dear wife in order that thus, by quietly waiting upon God, I might not be influenced by what might be said to me on the subject. This evening has been particularly set apart for prayer, beseeching the Lord once more not to allow me to be mistaken in this thing, and much less to be deluded by the devil. I have also sought to let all the reasons against building another Orphan House, and all the reasons for doing so pass before my mind: and now for the clearness and definiteness, write them down. Much, however, as the nine previous reasons weigh with me, yet they would not decide me were there not one more. It is this. After having for months pondered the matter, and having looked at it in all its bearings and with all its difficulties, and then having been finally led, after much prayer, to decide on this enlargement, my mind is at peace. The child who has again and again besought His Heavenly Father not to allow him to be deluded, nor even to make a mistake, is at peace, perfectly at peace concerning this decision; and has thus the assurance that the decision come to, after much prayer during weeks and months, is the leading of the Holy Spirit; and therefore purposes to go forward, assuredly believing that he will not be confounded, for he trusts in God. Many and great may be his difficulties; thousands and ten thousands of prayers may have ascended to God, before the full answer may be obtained; much exercise of faith and patience may be required; but in the end it will again be seen, that His servant, who trusts in Him, has not been confounded.

04.05. Chapter 5 - PRAYER AND THE GLORY

We have sought more than once to enforce the truth, that while we ordinarily seek the reasons of our prayers not being heard in the thing we ask not being according to the will of God, Scripture warns us to find the cause in ourselves, in our not being in the right state or not asking in the right spirit. The thing may be in full accordance with His will, but the asking, the spirit of the supplicant, not; then we are not heard. As the great root of all sin is self and self-seeking, so there is nothing that even in our more spiritual desires so effectually hinders God in answering as this: we pray for our own pleasure or glory. Prayer to have power and prevail must ask for the glory of God; and he can only do this as he is living for Gods glory. In George Muller we have one of the most remarkable instances on record of God's Holy Spirit leading a man deliberately and systematically, at the outset of a course of prayer, to make the glorifying of God his first and only object. Let us ponder well what he says, and learn the lesson God would teach us through him: I had constantly cases brought before me, which proved that one of the especial things which the children of God needed in our day, was to have their faith strengthened. I longed, therefore, to have something to point my brethren to, as a visible proof that our God and Father is the same faithful God as ever He was; as willing as ever to PROVE Himself to be the LIVING GOD in our day as formerly, to all who put their trust in Him. My spirit longed to be instrumental in strengthening their faith, by giving them not only instances from the word of God, of His willingness and ability to help all who rely upon Him, but to show them by proofs that He is the same in our day. I knew that the Word of God ought to be enough, and it was by grace enough for me; but still I considered I ought to lend a helping hand to my brethren. I therefore judged myself bound to be the servant of the Church of Christ, in the particular point in which I had obtained mercy; namely, in being able to take God at His Word and rely upon it. The first object of the work was, and is still: that God might be magnified by the fact that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need, only by prayer and faith, without any one being asked; thereby it may be seen that God is FAITHFUL STILL, AND HEARS PRAYER STILL. I have again these last days prayed much about the Orphan House, and have frequently examined my heart; that if it were at all my desire to establish it for the sake of gratifying myself, I might find it out. For as I desire only the Lords glory, I shall be glad to be instructed by the instrumentality of my brother, if the matter be not of Him. When I began the Orphan work in 1835, my chief object was the glory of God, by giving a practical demonstration as to what could be accomplished simply through the instrumentality of prayer and faith, in order thus to benefit the Church at large, and to lead a careless world to see the reality of the things of God, by showing them in this work, that the living God is still, as 4000 years ago, the living God. This my aim has been abundantly honoured. Multitudes of sinners have been thus converted, multitudes of the children of God in all parts of the world have been benefited by this work, even as I had anticipated. But the larger the work as grown, the greater has been the blessing, bestowed in the very way in which I looked for blessing: for the attention of hundreds of thousands has been drawn to the work; and many tens of thousands have come to see it. All this leads me to desire further and further to labour on in this way, in order to bring yet greater glory to the Name of the Lord. That He may be looked at, magnified, admired, trusted in, relied on at all times, is my aim in this

service; and so particularly in this intended enlargement. That it may be seen how much one poor man, simply by trusting in God, can bring about by prayer; and that thus other children of God may be led to carry on the work of God in dependence upon Him; and that children of God may be led increasingly to trust in Him in their individual positions and circumstances, therefore I am led to this further enlargement.

04.06. Chapter 6 - PRAYER AND TRUST IN GOD

There are other points on which I would be glad to point out what is to be found in Mr. Muller's narrative, but one more must suffice. It is the lesson of firm and unwavering trust in Gods promise as the secret of persevering prayer.

If once we have, in submission to the teaching of the Spirit in the word, taken hold of Gods promise, and believed that the Father has heard us, we must not allow ourselves by any delay or unfavourable appearances be shaken in our faith. The full answer to my daily prayers was far from being realized; yet there was abundant encouragement granted by the Lord to continue in prayer. But suppose, even, that far less had come in than was received, still, after having come to the conclusion, upon scriptural grounds, after much prayer and self-examination, I ought to have gone on without wavering, in the exercise of faith and patience concerning this object; and thus all the children of God, when once satisfied that anything which they bring before God in prayer, is according to His will, ought to continue in believing, expecting, persevering prayer until the blessing is granted. Thus am I myself now waiting upon God for certain blessings, for which I have daily besought Him for ten years and six months without one day's intermission. Still the full answer is not yet given concerning the conversion of certain individuals, though in the meantime I have received many thousands of answers to prayer. I have also prayed daily without intermission for the conversion of other individuals about ten years, for others six or seven years, for others from three or two years; and still the answer is not yet granted concerning those persons, while in the meantime many thousands of my prayers have been answered, and also souls converted, for whom I had been praying. I lay particular stress on this for the benefit of those who may suppose that I need only to ask of God, and receive at once; or that I might pray concerning anything, and the answer would surely come. One can only expect to obtain answers to prayers which are according to the mind of God; and even then, patience and faith may be exercised for many years, even as mine are exercised, in the matter to which I have referred; and yet am I daily continuing in prayer, and expecting the answer, and so surely expecting the answer, that I have often thanked God that He will surely give it, though now for nineteen years faith and patience have thus been exercised. Be encouraged, dear Christians, with fresh earnestness to give yourselves to prayer, if you can only be sure that you ask things which are for the glory of God. But the most remarkable point is this, that 6, 6s. 6d. from Scotland supplied me, as far as can be known now, with all the means necessary for fitting up and promoting the New Orphan Houses. Six years and eight months I have been day by day, and generally several times daily, asking the Lord to give me the needed means for this enlargement of the Orphan work, which, according to calculations made in the spring of 1861, appeared to be about fifty thousand pounds: the total of this amount I had now received. I praise and magnify the Lord for putting this enlargement of the work into my heart, and for giving me courage and faith for it; and above all, for sustaining my faith day by day without wavering. When the last portion of the money was received, I was no more assured concerning the whole, that I was at the time I had not received one single donation towards this large sum. I was at the beginning, after once having ascertained His mind, through most patient and

heart-searching waiting upon God, as fully assured that He would bring it about, as if the two houses, with their hundreds of orphans occupying them, had been already before me. I make a few remarks here for the sake of young believers in connection with this subject:

1. Be slow to take new steps in the Lords service, or in your business, or in your families: weigh everything well; weigh all in the light of the Holy Scriptures and in the fear of God.
2. Seek to have no will of your own, in order to ascertain the mind of God, regarding any steps you propose taking, so that you can honestly say you are willing to do the will of God, if He will only please to instruct you.
3. Bt when you have found out what the will of God is, seek for His help, and seek it earnestly, perseveringly, patiently, believingly, expectantly; and you will surely in His own time and way obtain it. To suppose that we have difficulty about money only would be a mistake: there occur hundreds of other wants and of other difficulties. It is a rare thing that a day occurs without some difficulty or some want; but often there are many difficulties and many wants to be met and overcome the same day. All these are met by prayer and faith, our universal remedy; and we have never been confounded.

Patient, persevering, believing prayer, offered up to God, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, has always, sooner or later, brought the blessing. I do not despair, by Gods grace, of obtaining any blessing, provided I can be sure it would be for any real good, and for the glory of God.

06.00. Humility

Humility By Andrew Murray Table of Contents

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PREFACE

There are three great motives that urge us to humility. It becomes me as a creature, as a sinner, as a saint. The first we see in the heavenly hosts, in unfallen man, in Jesus as Son of Man. The second appeals to us in our fallen state, and points out the only way through which we can return to our right place as creatures. In the third we have the mystery of grace, which teaches us that, as we lose ourselves in the overwhelming greatness of redeeming love, humility becomes to us the consummation of everlasting blessedness and adoration. In our ordinary religious teaching, the second aspect has been too exclusively put in the foreground, so that some have even gone to the extreme of saying that we must keep sinning if we are indeed to keep humble. Others again have thought that the strength of self-condemnation is the secret of humility. And the Christian life has suffered loss, where believers have not been distinctly guided to see that, even in our relation as creatures, nothing is more natural and beautiful and blessed than to be nothing, that God may be all; or where it has not been made clear that it is not sin that humbles most, but grace, and that it is the soul, led through its sinfulness to be occupied with God in His wonderful glory as God, as Creator and Redeemer, that will truly take the lowest place before Him. In these meditations I have, for more than one reason, almost exclusively directed attention to the humility that becomes us as creatures. It is not only that the connection between humility and sin is so abundantly set forth in all our religious teaching, but because I believe that for the fullness of the Christian life it is indispensable that prominence be given to the other aspect. If Jesus is indeed to be our example in His lowliness, we need to understand the principles in which it was rooted, and in which we find the common ground on which we stand with Him, and in which our likeness to Him is to be attained. If we are indeed to be humble, not only before God but towards men, if humility is to be our joy, we must see that it is not only the mark of shame, because of sin, but, apart from all sin, a being clothed upon with the very beauty and blessedness of heaven and of Jesus. We shall see that just as Jesus found His glory in taking the form of a servant, so when He said to us, "Whosoever would be first among you, shall be your servant," He simply taught us the blessed truth that there is nothing so divine and heavenly as being the servant and helper of all. The faithful servant, who recognizes his position, finds a real pleasure in supplying the wants of the

master or his guests. When we see that humility is something infinitely deeper than contrition, and accept it as our participation in the life of Jesus, we shall begin to learn that it is our true nobility, and that to prove it in being servants of all is the highest fulfillment of our destiny, as men created in the image of God. When I look back upon my own religious experience, or round upon the Church of Christ in the world, I stand amazed at the thought of how little humility is sought after as the distinguishing feature of the discipleship of Jesus. In preaching and living, in the daily intercourse of the home and social life, in the more special fellowship with Christians, in the direction and performance of work for Christ,-alas! how much proof there is that humility is not esteemed the cardinal virtue, the only root from which the graces can grow, the one indispensable condition of true fellowship with Jesus. That it should have been possible for men to say of those who claim to be seeking the higher holiness, that the profession has not been accompanied with increasing humility, is a loud call to all earnest Christians, however much or little truth there be in the charge, to prove that meekness and lowliness of heart are the chief mark by which they who follow the meek and lowly Lamb of God are to be known.

06.01. The Glory of the Creature

Chapter 1--HUMILITY: THE GLORY OF THE CREATURE

"They shall cast their crowns before the throne, so saying: Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory, and the honour and the power: for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will then are, and were created. "- Revelation 4:11 When God created the universe, it was with the one object of making the creature partaker of His perfection and blessedness, and so showing forth in it the glory of His love and wisdom and power. God wished to reveal Himself in and through created beings by communicating to them as much of His own goodness and glory as they were capable of receiving. But this communication was not a giving to the creature something which it could possess in itself, a certain life or goodness, of which it had the charge and disposal. By no means. But as God is the ever-living, ever-present, ever-acting One, who upholdeth all things by the word of His power, and in whom all things exist, the relation of the creature to God could only be one of unceasing, absolute, universal dependence. As truly as God by His power once created, so truly by that same power must God every moment maintain. The creature has not only to look back to the origin and first beginning of existence, and acknowledge that it there owes everything to God; its chief care, its highest virtue, its only happiness, now and through all eternity, is to present itself an empty vessel, in which God can dwell and manifest His power and goodness. The life God bestows is imparted not once for all, but each moment continuously, by the unceasing operation of His mighty power. Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is, from the very nature of things, the first duty and the highest virtue of the creature, and the root of every virtue. And so pride, or the loss of this humility, is the root of every sin and evil. It was when the now fallen angels began to look upon themselves with self-complacency that they were led to disobedience, and were cast down from the light of heaven into outer darkness. Even so it was, when the serpent breathed the poison of his pride, the desire to be as God, into the hearts of our first parents, that they too fell from their high estate into all the wretchedness in which man is now sunk. In heaven and earth, pride, self-exaltation, is the gate and the birth, and the curse, of hell. (See Note "A" at end of chapter.)

Hence it follows that nothing can be our redemption, but the restoration of the 'lost humility, the original and only true relation of the creature to its God. And so Jesus came to bring humility back to earth, to make us partakers of it, and by it to save us. In heaven He humbled Himself to become man. The humility we see in Him possessed Him in heaven; it brought Him, He brought it, from there. Here on earth "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death"; His humility gave His death its value, and so became our redemption. And now the salvation He imparts is nothing less and nothing else than a communication of His own life and death, His own disposition and spirit, His own humility, as the ground and root of His relation to God and His redeeming work. Jesus Christ took the place and fulfilled the destiny of man, as a creature, by His life of perfect humility. His humility is our salvation. His salvation is our humility. And so the life of the saved ones, of the saints, must needs bear this stamp of deliverance from sin, and full restoration to their original state; their whole relation to God and man marked by an allpervading humility. Without this

there can be no true abiding in God's presence, or experience of His favor and the power of His Spirit; without this no abiding faith, or love or joy or strength. Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure. Humility is not so much a grace or virtue along with others; it is the root of all, because it alone takes the right attitude before God, and allows Him as God to do all.

God has so constituted us as reasonable beings, that the truer the insight into the real nature or the absolute need of a command, the readier and fuller will be our obedience to it. The call to humility has been too little regarded in the Church because its true nature and importance has been too little apprehended. It is not a something which we bring to God, or He bestows; it is simply the sense of entire nothingness, which comes when we see how truly God is all, and in which we make way for God to be all. When the creature realizes that this is the true nobility, and consents to be with his will, his mind, and his affections, the form, the vessel in which the life and glory of God are to work and manifest themselves, he sees that humility is simply acknowledging the truth of his position as creature, and yielding to God His place. In the life of earnest Christians, of those who pursue and profess holiness, humility ought to be the chief mark of their uprightness. It is often said that it is not so. May not one reason be that in the teaching and example of the Church, it has never had that place of supreme importance which belongs to it? And that this, again, is owing to the neglect of this truth, that strong as sin is as a motive to humility, there is one of still wider and mightier influence, that which makes the angels, that which made Jesus, that which makes the holiest of saints in heaven, so humble; that the first and chief mark of the relation of the creature, the secret of his blessedness, is the humility and nothingness which leaves God free to be all?

I am sure there are many Christians who will confess that their experience has been very much like my own in this, that we had long known the Lord without realizing that meekness and lowliness of heart are to be the distinguishing feature of the disciple as they were of the Master. And further, that this humility is not a thing that will come of itself, but that it must be made the object of special desire and prayer and faith and practice. As we study the word, we shall see what very distinct and oft-repeated instructions Jesus gave His disciples on this point, and how slow they were in understanding Him. Let us, at the very commencement of our meditations, admit that there is nothing so natural to man, nothing so insidious and hidden from our sight, nothing so difficult and dangerous, as pride. Let us feel that nothing but a very determined and persevering waiting on God and Christ will discover how lacking we are in the grace of humility, and how impotent to obtain what we seek. Let us study the character of Christ until our souls are filled with the love and admiration of His lowliness. And let us believe that, when we are broken down under a sense of our pride, and our impotence to cast it out, Jesus Christ Himself will come in to impart this grace too, as a part of His wondrous life within us.

NOTE A--

"All this is to make it known the region of eternity that pride can degrade the highest angels into devils, and humility raise fallen flesh and blood to the thrones of angels. Thus, this is the great end of God raising a new creation out of a fallen kingdom of angels: for this end it stands in its state of war betwixt the fire and pride of fallen angels, and the humility of the Lamb of God, that the last trumpet may sound the great truth through the depths of eternity, that evil can have no beginning

but from pride, and no end but from humility. The truth is this: Pride may die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you. Under the banner of the truth, give yourself up to the meek and humble spirit of the holy Jesus. Humility must sow seed, or there can be no reaping in Heaven. Look not at pride only as an unbecoming temper, nor at humility only as a decent virtue: for the one is death, and the other is life; the one is all hell, the other is all heaven. So much as you have of pride within you, you have of the fallen angels alive in you; so much as you have of true humility, so much you have of the Lamb of God within you. Could you see what every stirring of pride does to your soul, you would beg of everything you meet to tear the viper from you, though with the loss of a hand or an eye. Could you see what a sweet, divine, transforming power there is in humility, how it expels the poison of your nature, and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you, you would rather wish to be the footstool of all the world than want the smallest degree of it." --Spirit of Prayer, Pt.II, p.73, Edition of Moreton, Canterbury, 1893.

06.02. The Secret of Redemption

Chapter 2--HUMILITY: THE SECRET OF REDEMPTION

"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who emptied Himself; taking the form of a servant; and humbled Himself; becoming obedient even unto death. Wherefore God also highly exalted Him. "Php 2:5-9. No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. Through all its existence it can only live with the life that was in the seed that gave it being. The full apprehension of this truth in its application to the first and the Second Adam cannot but help us greatly to understand both the need and the nature of the redemption there is in Jesus. The Need.-When the Old Serpent, he who had been cast out from heaven for his pride, whose whole nature as devil was pride, spoke his words of temptation into the ear of Eve, these words carried with them the very poison of hell. And when she listened, and yielded her desire and her will to the prospect of being as God, knowing good and evil, the poison entered into her soul and blood and life, destroying forever that blessed humility and dependence upon God which would have been our everlasting happiness. And instead of this, her life and the life of the race that sprang from her became corrupted to its very root with that most terrible of all sins and all curses, the poison of Satan's own pride. All the wretchedness of which this world has been the scene, all its wars and bloodshed among the nations, all its selfishness and suffering, all its ambitions and jealousies, all its broken hearts and embittered lives, with all its daily unhappiness, have their origin in what this cursed, hellish pride, either our own, or that of others, has brought us. It is pride that made redemption needful; it is from our pride we need above everything to be redeemed. And our insight into the need of redemption will largely depend upon our knowledge of the terrible nature of the power that has entered our being. No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. The power that Satan brought from hell, and cast into man's life, is working daily, hourly, with mighty power throughout the world. Men suffer from it; they fear and fight and flee it; and yet they know not whence it comes, whence it has its terrible supremacy. No wonder they do not know where or how it is to be overcome. Pride has its root and strength in a terrible spiritual power, outside of us as well as within us; as needful as it is that we confess and deplore it as our very own, is to know it in its Satanic origin. If this leads us to utter despair of ever conquering or casting it out, it will lead us all the sooner to that supernatural power in which alone our deliverance is to be found-the redemption of the Lamb of God. The hopeless struggle against the workings of self and pride within us may indeed become still more hopeless as we think of the power of darkness behind it all; the utter despair will fit us the better for realizing and accepting a power and a life outside of ourselves too, even the humility of heaven as brought down and brought nigh by the Lamb of God, to cast out Satan and his pride. No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. Even as we need to look to the first Adam and his fall to know the power of the sin within us, we need to know well the Second Adam and His power to give within us a life of humility as real and abiding and overmastering as has been that of pride. We have our life from and in Christ, as truly, yea more truly, than from and in Adam. We are to walk "rooted in Him," "holding fast the Head from whom the whole body increaseth with the increase of God." The life of God which in the

incarnation entered human nature, is the root in which we are to stand and grow; it is the same almighty power that worked there, and thence onward to the resurrection, which works daily in us. Our one need is to study and know and trust the life that has been revealed in Christ as the life that is now ours, and waits for our consent to gain possession and mastery of our whole being. In this view it is of inconceivable importance that we should have right thoughts of what Christ is, of what really constitutes Him the Christ, and specially of what may be counted His chief characteristic, the root and essence of all His character as our Redeemer. There can be but one answer: it is His humility. What is the incarnation but His heavenly humility, His emptying Himself and becoming man? What is His life on earth but humility; His taking the form of a servant? And what is His atonement but humility? "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." And what is His ascension and His glory, but humility exalted to the throne and crowned with glory? "He humbled Himself, therefore God highly exalted Him." In heaven, where He was with the Father, in His birth, in His life, in His death, in His sitting on the throne, it is all, it is nothing but humility. Christ is the humility of God embodied in human nature; the Eternal Love humbling itself, clothing itself in the garb of meekness and gentleness, to win and serve and save us. As the love and condescension of God makes Him the benefactor and helper and servant of all, so Jesus of necessity was the Incarnate Humility. And so He is still in the midst of the throne, the meek and lowly Lamb of God.

If this be the root of the tree, its nature must be seen in every branch and leaf and fruit. If humility be the first, the all-including grace of the life of Jesus, -if humility be the secret of His atonement, -then the health and strength of our spiritual life will entirely depend upon our putting this grace first too, and making humility the chief thing we admire in Him, the chief thing we ask of Him, the one thing for which we sacrifice all else. 1-See Note B (at end of this chapter) Is it any wonder that the Christian life is so often feeble and fruitless, when the very root of the Christ life is neglected, is unknown? Is it any wonder that the joy of salvation is so little felt, when that in which Christ found it and brings it, is so little sought? Until a humility which will rest in nothing less than the end and death of self; which gives up all the honor of men as Jesus did, to seek the honor that comes from God alone; which absolutely makes and counts itself nothing, that God may be all, that the Lord alone may be exalted, -until such a humility be what we seek in Christ above our chief joy, and welcome at any price, there is very little hope of a religion that will conquer the world.

I cannot too earnestly plead with my reader, if possibly his attention has never yet been specially directed to the want there is of humility within him or around him, to pause and ask whether he sees much of the spirit of the meek and lowly Lamb of God in those who are called by His name. Let him consider how all want of love, all indifference to the needs, the feelings, the weakness of others; all sharp and hasty judgments and utterances, so often excused under the plea of being outright and honest; all manifestations of temper and touchiness and irritation; all feelings of bitterness and estrangement, have their root in nothing but pride, that ever seeks itself, and his eyes will be opened to see how a dark, shall I not say a devilish pride, creeps in almost everywhere, the assemblies of the saints not excepted. Let him begin to ask what would be the effect, if in himself and around him, if towards fellowsaints and the world, believers were really permanently guided by the humility of Jesus; and let him say if the cry of our whole heart, night and day, ought not to be, Oh for the humility of Jesus in myself and all around me! Let him honestly fix his heart on his own lack of the humility which has been revealed in the likeness of

Christ's life, and in the whole character of His redemption, and he will begin to feel as if he had never yet really known what Christ and His salvation is.

Believer! study the humility of Jesus. This is the secret, the hidden root of thy redemption. Sink down into it deeper day by day. Believe with thy whole heart that this Christ, whom God has given thee, even as His divine humility wrought the work for thee, will enter in to dwell and work within thee too, and make thee what the Father would have thee be.

Note B.-

"We need to know two things: 1. That our salvation consists wholly in being saved from ourselves, or that which we are by nature; 2. That in the whole nature of things nothing could be this salvation or saviour to us but such a humility of God as is beyond all expression. Hence the first unalterable term of the Saviour to fallen man: Except a man denies himself, he cannot be My disciple. Self is the whole evil of fallen nature; selfdenial is our capacity of being saved; humility is our saviour ... Self is the root, the branches, the tree, of all the evil of our fallen state. All the evils of fallen angels and men have their birth in the pride of self. On the other hand, all the virtues of the heavenly life are the virtues of humility. It is humility alone that makes the unpassable gulf between heaven and hell. What is then, or in what lies, the great struggle for eternal life? It all lies in the strife between pride and humility: pride and humility are the two master powers, the two kingdoms in strife for the eternal possession of man. There never was, nor ever will be, but one humility, and that is the one humility of Christ. Pride and self have the all of man, till man has his all from Christ. He therefore only fights the good fight whose strife is that the self-idolatrous nature which he hath from Adam may be brought to death by the supernatural humility of Christ brought to life in him."-W. Law, Address to the Clergy, p. 52. [I hope that this book of Law on the Holy Spirit may be issued by my publisher in the course of the year.]

06.03. In the Life of Jesus

Chapter 3 --HUMILITY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Luke 22:27. In the Gospel of John we have the inner life of our Lord laid open to us. Jesus speaks frequently of His relation to the Father, of the motives by which He is guided, of His consciousness of the power and spirit in which He acts. Though the word humble does not occur, we shall nowhere in Scripture see so clearly wherein His humility consisted. We have already said that this grace is in truth nothing but that simple consent of the creature to let God be all, in virtue of which it surrenders itself to His working alone. In Jesus we shall see how both as the Son of God in heaven, and as man upon earth, He took the place of entire subordination, and gave God the honor and the glory which is due to Him- And what He taught so often was made true to Himself: "He that humbleth him: shall be exalted." As it is written, "He humbled Himself, therefore God highly exalted Him."

Listen to the words in which our Lord speaks of His relation to the Father, and how unceasingly He uses the words not, and nothing, of Himself. The not I, in which Paul expresses his relation to Christ, is the very spirit of what Christ says of His relation the Father.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself" (John 5:19).

"I can of My own self do nothing; My judgment is just, because I seek not Mine own will" (John 5:30).

"I receive not glory from men" (John 5:41).

"I am come not to do Mine own will" (John 6:38).

"My teaching is not Mine" (John 7:16) "I am not come of Myself" (John 7:28) "I do nothing of Myself" (John 8:28) "I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me" (John 8:42).

"I seek not Mine own glory" (John 8:50) "The words that I say, I speak not from Myself" (John 14:10).

"The word which ye hear is not Mine" (John 14:24).

These words open to us the deepest roots of Christ's life and work. They tell us how it was that the Almighty God was able to work His mighty redemptive work through Him. They show what Christ counted the state of heart which became Him as the Son of the Father. They teach us what the essential nature and life is of that redemption which Christ accomplished and now communicates. It is this: He was nothing, that God might be all. He resigned Himself with His will and His powers entirely for the Father to work in Him. Of His own power, His own will, and His own glory, of His whole mission with all His works and His teaching, of all this He said, It is not I; I am nothing; I have given Myself to the Father to work; I am nothing, the Father is all. This life of entire self-abnegation, of absolute submission and dependence upon the Father's will, Christ found to be one of perfect peace and joy. He lost nothing by giving all to God. God honored His trust, and did

all for Him, and then exalted Him to His own right hand in glory. And because Christ had thus humbled Himself before God, and God was ever before Him, He found it possible to humble Himself before men too, and to be the Servant of all. His humility was simply the surrender of Himself to God, to allow Him to do in Him what He pleased, whatever men around might say of Him, or do to Him.

It is in this state of mind, in this spirit and disposition, that the redemption of Christ has its virtue and efficacy. It is to bring us to this disposition that we are made partakers of Christ. This is the true self-denial to which our Saviour calls us, the acknowledgment that self has nothing good in it, except as an empty vessel which God must fill, and that its claim to be or do anything may not for a moment be allowed. It is in this, above and before everything, in which the conformity to Jesus consists, the being and doing nothing of ourselves, that God may be all.

Here we have the root and nature of true humility. It is because this is not understood or sought after, that our humility is so superficial and so feeble. We must learn of Jesus, how He is meek and lowly of heart. He teaches us where true humility takes its rise and finds its strength-in the knowledge that it is God who worketh all in all, that our place is to yield to Him in perfect resignation and dependence, in full consent to be and to do nothing of ourselves. This is the life Christ came to reveal and to impart-a life to God that came through death to sin and self. If we feel that this life is too high for us and beyond our reach, it must but the more urge us to seek it in Him; it is the indwelling Christ who will live in us this life, meek and lowly. If we long for this, let us, meantime, above everything, seek the holy secret of the knowledge of the nature of God, as He every moment works all in all; the secret, of which all nature and every creature, and above all, every child of God, is to be the witness,-that it is nothing but a vessel, a channel, through which the living God can manifest the riches of His wisdom, power, and goodness. The root of all virtue and grace, of all faith and acceptable worship, is that we know that we have nothing but what we receive, and bow in deepest humility to wait upon God for it.

It was because this humility was not only a temporary sentiment, wakened up and brought into exercise when He thought of God, but the very spirit of His whole life, that Jesus was just as humble in His intercourse with men as with God. He felt Himself the Servant of God for the men whom God made and loved; as a natural consequence, He counted Himself the Servant of men, that through Him God might do His work of love. He never for a moment thought of seeking His honor, or asserting His power to vindicate Himself. His whole spirit was that of a life yielded to God to work in. It is not until Christians study the humility of Jesus as the very essence of His redemption, as the very blessedness of the life of the Son of God, as the only true relation to the Father, and therefore as that which Jesus must give us if we are to have any part with Him, that the terrible lack of actual, heavenly, manifest humility will become a burden and a sorrow, and our ordinary religion be set aside to secure this, the first and the chief of the marks of the Christ within us.

Brother, are you clothed with humility? Ask your daily life. Ask Jesus. Ask your friends. Ask the world. And begin to praise God that there is opened up to you in Jesus a heavenly humility of which you have hardly known, and through which a heavenly blessedness you possibly have never yet tasted can come in to you.

06.04. In the Teaching of Jesus

Chapter 4--HUMILITY IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS

"Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart. "-Matt. xi. 29. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came to server." Matthew 10:27.

We have seen humility in the life of Christ, as He laid open His heart to us: let us listen to His teaching. There we shall hear how He speaks of it, and how far He expects men, and specially His disciples, to be humble as He was. Let us carefully study the passages, which I can scarce do more than quote, to receive the full impression of how often and how earnestly He taught it: it may help us to realize what He asks of us.

1. Look at the commencement of His ministry. In the Beatitudes with which the Sermon on the Mount opens, He speaks:"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." The very first words of His proclamation of the kingdom of heaven reveal the open gate through which alone we enter. The poor, who have nothing in themselves, to them the kingdom comes. The meek,who seek nothing in themselves, theirs the earth shall be. The blessings of heaven and earth are for the lowly. For the heavenly and the earthly life, humility is the secret of blessing.

2. "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls."Jesus offers Himself as Teacher. He tells what the spirit both is, which we shall find Him as Teacher, and which we can learn areceive from Him. Meekness and lowliness the one thing He offers us; in it we shall find perfect rest of soul. Humility is to be a salvation.

3. The disciples had been disputing who would be the greatest in the kingdom, and had agreed to ask the Master (Luke 9:46; Matthew 18:3). He set a child in their midst and said, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, shall be exalted. " "Who the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" The question is indeed a far-reaching one. What will be the chief distinction in the heavenly kingdom? The answer, none but Jesus would have given. The chief glory of heaven, the true heavenly-mindedness, the chief of the graces, is humility. "He that is least among you, the same shall be great. "

4. The sons of Zebedee had asked Jesus to sit on His right and left, the highest place in the kingdom. Jesus said it was not His to give, but the Father's, who would give it to those for whom it was prepared. They must not look or ask for it. Their thought must be of the cup and the baptism of humiliation. And then He added, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came to serve. " Humility, as it is the mark of Christ the heavenly, will be the one standard of glory in heaven: the lowliest is the nearest to God. The primacy in the Church is promised to the humblest.

5. Speaking to the multitude and the disciples, of the Pharisees and their love of the chief seats, Christ said once again (Matthew 23:11), "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

Humiliation is the only ladder to honor in God's kingdom.

6. On another occasion, in the house of a Pharisee, He spoke the parable of the guest who would be invited to come up higher (Luke 14:1-11), and added, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The demand is inexorable; there is no other way. Self-abasement alone will be exalted.

7. After the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Christ spake again (Luke 18:14), "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." In the temple and presence and worship of God, everything is worthless that is not pervaded by deep, true humility towards God and men.

8. After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus said (John 13:14), "If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." The authority of command, and example, every thought, either of obedience or conformity, make humility the first and most essential element of discipleship.

9. At the Holy Supper table, the disciples still disputed who should be greatest (Luke 22:26). Jesus said, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. I am among you as he that serveth." The path in which Jesus walked, and which He opened up for us, the power and spirit in which He wrought out salvation, and to which He saves us, is ever the humility that makes me the servant of all.

How little this is preached. How little it is practised. How little the lack of it is felt or confessed. I do not say, how few attain to it, some recognizable measure of likeness to Jesus in His humility. But how few ever think, of making it a distinct object of continual desire or prayer. How little the world has seen it. How little has it been seen even in the inner circle of the Church.

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Would God that it might be given us to believe that Jesus means this! We all know what the character of a faithful servant or slave implies. Devotion to the master's interests, thoughtful study and care to please him, delight in his prosperity and honor and happiness. There are servants on earth in whom these dispositions have been seen, and to whom the name of servant has never been anything but a glory. To how many of us has it not been a new joy in the Christian life to know that we may yield ourselves as servants, as slaves to God, and to find that His service is our highest liberty,-the liberty from sin and self? We need now to learn another lesson,-that Jesus calls us to be servants of one another, and that, as we accept it heartily, this service too will be a most blessed one, a new and fuller liberty too from sin and self. At first it may appear hard; this is only because of the pride which still counts itself something. If once we learn that to be nothing before God is the glory of the creature, the spirit of Jesus, the joy of heaven, we shall welcome with our whole heart the discipline we may have in serving even those who try to vex us. When our own heart is set upon this, the true sanctification, we shall study each word of Jesus on self-abasement with new zest, and no place will be too low, and no stooping too deep, and no service too mean or too long continued, if we may but share and prove the fellowship with Him who spake, "I am among you as he that serveth".

Brethren, here is the path to the higher life. Down, lower down! This was what Jesus ever said to the disciples who were thinking of being great in the kingdom, and of sitting on His right hand and His left. Seek not, ask not for exaltation; that is God's work. Look to it that you abase and humble

yourselves, and take no place before God or man but that of servant; that is your work; let that be your one purpose and prayer. God is faithful. Just as water ever seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds the creature abased and empty, His glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless. He that humbleth himself-that must be our one care shall be exalted; that is God's care; by His mighty power and in His great love He will do it.

Men sometimes speak as if humility and meekness would rob us of what is noble and bold and manlike. Oh that all would believe that this is the nobility of the kingdom of heaven, that this is the royal spirit that the King of heaven displayed, that this is Godlike, to humble oneself, to become the servant of all! This is the path to the gladness and the glory of Christ's presence ever in us, His power ever resting on us.

Jesus, the meek and lowly One, calls us to learn of Him the path to God. Let us study the words we have been reading, until our heart is filled with the thought: My one need is humility. And let us believe that what He shows, He gives; what He is, He imparts. As the meek and lowly One, He will come in and dwell in the longing heart.

06.05. In the Disciples of Jesus

Chapter 5--HUMILITY IN THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS "Let him that is chief among you be as he that doth serve." - Luke 22:26.

We have studied humility in the person and teaching of Jesus; let us now look for it in the circle of His chosen companions--the twelve apostles. If, in the lack of it we find in them, the contrast between Christ and men is brought out more clearly, it will help us to appreciate the mighty change which Pentecost wrought in them, and prove how real our participation can be in the perfect triumph of Christ's humility over the pride Satan had breathed into man. In the texts quoted from the teaching of Jesus, we have already seen what the occasions were on which the disciples had proved how entirely wanting they were in the grace of humility. Once, they had been disputing the way which of them should be the greatest Another time, the sons of Zebedee with their mother had asked for the first places--the seat on the right hand and the left. And, later on, at the Supper table on the last night, there was again a contention which should be accounted the greatest. Not that there were not moments when they indeed humbled themselves before their Lord. So it was with Peter when he cried out, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." So, too, with the disciples when they fell down and worshipped Him who had stilled the storm. But such occasional expressions of humility only bring out into stronger relief what was the habitual tone of their mind, as shown in the natural and spontaneous revelation given at other times of the place and the power of self. The study of the meaning of all this will teach us most important lessons.

First,. How much there may be of earnest and active, religion while humility is still sadly wanting.-See it in the disciples. There was in them fervent attachment to Jesus. They had forsaken all for Him. The Father had revealed to them that He was the Christ of God. They believed in Him, they loved Him, they obeyed His commandments. They had forsaken all to follow Him. When others went back, they clave to Him. They were ready to die with Him. But deeper down than all this there was a dark power, of the existence and the hideousness of which they were hardly conscious, which had to be slain and cast out, ere they could be the witnesses of the power of Jesus to save. It is even so still. We may find professors and ministers, evangelists and workers, missionaries and teachers, in whom the gifts of the Spirit are many and manifest, and who are the channels of blessing to multitudes, but of whom, when the testing time comes, or closer intercourse gives fuller knowledge, it is only too painfully manifest that the grace of humility, as an abiding characteristic, is scarce to be seen. All tends to confirm the lesson that humility is one of the chief and the highest graces; one of the most difficult of attainment; one to which our first and chiefest efforts ought to be directed; one that only comes in power, when the fullness of the Spirit makes us partakers of the indwelling Christ, and He lives within us.

Second, How impotent all external teaching and all personal effort is, to conquer pride or give the meek and lowly heart.-For three years the disciples had been in the training school of Jesus. He had told them what the chief lesson was He wished to teach them: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Time after time He had spoken to them, to the Pharisees, to the multitude, of

humility as the only path to the glory of God. He had not only lived before them as the Lamb of God in His divine humility, He had more than once unfolded to them the inmost secret of His life: "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve"; "I am among you as one that serveth." He had washed their feet, and told them they were to follow His example. And yet all had availed but little. At the Holy Supper there was still the contention as to who should be greatest. They had doubtless often tried to learn His lessons, and firmly resolved not again to grieve Him. But all in vain. To teach them and us the much needed lesson, that no outward instruction, not even of Christ Himself; no argument however convincing; no sense of the beauty of humility, however deep; no personal resolve or effort, however sincere and earnest, can cast out the devil of pride. When Satan casts out Satan, it is only to enter afresh in a mightier, though more hidden power. Nothing can avail but this, that the new nature in its divine humility be revealed in power to take the place of the old, to become as truly our very nature as that ever was.

Third, It is only by the indwelling of Christ in His divine humility that we become truly humble. We have our pride from another, from Adam; we must have our humility from Another too. Pride is ours, and rules in us with such terrible power, because it is ourself, our very nature. Humility must be ours in the same way; it must be our very self, our very nature. As natural and easy as it has been to be proud, it must be, it will be, to be humble. The promise is, "Where," even in the heart, "sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." All Christ's teaching of His disciples, and all their vain efforts, were the needful preparation for His entering into them in divine power, to give and be in them what He had taught them to desire. In His death He destroyed the power of the devil, He put away sin, and effected an everlasting redemption. In His resurrection He received from the Father an entirely new life, the life of man in the power of God, capable of being communicated to men, and entering and renewing and filling their lives with His divine power. In His ascension He received the Spirit of the Father, through whom He might do what He could not do while upon earth, make Himself one with those He loved, actually live their life for them, so that they could live before the Father in a humility like His, because it was Himself who lived and breathed in them. And on Pentecost He came and took possession. The work of preparation and conviction, the awakening of desire and hope which His teaching had effected, was perfected by the mighty change that Pentecost wrought. And the lives and the epistles of James and Peter and John bear witness that all was changed, and that the spirit of the meek and suffering Jesus had indeed possession of them.

What shall we say to these things? Among my readers I am sure there is more than one class. There may be some who have never yet thought very specially of the matter, and cannot at once realize its immense importance as a life question for the Church and its every member. There are others who have felt condemned for their shortcomings, and have put forth very earnest efforts, only to fail and be discouraged. Others, again, may be able to give joyful testimony of spiritual blessing and power, and yet there has never been the needed conviction of what those around them still see as wanting. And still others may be able to witness that in regard to this grace too the Lord has given deliverance and victory, while He has taught them how much they still need and may expect out of the fullness of Jesus. To whichever class we belong, may I urge the pressing need there is for our all seeking a still deeper conviction of the unique place that humility holds in the religion of Christ, and the utter impossibility of the Church or the believer being what Christ would have them be, as long as His humility is not recognized as His chief glory, His first

command, and our highest blessedness. Let us consider deeply how far the disciples were advanced while this grace was still so terribly lacking, and let us pray to God that other gifts may not so satisfy us, that we never grasp the fact that the absence of this grace is the secret cause why the power of God cannot do its mighty work. It is only where we, like the Son, truly know and show that we can do nothing of ourselves, that God will do all.

It is when the truth of an indwelling Christ takes the place it claims in the experience of believers, that the Church will put on her beautiful garments and humility be seen in her teachers and members as the beauty of holiness.

06.06. In Daily Life

Chapter 6 --HUMILITY IN DAILY LIFE "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"- 1 John 4:20.

What a solemn thought, that our love to God will be measured by our everyday intercourse with men and the love it displays; and that our love to God will be found to be a delusion, except was its truth is proved in standing the test of daily life with our fellowmen. It is even so with our humility. It is easy to think we humble ourselves before God: humility towards men will be the only sufficient proof that our humility before God is real; that humility has taken up its abode in us; and become our very nature; that we actually, like Christ, have made ourselves of no reputation. When in the presence of God lowliness of heart has become, not a posture we pray to Him, but the very spirit of our life, it will manifest itself in all our bearing towards our brethren. The lesson is one of deep import: the only humility that is really ours is not that which we try to show before God in prayer, but that which we carry with us, and carry out, in our ordinary conduct; the insignificances of daily life are the importances and the tests of eternity, because they prove what really is the spirit that possesses us. It is in our most unguarded moments that we really show and see what we are. To know the humble man, to know how the humble man behaves, you must follow him in the common course of daily life. Is not this what Jesus taught? It was when the disciples disputed who should be greatest; when He saw how the Pharisees loved the chief place at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues; when He had given them the example of washing their feet,-that He taught His lessons of humility. Humility before God is nothing if not proved in humility before men.

It is even so in the teaching of Paul. To the Romans He writes: "In honor preferring one another"; "Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to those that are lowly." "Be not wise in your own conceit." To the Corinthians: "Love," and there is no love without humility as its root, "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not its own, is not provoked." To the Galatians: "Through love be servants one of another. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another." To the Ephesians, immediately after the three wonderful chapters on the heavenly life: "Therefore, walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love"; "Giving thanks always, subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." To the Philippians: "Doing nothing through faction or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, each counting other better than himself. Have the mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and humbled Himself." And to the Colossians: "Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, even as the Lord forgave you." It is in our relation to one another, in our treatment of one another, that the true lowliness of mind and the heart of humility are to be seen. Our humility before God has no value, but as it prepares us to reveal the humility of Jesus to our fellow-men. Let us study humility in daily life in the light of these words. The humble man seeks at all times to act up to the rule, "In honor preferring one another; Servants one of another; Each counting others better than himself Subjecting yourselves one to another." The question is often asked, how we can count others better than ourselves, when we see that they are far below us in

wisdom and in holiness, in natural gifts, or in grace received. The question proves at once how little we understand what real lowliness of mind is. True humility comes when, in the, light of God, we have seen ourselves to be nothing, have consented to part with and cast away self, to let God be all. The soul that has done this, and can say, So have I lost myself in finding Thee, no longer compares itself with others. It has given up forever every thought of self in God's presence; it meets its fellow-men as one who is nothing, and seeks nothing for itself; who is a servant of God, and for His sake a servant of all. A faithful servant may be wiser than the master, and yet retain the true spirit and posture of the servant. The humble man looks upon every, the feeblest and unworthiest, child of God, and honors him and prefers him in honor as the son of a King. The spirit of Him who washed the disciples' feet, makes it a joy to us to be indeed the least, to be servants one of another. The humble man feels no jealousy-or envy. He can praise God when others are preferred and blessed before him. He can bear to hear others praised and himself forgotten, because in God's presence he has learnt to say with Paul, "I am nothing." He has received the spirit of Jesus, who pleased not Himself, and sought not His own honor, as the spirit of his life.

Amid what are considered the temptations to impatience and touchiness, to hard thoughts and sharp words, which come from the failings and sins of fellow-Christians, the humble man carries the oft-repeated injunction in his heart, and shows it in his life, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as the Lord forgave you." He has learnt that in putting on the Lord Jesus he has put on the heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and long-suffering. Jesus has taken the place of self, and it is not an impossibility to forgive as Jesus forgave. His humility does not consist merely in thoughts or words of self-depreciation, but, as Paul puts it, in "a heart of humility," encompassed by compassion and kindness, meekness and long-suffering,-the sweet and lowly gentleness recognized as the mark of the Lamb of God. In striving after the higher experiences of the Christian life, the believer is often in danger of aiming at and rejoicing in what one might call the more human, the manly, virtues, such as boldness, joy, contempt of the world, zeal, self-sacrifice,-even the old Stoics taught and practised these,-while the deeper and gentler, the diviner and more heavenly graces, those which Jesus first taught upon earth, because He brought them from heaven; those which are more distinctly connected with His cross and the death of self,-poverty of spirit, meekness, humility, lowliness,-are scarcely thought of or valued. Therefore, let us put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; and let us prove our Christlikeness, not only in our zeal for saving the lost, but before all in our intercourse with the brethren, forbearing and forgiving one another, even as the Lord forgave us.

Fellow-Christians, do let us study the Bible portrait of the humble man. And let us ask our brethren, and ask the world, whether they recognize in us the likeness to the original. Let us be content with nothing less than taking each of these texts as the promise of what God will work in us, as the revelation in words of what the Spirit of Jesus will give as a birth within us. And let each failure and shortcoming simply urge us to turn humbly and meekly to the meek and lowly Lamb of God, in the assurance that where He is enthroned in the heart, His humility and gentleness will be one of the streams of living water that flow from within us. 1

(1- I knew Jesus, and He was very precious to my soul: but I found something in me that would not keep sweet and patient and kind. I did what I could to keep it down, but it was there. I besought Jesus to do something for me, and when I gave Him my will, He came to my heart, and took out all that would not be sweet, all that would not be kind, all that would not be patient, and then He shut

the door."-George Foxe)

Once again I repeat what I have said before. I feel deeply that we have very little conception of what the Church suffers from the lack of this divine humility,-the nothingness that makes room for God to prove His power. It is not long since a Christian, of an humble, loving spirit, acquainted with not a few mission stations of various societies, expressed his deep sorrow that in some cases the spirit of love and forbearance was sadly lacking. Men and women, who in Europe could each choose their own circle of friends, brought close together with others of uncongenial minds, find it hard to bear, and to love, and to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And those who should have been fellow-helpers of each other's joy, became a hindrance and a weariness. And all for the one reason, the lack of the humility which counts itself nothing, which rejoices in becoming and being counted the least, and only seeks, like Jesus, to be the servant, the helper and comforter of others, even the lowest and unworthiest. And whence comes it that men who have joyfully given up themselves for Christ, find it so hard to give up themselves for their brethren? Is not the blame with the Church? It has so little taught its sons that the humility of Christ is the first of the virtues, the best of all the graces and powers of the Spirit. It has so little proved that a Christlike humility is what it, like Christ, places and preaches first, as what is in very deed needed, and possible too. But let us not be discouraged. Let the discovery of the lack of this grace stir us to larger expectation from God. Let us look upon every brother who tries or vexes us, as God's means of grace, God's instrument for our purification, for our exercise of the humility Jesus our Life breathes within us. And let us have such faith in the All of God, and the nothing of self, that, as nothing in our own eyes, we may, in God's power, only seek to serve one another in love.

06.07. And Holiness

Chapter 7--HUMILITY AND HOLINESS "Which say, Stand by thyself;-,for I am holier than thou. " - Isaiah 65:5.

We speak of the Holiness movement in our times, and praise God for it. We hear a great deal of seekers after holiness and professors of holiness, of holiness teaching and holiness meetings. The blessed truths of holiness in Christ, and holiness by faith, are being emphasized as never before. The great test of whether the holiness we profess to seek or to attain, is truth and life, will be whether it be manifest in the increasing humility it produces. In the creature, humility is the one thing needed to allow God's holiness to dwell in him and shine through him. In Jesus, the Holy One of God who makes us holy, a divine humility was the secret of His life and His death and His exaltation; the one infallible test of our holiness will be the humility before God and men which marks us. Humility is the bloom and the beauty of holiness. The chief mark of counterfeit holiness is its lack of humility. Every seeker after holiness needs to be on his guard, lest unconsciously what was begun in the spirit be perfected in the flesh, and pride creep in where its presence is least expected. Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. There is no place or position so sacred but the Pharisee can enter there. Pride can lift its head in the very temple of God, and make His worship the scene of its self exaltation. Since the time Christ so exposed his pride, the Pharisee has put on the garb of the publican, and the confessor of deep sinfulness equally with the professor of the highest holiness, must be on the watch. Just when We are most anxious to have our heart the temple of God, we shall find the two men coming up to pray. And the publican will find that his danger is not from the Pharisee beside him, who despises him, but the Pharisee within who commends and exalts. In God's temple, when we think we are in the holiest of all, in the presence of His holiness, let us beware of pride. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them."

"God, I thank thee, I am not as the rest of men, or even as this publican." It is in that which is just cause for thanksgiving, it is in the very thanksgiving which we render to God, it may be in the very confession that God has done it all, that self finds its cause of complacency. Yes, even when in the temple the language of penitence and trust in God's mercy alone is heard, the Pharisee may take up the note of praise, and in thanking God be congratulating himself. Pride can clothe itself in the garments of praise or of penitence. Even though the words, "I am not as the rest of men" are rejected and condemned, their spirit may too often be found in our feelings and language towards our fellowworshippers and fellow-men. Would you know if this really is so, just listen to the way in which Churches and Christians often speak of one another. How little of the meekness and gentleness of Jesus is to be seen. It is so little remembered that deep humility must be the keynote of what the servants of Jesus say of themselves or each other. Is there not many a Church or assembly of the saints, many a mission or convention, many a society or committee, even many a mission away in heathendom, where the harmony has been disturbed and the work of God hindered, because men who are counted saints have proved in touchiness and haste and

impatience, in self-defense and selfassertion, in sharp judgments and unkind words, that they did not each reckon others better than themselves, and that their holiness has but little in it of the meekness of the saints? In their spiritual history men may have had times of great humbling and brokenness, but what a different thing this is from being clothed with humility, from having an humble spirit, from having that lowliness of mind in which each counts himself the servant of others, and so shows forth the very mind which was also in Jesus Christ.

"Stand by; for I am holier than thou!" What a parody on holiness! Jesus the Holy One is the humble One: the holiest will ever be the humblest. There is none holy but God: we have as much of holiness as we have of God. And according to what we have of God will be our real humility, because humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all. The holiest will be the humblest. Alas! though the bare-faced boasting Jew of the days of Isaiah is not often to be found, even our manners have taught us not to speak thus, how often his spirit is still seen, whether in the treatment of fellowsaints or of the children of the world. In the spirit in which opinions are given, and work is undertaken, and faults are exposed, how often, though the garb be that of the publican, the voice is still that of the Pharisee: "Oh God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." And is there, then, such humility to be found, that men shall indeed still count themselves "less than the least of all saints," the servants of all? There is. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not its own." Where the spirit of love is shed abroad in the heart, where the divine nature comes to a full birth where Christ the meek and lowly Lamb of God is truly formed within, there is given the power of a perfect love that forgets itself and finds its blessedness in blessing others, in bearing with them and honoring them, however feeble they be. Where this love enters, there God enters. And where God has entered in His power, and reveals Himself as All, there the creature becomes nothing. And where the creature becomes nothing before God; it cannot be anything but humble towards the fellow-creature. The presence of God becomes not a thing of times and seasons, but the covering under which the soul ever dwells, and its deep abasement before God becomes the holy place of His presence whence all its words and works proceed. May God teach us that our thoughts and words and feelings concerning our fellowmen are His test of our humility towards Him, and that our humility before Him is the only power that can enable us to be always humble with our fellow-men. Our humility must be the life of Christ, the Lamb of God, within us.

Let all teachers of holiness, whether in the pulpit or on the platform, and all seekers after holiness, whether in the closet or the convention, take warning. There is no pride so dangerous, because none so subtle and insidious, as the pride of holiness. It is not that a man ever says, or even thinks, "Stand by; I am holier than thou." No, indeed, the thought would be regarded with abhorrence. But there grows up, all unconsciously, a hidden habit of soul, which feels complacency its attainments, and cannot help seeing how far it is in advance of others. It can be recognized, not always in any special selfassertion or self-laudation, but simply in the absence of that deep self-abasement which cannot but be the mark of the soul that has seen the glory of God (Job 42:5-6; Isaiah 6:5). It reveals itself, not only in words or thoughts, but in a tone, a way of speaking of others, in which those who have the gift of spiritual discernment cannot but recognize the power of self. Even the world with its keen eyes notices it, and points to it as a proof that the profession of a heavenly life does not bear any specially heavenly fruits. O brethren! let us beware. Unless we make, with each advance in what we think holiness, the increase of humility our study,

we may find that we have been delighting in beautiful thoughts and feelings, in solemn acts of consecration and faith, while the only sure mark of the presence of God, the disappearance of self, was all the time wanting. Come and let us flee to Jesus, and hide ourselves in Him until we be clothed upon with His humility. That alone is our holiness.

06.08. And Sin

Chapter 8--HUMILITY AND SIN "Sinners, of whom I am chief."- 1 Timothy 1:15

Humility is often identified with penitence and contrition. As a consequence, there appears to be no way of fostering humility but by keeping the soul occupied with its sin. We have learned, I think, that humility is something else and something more. We have seen in the teaching of our Lord Jesus and the Epistles how often the virtue is inculcated without any reference to sin. In the very nature of things, in the whole relation of the creature to the Creator, in the life of Jesus as He lived it and imparts it to us, humility is the very essence of holiness as of blessedness. It is the displacement of self by the enthronement of God. Where God is all, self is nothing. But though it is this aspect of the truth I have felt it specially needful to press, I need scarce say what new depth and intensity man's sin and God's grace give to the humility of the saints. We have only to look at a man like the Apostle Paul, to see how, through his life as a ransomed and a holy man, the deep consciousness of having been a sinner lives inextinguishably. We all know the passages in which he refers to his life as a persecutor and blasphemer. "I am the least of the apostles, that am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God ...I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:9-10). "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach to the heathen" (Ephesians 3:8). "I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief ...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:13, 1 Timothy 1:15). God's grace had saved him; God remembered his sins no more for ever; but never, never could he forget how terribly he had sinned. The more he rejoiced in God's salvation, and the more his experience of God's grace filled him with joy unspeakable, the clearer was his consciousness that he was a saved sinner, and that salvation had no meaning or sweetness except as the sense of his being a sinner made it precious and real to him. Never for a moment could he forget that it was a sinner God had taken up in His arms and crowned with His love. The texts we have just quoted are often appealed to as Paul's confession of daily sinning. One has only to read them carefully in their connection, to see how little this is the case. They have a far deeper meaning, they refer to that which lasts throughout eternity, and which will give its deep undertone of amazement and adoration to the humility with which the ransomed bow before the throne, as those who have been washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb. Never, never, even in, glory, can they be other than ransomed sinners; never for a moment in this life can God's child live in the full light of His love, but as he feels that the sin, out of which he has been saved, is his one only right and title to all that grace has promised to do. The humility with which first he came as a sinner, acquires a new meaning when he learns how it becomes him as a creature. And then ever again, the humility, in which he was born as a creature, has its deepest, richest tones of adoration, in the memory of what it is to be a monument of God's wondrous redeeming love. The true import of what these expressions of St. Paul teach us comes out all the more strongly when we notice the remarkable fact that, through his whole Christian course, we never find from his pen, even in those epistles in which we have the most intensely

personal unbosomings, anything like confession of sin. Nowhere is there any mention of shortcoming or defect, nowhere any suggestion to his readers that he has failed in duty, or sinned against the law of perfect love. On the contrary, there are passages not a few in which he vindicates himself in language that means nothing if it does not appeal to a faultless life before God and men. "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and righteously, and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you" (1 Thessalonians 2:10). "Our glorying is this, this testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you ward" (2 Corinthians 1:12). This is not an ideal or an aspiration; it is an appeal to what his actual life had been. However we may account for this absence of confession of sin, all will admit that it must point to a life in the power of the Holy Ghost, such as is but seldom realized or expected in these our days. The point which I wish to emphasize is this-that the very fact of the absence of such confession of sinning only gives the more force to the truth that it is not in daily sinning that the secret of the deeper humility will be found, but in the habitual, never for a moment to be forgotten position, which just the more abundant grace will keep more distinctly alive, that our only place,, the only place of blessing, our one abiding position before God, must be that of those whose highest joy it is to confess that they are sinners saved by grace. With Paul's deep remembrance of having sinned so terribly in the past, ere grace had met him, and the consciousness of being kept from present sinning, there was ever coupled the abiding remembrance of the dark hidden power of sin ever ready to come in, and only kept out by the presence and power of the indwelling Christ. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;"-these words of Romans 7:1-25 describe the flesh as it is to the end. The glorious deliverance of Romans 8:1-39 -"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath now made me free from the law of sin, which once led me captive"-is neither the annihilation nor the sanctification of the flesh, but a continuous victory given by the Spirit as He mortifies the deeds of the body. As health expels disease, and light swallows up darkness, and life conquers death, the indwelling of Christ through the Spirit is the health and light and life of the soul. But with this, the conviction of helplessness and danger ever tempers the faith in the momentary and unbroken action of the Holy Spirit into that chastened sense of dependence which makes the highest faith and joy the handmaids of a humility that only lives by the grace of God. The three passages above quoted all show that it was the wonderful grace bestowed upon Paul, and of which he felt the need every moment, that humbled him so deeply. The grace of God that was with him, and enabled him to labor more abundantly than they all; the grace to preach to the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ; the grace that was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, it was this grace of which it is the very nature and glory that it is for sinners, that kept the consciousness of his having once sinned, and being liable to sin, so intensely alive. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." This reveals how the very essence of grace is to deal with and take away sin, and how it must ever be the more abundant the experience of grace, the more intense the consciousness of being a sinner. It is not sin, but God's grace showing a man and ever reminding him what a sinner he was, that, will keep him truly humble. It is not sin, but grace, that will make me indeed know myself a sinner, and- make the sinner's place of deepest self-abasement the place I never leave.

I fear that there are not a few who, by strong expressions of self-condemnation and self-denunciation, have sought to humble themselves, and have to confess with sorrow that a humble spirit, a "heart of humility," with its accompaniments of kindness and compassion, of

meeekness and forbearance, is still as far off as ever. Being occupied with self, even amid the deepest self-abhorrence, can never free us from self. It is the revelation of God, not only by the law condemning sin but by His grace delivering from it, that will make us humble. The law may break the heart with fear; it is only grace that works that sweet humility which becomes a joy to the soul as its second nature. It was the revelation of God in His holiness, drawing nigh to make Himself known in His grace, that made Abraham and Jacob, Job and Isaiah, bow so low. It is the soul in which God the Creator, as the All of the creature in its nothingness, God the Redeemer in His grace, as the All of the sinner in his sinfulness, is waited for and trusted and worshipped, that will find itself so filled with His presence, that there will be no place for self. So alone can the promise be fulfilled: "The haughtiness of man shall be brought low, and the Lord alone be exalted in that day."

It is the sinner dwelling in the full light of God's holy, redeeming love, in the experience of that full indwelling of divine love, which comes through Christ and the Holy Spirit, who cannot but be humble. Not to be occupied with thy sin, but to be occupied with God, brings deliverance from self.

06.09. And Faith

Chapter 9 -- HUMILITY AND FAITH

"How can ye believe, which receive glory from one another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?"- John 5:44. In an address I lately heard, the speaker said that the blessings of the higher Christian life were often like the objects exposed in a shop window,-one could see them clearly and yet could not reach them. If told to stretch out his hand and take, a man would answer, I cannot; there is a thick pane of plate-glass between me and them. And even so Christians may see clearly the blessed promises of perfect peace and rest, of overflowing love and joy, of abiding communion and fruitfulness, and yet feel that there was something between hindering the true possession. And what might that be? Nothing but pride. The promises made to faith are so free and sure; the invitations and encouragements so strong; the mighty power of God on which it may count is so near and free,-that it can only be something that hinders faith that hinders the blessing being ours. In our text Jesus discovers to us that it is indeed pride that makes faith impossible. "How can ye believe, which receive glory from one another?" As we see how in their very nature pride and faith are irreconcilably at variance, we shall learn that faith and humility are at root one, and that we never can have more of true faith than we have of true humility; we shall see that we may indeed have strong intellectual conviction and assurance of the truth while pride is kept in the heart, but that it makes the living faith, which has power with God, an impossibility.

We need only think for a moment what faith is. Is it not the confession of nothingness and helplessness, the surrender and the waiting to let God work? Is it not in itself the most humbling thing there can be, the acceptance of our place as dependents, who can claim or get or do nothing but what grace bestows?! Humility is 'simply the disposition which prepares the soul for living on trust. And every, even the most secret breathing of pride, in self-seeking, self-will, selfconfidence, or self exaltation, is just the strengthening of that self which cannot enter the kingdom, or possess the things of the kingdom, because it refuses to allow God to be what He is and must be there--the All in All.

Faith is the organ or sense for the perception and apprehension of the heavenly world and its blessings. Faith seeks .the glory that comes from God, that only comes where God is All. As long as we take glory from one another, as long as ever we seek and love and jealously guard the glory of this life, the honor and reputation that comes from men, we do not seek, and cannot receive the glory that comes from God. Pride renders faith impossible. Salvation comes through a cross and a crucified Christ. Salvation is the fellowship with the crucified Christ in the Spirit of His cross. Salvation is union with and delight in, salvation is participation in, the humility of Jesus. Is it wonder that our faith is so feeble when pride still reigns so much, and we have scarce learnt even to long or pray for humility as the most needful and blessed part of salvation?

Humility and faith are more nearly allied in Scripture than many know. See it in the life of Christ. There are two cases in which He spoke of a great faith. Had not the centurion, at whose faith He

marvelled, saying, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel!" spoken, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof"? And had not the mother to whom He spoke, "O woman, great is thy faith!" accepted the name of dog, and said, "Yea, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs"? It is the humility that brings a soul to be nothing before God, that also removes every hindrance to faith, and makes it only fear lest it should dishonor Him by not trusting Him wholly.

Brother, have we not here the cause of failure in the pursuit of holiness? Is it not this, though we knew it not, that made our consecration and our faith so superficial and so short-lived? We had no idea to what an extent pride and self were still secretly working within us, and how alone God by His incoming and His mighty power could cast them out. We understood not how nothing but the new and divine nature, taking entirely the place of the old self, could make us really humble. We knew not that absolute, unceasing, universal humility must be the rootdisposition of every prayer and every approach to God as well as of every dealing with man; and that we might as well attempt to see without eyes, or live without breath, as believe or draw nigh to God or dwell in His love, without an all-prevading humility and lowliness of heart.

Brother, have we not been making a mistake in taking so much trouble to believe, while all the time there was the old self in its pride seeking to possess itself of God's blessing and riches? No wonder we could not believe. Let us change our course. Let us seek first of all to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God: He will exalt us. The cross, and the death, and the grave, into which Jesus humbled Himself, were His path to the glory of God. And they are our path. Let our one desire and our fervent prayer be, to be humbled with Him and like Him; let us accept gladly whatever can humble us before God or men;-this alone is the path to the glory of God.

You perhaps feel inclined to ask a question. I have spoken of some who have blessed experiences, or are the means of bringing blessing to others, and yet are lacking in humility. You ask whether these do not prove that they have true, even strong faith, though they show too clearly that they still seek too much the honor that cometh from men. There is more than one answer can be given. But the principal answer in our present connection is this: They indeed have a measure of faith, in proportion to which, with the special gifts bestowed upon them, is the blessing they bring to others. But in that very blessing the work of their faith is hindered, through the lack of humility. The blessing is often superficial or transitory, just because they are not the nothing that opens the way for God to be all. A deeper humility would without doubt bring a deeper and fuller blessing. The Holy Spirit not only working in them as a Spirit of power, but dwelling in them in the fullness of His grace, and specially that of humility, would through them communicate Himself to these converts for a life of power and holiness and steadfastness now all too little seen.

"How can ye believe, which receive glory from one another?" Brother! nothing can cure you of the desire of receiving glory from men, or of the sensitiveness and pain and anger which come when it is not given, but giving yourself to seek only the glory that comes from God. Let the glory of the Allglorious God be everything to you. You will be freed from the glory of men and of self, and be content and glad to be nothing. Out of this nothingness you will grow strong in faith, giving glory to God, and you will find that the deeper you sink in humility before Him, the nearer He is to fulfill the every desire of your Faith.

06.10. And Death to Self

Chapter 10- HUMILITY AND DEATH TO SELF "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." - Php 2:8.

Humility is the path to death, because in death it gives the highest proof of its perfection. Humility is the blossom of which death to self, is the perfect fruit. Jesus humbled Himself unto death, and opened the path in which we too must walk. As there was no way for Him to prove His surrender to God to the very uttermost, or to give up and rise out of our human nature to the glory of the Father but through death, so with us too. Humility must lead us to die to self: so we prove how wholly we have given ourselves up to it and to God; so alone we are freed from fallen nature, and find the path that leads to life in God, to that full birth of the new nature, of which

We have spoken of what Jesus did for His disciples when He communicated His resurrection life to them, when in the descent of the Holy Spirit He, the glorified and enthroned Meekness, actually came from heaven Himself to dwell in them. He won the power to do this through death: in its inmost nature the life He imparted was a life out of death, a life that had been surrendered to death, and been won through death. He who came to dwell in them was Himself One who had been dead and now lives for evermore. His life, His person, His presence, bears the marks of death, of being a life begotten out of death. That life in His disciples ever bears the deathmarks too; it is only as the Spirit of the death, of the dying One, dwells and works in the soul, that the power of His life can be known. The first and chief of the marks of the dying of the Lord Jesus, of the death-marks that show the true follower of Jesus, is humility. For these two reasons: Only humility leads to perfect death; Only death perfects humility. Humility and death are in their very nature one: humility is the bud; in death the fruit is ripened to perfection.

Humility leads to perfect death. Humility means the giving up of self and the taking of the place of perfect nothingness before God. Jesus humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death. In death He gave the highest, the perfect proof of having given up His will to the will of God. In death He gave up His self, with its natural reluctance to drink the cup; He gave up the life He had in union with our human nature; He died to self, and the sin that tempted Him; so, as man, He entered into the perfect life of God. If it had not been for His boundless humility, counting Himself as nothing except as a servant to do and suffer the will of God, He never would have died. This gives us the answer to the question so often asked, and of which the meaning is so seldom clearly apprehended: How can I die to self? The death to self is not your work, it is God's work. In Christ you are dead to sin the life there is in you has gone through the process of death and resurrection; you may be sure you are indeed dead to sin. But the full manifestation of the power of this death in your disposition and conduct. depends upon the measure in which the Holy Spirit imparts the power of the death of Christ And here it is that the teaching is needed: if you would enter into full fellowship with Christ in His death, and know the full deliverance from self, humble yourself. This is your one duty. Place yourself before God in your utter helplessness; consent heartily to the fact of your impotence to slay or make alive yourself; sink down into your own nothingness, in the spirit of

meek and patient and trustful surrender to God. Accept every humiliation,. look upon every fellow-man who tries or vexes you, as a means of grace to humble you. Use every opportunity of humbling' yourself before your fellow-men as a help to abide humble before God. God will accept such humbling of yourself as the proof that your whole heart desires it, as the very best prayer for it, as your preparation for His mighty work of grace, when, by the mighty strengthening of His Holy Spirit, He reveals Christ fully in you, so that He, in His form of a servant, is truly formed in you, and dwells in your heart. It is the path of humility which leads to perfect death, the full and perfect experience that we are dead in Christ.

Then follows: Only this death leads to perfect humility. Oh, beware of the mistake so many make, who would fain be humble, but are afraid to be too humble. They have so many qualifications and limitations, so many reasonings and questionings, as to what true humility is to be and to do, that they never unreservedly yield themselves to it. Beware of this. Humble yourself unto the death. It is in the death to self that humility is perfected. Be sure that at the root of all real experience of more grace, of all true advance in consecration, of all actually increasing conformity to the likeness of Jesus, there must be a deadness to self that proves itself to God and men in our dispositions and habits. It is sadly possible to speak of the death-life and the Spirit-walk, while even the tenderest love cannot but see how much there is of self. The death to self has no surer deathmark than a humility which makes itself of no reputation, which empties out itself, and takes the form of a servant. It is possible to speak much and honestly of fellowship with a despised and rejected Jesus, and of bearing His cross, while the meek and lowly, the kind and gentle humility of the Lamb of God is not seen, is scarcely sought. The Lamb of God means to two things--meekness and death. Let us seek to receive Him in both forms. In Him they are inseparable: they must be in us too.

What a hopeless task if we had to do the work! Nature never can overcome, -nature, not even with--the help of grace. Self can never cast out self, even in the regenerate man. Praise God! the work has been done, and finished and perfected for ever. The death of Jesus, once and forever, is our death to self. And the ascension of Jesus, His entering once and for ever into the Holiest, has given us the Holy Spirit to communicate to us in power, and make our very own, the power of the death-life. As the soul, in the pursuit and practice of humility, follows in the steps of Jesus, its consciousness of the need of something more is awakened, its desire and hope is quickened, its faith is strengthened, and it learns to look up and claim and receive that true fullness of the Spirit of Jesus, which can daily maintain His death to self and sin in its full power, and make humility the all pervading spirit of our life.(See note "C" at end of this chapter.)

"Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Present yourself unto God, as alive from the dead. " The whole self consciousness of the Christian is to be imbued and characterized by the spirit that animated the death of Christ. He has ever to present himself to God as one who has died in Christ, and in Christ is alive from the dead, bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. His life ever bears the two-fold mark: its roots striking in true humility deep into the grave of Jesus, the death to sin and self; its head lifted up in resurrection power to the heaven where Jesus is.

Believer, claim in faith the death and the life of Jesus as thine. Enter in His grave into the rest from self and its work-the rest of God.- With Christ, who committed His spirit into the Father's hands, humble thyself and descend each- day into that perfect, helpless dependence upon God. God will raise thee up and exalt thee. Sink every morning in deep, deep nothingness into the grave of Jesus; every day the life of Jesus will be manifest in thee, Let a willing, loving, restful, happy humility be the mark that thou hast indeed claimed thy birthright-the baptism into the death of Christ. "By one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified."The souls that enter into His humiliation will find in Him the power to see and count self dead, and, as those who have learned and received of Him, to walk with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love. The death-life is seen in a meekness and lowliness like that of Christ.

Note C

"To die to self, or come from under its power, is not, cannot be done, by any active resistance we can make to it by the powers of nature. The one true way of dying to self is the way of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God. This is the truth and perfection of dying to self ...For if I ask you what the Lamb of God means, must you not tell me that it is and means the perfection of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God? Must you not therefore say that a desire and faith of these virtues is an application to Christ, is a giving up yourself to Him and the perfection of faith in Him? And then, because this inclination of your heart to sink down in patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God, is truly giving up all that you are and all that you have from fallen Adam, it is perfectly leaving all you have to follow Christ; it is your highest act of faith in Him. Christ is nowhere but in these virtues; when they are there, He is in His own kingdom. Let this be the Christ you follow.

"The Spirit of divine love can have no birth in any fallen creature, till it wills and chooses to be dead to all self, in a patient, humble resignation to the power and mercy of God. "I seek for all my salvation through the merits and mediation of the meek, humble, patient, suffering Lamb of God, who alone hath power to bring forth the blessed birth of these heavenly virtues in my soul. There is no possibility of salvation but in and by the birth of the meek, humble, patient, resigned Lamb of God in our souls. When the Lamb of God hath brought forth a real birth of His own meekness, humility, and full resignation to God in our souls, then it is the birthday of the Spirit of love in our souls, which, whenever we attain, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God as will blot out the remembrance of everything that we called peace or joy before.

"This way to God is infallible. This infallibility is grounded in the twofold character of our Saviour: 1. As He is the Lamb of God, a principle of all meekness and humility in the soul; 2. As He is the Light of heaven, and blesses eternal nature, and turns it into a kingdom of heaven,-when we are willing to get rest to our souls in meek, humble resignation to God, then it is that He, as the Light of God and heaven, joyfully breaks in upon us, turns our darkness into light, and begins that kingdom of God and of love within us, which will never have an end." ---See Wholly For God. (The whole passage deserves careful study, showing most remarkably how the continual sinking down in humility before God is, from man's side, the only way to die to self.)

06.11. And Happiness

Chapter 11--HUMILITY AND HAPPINESS

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weakness: for when I am weak then am I strong. " - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

Lest Paul should exalt himself, by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was sent him to keep him humble. Paul's first desire was to have it removed, and he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart. The answer came that the trial was a blessing; that, in the weakness and humiliation it brought, the grace and strength of the Lord could be the better manifested. Paul at once entered upon a new stage in his relation to the trial: instead of simply enduring it, he most gladly gloried in it; instead of asking for deliverance, he took pleasure in it. He had learned that the place of humiliation is the place of blessing, of power, of joy.

Every Christian virtually passes through these two stages in his pursuit of humility. In the first he fears and flees and seeks deliverance from all that can humble him. He has not yet learnt to seek humility at any cost. He has accepted the command to be humble, and seeks to obey it, though only to find how utterly he fails. He prays for humility, at times very earnestly; but in his secret heart he prays more, if not in word, then in wish, to be kept from the very things that will make him humble. He is not yet so in love with humility as the beauty of the Lamb of God, and the joy of heaven, that he would sell all to procure it. In his pursuit of it, and his prayer for it, there is still somewhat of a sense of burden and of bondage; to humble himself has not yet become the spontaneous expression of a life and a nature that is essentially humble. It has not yet become his joy and only pleasure. He cannot yet say, "Most gladly do I glory in weakness, I take pleasure in whatever humbles me." But can we hope to reach the stage in which this will be the case? Undoubtedly. And what will it be that brings us there? That which brought Paul there—a new revelation of the Lord Jesus. Nothing but the presence of God can reveal and expel self. A clearer insight was to be given to Paul into the deep truth that the presence of Jesus will banish every desire to seek anything in ourselves, and will make us delight in every humiliation that prepares us for His fuller manifestation. Our humiliations lead us, in the experience of the presence and power of Jesus, to choose humility as our highest blessing. Let us try to learn the lessons the story of Paul teaches us.

We may have advanced believers, eminent teachers, men of heavenly experiences, who have not yet fully learnt the lesson of perfect humility, gladly glorying in weakness. We see this in Paul. The danger of exalting himself was coming very near. He knew not yet perfectly what it was to be nothing; to die, that Christ alone might live in him; to take pleasure in all that brought him low. It appears as if this were the highest lesson that he had to learn, full conformity to his Lord in that self-emptying where he gloried in weakness that God might be all. The highest lesson a believer has to learn is humility. Oh that every Christian who seek to advance in holiness may remember this well! There may be intense consecration, and fervent zeal and heavenly experience, and yet,

if it is not prevented by very special dealings of the Lord, there may be an unconscious self-exaltation with it all. Let us learn the lesson,--the highest holiness is the deepest humility; and let us remember that comes not of itself, but only as it is made matter of special dealing on the part of our faithful Lord and His faithful servant.

Let us look at our lives in the light of this experience, and see whether we gladly glory in weakness, whether we take pleasure, as Paul did, in injuries, in necessities, in distresses. Yes, let us ask whether we have learnt to regard a reproof, just or unjust, a reproach from friend or enemy, an injury, or trouble, or difficulty into which others bring us, as above all an opportunity of proving Jesus is all to us, how our own pleasure or honor are nothing, and , how humiliation is in very truth what we take pleasure in. It is indeed blessed, the deep happiness of heaven, to be so free from self that whatever is said of us or done to us is lost and swallowed up, in the thought that Jesus is all.

Let us trust Him who took charge of Paul to take charge of us too. Paul needed special discipline, and with it special instruction, to learn, what was more precious than even the unutterable things he had heard in heaven what it is to glory in weakness and lowliness. We need it, too, oh so much. He who cared for him will care for us too. He watches over us with a jealous, loving care, "lest we exalt ourselves". When we are doing so, He seeks to discover to us the evil, and deliver us from it. In trial and weakness and trouble He seeks to bring us low, until we so learn that His grace is all, as to take pleasure in the very thing that brings us and keeps us low. His strength made perfect in our weakness, His presence filling and satisfying our emptiness, becomes the secret of a humility that need never fail. It can, as Paul, in full sight of what God works in us, and through us, ever say, "In nothing was I behind the chiefest apostles, though I am nothing." His humiliations had led him to true humility, with its wonderful gladness and glorying and pleasure in all that humbles.

"Most gladly will I glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me;wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses. "The humble man has learnt the secret of abiding gladness. The weaker he feels, the lower he sinks;the greater his humiliations appear, the more the power and the presence of Christ are his portion, ,until, as he says, " I amnothing," the word of his Lord brings ever deeper joy: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

I feel as if I must once again gather up all in the two lessons: the danger of pride is greater and nearer than we think, and the grace for humility too. The danger of pride is greater and nearer than we think, and that especially at the time of our highest experiences. The preacher of spiritual truth with an admiring congregation hanging on his lips, the gifted speaker on a Holiness platform expounding the secrets of the heavenly life, the Christian giving testimony to a blessed experience, the evangelist moving on as in triumph, and made a blessing to rejoicing multitudes,-no man knows the hidden, the unconscious danger to which these are exposed. Paul was in danger without knowing it; what Jesus did for him is written for our admonition, that we may know our danger and know our only safety. If ever it has been said of a teacher or professor of holiness,he is so full of self; or, he does not practise what he preaches; or, his blessing has not made him humbler or gentler,-let it be said no more. Jesus, in whom we trust, can make us humble.

Yes, the grace for humility is greater and nearer, too, than we think. The humility of Jesus is our salvation: Jesus Himself is our humility. Our humility is His care and His work. His grace is

sufficient for us, to meet the temptation of pride too. His strength will be perfected in our weakness. Let us choose to be weak, to be low, to be nothing. Let humility be to us joy and gladness. Let us gladly glory and take pleasure in weakness, in all that can humble us and keep us low; the power of Christ will rest upon us. Christ humbled Himself, therefore God exalted Him. Christ will humble us, and keep us humble; let us heartily consent, let us trustfully and joyfully accept all that humbles; the power of Christ will rest upon us. We shall find that the deepest humility is the secret of the truest happiness, of a joy that nothing can destroy.

06.12. And Exaltation

Chapter 12--HUMILITY AND EXALTATION "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. "Luke 14:11; Luke 18:14.

"God giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you." James 4:10.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. "1 Peter 5:6.

Just yesterday I was asked the question, How am I to conquer this pride? The answer; was simple. Two things are needed. Do what; God says is your work:humble yourself. Trust Him to do what He says is His work: He will exalt you. The command is clear: humble yourself. That does not mean that it is your work to conquer and cast out the pride of your nature, and to form within yourself the lowliness of the holy Jesus. No, this is God's work;the very essence of that exaltation, wherein He lifts you up into the real likeness of the beloved Son. What the command does mean is this: take every opportunity of humbling yourself before God and man. In the faith of the grace that is already working in you; in the assurance of the more grace for victory that is coming; up to the light that conscience each time flashes upon the pride of the heart and its workings; notwithstanding all there may be of failure and falling, stand persistently as under the unchanging command: humble yourself. Accept with gratitude everything that God allows from within or without, from friend or enemy, in nature or in grace, to remind you of your need of humbling, and to help you to it. Reckon humility to be indeed the mother-virtue, your very first duty before God, the one perpetual safeguard of the soul, and set your heart upon it as the source of all blessing. The promise is divine and sure: He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. See that you do the one thing God asks: humble yourself. God will see that does the one thing He has promised. He will give more grace; He will exalt you in due time.

All God's dealings with man are characterized by two stages. There is the time of preparation, when command and promise, with the mingled experience of effort and impotence, of failure and partial success, with the holy expectancy of something better which these waken, train and discipline men for a higher stage. Then comes the time of fulfillment, when faith inherits the promise, and enjoys what it had so often struggled for in vain. This law holds good in every part of the Christian life, and in the pursuit of every separate virtue. And that because it is grounded in the very nature of things. In all that concerns our redemption, God must needs take the initiative. When that has been done, man's turn comes. In the effort after obedience and attainment, he must learn to know his impotence, in self-despair to die to himself, and so be fitted voluntarily and intelligently to receive from God the end, the completion of that of which he had accepted the beginning in ignorance. So, God who had been the Beginning, ere man rightly knew Him, or fully understood what His purpose was, is longed for and welcomed as the End, as the All in All.

It is even thus, too, in the pursuit of humility. To every Christian the command comes from the throne of God Himself: humble yourself. The earnest attempt to listen and obey will be rewarded—yes, rewarded—with the painful discovery of two things. The one, what depth of pride, that is of unwillingness to count oneself and to be counted nothing, to submit absolutely to God, there was, that one never knew. The other, what utter impotence there is in all our efforts, and in all our prayers too for God's help, to destroy the hideous monster. Blessed the man who now learns to put his hope in God, and to persevere, notwithstanding all the power of pride within him, in acts of humiliation before God and Men. We know the law of human nature: acts produce habits, habits breed dispositions, dispositions form the will, and the rightly-formed will is character. It is no otherwise in the work of grace. As acts, persistently repeated, beget habits and dispositions, and these strengthened the will, He who works both to will and to do comes with His mighty power and Spirit; and the humbling of the proud heart with which the penitent saint cast himself so often before God, is rewarded with the "more grace" of the humble heart, in which the Spirit of Jesus has conquered, and brought the new nature to its maturity, and He the meek and lowly One now dwells for ever.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you. And wherein does the exaltation consist? The highest glory of the creature is in being only a vessel, to receive and enjoy and show forth the glory of God. It can do this only as it is willing to be nothing in itself, that God may be all. Water always fills first the lowest places. The lower, the emptier a man lies before God, the speedier and the fuller will be the inflow of the divine glory. The exaltation God promises is not, cannot be, any external thing apart from Himself: all that He has to give or can give is only more of Himself, Himself to take more complete possession. The exaltation is not, like an earthly prize, something arbitrary, in no necessary connection with the conduct to be rewarded. No, but it is in its very nature the effect and result of the humbling of ourselves. It is nothing but the gift of such a divine indwelling humility, such a conformity to and possession of the humility of the Lamb of God, as fits us for receiving fully the indwelling of God.

He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Of the truth of these words Jesus Himself is the proof; of the certainty of their fulfillment to us He is the pledge. Let us take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart. If we are but willing to stoop to Him, as He has stooped to us, He will yet stoop to each one of us again, and we shall find ourselves not unequally yoked with Him. As we enter deeper into the fellowship of His humiliation, and either humble ourselves or bear the humbling of men, we can count upon it that the Spirit of His exaltation, "the Spirit of God and of glory," will rest upon us. The presence and the power of the glorified Christ will come to them that are of an humble spirit. When God can again have His rightful place in us, He will lift us up. Make His glory thy care in humbling thyself; He will make thy glory His care in perfecting thy humility, and breathing into thee, as thy abiding life, the very Spirit of His Son. As the all-pervading life of God possesses thee, there will be nothing so natural, and nothing so sweet, as to be nothing, with not a thought or wish for self, because all is occupied with Him who filleth all. "Most gladly will I glory in my weakness, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me."

Brother, have we not here the reason that our consecration and our faith have availed so little in the pursuit of holiness? It was by self and its strength that the work was done under the name of faith; it was for self and its happiness that God was called in; it was, unconsciously, but still truly, in self and its holiness that the soul rejoiced. We never knew that humility, absolute, abiding,

Christlike humility and self-effacement, pervading and marking our whole life with God and man, was the most essential element of the life of the holiness we sought for.

It is only in the possession of God that I lose myself. As it is in the height and breadth and glory of the sunshine that the littleness of the mote playing in its beams is seen, even so humility is the taking our place in God's presence to be nothing but a mote dwelling in the sunlight of His love.

"How great is God! how small am I! .Lost, swallowed up in Love's immensity! God only there, not I." May God teach us to believe that to be humble, to be nothing in His presence, is the highest attainment, and the fullest blessing of the Christian life. He speaks to us: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him the is of a contrite and humble spirit." Be this our portion!

"Oh, to be emptier, lowlier, Mean, unnoticed, and unknown, And to God a vessel holier, Filled with Christ, and Christ alone!"

Note D.-A Secret of Secrets: Humility the Soul of True Prayer.--Till the spirit of the heart be renewed, till it is emptied of all earthly desires, and stands in an habitual hunger and thirst after God, which is the true spirit of prayer; till then, all our prayer will be, more or less, but too much like lessons given to scholars; and we shall mostly say them, only because we dare not neglect them. But be not discouraged; take the following advice, and then you may go to church without any danger of mere lip-labor or hypocrisy, although there should be a hymn or a prayer, whose language is higher than that of your heart. Do this: go to the church as the publican went to the temple; stand inwardly in the spirit of your mind in that form which he outwardly expressed, when he cast down his eyes, and could only say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Stand unchangeably, at least in your desire, in this form or state of heart; it will sanctify every petition that comes out of your mouth; and when anything is read or sung or prayed, that is more exalted than your heart is, if you make this an occasion of further sinking down in the spirit of the publican, you will then be helped, and highly blessed, by those prayers and praises which seem only to belong to a heart better than yours.

This, my friend, is a secret of secrets; it will help you to reap where you have not sown, and be a continual source of grace in your soul; for everything that inwardly stirs in you, or outwardly happens to you, becomes a real good to you, if it finds or excites in you this humble state of mind. For nothing is in vain, or without profit to the humble soul; it stands always in a state of divine growth; everything that falls upon it is like a dew of heaven to it. Shut up yourself, therefore, in this form of Humility; all good is enclosed in it; it is a water of heaven, that turns the fire of the fallen soul into the meekness of the divine life, and creates that oil, out of which the love to God and man gets its flame. Be enclosed, therefore, always in it; let it be as a garment wherewith you are always covered, and a girdle with which you are girt; breathe nothing but in and from its spirit; see nothing but with its eyes; hear nothing but with its ears. And then, whether you are in the church or out of the church, hearing the praises of God or receiving wrongs from men and the world, all will be edification, and everything will help forward your growth in the life of God. (The Spirit of Prayer, PtII, p. 121) A PRAYER FOR HUMILITY

I will here give you an infallible touchstone, that will try all to the truth. It is this: retire from the world and all conversation, only for one month; neither write, nor read, nor debate anything with yourself; stop all the former workings of your heart and mind: and, with all the strength of your heart, stand

all this month, as continually as you can, in the following form of prayer to God. Offer it frequently on your knees; but whether sitting, walking, or standing, be always inwardly longing, and earnestly praying this one prayer to God: "That of His great goodness He would make known to you, and take from your heart, every kind and form and degree of Pride, whether it be from evil spirits, or your own corrupt nature; and that He would awaken in you the deepest depth and truth of that Humility, which can make you capable of His light and Holy Spirit." Reject every thought, but that of waiting and praying in this matter from the bottom of your heart, with such truth and earnestness, as people in torment wish to pray and be delivered from it ...If you can and will give yourself up in truth and sincerity to this spirit of prayer, I will venture to affirm that, if you had twice as many evil spirits in you as Mary Magdalene had, they will all be cast out of you, and you will be forced with her to weep tears of love at the feet of the holy Jesus.-The Spirit of Prayer, Pt. II, p. 124

07.00.0. In Search of Spiritual Excellence

In Search of Spiritual Excellence by
Andrew Murray

07.00.1. Preface

Preface In all our studies of the work of the blessed Spirit, and in our pursuit of a life in His fullness, we will always find the sum of Christ's teaching in those wonderful words: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). As we are convicted of the defectiveness of our faith in Christ and as we understand that believing in Him means a yielding of the whole heart, life, and will, we can confidently count on receiving the Holy Spirit's power and presence. When Christ becomes all that God has made Him to be for us the Holy Spirit can then flow from Christ to do His blessed work of leading us back to know Him better and to believe in Him more completely.

Hebrews speaks of Christ in His heavenly glory and power as the object of our faith. The Holy Spirit reveals the way into the Holiest by the blood of Christ and invites us by faith in Christ to have our life there. As we yield our hearts to the leading of the Spirit to know Christ and to believe in what is revealed, the Spirit can take possession of us. The Spirit is given to reveal Christ, and every fully accepted revelation of Christ gives the Spirit room to dwell and work within us. This promise will surely then be fulfilled: "He that believeth on me...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." May God lead us to this simple and full faith in Christ, our great High Priest and King in the heavens, and so into a life in the fullness of the Spirit.

Andrew Murray

07.00.2. Introduction

This book brings a simple but solemn message. The one thing needed for the Church in its search for spiritual excellence is to be filled with the Spirit of God. In order to secure attention to this message and attract the hearts of my readers to its blessing, I have laid particular emphasis on certain main points.

1. The will of God for every one of His children is that they live entirely and unceasingly under the control of the Holy Spirit.
2. Without being filled with the Spirit, it is impossible for an individual Christian or a church to ever live or work as God desires.
3. In the life and experience of Christians, this blessing is little used and little searched for.
4. God waits to give us this blessing, and in our faith we may expect it with the greatest confidence.
5. The self-life and the world hinder and usurp the place that Christ ought to occupy.
6. We cannot be filled with the Spirit until we are prepared to yield ourselves to be led by the Lord Jesus--to forsake and sacrifice everything for this pearl of great price.

We have such a poor conception of the unspiritual and sinful state which prevails in the Church that, unless we take time to devote our heart and our thoughts to the real facts of the case, the promise of God can make no deep impression on us. I have presented the subject in various aspects to prepare the way for the conviction that this blessing is in truth the one thing needed; and to get possession of this one thing, we ought to say goodbye to everything else we hold dear. Owing to the prevailing lack of the presence and operation of the Spirit, it takes a long time before these spiritual truths concerning the need, the fullness, and the reality of the Spirit's power can obtain mastery over us.

Every day ought to be a Pentecostal season in the Church of Christ. Christians cannot live according to the will of God without this blessing. I cannot exhort my readers strongly enough to continue this search for spiritual excellence by calling on God in the confidence that He will answer. When we read the book of Acts, we see that the filling with the Spirit and His mighty operation was always obtained by prayer. Recall, for example, what took place at Antioch. When the Christians were engaged in fasting and prayer, God regarded them as prepared to receive the revelation that they must separate Barnabas and Saul. It was only after they had once more fasted and prayed that these two men went forth, gent by the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 13:2-3.) These servants of God felt that the blessing they needed must come only from above. To obtain the blessing we so greatly need, we, in like manner, must liberate ourselves as far as possible from the demands of the earthly life. Let us never become weary or discouraged but ask that the Holy Spirit may again assume His rightful place and exercise full dominion in us. In addition, let us pray that He may again have His true place in the Church, be held in honor by all, and in everything

reveal the glory of our Lord Jesus. To the soul who diligently searches and prays in sincerity according to His Word, God's answer will surely come.

Nothing searches and cleanses the heart like true prayer. It teaches one to ask such questions as these: Do I really desire what I pray for? Am I willing to cast out everything to make room for what God is prepared to give me? Is the prayer of my lips really the prayer of my life?

Am I willing to wait on Him, in quiet trust, until He gives me this supernatural gift, His own Spirit.

Let us pray continually, coming before God with supplications and strong crying as His priests and the representatives of His Church. We can depend on Him to hear us.

Believer, you know that the Lord is a God that often hides Himself. He desires to be trusted. He is often very near to us without our knowing it. He is a God who knows His own time. Though He tarry, wait for Him. He will surely come. (See Habakkuk 2:3.)

07.01. How It Is to Be Taught

Chapter I How It Is to Be Taught

"And it came to pass that Paul came to Ephesus and found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Have ye receive the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:1-2).

About twenty years after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, this incident took place. In the course of his journey, Paul came to Ephesus and found in the Christian church some disciples in whom he observed that there was something lacking in their belief or experience. Accordingly he asked them the question: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Their reply was that they had not even heard of the Holy Ghost. They had been baptized by disciples of John the Baptist with the baptism of repentance with a view to faith in Jesus as One who was to come, but they were still unacquainted with the great event of the outpouring of the Spirit or the significance of it. They came from a region of the country into which the full Pentecostal preaching of the exalted Savior had not yet penetrated.

Paul took them at once under his care and told them about the full gospel of the glorified Lord who had received the Spirit from the Father and had sent Him down to this world so that every one of His believing disciples might also receive Him. Hearing this good news and agreeing with it, they were baptized into the name of this Savior who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Paul then laid his hands on them and prayed, and they received the Holy Spirit. They obtained a share in the Pentecostal miracle and spoke with other tongues. In these chapters it is my desire to bring to the children of God the message that there is a twofold Christian life. The one is that in which we experience something of the operations of the Holy Spirit, just as many did under the old covenant, but we do not yet receive Him as the Pentecostal Spirit, as the personal indwelling Guest. On the other hand, there is a more abundant life, in which the indwelling just referred to is known and experienced. When Christians come to fully understand the distinction between these two conditions, they will find the will of God concerning them.

Therefore, it is a possible experience for each believer, having confessed the sinfulness and inconsistency that still marks our lives, to dare to hope that the Christian community will once more be restored to its Pentecostal power. With our eye fixed on this distinction, we desire to ponder the lessons presented in this incident at Ephesus. Do Not Rest Prematurely For a healthy Christian life, it is indispensable that we should be fully conscious that we have received the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. Had it been otherwise, Paul would never have asked the question: "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" These disciples were recognized as believers. This position, however, was not enough for them. The disciples who walked with the Lord Jesus on earth were also true believers, yet He commanded them not to rest satisfied until they had received the Holy Spirit from Himself in heaven. Paul, too, had seen. the Lord in His heavenly glory and was by that vision led to conversion. Yet, even in his case, the spiritual work the Lord required to have done in him was not completed. Ananias had to go to him and lay his hands on him that he might receive the Holy Spirit. Only then could he become a witness for Christ.

All these facts teach us that there are two ways in which the Holy Spirit works in us. The first is the preparatory operation in which He simply acts on us but does not yet take up His abode within us, though leading us to conversion and faith and ever urging us to all that is good and holy. The second is the higher and more advanced phase of His working when we receive Him as an abiding gift, as an indwelling Person who assumes responsibility for our whole inner being. This is the ideal of the full Christian life. *Where Do We Stand?*

There are disciples of Christ who know little or nothing of this conscious indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

It is of the utmost importance to understand this statement. The more fully we come under the conviction of its truth, the better we will understand the condition of the Church in our times and be enabled to discover where we really stand. The condition I refer to becomes very plain to us when we consider what took place at Samaria. Philip the evangelist had preached there. Many had been led to believe in Jesus and were baptized into His name, and there was great joy in that city. When the apostles heard this news, they sent down Peter and John, who, when they came to Samaria, prayed that these new converts might receive the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 8:16-17.) This gift was something quite different from the working of the Spirit that led them to conversion, faith, and joy in Jesus as a Savior. It was something higher; for now from heaven and by the glorified Lord Himself, the Holy Spirit was imparted in power with His abiding indwelling to consecrate and fill their hearts.

If this new experience had not been given, the Samaritan disciples would still have been Christians, but they would have remained weak. Thus it is that in our own days there are still many Christians who know nothing of this gift of the Holy Spirit. Amid much that is good and amiable, even with much earnestness and zeal, the life of such Christians is still hampered by weakness, stumbling, and disappointment simply because it has never been brought into vitalizing contact with power from on high. Such souls have not received the Holy Spirit as the Pentecostal gift to be possessed, kept, and filled by Him. *Can We Worship With Sincerity?*

It is the great work of the gospel ministry to lead believers to the Holy Spirit.

It was the great aim of the Lord Jesus, after He had educated and trained His disciples for three years, to lead them to the point of waiting for the promise of the Father and receiving the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. This was the chief object of Peter on the day of Pentecost, when, after summoning those who were pricked in their hearts to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, he assured them that they should then receive the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 2:38.)

Paul aimed at this when he asked his fellow-Christians if they did not know that they were each a temple of the Holy Spirit. He reminded them that they had to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (See Ephesians 5:18.)

Yes, the supreme heed of the Christian life is to receive the Holy Spirit and, when we have it, to be conscious of the fact and live in harmony with it. An evangelical minister must not merely preach about the Holy Spirit from time to time, but also direct his efforts toward teaching his congregation that there can be no true worship except through the indwelling and unceasing operation of the Holy Spirit. To lead believers to the Holy Spirit, the great lack in their life must be pointed out to them. This was the intention in Paul's question: "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" Only those who are thirsty will drink water with eagerness, and only those who are sick will desire

a physician. In the same way, it is only when believers are prepared to acknowledge the defective and sinful character of their spiritual condition that the preaching of the full blessing of Pentecost will find an entrance into their hearts.

Many Christians imagine that the only thing lacking in their life is more earnestness or more strength and, if they only obtain these benefits, they will become all they ought to be. This makes the preaching of a full salvation of little avail. It is only when the discovery is made that they are not standing in a right attitude toward the Holy Spirit, that they have only His preparatory operations but do not yet know Him in His indwelling, that the way to something higher will ever be open or even be desired. For this discovery, it is indispensable that the question should be put to each individual as pointedly and as personally as may be: "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" When the answer takes the shape of a deeply felt and utterly sincere concern, then the time of revival is not far off.

Help To Appropriate This Blessing In the Acts of the Apostles we read often about laying on of hands and prayer. Even an effectual man like Paul, whose conversion was due to the direct intervention of the Lord--had to receive the Spirit through laying on of hands and prayer on the part of Ananias. (See Acts 9:17.) This implies that there must be among ministers of the gospel and believers generally a power of the Spirit which makes them the channel of faith and courage to others. Those who are weak must be helped to appropriate the blessing for themselves. But those who have this blessing, as well as those who desire to have it, must realize and acknowledge their absolute dependence on the Lord and expect all from Him. The gift of the Spirit is imparted only by God Himself. Every fresh outpouring of the Spirit comes from above. There must be frequent personal dealing with God. The minister of the Spirit whom God is to use for communicating the blessing, as well as the believer who is to receive it, must meet with God in immediate and close communion. Every good gift comes from above. Faith in this truth will give us courage to expect with confidence and gladness that the full Pentecostal blessing may be looked for and that a life under the continual leading of the Holy Spirit is within our reach. The proclamation and appropriation of this blessing will restore the Christian community to the primary Pentecostal power. On the day of Pentecost, speaking "with other tongues" and prophesying was the result of being filled with the Spirit. Here at Ephesus, twenty years later, the very same miracle is again witnessed as the visible token and pledge of the other glorious gifts of the Spirit. We may depend on it that where the reception of the Holy Spirit and the possibility of being filled with Him are proclaimed and appropriated, the blessed life of the Pentecostal community will be restored in all its fresh power. An increasing acknowledgement of the lack of power in the Church exists today. In spite of the multiplication of the means of grace, there is neither the power of the divine salvation in believers nor the power for conversion in preaching. Little conflict exists in the Church between worldliness and unbelief. This complaint is justified. If the expression of it became strong enough, the children of God might be led to cast themselves on the great truth which the Word of God teaches. When faith in the full Pentecostal blessing is found in the Christian Church again, the members will find their strength and be able to do their first works. The Church Needs Men Who Testify

We need more pastors and teachers who preach Christ Jesus as John the Baptist did as the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. It is only the minister who stands forth as a personal witness and living proof of the ministry of the Spirit whose word will have full entrance into the hearts of the

people and exercise full sway over them. The first disciples obtained the baptism on their knees, and on their knees they obtained it for others. It will be on our knees also that the full blessing will be won today. Let this be the attitude in which we await the full blessing of our God. Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? To be filled with the Holy Spirit of God and to have the full enjoyment of the Pentecostal blessing is the will of God concerning us.

Judge your life and your work before the Lord in the light of this question and return the answer to God.

Do not be afraid to confess before your Lord what is still lacking in you. Do not hold back, although you do not as yet fully understand what the blessing is or how it comes. The early disciples called on their Lord and waited with prayer and supplications.

Let your heart be filled with a deep conviction of what you lack, a desire for what God offers, and a willingness to sacrifice everything for it. Then you may rest assured that the marvel of Jerusalem and Samaria, of Caesarea and Ephesus, will once again be repeated. We may and we will be filled with the Spirit.

07.02. How Glorious It Is

Chapter II How Glorious It Is "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4).

Whenever we speak of being filled with the Holy Spirit and desire to know what it precisely is, our thoughts always turn back to the day of Pentecost, How glorious the blessing is that is brought from heaven by the Holy Spirit.

One fact makes the great event of the day of Pentecost doubly instructive, namely, that we have learned to know intimately the men who were then filled with the Spirit by their relationship for three years with the Lord Jesus. Their weaknesses, defects, sins, and perversities all stand open to our view. The blessing of Pentecost wrought a complete transformation. They became entirely new men, so that one could say of them with truth: "Old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Close study of them and their example help us in more than one way.

It shows us to what weak and sinful men the Spirit will come. It teaches us how they were prepared for the blessing. It teaches us also, and this is the principle thing--how mighty and complete the revolution is when the Holy Spirit is received in His fullness. It lets us see how glorious the grace that awaits us is if we diligently search for spiritual excellence through the full blessing of Pentecost.

Fulfilling His Promise The ever abiding presence and indwelling of the Lord Jesus is the first and principal blessing of the Pentecostal life. In the course of our Lord's dealings with His disciples on earth, He spared no pains to teach and train them or to renew and sanctify them. In most respects, however, they remained just what they were. The reason was that, up to this point, He was still nothing more than an external Christ who stood outside of them and from without sought to work on them by His word and His personal influence. With the advent of Pentecost this condition was entirely changed. In the Holy Spirit, He came down as the indwelling Christ to become the life of their life. He had promised this in the words: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:18-20). This was the source of all the other blessings that came with Pentecost. Jesus Christ, the Crucified, came in spiritual power to impart to them that ever-abiding presence of their Lord in a way that was intimate and all-powerful. Him whom they had had in the flesh, living with them-on earth, they now received by the Spirit in His heavenly glory within them. Instead of an outward Jesus near them, they now obtained the inward Jesus with them. From this first and principal blessing sprang the second: the Spirit of Jesus came into them as the life and the power of sanctification. Often the Lord had to rebuke the disciples for their pride and exhort them to humility. It was all of no avail. Even on the last night of His earthly life, at the table of the Holy Supper, there was strife among them as to which of them should be the greatest. (See Luke 22:24.) The outward teaching of the outward Christ, whatever other influences it may have exercised, was not sufficient to redeem them from the power of indwelling sin. This could be achieved only by the indwelling Christ. Only when Jesus descended into them by the Holy Spirit did they undergo a complete change. They

received Him in His heavenly humility and subjection to the Father and in His self-sacrifice for others. Henceforth all was changed. From that moment on they were animated by the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Many Christians keep their minds occupied only with the external Christ on the Cross. They wait for the blessing of His teaching and His working without understanding that the blessing of Pentecost brings Him into us. That is why they make so little progress in sanctification. Christ Himself is made unto us sanctification.

Living The Life Of Love A heart overflowing with the love of God is also a part of the blessing of Pentecost. Next to pride, a lack of love was the sin for which the Lord had often rebuked His disciples. These two sins have in truth the same root: the desire for pleasing self. The new commandment that He gave them, the characteristic whereby all men should know that they were His disciples, was their love for one another.

It was gloriously manifested on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit of the Lord shed abroad His love in the hearts of His own. The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, one soul. All things they possessed were held in common. No one said that anything he had was his own. The Kingdom of heaven with its life of love had come down to them. The spirit, the disposition, and the wonderful love of Jesus filled them because He Himself had come into them. The mighty working of the Spirit and the indwelling of the Lord Jesus are bound together with a life of love. This appears in the prayer of Paul on behalf of the Ephesians. He asks that they might be strengthened with power by the Spirit in order that Christ might dwell in their hearts.

Then he quickly makes this addition: "that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with the saints the love which passeth knowledge" (Ephesians 3:17-19). The filling with the Spirit and the indwelling of Christ bring a life that has its root, its joy, its power, and its evidence in love because Christ is love. If the filling with the Spirit was recognized as the blessing which the Father promised us, the love of God would fill the Church and the world would be convinced she has received a heavenly element into her life.

Obtaining Courage And Power

We all know how Peter denied his Lord and how all the disciples fled and forsook Him. Their hearts were really attached to the Lord, and they were sincerely willing to do what they had promised and go to die with Him. But when it came to the crisis, they had neither the courage nor the power. After the blessing of the Spirit of Pentecost, it was no longer a matter of willing apart from performing. By Christ dwelling in us, God works both the willing and the doing. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached about Jesus to thousands of hostile Jews. With boldness and in opposition to the leaders of the people, he was able to say: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). With courage and joy, Stephen, Paul, and many others were enabled to encounter threatening, suffering, and death. They did this triumphantly because the Spirit of Christ, the victor, Christ Himself, had been glorified and now dwelt within them. The joy of the blessing of Pentecost gives courage and power to speak for Jesus because it fills the whole heart with Him. The blessing of Pentecost makes the Word of God new. We see this fact distinctly in the case of the disciples. As with all the Jews of that age, their ideas of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God were external and carnal. All the instruction of the Lord Jesus throughout three long years

could not change their way of thinking. They were unable to comprehend the doctrine of a suffering and dying Messiah or the hope of His invisible spiritual dominion. Even after His resurrection, He had to rebuke them for their unbelieving spirit and their inability to understand the Scriptures. With the coming of the day of Pentecost, an entire change took place. Their ancient Scriptures opened up before them. The light of the Holy Spirit in them illumined the Word. In the preaching of Peter and Stephen and in the addresses of Paul and James, we see how a divine light had shone on the Old Testament. They saw everything through the Spirit of this Jesus who had made His abode within them. So it will be with us. It is necessary to meditate on the Scriptures and keep the Word of God in our thoughts, heart, and daily walk. Let us, however, constantly remember that it is only when we are filled with the Spirit that we can fully experience the spiritual power and truth of the Word. He is "the Spirit of truth." He alone guides us into all truth when He dwells in us.

Power To Bless Others The divine power of the exalted Jesus to grant repentance and the forgiveness of sins is exercised by Him through His servants. The minister of the gospel who desires to preach repentance and forgiveness through Jesus and have success in winning souls must do the work in the power of the Spirit of Jesus. Much preaching of conversion and pardon is fruitless because these elements of truth are presented only as a doctrine.

Some preachers try to reach the hearts of their audience in the power of mere human earnestness, reasoning, and eloquence. But little blessing is won by these means. The man whose chief desire is to be filled with the Spirit of the indwelling Christ can be assured that the glorified Lord will speak and work in him. He will obtain the blessing, not always in the same manner, but it will always certainly come. In preaching and in the daily life of a servant of Christ, the full blessing of Pentecost is the sure way of becoming a blessing to others. "He that believeth on me," said Jesus, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). This refers to the Holy Spirit. A heart filled with the Spirit will overflow with the Spirit.

It is the blessing of Pentecost that will make the Church what God would have her be.

We have spoken of what the Spirit will do in individual believers. Think of what the blessing will be when the Church as a whole answers her calling to be filled with the Spirit and exhibits the life, the power, and the very presence of her Lord to the world. We must not only seek and receive this blessing, each person for himself, but we must also remember that the full manifestation of the blessing cannot be given until the whole body of Christ receives it. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

If many members of the Church of Christ are content to remain without this blessing, the whole Church will suffer. Even in individual disciples the blessing cannot come to its full manifestation. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we should not only think of what being filled with the Spirit means for ourselves but also consider what it will do for the Church. **Will You Separate Yourself?**

Let us recall the morning of the day of Pentecost. At that time, the Christian Church in Jerusalem consisted only of one hundred and twenty disciples, most of them poor, unlearned fishermen, tax collectors, and humble women, an insignificant and despised gathering. Yet it was by these believers that the Kingdom of God had to be proclaimed and extended, and they did it. By them

and those who were added to them, the power of Jewish prejudice and of pagan hardness of heart was overcome, and the Church of Christ won glorious triumphs. This grand result was achieved simply and only because the first Christian Church was filled with the Spirit. The members of it gave themselves wholly to their Lord. They allowed themselves to be filled, consecrated, governed, and used only by Him. They yielded themselves to Him as instruments of His power. He dwelt in them and used them for all His wondrous deeds.

It is to this same experience that the Church of Christ in our age must be brought back. This is the only thing that will help her in the conflict with sin and the world. She must be filled with the Spirit.

Beloved fellow Christians, this call comes to you and the whole Church of the Lord. This one thing is needed. We have to be filled with the Spirit. Do not imagine that you must comprehend or understand it all before you seek and find it. For those who wait on Him, God will do more than they can conceive. You must taste the happiness, and know by personal experience the blessedness of having Jesus in your heart. Then His Spirit of holiness and humility, of love and self-sacrifice, and of courage and power will become as natural as your own spirit.

If you have the Word of God in you, you will be able to carry it as a blessing to others. If you desire to see the Church of Christ arrayed in her first splendor, then separate yourselves from everything that is evil, cast it out of your heart, and fix your desire on this one thing: to be filled with the Spirit of God. Receive this as your rightful heritage. Appropriate it and hold it by faith. It will certainly be given to you.

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