

# Christlike Living in a Sinful World

by J.R. Miller

## Character

*Reputation* is what a man's neighbors and friends think of him.

*Character* is what the man IS.

**Character** is personal. It is not a possession we can share with someone else. We can give a hungry person part of our loaf of bread; we can divide our money with one who needs it; but character is something we cannot give away or transmit. The brave soldier cannot share his *courage* with the trembling recruit who fights by his side in the battle. The pure, gentle woman cannot give part of her *purity* and *gentleness*, to the defiled and hardened woman she meets.

Character is our own — a part of our very being. It grows in us over the years. Acts repeated become habits, and character is made up in the long run, of those habits which have been repeated so often, that they become a permanent part of our lives.

Sow a *thought* — and you will reap an act;  
sow an *act* — and you will reap a habit;  
sow a *habit* — and you will reap a character;  
sow *character* — and you will reap a destiny!

As the tree falls — so must it lie;  
As the man lives — so must he die!  
As a man dies — such must he be;  
All through the ages of eternity!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Practical Kindness

"Love must be *sincere*." Romans 12:9

Kindness must be *practical* — not merely *emotional* and *sentimental*. It will not be satisfied merely . . .

with good wishes,  
with sympathetic words,  
or even with prayers.

It should be put into some form that will do practical good.

There are times when even prayer is a mockery. At times it is our duty to answer our own prayers, to be the *messengers* we ask God to send to help others. We are God's messengers, when we find ourselves in the presence of human needs and sorrows, which we can supply or comfort.

Expressions of pity or sympathy are mockeries — when we do nothing to relieve the distress.

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart." 1 Peter 1:22

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **God's clock!**

"What I am doing you do not understand now — but **afterward** you will understand." John 13:7

In *divine providence*, nothing comes a moment too soon or too late — but everything comes in its own complete time. **God's clock** is never too slow. Every link of the chain of God's providence, fits into its own place.

We do not see God's hand at the time. Not until *afterward*, will you see that your disappointments, hardships, trials, and the wrongs inflicted on you by others — are parts of God's good providence toward you, and full of blessing. Not until *afterward* will you see it, but the "afterward" is secure to faithful followers of Christ. The "afterward" of every disappointment or sorrow — is blessing and good. We only need to learn to wait in patience for Him.

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." Romans 8:28

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **We must test all our pleasures and amusements by this rule:**

"Lovers of *pleasure* — rather than lovers of God; having a form of godliness — but denying its power." 2 Timothy 3:4-5

Is the *love of pleasure and amusement* growing on you — gaining the power and authority over you?

Is it dulling the keenness of your zest for spiritual pleasures?

Is it making Bible study, prayer, communion with Christ, and meditation upon holy themes — less sweet enjoyments than they once were?

Is it making your hunger for righteousness, and for God — less intense?

Is it interfering with the comfort and blessing which you used to find in church services, or in Christ's work?

If so, there is only one thing to do — hurry . . .

to return to God,

to abandon the pleasure or amusement which is imperiling your soul, and

to find in Christ, the joy which the world cannot give, and which never harms any aspect of life.

**We must test all our pleasures and amusements by this rule:** Are they helping us to grow into

Christ-likeness and spiritual beauty?

"All things are lawful — but not all things are *profitable*. All things are lawful — but not all things *edify*." 1 Corinthians 10:23

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Divine discontent!**

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled!" Matthew 5:6

The ideal Christian life is one . . .

of unquenchable thirst,  
of bottomless yearning,  
of **divine discontent** —

wooed ever on by visions of holier living, higher joy, and new attainments.

The trouble with too many of us, is that we are too satisfied with ourselves as we are. We have attained a small measure of peace, of holiness, of faith, of joy, of knowledge of Christ — and we are not hungering for the larger possible rewards. Pray for discontent with your spiritual state! With all the infinite possibilities of spiritual life before you, do not sit down on a little patch of dusty ground at the *foot* of the mountain, in restful contentment. Do not be content until you reach the mountain's *summit*!

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." Philippians 3:12

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Work for Christ**

Many people think that **work for Christ** must be something great or public. They imagine that to minister to Christ they must . . .

teach a Sunday School class,  
or join a missionary society,  
or go out to visit sick people,  
or go into hospitals or prisons on missions of mercy.

These are all beautiful and important ministries, and Christ wants some of you to do these things as well. But the very first place you are to serve Him, is *in your own home*! Let the blessed light of your life first be shed throughout that most sacred of all spots. Brightening that little place, you will be all the more ready to be a blessing outside. Those who are the best Christians at home — are also the best elsewhere.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Much of our best praying**

"Blessed be the LORD, because He has heard the voice of my supplications!" Psalm 28:6

Every thought that flies through your brain, is heard in Heaven. God hears . . .  
your wishes,  
the longings of your heart,  
your aspirations, and  
hunger of your soul.

Do not grieve, then, if you cannot find *words* to tell God what you need, if you cannot put the hopes and hungers of your heart, into well-defined thoughts. When words and even thoughts fail, pray in silent yearnings, in unutterable longings — and God will understand just as well as if you spoke in ordinary language. **Much of our best praying** is done when we sit at God's feet and do not speak at all — but only let our hearts talk to God.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life!" Psalm 139:23-24

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Make the *minutes* beautiful**

*Scrupulous people* are often laughed at.

"Why be so particular?

Why be so conscientious about mere trifles?

Why be so exacting and punctual in doing small duties?"

The answer is that in the matter of right and wrong — nothing is little; certainly nothing is insignificant. Duty is duty, whether it be the smallest, or the greatest task. You are on the highway to nobility of character, if you learn to be scrupulous concerning the smallest things. He who is careful in little things, rises a step higher every day. He who is faithful in little things, is then entrusted with larger responsibilities.

It is the small segments in life which are most important.

Look after the little things, and the greater aggregates will be right.

**Make the *minutes* beautiful** — and the *hours* and *days* will be radiant.

"Well done, good servant, because you have been faithful in a very little thing" Luke 19:17

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" Matthew 25:23

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Earth's saddest failure

"A bruised reed he will not break" Matthew 12:20

Christ is building His kingdom with *earth's broken people*. Men want only the *strong*, the *successful*, the *victorious*, the *whole* — in building their kingdoms. But God is the God of the unsuccessful, of those who have failed. Heaven is filled with earth's broken lives, and there is no *bruised reed* whom Christ cannot take and restore to glorious blessedness and beauty. He can take a life crushed by pain and sorrow — and make it into a harp whose music shall be all praise. He can lift **earth's saddest failure** up to Heaven's glory!

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## It makes no difference what a man believes, or what doctrines he holds

*"It makes no difference what a man believes, or what doctrines he holds — it is only his conduct that counts."*

That is the way some people talk, as they sneer at Bible doctrines. But it does matter what one believes. Wrong believing leads to wrong living. The *heathen* worships a god conceived of as lustful, cruel, and unholy. The *Christian* worships a God, who is revealed as holy, righteous, pure, and good, and becomes holy, righteous, pure, and good.

*Beliefs shape our lives.* It is important, therefore, that we know the truths about the character and will of Christ, as *our conception of Christ will imprint itself upon our life.*

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" Colossians 3:16

"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." Titus 1:9

"You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine." Titus 2:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## The shadow!

"Shall we indeed accept **good** from God — and shall we not accept **adversity**?" Job 2:10

Shall we trust our Father only when our lives are filled with *pleasant* things — and then not trust Him also when a *shadow* falls over our hearts? Do you think that God is good — only when He makes all things please you?

Our call is to *trust God at all times* — whether good or bad. For even if sorrow should enter our

home, He is able, even in the midst of sorrow, to make our home-life sweeter, purer, and more Christ-like. If we trust in God, then **the shadow** will be as rich a blessing to us as the light; and the *sorrow* will be steps upward, on which our feet may climb Heavenward!

"We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight!" Proverbs 3:5-6

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **How to pray in our own Gethsemanes**

"And being in *agony* — He prayed more earnestly!" Luke 22:44

This is the record of *our Savior's Gethsemane experience*. Like a bright lamp, this Scripture shines amid the olive trees of that garden — to show us *the path to comfort in our time of sorrow*. Never before nor since, has there been such grief as the Redeemer's that night — -but *He found comfort in His prayer*. His agony lessened as He prayed, until at last its *bitterness* was all gone — and sweet, blessed peace took its place.

The '*gate of prayer*' is one of *comfort*. There is no other place for true comfort and help. We learn from our Lord's Gethsemane agony — **how to pray in our own Gethsemanes**.

God never blames us for asking to have the bitter cup removed, nor for the intensity of our prayers; but we must always pray with submission to His will. When we sincerely pray, "Not my will, but may Your will be done" — *comfort* comes, and then *peace*.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The Lord will provide!**

"You have not passed this way before!" Joshua 3:4

"Abraham named the place *Jehovah-Jireh* (which means '*the LORD will provide*')" Genesis 22:14

As you begin meditating on this verse, write deep in your heart this word with the strongest confidence: ***Jehovah-Jireh***. This name tells you . . .

that you can trust God always;

that no promise of His ever fails;

that He does all things well;

that out of all seeming loss and destruction of human hopes, He brings blessing.

You have not passed this way before. There will be both sorrows and joys, both failures and

successes. You cannot predict your future experiences. You cannot see the next step before your feet. Yet *Jehovah-Jireh* calls you to trust Him calmly. He bids you put away all anxieties and foreboding, because *the Lord will provide!*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Not what we HAVE or what we KNOW, but what we ARE!**

We must strive to *realize* every longing for holiness and Christlikeness, which our hearts seek. Remember that it is character alone, which is the test of true living.

It is not knowledge; for knowledge will fail.

It is not money; for money cannot be taken into the eternal world.

It is not fame; for fame's laurels fade at the grave's edge.

It is not culture, or education, or refinement either.

It is our character alone — **not what we HAVE or what we KNOW, but what we ARE** — which we can carry with us into the eternal world.

"He who is unjust — let him be unjust still;  
he who is filthy — let him be filthy still;  
he who is righteous — let him be righteous still;  
he who is holy — let him be holy still."

Revelation 22:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Seeing through love's eyes**

"Love . . .  
*thinks* no evil,  
*bears* all things,  
*believes* all things,  
*hopes* all things,  
*endures* all things."

1 Corinthians 13:5-7

Love does not suspect unkindness, in kind deeds.

Love does not imagine an enemy, in every friend.

Love does not fear insincerity, in sincere expressions of love.

Love does not question one's motives, nor discount their acts.

But love *overlooks* mistakes and *hides* human faults. It believes tries to think of others always at their best, not at their worst. It considers the best possibilities in people, what they may become through divine love and grace — and not merely what they now are. It is wonderful how **seeing through love's eyes** changes the whole view of earthly life, transforming it. If the heart is filled with suspicion, distrust, and doubts — the world grows very ugly. But *love* sees brightness, beauty, and hope everywhere!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The shadow of God's wings**

"How priceless is Your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in *the shadow of Your wings!*" Psalm 36:7

Is there a grief in your heart, which grows into a nagging pain? Is there a hint of a coming sorrow that you see looming over you? Remember that it is **the shadow of God's wings** — and so it is safe to receive. Crawl closer under them.

Earth has nothing so gentle as true mother-love; but God's wings that fold down over you, are gentler than even mother-love; and you can never get out from beneath them. They hold you close to the gentle heart of the divine Father. You need never be afraid while resting there. In all the universe, there is no harm that can come near you. From your eternal refuge, you can look out with confidence on the fury of earth's storms and be at peace. The wildest of them cannot touch you in your refuge!

"Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in You my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in *the shadow of Your wings* until the disaster has passed." Psalm 57:1

"Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under *the shadow of Your wings*" Psalm 17:8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **If all people were angelic**

"A new command I give you: Love one another. **As I have loved you** — so you must love one another." John 13:34

"**As I have loved you**" means love which is sweet, fragrant, and gentle — to people who are rude and mean-spirited, selfish, and full of faults, with sharp corners and only partially sanctified lives.

**If all people were angelic**, and you were too — it would not be hard to love everyone; but as other people are not yet angelic, you will still have need of patience, even if you are angelic yourself, which is quite doubtful.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The worst-tempered people**

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23



**The worst-tempered people** may be made gentle and loving in all their words, acts, and dispositions — by the renewing and transforming power of divine grace. God can take the *jangled keys* and put them *in tune* — if we will only put them into His hand.

But we must strive ourselves to be sweet-tempered. We must watch the rising anger — and quickly choke it back. We must keep down our ugly disposition. We must learn to control ourselves, our tempers, our feelings, our passions, and our tongues. We must seek to *develop the gentle virtues* — and crowd out the *thorns!* This discipline is not easy, but the lessons can be mastered.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **A powerful, silent, personal influence**

There is a **powerful, silent, personal influence**, like a *shadow*, which emanates from everyone — and this influence is always leaving results wherever it touches another person. You cannot live a day — and not touch some other life with this influence. Wherever you go, your *shadow* falls on others — and they are either better or worse for your presence.

Our influence depends upon what we **are** — more than upon what we **do**. It is by *living a beautiful life*, that we bless the world. I do not underestimate good works. Good deeds must characterize every true life. But if your *life itself* is noble, beautiful, holy, Christlike, one that is itself a blessing and an inspiration — then the worth of your influence is multiplied many times!

There is not a Christian who cannot *preach sermons* every day, at home and among neighbors and friends most eloquently — by the beauty of holiness in his or her own everyday life. Wherever a Christian goes — his life ought to be an *inspiration*. Our *silent influence* ought to touch other lives with blessing. People ought to feel stronger, happier, and more uplifted — after meeting us. Our very faces ought to shed light, shining like holy lamps into sad, weary hearts. Our lives ought to be blessings to repair human sorrow and need all around us.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Building monuments to yourself**

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit" Philippians 2:3

No grace shines more brightly in a Christian, than *humility*. Wherever *SELF* comes in — it mars the beauty of the work we are doing. Seek to do your work quietly. Do not try to draw attention to yourself, to make people know that you did this or that beautiful thing. Be content to pour your rich life into other wasted, weary lives, and see them blessed and made more holy — and then withdraw and let Christ have the honor. Work for God's approval, and even then, do not think much about reward. Seek to be a blessing to others — and never think of *self-advancement*. Do not worry about credit for your work, or about **building monuments to yourself**; be content

to do good in Christ's name.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved — clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, *humility*, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12

"All of you, clothe yourselves with *humility* toward one another" 1 Peter 5:5

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Two men look at the same scene:**

"Be joyful always!" 1 Thessalonians 5:16

"In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy!" 2 Corinthians 7:4

Thankfulness or unthankfulness is largely a matter of the attitude of our heart.

### **Two men look at the same scene:**

one sees the defects and the imperfections;  
the other sees the beauty and the brightness.

If you cannot find things to be thankful for today, and *every* day — the fault is in yourself, and you ought to pray for a changed heart — a heart to see God's goodness and to praise Him.

*A joyful heart transfigures all the world around us!* It finds something to be thankful for in the barest circumstances, even in the dark night of the soul. Let us train ourselves to see the beauty and the goodness in God's world, and in our own circumstances — and then we shall stop grumbling, and be content and thankful in all situations.

"A *happy* heart makes the face cheerful!" Proverbs 15:13

"The *cheerful* heart has a continual feast!" Proverbs 15:15

"A *cheerful* heart is good medicine — but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." Proverbs 17:22

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Have a dart ready to draw and hurl at our adversary!**

"Jesus answered: *It is written . . .*" Matthew 4:4

We must all meet *temptation*. The tempter comes so suddenly and so secretively, that if we cannot instantly repel his assault, we shall be defeated.

There is nothing like texts of Scripture hidden in the heart, to drive Satan away. We need to have our quiver full of these polished shafts, these invincible darts, and to keep them ever ready to shoot on a moment's notice, and to hurl at our enemy. The only way to do this, is to make the

Word of God our daily study, storing in our memory . . .  
its precious texts,  
its counsels,  
its promises, and  
its warnings.

Then we shall never be surprised, unprepared or defenseless — but for every temptation, shall **have a dart ready to draw and hurl at our adversary!**

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **An unreached goal in this life**

"She has done what she could!" Mark 14:8

No one can do all that he knows he *ought* to do, or that he *wants* to do. Yet when we have done our duty, faithfully and earnestly, according to the light and the wisdom given to us — we should not regret afterwards, if it appears that we might have done things with more wisdom or with greater skill. We cannot get the *benefits of experience*, until we have already gone through the experience. We cannot have an elder's ripe wisdom, in the days of our youth. We are able to see when a day is done, how we might have lived it better. We should bring to every hour's work — our finest skill, our best wisdom, our purest strength — and then feel no regret, even if it does not seem well done. Perfection is always **an unreached goal in this life**. Duty is always too large for us. We can never do more than a portion of it.

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect — but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14

"Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things — I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord!" Matthew 25:23

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **No one gets the crown — without the conflict!**

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God!" Revelation 2:7

The daily temptations which make every true life such a painful conflict from beginning to end — bring us constant opportunities for growth of character. To *struggle* — is to grow strong. The

soldier's art can be learned, and the soldier's honors can be won — only on the field of battle.

If you would grow into the beauty of the Master, you must accept the *conflicts*, and fight the *battles*. You can live easy if you will, by declining every struggle — but you will then get little out of life which is truly noble and worthy. The best things all come after the battle — you must fight your way across the field to get them. Heaven is only for those who overcome. **No one gets the crown — without the conflict!**

"To him who *overcomes*, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne!" Revelation 3:21

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **A Beautiful Life!**

"She has done what she could!" Mark 14:8

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that one be found faithful." 1 Corinthians 4:2

A life does not need to be great, to be beautiful. There may be as much beauty . . .  
in a tiny flower — as in a majestic tree;  
in a little gem — as in a great mountain;  
in the smallest creature — as in a massive one.

A life may be very lovely in God's eyes — and yet be insignificant in the world's eyes. A beautiful life fulfills its mission in this world, and is what God made it to be, doing what God created it to do. Those with only *common* gifts, are in danger of thinking that they cannot live a beautiful life, and cannot be a blessing in this world. But the most obscure life which fills its place well, is far lovelier in God's sight, than the grandest and most splendidly gifted life which fails in its divine mission.

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

"Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things — I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord!" Matthew 25:23

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **How slowly we learn it!**

"A new command I give you: *Love one another*. As I have loved you — so you must love one another." John 13:34-35

*How* did Christ love His disciples? How did He *demonstrate* His love to them? Was it not, among other ways . . .  
in His wonderful patience with them — with their faults, their ignorance, their unfaithfulness;

in His considerate kindness;  
in His ever-watchful thoughtfulness;  
in His compassionate gentleness;  
in His ministering to them in every possible way?

What is it, then, to love one another, as He loves us? Is it not to take His example for our pattern? But **how slowly we learn it!** How hard it is to be gentle, patient, kind, thoughtful, even perfectly true and just, to one another! Still, the lesson stands and waits for us, and we must never falter in learning it.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The light, the joy, the blessing, the inspiration of a home!**

Home is *the true wife's kingdom*. There, first of all places, she must be strong and godly. She may touch life *outside* in many ways — if she can do it without slighting the duties that are hers within her own doors. But if any calls for her service must be declined, they should not be the duties of her home. These are hers, and no other one's. Very largely does the wife hold in her hands, as a sacred trust, the happiness and the highest good of the hearts that nestle there. The best husband — the truest, the noblest, the gentlest, the richest-hearted — cannot make his home happy — if his wife is not, in every reasonable sense, a helpmate to him.

In the last analysis, *home happiness* depends on the wife. Her spirit gives the home its atmosphere. Her hands fashion its beauty. Her heart makes its love. And the end is so worthy, so noble, so divine — that no woman who has been called to be a wife, and has listened to the call, should consider any price too great to pay — to be **the light, the joy, the blessing, the inspiration of a home!**

Men with fine artistic gifts, think it worth while to live to paint a few great pictures which shall be looked at and admired for generations; or to write a few songs which shall sing themselves into the ears and hearts of men.

But the woman who makes *a sweet, beautiful home*, filling it with love and prayer and purity — is doing something better than anything else her hands could find to do beneath the skies!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Plank-eye**

"Why do you look at the *speck* of sawdust in your brother's eye — and pay no attention to the *plank* in your own eye?" Matthew 7:3

Let us learn to seal our lips forever on the wretched, miserable habit of telling the world about the speck in our neighbor's eye! Who made us a judge of others?

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he

listens to you, you have won your brother over." Matthew 18:15. Tell him his faults, if you will, with love and sympathy in your heart, confessing your own in the meantime. Tell faults because you want to help your neighbor to become nobler, lovelier, and better, because you cannot bear to see your neighbor suffer — not because you want to humble him or triumph over her. Tell him his faults in secret — if you are ready for such *holy* work; but do not tell the world of these faults.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Life's battles and crises**

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble!" Psalm 46:1

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!" Philippians 4:13

Many a great battle is won by the *reserves*. The struggle is perfectly balanced, and victory is uncertain. Then, one side or the other brings up the reserve army, and instantly the question is settled.

**Life's battles and crises** are often determined in the same manner: by reserve resources — or their absence.

Our *days* are not all bright, easy, and free of pain. The *course* is not always smooth. We all have *tasks* and *duties* which completely overwhelm our ability. We are all assailed by spiritual foes and temptations — and victory comes only if we can call our *reserves* into action. Blessed are those who have learned to draw on the *infinite resources of divine strength*. With the fullness of God as a reserve, they can never fail.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes!" Ephesians 6:10-11

"And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus!"  
Philippians 4:19

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Reckless words**

Some people boast of their honesty and frankness, just because they "say what they think," flinging out the words right and left as they come, no matter where they *strike*, or whom they *wound*. Do not call this honesty — call it rather miserable rudeness, reckless cruelty.

We have no right to say what we think — unless we think lovingly and sweetly. We certainly have no right to unload . . .

our jealousies,  
our envies,

our bad tempers, and  
our miserable spite upon our neighbor.

If we must be bad-tempered, we should at least keep the ugliness locked up in our own heart, and not let it out to hurt other people's happiness. Or, if we must *speak* our wretched feelings, let us go into our own room and lock the door and close the windows, that no ears but our own shall hear our hateful words!

**"Reckless words** pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing!" Proverbs 12:18

**"Pleasant words** are like a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones!" Proverbs 16:24

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**It is good for me that I have been afflicted!**

"I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me." Psalm 119:75

Our spiritual life needs *trials* to bring out its greatest possibilities. It flourishes most luxuriantly, in adverse circumstances. The very trials and temptations which make our life full of unceasing warfare — train us to be true soldiers of Christ. The difficulties of our experiences, which seem to us to be more than we can possibly endure — are the very school of life for us in which we learn our best lessons, and grow into whatever beauty and Christlike character we attain.

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word." Psalm 119:67

**"It is good for me that I have been afflicted,** that I may learn Your statutes." Psalm 119:71

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**Pleasant words**

"How delightful is a timely word!" Proverbs 15:23

**"Pleasant words** are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones!" Proverbs 16:24

How much better would it be if we were more generous and lavish of our good words, when our friends can be cheered and blessed by them! Sometimes we let other hearts starve, for lack of kindly words which lie meanwhile on our tongues, ready to be spoken. It is not the lack of love for which we are to be blamed — but the stinginess which locks up the love and will not give it out in word and act to bless hungry lives. Is there any *miserliness* so base? We let hearts starve close beside us, when we have the bread to feed them; and then, when they lie in the dust of defeat or death — we come with our love to speak eloquent funeral eulogies. Would it not be far better to give out our kind words when it will do good?

"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear."  
Ephesians 4:29

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Choosing Friends**

We should choose friends whom we can take . . .  
into every part of our life,  
into closest fellowship,  
into each holy joy of our heart,  
into each work and service,  
into each hope, and  
at every point be in sympathy.

We ought to accept only the friendship . . .  
which will bring blessing to our lives,  
which will enrich our character,  
which will stimulate us to better and holier things,  
which will weave threads of silver and gold into our web of life,  
whose every influence will be a lasting blessing.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Enlarge your desires and your prayers!**

**Enlarge your desires and your prayers!** Do not ask merely for mercies, and favors, and ordinary gifts. Do not ask God merely to give you bread, and health, and friends, and prosperity. Do not content yourself with asking . . .  
for grace to help in temptation,  
or for strength to fill up your weakness,  
or for wisdom to guide you in confusion,  
or for holiness and purity and power.

Ask for God Himself, and then open your heart to receive Him. If you have God — then you have all other gifts and blessings in Him. God is willing to give you Himself for the asking, not merely the *favors* and *benefits* which His hand provides. Ask for great things!

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think!"  
Ephesians 3:20

*"He has all — who has the haver of all."* Augustine

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



## **The sacred and holy trust**

Oh that God would give every mother a vision of the glory and splendor of the work that is given to her, when a babe is placed in her bosom to be nursed and trained! Could she have but one glimpse in to the future of that life as it reaches on into eternity; could she look into its soul to see its possibilities; could she be made to understand her own personal responsibility for the training of this child, for the development of its life, and for its destiny — she would see that in all God's world, there is no other work so noble and so worthy of her best powers, and she would commit to no other hands, **the sacred and holy trust** given to her.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **To be a Christian**

Consecration to God is nothing less than doing the will of Christ, rather than our own will — doing it always, whatever the cost, the sacrifice, or the danger. There is too much *mere pretense* in our religion. We say that we believe in Christ; but if we truly do, we must follow Him wherever He leads, though we don't know where. We say we love Christ, and from His lips comes the crucial test: "*If you love Me — keep My commandments.*"

**To be a Christian** is to be devoted utterly, and irrevocably, to Christ.

"And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple!" Luke 14:27

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **What a shame!**

Think of all the magnificent potential God has put into these lives of ours. He has given us **minds** . . .  
to think,  
to reason,  
to imagine,  
to roam amid the stars,  
to wander into the very borders of infinity,  
to climb the golden stairs of faith even into the midst of Heaven's brightness.

He has given us **hearts** to feel, to suffer, to rejoice, and to love.

He has put into our beings, the possibilities of the noblest achievements and the loftiest attainments. **What a shame** it is for one born to live in immortal glory, called to be a child of God — to become like Jesus — yet to be content with a poor earthly life and to live without reaching up toward God and Heaven!

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you

died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory!" Colossians 3:1-4

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Ladders of commonplace things**

*To find your mission in life*, you have only to be *faithful* wherever God puts you for the present. The smaller opportunities which He gives you in the earlier years, are for your *training*, that you may be ready finally for the larger and specific service for which you were born. Do these smaller, humbler things well — and they will prove to be steps in the stairs up to the loftier height where your "mission" awaits. To spurn these simpler duties and tasks and to neglect them, is to miss your important mission itself in the end — for there is no way to get to it but by these **ladders of commonplace things**. You must build your own ladder day by day — in common, faithful acts.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Divine assistance**

"As your days — so shall your strength be!" Deuteronomy 33:25

There is no promise of grace before you need it. God does not say He will strengthen our arms for the battle — when there is no battle. When the conflict is approaching — then we are given the necessary strength. He does not open the gates for us, nor roll away the stones — until we come to them. He did not divide the waters of the Jordan — while the people were still in their camps, nor even when they began to march toward the river. The wild stream continued to flow, even as the feet of the priests dipped in the water.

This is the continual law of God's help in time of need. **Divine assistance** is not given in advance. As we come to the need, the supply is ready — but not before. Do not worry because you cannot see the way clear and the needs supplied far in advance of your steps. God will always provide for His children.

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble!" Psalm 46:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Christlikeness at home**

Keep the *lamp of love* shining day after day . . .  
amid the many home cares and duties,  
amid the criticisms, sarcasms, and thoughtlessness of others,  
amid the thousand little irritations and arguments of home life  
— which tend to break peace and disrupt a sweet temper.  
Let your love at home be of the kind that never fails. Wherever else, far away or near, you pour

the bright beams of your Christian love — be sure that you brighten your own home. No goodness and gentleness outside the home, will atone for lack of love at home.

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble." 1 Peter 3:8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows**

Wherever Christ *places* us — we are to stay; and where He *sends* us — we are to go. In the heat of life's conflicts, obstructed by a host of things which tend to distract our peace — we are to maintain an unruffled calm, and the tenderness and simplicity of the heart of a little child. That is the lesson which Christ presents to us.

As the tender grass and even the sweet flowers live and thrive all through the winter under the deep snows, and emerge in the springtime in beauty — so our hearts may remain loving, tender, and joyous through life's severest winter, under the snows of trial and sorrow.

"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in Me. **Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.** But take heart, because I have overcome the world!" John 16:33

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Love's Ministry**

"Christ **loved** the church and **gave** Himself up for her!" Ephesians 5:25

Love's quality is measured by . . .  
what it will *do*,  
what it will *give*, and  
what it will *suffer*.

God so *loved* the world that He *gave* — gave His only begotten Son, gave all — and withheld nothing! That is the measure of God's love for us — it loves to the uttermost. If you are one of Christ's redeemed people, then . . . .

every energy of your mind,  
every affection of your heart,  
every power of your soul,  
every fiber of your body,  
every element of your influence,  
every penny of your money —

is Christ's; and all of these are to be used to bless others and to make the world better and holier. If we love, we will *give*, we will *suffer*, we will *sacrifice*. If we would be like God, we must live to minister to others, giving our life, without reserve, to service in Christ's name!

"The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who **loved** me and **gave** Himself for me!" Galatians 2:20

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Make the teaching about God our Savior attractive!**

"Whatever things are lovely" Philippians 4:8

"So that in every way, they will **make the teaching about God our Savior attractive!**" Titus 2:10

We become truly lovely, to the degree that we become like God. Human morality is not always beautiful. There are people who are good, but not lovely. Their "goodness" still has qualities which repel others.

But true holiness is always attractive. We ought to make our religion so beautiful, that all who look upon us shall be drawn to our Master! We dishonor Christ, when we claim to be His people, and yet show in our character, disposition, and life — things which are not in God's character. How will people of the world know what true religion is — if you and I do not show them its beauty in our lives? We should seek not only whatever things are just and true and honest — but also whatever things are lovely!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Earth's broken things**

Christ is building His kingdom with **earth's broken things**. Men want only the strong, the successful, the victorious, the unbroken, in building their kingdoms; but God is the God of the unsuccessful, of those who have failed. Heaven is filling with earth's broken lives, and there is no *bruised reed* that Christ cannot take and restore to glorious blessedness and beauty. He can take the life crushed by pain or sorrow — and make it into a harp whose music shall be all praise. He can lift earth's saddest failure up to Heaven's glory.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Spiritual Greatness**

**Spiritual Greatness** — sanctified character, beauty of soul, the likeness of Jesus upon our lives and hearts — shall endure forever. God wants to *train* every one of us into this true spiritual greatness.

Many Christians grow sadly disheartened, because they seem never to become any better. Year after year, the *struggle* goes on with the old bad habits and ugly dispositions, the old selfishness, pride, and hatefulness — and they appear never to be growing victorious.

Yet Christ is a most patient teacher. He never wearies of our *slowness* and *dullness* as learners. He will teach the same lesson over and over, until we have learned it. If we only persevere, He will never tire of us, and His gentleness will make us great.

"Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go." Isaiah 48:17

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye."  
Psalm 32:8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **It is better to be deaf!**

"Whoever spreads *slander* is a fool!" Proverbs 10:18

In the case of *slander*, the listener is almost as bad as the speaker. The only proper response, is to shut your ears the moment you begin to hear an evil report of another from anyone. The person has no right to *tell* it to you — and you have no right to *listen* to it! If you refuse to listen — he will not be able to go on with his story. Ears are made to hear with, but on occasion **it is better to be deaf**. We all aim at courtesy, and courtesy requires that we be patient listeners, even to dull speakers; but even courtesy does not require us to listen to evil reports about a neighbor. Ears should be trained to shut instinctively when the *breath of slander* touches it, just as our eyes shut at the slightest approach of harm.

"He who **speaks** a slander, carries the devil on his tongue — and he who **listens** to it, carries the devil in his ear!" Thomas Watson

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **As we go along the dusty road of life**

**As we go along the dusty road of life** — we all need sympathy, human kindness, cheer, fellowship, and the thousand little expressions of human love. These *small tokens of affection* are the bright side of every life that is blessed by rich friendships. It is this unceasing blessing that your heart hungers for, as its daily bread — not great gifts and large favors, but a gentle affection in your friend to bring cheer, comfort, inspiration, hope, and strength to your soul every time you look into his face.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **One selfish soul**

Love is always ready to deny itself, to give, sacrifice — -just in the measure of its sincerity and intensity. Perfect love is perfect self-forgetfulness. Hence where there is love in a home — unselfishness is the law. Each forgets self, and lives for others. But where there is selfishness, it

mar's joy. **One selfish soul** will destroy the sweetness of life in any home. It is like an *ugly bush* in the midst of a garden of flowers. It was selfishness that destroyed the first home and blighted all the loveliness of Paradise; and it has been blighting lovely things in earth's homes ever since. We need to guard against this selfish spirit.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The Law of Amusements**

"All things are lawful — but not all things are *profitable*. All things are lawful — but not all things *edify*." 1 Corinthians 10:23

Amusements are proper, only so far as they make us better Christians. Whenever they become hindrances to us in our Christian living, or in our progress in sanctification — they are harmful, no matter how innocent they may be in themselves.

How do your amusements affect your spiritual life? What is their influence on you? They may be very pleasing to you and provide great pleasure. But what is their influence on you as a Christian? In other words, are they means of grace? Or are they making you careless regarding Christ, and hindering your advancement in spirituality? We ought to be honest enough with ourselves to answer these questions truthfully, and then *act* accordingly.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **A true disciple of Jesus**

"Lord, what will You have me to do?" Acts 9:6

To be a **true disciple of Jesus**, is to say "Yes" to Him always, with our whole heart, and with our whole being.

It means giving up the sins that grieve Him.

It means cutting free from whatever displeases Him.

It is renouncing every other master, and taking orders from Him only.

It means walking with Him, following Him wherever He leads, without question, without reservation, not counting the cost.

It is saying "Yes" to Christ whatever He may ask us . . .  
to do,  
or to give up,  
or to sacrifice,  
or to suffer.

That was the way His first disciples followed Him. And that is the way His disciples must follow Him now. Absolute obedience to Him, is the condition of following Him completely.

"His disciples followed Him." Matthew 8:23

"And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me." Matthew 10:38

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matthew 16:24

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Character Building**

"In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built." 1 Kings 6:7

The account of the *silent temple builders* on Mount Moriah, is the picture of all the worthwhile work within us. The builders are always at work on our characters, but they work quietly. The little blocks come from a thousand sources, and are laid upon the walls of our hearts.

The lessons we receive from others,  
the influences friends exert upon us,

the books that feed our minds,

the impressions our experiences leave upon us,

the inspirations from the Holy Spirit —

in all these ways the quiet work of character-building goes on. It never ceases, because the builders never rest. By day and by night, your character-temple is rising. Is it completely beautiful? Are the stones all clean and white? Your character-temple is not yet completed.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The continuing debt**

"Owe no one anything, except **the continuing debt to love one another**, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law." Romans 13:8

If we have the true spirit of service, we will look upon everyone we meet, even casually, as one to whom we owe some *debt of love*, one sent to us to receive . . .

some blessing,

some cheerful word,

some comfort,

some strength,

some inspiration,

some touch of beauty from our hand.

We may never do even one *great* or *noticeable* thing that people will talk about, or that will be reported in the newspapers. Yet every *word* we speak, every *small act*, every *influence* we bring

out, even unconsciously — all "in His name," meeting human need and pain and sorrow as we pass by — will prove to be a *sweet and blessed ministry of love* and will impart strength and help to others. The name of Christ consecrates every smallest deed or influence, pouring it full of love.

"The King will answer and say to them: Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them — you did it to Me!" Matthew 25:40

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The balanced Christian life**

While the Christian life is firm and yielding in its *integrity* and *uprightness* — it is still beautiful in its *love* and *gentleness*. The unchangeable principles of uprightness, like mountain-crags, are covered over with tender vines, and with the sweet flowers of grace and charity.

True religion is never meant to dry up our life and make it cold, hard, and formal. It is meant to bring out new beauty, and to clothe the soul in garments of loveliness. It asks for the development of every power of body, mind, and spirit to the greatest possibility. It demands the strongest motives for godliness. It demonstrates the finest examples. Its ideal includes not only "whatever things are *true*, whatever things are *just*," but also "whatever things are *lovely*."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Don't worry about the package!**

"No *chastening* seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been *trained* by it." Hebrews 12:11

Beyond the *River of Sorrow*, there is a *Promised Land*. No trial for the present seems joyous, yet afterward it leads to blessing. There are rich possibilities for good — beyond every pain and trial. There are *green fields* beyond *Jordan's sorrows*. **Our disappointments are really God's appointments**, and bring rich rewards. God takes our *losses* — and molds them into *gains* for us. There is nothing really evil in the experiences of a Christian, for "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Our Father sends us nothing but good. **Don't worry about the package!** Be it dull or attractive, it enfolds a 'gift of love'.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Our unconscious, perpetual, pervading, and immortal difference**

"To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And *who is sufficient for these things?*" 2 Corinthians 2:16

Every human life has an *influence* in this world. Our impact perpetually continues on every side.



If our lives are true and good — then this influence is a blessing to other lives. Let us never set in motion any influence that we would later want buried. When we think of **our unconscious, perpetual, pervading, and immortal difference** in the world — we can only cry out, "*Who is sufficient for these things?*" How can we hope that the efforts from our lives will always be blessed? Let us be *faithful* in all our duties, obligations, and responsibilities — in act, word, and attitude, all our days, in whatever makes an impact. In no other way, can we fulfill the responsibility of living for others.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Yes, Lord!**

"Lord, what will You have me to do?" Acts 9:6

Whatever command God gives — we should instantly and cheerfully answer, "*Yes, Lord, I am ready to obey!*"

It is not hard to say "**Yes, Lord!**" when God leads us in *pleasant* paths, where the flowers are plentiful, where the way is smooth and agreeable. But we know that sometimes the path is covered with *thorns* and is *rough* and *steep* — or runs through *fire* or *flood*. We are still called always to say, "*Yes, Lord!*" If God calls us to some trial or cross-bearing or sacrifice, our answer should always be the same. We should be able to *trust His loving heart* — when our eyes cannot see blessing or goodness in the way He takes us. Every true path of God leads to rich joy!

"Teach me your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path!" Psalm 27:11

"He led them forth by the *right* way" Psalm 107:7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **If God sent two angels to earth**

Use your one talent for God's glory — and He will give you more to use. Do the *little duties* faithfully — and you will grow in skill and ability and be able for greater duties. No duties are small or unimportant. There are many who grow discouraged, because they are occupied all their lives with little tasks. Men praise grand and heroic deeds — and no notice is taken of the common, sacrificial deeds of daily duty. But someone once said, that **if God sent two angels to earth**, one to rule an empire and the other to clean a street — they would each regard their employment as equally distinguished. True faithfulness regards nothing as small or unimportant.

The service of the angels in Heaven's glory, is no more radiant than the faithful duty of the lowliest saint on earth.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **If He were in our place**

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The spirit of Christian love, if allowed to work deeply and thoroughly in all hearts and lives — will prevent divisions and alienation among Christians. It will lead us to forget ourselves and think of others, not pushing our own interests excessively nor demanding the first place, but in honor preferring one another. It will make us willing . . .

to serve,

to minister,

to stoop down to wash a brother's feet.

It will make us *thoughtful*, too, in all our acts, in all our manners, in all our words. It will make us gentle, kind, and patient, teaching us to be all that Jesus would be, **if He were in our place**.

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" Matthew 11:29

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **We are like Christ**

"May Your will be done on earth — as it is in Heaven." Matthew 6:10

Obedience is what Heaven is made of. All the life of Heaven, is simply perfect obedience. A

little bit of Heaven comes into our lives on earth, when we learn to obey the will of God.

Obedience is the mark of royalty. Wherever God finds a soul that is ready to always yield to His will, to do His commandments without question, and to submit to His care without murmuring — there is a person whom He is ready to crown.

**We are like Christ** — only as much as we learn to obey and do God's will. Heaven comes down into our heart — only as we yield our lives to God.

"If you love Me, you will obey what I command." John 14:15

"If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." John 14:23

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **We are lifted up in the arms of omnipotence**

"There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother!" Proverbs 18:24

God helps and blesses us through our friendships, but these are meant only to draw us up to

Himself. Jesus is the only man in whom we can have eternal trust. All other friendships are only shadows — His is the perfect friendship.

Behind the sweet, gentle, human qualities in Jesus which make it so easy for us to come to Him and rest in Him — is the power of the eternal God. When we come to His precious human love, for which our hearts crave and which seems so satisfying — we know that His infinite, divine fullness lies behind the tender warmth of the Son of God. His humanity comes very close to us, and we only need to lay our heads upon its bosom. Then when we lean on Him, **we are lifted up in the arms of omnipotence.**

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given . . . and He will be called Wonderful Counselor, *Mighty God*, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace!" Isaiah 9:6

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The blemishes and faults of others**

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble." 1 Peter 3:8

We should learn to look at **the blemishes and faults of others** — only through the eyes of love, with sympathy, patience, and compassion. We do not know the *secret history* of the lives of others around us. We do not know what *piercing sorrows* have produced the *scars* we see in people's lives. We do not know the *pains* and *trials* which make life hard, to many with whom we are tempted to be impatient. If we knew all the *secret burdens* and the *heart-wounds* which many keep hidden beneath their smiling faces — we would be patient and gentle with all people.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The way to waste our life**

"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it." Luke 9:24

**The way to waste our life**, is . . .

- to be very protective of it,
- to hold it back from dangerous duty and costly service,
- to save it from the work of self-denial and sacrifice.

*The way to make our life an eternal success*, is to do with it what Jesus did with His — present it a living sacrifice to God, to be used wholly for Him. Some say He threw His life away — and so it certainly *seemed*, up to the morning of His resurrection. But no one would say that now of Christ. The throwing away of His life — led to its glory. In no other way can we make anything

worthy of our life. *Saving is losing*. It is losing life in devotion to Christ and His service, which saves a life for Heavenly honor and glory.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The glory of all loveliness**

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." Matthew 5:8

*Bodily health* is beautiful. *Mental vigor* is beautiful. But *heart purity* is **the glory of all loveliness**. The heart makes the life. The inner life fashions the outer life. So, above all things, be pure-hearted — that Christ may more and more fill your life, that He may fill all of your soul, and that His Spirit may permeate all of your being. Then the beauty of the Lord may be upon you, and the winning charm of God's loveliness may shine in your features, and you will have the beauty of Christ within you. The transfiguration must come from *within*. Only a holy, beautiful *heart* — can make a holy, beautiful *character*.

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me". Psalm 51:10

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The secret of peace**

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." John 14:27

Perfect loyalty to Christ — brings perfect peace into the heart. The secret of Christ's own peace, was His absolute devotion to His Father's will. We can find peace in no other way. Any resistance to God's will, any disobedience of His commands — must disturb the peace of our hearts. No *hard lesson* which He teaches, ever destroys our peace — if we receive it with a willing, teachable spirit, and strive to learn it just as He has written it out for us. If we receive the lessons in the way that our Master gives them to us — we shall make our life into beautiful music, and we shall find peace.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Whoever spreads slander is a fool!**

It is easy for one to poison a person's mind, concerning another's reputation. There is measureless ruin created in this world, by the slanderer.

Characters are blackened,  
friendships are destroyed,

jealousies are aroused,  
homes are torn up,  
hearts are broken!

Let us never take up an evil report, and pass it onto others. Let us never whisper an evil word about another. We do not know . . .

where it may end,  
how it may grow, or  
what ruin it may work.

Words once spoken, can never be taken back again. We'd better learn to keep *the door of our lips* locked and speak no evil of anyone.

"The Scripture calls slandering, *smiting with the tongue*. "Come, and let us smite him with the tongue!" Jer. 18:18. You may smite another — and never touch him. The tongue inflicts greater wounds than the sword. No physician can heal the wounds of the tongue! To pretend friendship to a man, and slander him, is most odious!" *Thomas Watson*

"As a rod scourges the back, so the slanderer's tongue scourges the name!" *Thomas Watson*

"The scorpion carries his poison in his tail; the slanderer carries his poison in his tongue!"  
*Thomas Watson*

"He who raises a slander — carries the devil in his tongue!  
He who receives a slander — carries the devil in his ear!" *Thomas Watson*

"Do not go about spreading slander among your people." Leviticus 19:16

**"Whoever spreads slander is a fool!"** Proverbs 10:18

"Brothers, do not slander one another!" James 4:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Faithfulness in small things**

"And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been *faithful in a very little thing*, you are to be in authority over ten cities.'" Luke 19:17

There will be eternal honors for those who have filled *important* places of trust and responsibility in this world, and have proved faithful in great things. There will be crowns of glory for the martyrs who, throughout the ages, have died rather than deny Christ.

But there will be rewards just as brilliant and crowns just as splendid, for those who, in lives of lowly service and self-denial and in patient endurance and humble devotion — have been *faithful in the small things*. God does not overlook the lowly, nor does He forget the little things. If only we are faithful in the place to which He assigns us and in the duties He gives us, we shall have

our reward from God, even though our lives and our deeds are unknown and unpraised by others.

No one is endowed with all gifts. Every person has his or her own particular excellence or ability. No two have precisely the same gifts, and no two are called to fill precisely the same place in life. The role of the lowliest and the humblest with the fewest gifts, is just as important as the most brilliantly gifted.

The great one in God's sight is not the prominent one, but the life that fills the *place* it was made to fill, and does the *work* it was made to do. God does not ask great things; He asks only *simple faithfulness* — the quiet doing of what He commands.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **A true home**

**A true home** is one of the most sacred of places. It is a *sanctuary* into which men flee from the world's perils and alarms. It is a resting-place to which at close of day, the weary retire to gather new strength for the battle and toils of tomorrow. It is the place . . . .

where love learns its lessons,  
where life is schooled into discipline and strength,  
where character is molded.

Few things we can do in this world are so well worth doing, as the making of a beautiful and happy home. He who does this, builds a sanctuary for God and opens a fountain of blessing for men.

Far more than we know, do the strength and beauty of our lives, depend upon the home in which we dwell. He who goes forth in the morning from a happy, loving, prayerful home — into the world's strife, temptation, struggle, and duty — is strong, and inspired for noble and victorious living. The *children* who are brought up in a true home, go out trained and equipped for life's battles and tasks, carrying in their hearts a secret of strength which will make them brave and loyal to God, and will keep them pure in the world's severest temptations.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Who can find a virtuous wife?**

**"Who can find a virtuous wife? Her worth is far above rubies!"** Proverbs 31:10

The woman who makes a sweet, beautiful home, filling it with love and prayer and purity — is doing something better than anything else her hands could find to do beneath the skies!

"Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: *Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all!* Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised." Proverbs 31:28-30

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **We must keep the sea out of our heart**

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14:27

The problem of *sailing*, is not to keep the vessel out of the water — but to keep the water out of the vessel. In the same way, the problem of true Christian living, is not to keep ourselves out of life's cares, trials, and temptations — but to keep the cares, trials, and temptations out of us. As the sea is the normal medium for ship sailing — so cares are the normal element of life in this world. But **we must keep the sea out of our heart**. Some people make the mistake of letting their cares and worries creep into their souls. The result is that they grow discontented, fretful, and unhappy. The secret of peace, is to keep your heart free from care and anxiety, even in the midst of many internal trials.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Worry — or preparation**

There is a large difference between **worrying** about possible future trials — and being **prepared** for them if they should come. The former we should never do — the latter we should always seek to do. If we do, we are always prepared . . .

for emergencies,  
for the hard knocks,  
for the steep climbing,  
for the sore struggle —  
and we get through life victoriously.

In moral and spiritual things, it is the same. It is our *preparation* which *preserves* us in all the final tests — the *strength* which lies behind what we need in ordinary encounters. Those who daily commune with God, breathing His life into their souls — become strong with that hidden strength that preserves them from falling in the day of trial. They have a "vessel" from which to refill the lamp when its little cup of oil is exhausted.

"Do not be **anxious** about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

"Therefore do not **worry** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:34

"**Prepared** for every good work." 2 Timothy 2:21

"Be **prepared** in season and out of season" 2 Timothy 4:2

"Therefore, **prepare** your minds for action!" 1 Peter 1:13

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **It requires grace to love *all* Christians**

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples — if you love one another." John 13:35

It is easy enough to love *some* people —  
people with tastes like ours,  
people who belong to our social group,  
people who are particularly kind to us.

But that is not the way that Christ wants us to live and to love. True Christian fellowship receives *all* the followers of our Lord — *all* who bear His name. We will be known as His disciples, by our love for one another.

**It requires grace to love *all* Christians.** We must have the love of God in our hearts — before we can love others. We must be close to Christ — before we can be close to one another. We must cultivate the thoughts and feelings appropriate for disciples of Christ. The humblest believer is our brother or our sister in Christ — whom we should sincerely love.

"My command is this: Love each other — as I have loved you." John 15:12

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart!" 1 Peter 1:22

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **These rare pictures!**

"Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things!" Isaiah 40:26

They miss many a tender joy — who do not have a *heart* in sympathy with nature.  
They lose many a whisper of love which drops from God's lips — who do not have *ears* open to hear the voices of nature.  
They fail to see many lovely visions of beauty — who have not learned to use their *eyes* in admiring the exquisite things that God has scattered everywhere in such glorious variety.

Yet most of us walk amid these inspirations, **these rare pictures**, these sweet voices — and neither feel nor see nor hear them! God meant us to get comfort and joy from the lovely things with which He has filled our earth.



"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world!" Psalm 19:1-4

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The divine art of sympathy**

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are" Hebrews 4:15

No books nor universities can teach us **the divine art of sympathy**.

We must be strongly *tempted* ourselves — before we can understand what others suffer in their temptations.

We must have deep sorrow ourselves — before we can be true comforters of others in their times of sorrow.

We must walk through the *deep valley* ourselves — before we can be guides to others in the same shadowy valleys.

We must feel the *strain*, and carry the *burden*, and endure the *struggle* ourselves — and only then can we be touched with the feeling of sympathy, or can give help to others in life's stresses and overwhelming needs. So we see *one compensation of suffering* — it prepares us for being helpers to others.

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble." 1 Peter 3:8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **One of the best way of evangelizing**

We can win others to Christ — only by being Christ to them, demonstrating Christ's love in ourselves, by living in such a way that they may be attracted to Christ, and may learn to admire and to love Him, by what they see of Him in us. **One of the best way of evangelizing** — is through consistent, beautiful, gentle, Christlike living.

Eloquence of persuasion in a preacher is powerful — only insofar as the preacher's life is consistent with that message. Preaching without love in one's life, produces only empty chatter. But where the deep, true love of Christ is — the plainest, humblest words become eloquent and mighty.

"Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight." 1 Peter 3:1-4

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Carve the image of Christ on the wall of your heart!**

A persecuted Christian in prison was cheered an hour every day, by a little spot of sunshine on his dungeon wall. Through a grating, the sun's rays briefly streamed into his cell. With the crude tools of a nail and stone, he carved a rough image of Christ upon His cross on the wall. He mastered his misfortune, getting a blessing out of it.

*No matter how calamity or disaster builds its dark, gloomy dungeon walls about you — never let despair lay its chilly hand upon your soul. No dungeon is so deep, that God's love cannot stream through. **Carve the image of Christ on the wall of your heart!** Master your misfortune, and make it give you a blessing. If you let trouble master you — it will leave a permanent scar upon your life. But **conquered calamity** becomes your helper and leaves beauty on your soul.*

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word." Psalm 119:67

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes." Psalm 119:71

"I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me." Psalm 119:75

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Sermons without words!**

"Each one should remain in the situation which he was in, when God called him." 1 Corinthians 7:20

When you are tempted to complain and resist the difficulties of your circumstances, and the limitations of your place in life — remember that Jesus, even with all His divine life and all His great powers, for thirty years found room in a humble peasant home for worthy living, and for service not unfitting to His true exalted character.

If you can do nothing but live a true Christian life which is patient, gentle, kind, pure — in your home, in society, at your daily occupation — you will perform a service of great value, and leave many blessings in the world. This kind of life is a *little gospel* — displaying the wonderful story of the cross of Christ, in **sermons without words!**

"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation — whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." Philippians 4:12

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The ideal for all Christian life**

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served — but to *serve*, and to *give* His life a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

True life, wherever it is found, is *ministry*. Some think they *climb the ladder in life* — as they get beyond serving; but the reverse is true. Our Lord gave the central aim and desire of His life as, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served — but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

These words proclaim **the ideal for all Christian life**. The whole of Christ's wonderful biography, is focused and summarized here. He Himself holds up *the perfect pattern* on which every disciple's life is to be fashioned. No one really begins to live at all in any worthy sense — until selfishness dies, and he begins to serve others.

We should ask, as far as others are concerned, not how we can use them to advance *our* interests and *our* welfare — but how we can minister to them, serve them, and become in some way a blessing to them.

"Serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:13-14

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The oyster's wounds!**

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." Matthew 18:21-22

Shall we seek **revenge** for the wrongs, injustices, and injuries inflicted upon us by others? How are these wrongs to be righted, these injuries to be healed?

Do not fear the consequences of any wrong done to you. Simply put the matter into God's hands and leave it there — and He will make it all as clear as the noonday. He will not allow us to be permanently and completely injured by any wrong done to us. Our duty, then, is . . .  
to meekly and patiently bear the suffering which others inflict on us;  
to bathe with love, the hand that strikes us,  
to forgive those who injure us; and  
to commit all the injustices, wrongs, and inequities of life, into the hand of a righteous and just God.

**The oyster's wounds** become pearls; and God can bring *pearls of spiritual beauty* out of our hurts!

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Colossians 3:13

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**She has done what she could!**

**"She has done what she could!"** Mark 14:8

All Christ asks from any of us — is what we have the ability to do. He asks no *impossibilities* apart from His grace. He accepts our smallest, poorest gifts or services — if they are indeed our best and if true love towards Him consecrates and sanctifies them. We need to care only for two things — that we always do our best, and that we do what we, do through love for Christ. If we are faithful to the measure of our ability and opportunity, and if love sanctifies what we do — then we are guaranteed of our Lord's approval. But we should never offer less than the best that we can do; to do so is to be disloyal to our Lord and disloyal to our own soul.

"Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things — I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord!" Matthew 25:23

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**The central goal of Christian life**

"Owe no one anything, except *the continuing debt to love one another*, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." Romans 13:8

"Serve one another in love." Galatians 5:13

God gives us, among the good things — hard work, conflict, self-denial, and bearing the cross. **The central goal of Christian life**, is ministry or serving. Some say, "Our chief end is to *glorify* God and to *enjoy* Him forever." Yes, but there is no way of glorifying God, except by living to bless the world in Christ's name, to bless others by . . .

    serving them,  
    loving them,  
    helping them,  
    and doing them good.

We are debtors, therefore, to everyone we meet. We owe them love; we owe them service. We are not to put ourselves on little thrones and demand homage and service from others; rather we are to do the serving. Christ came "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." And we should act the same way as our Lord.

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet — you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you!" John 13:14-15

"The greatest among you will be your servant!" Matthew 23:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Bring your barley loaves to Christ!**

"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" John 6:9

God does not like to bestow His blessings where they will be *hoarded* — but He loves to put them into the hands of those who will do the most with them to bless others. The central purpose of authentic Christian living, is to serve others in need. The purposeful life, is one devoted to Christ, to be used for Him in blessing others. Lay every gift at the Master's feet, and then, when it has been blessed by Him — give it out to bless others. **Bring your barley loaves to Christ**, and then, with the anointing of His touch upon them, you may feed many spiritually hungry people

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **It is easier to offer God a few easy activities**

"My son, give me your heart" Proverbs 23:26

"They first gave themselves to the Lord" 2 Corinthians 8:5

God wants, not so much your work, but you; at least He wants you first — and then your work. Service from hearts which are not really consecrated to God, is not pleasing to Him. We are in danger of forgetting this in our busy, bustling periods. **It is easier to offer God a few easy activities** — than to give Him our heart. The tendency of the religious life at present is to work, and to serve — rather than to love God. So we need to remind ourselves continually, that *loving* must come *before* doing and serving. The largest and most noticeable work will find no acceptance with God — if our hearts are not His.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The power of the tongue!**

"The tongue of the righteous is choice silver" Proverbs 10:20

"The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom" Proverbs 10:31

"The tongue of the wise brings healing" Proverbs 12:18

"The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life" Proverbs 15:4

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue!" Proverbs 18:21

"A gentle tongue can break a bone" Proverbs 25:15

The tongue's power to bless others, is simply beyond our understanding. It can impart valuable knowledge, making others wise. It can utter kind words, to comfort the sorrowful or cheer the downcast. It can verbalize thoughts which will arouse, inspire, and quicken heedless souls. It can sing songs that will live forever, in their influence and ministry. We should consecrate our tongues to God, and keep them pure for Him. The lips that speak God's name in prayer and Christian song, and speak vows of fidelity to Christ — should never defile themselves with any type of unwholesome speech. They should be kept only for Christ.

"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear."  
Ephesians 4:29

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**I have only one passion, and that is Jesus!**

"Son of man, these men have set up *idols in their hearts!*" Ezekiel 14:3

"Their heart went after their *idols!*" Ezekiel 20:16

We need to watch our heart-life, for it is in our thoughts, feelings, moods, tempers, and affections — that the turning from Christ begins.

We need to watch our inner spiritual state. The world may see no limit to our zeal, our religious activity, our earnest promoting of the truth — and yet there may be not enough prayerfulness, love for Christ, tenderness of conscience, hunger for righteousness, or desire for holiness.

Is Christ more to you now, than He ever was before? Does His love draw you with an overwhelming sway? Can you say, with Zinzendorf, "**I have only one passion, and that is Jesus!**"

Is your heart right?

"My son, give me your heart!" Proverbs 23:26

"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life!" Proverbs 4:23

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **The true motto of all Christian living**

"I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water *in My name* because you belong to Christ — will certainly not lose his reward!" Mark 9:41

Love to Christ must be the springboard and inspiration of all duty, fine achievements, and service to others. "In His Name" is **the true motto of all Christian living**.

Serving others amounts to nothing in Heaven's sight — if it is not done for the sake of Christ. The service must be truly rendered to Christ, no matter to whom the kindness is shown — or otherwise it will not please God, however beautiful it may be in itself. Things we do from any other motive, have no acceptability in the sight of God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **He answers our soul's needs**

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." James 4:3

No true prayer with the *wings of faith* goes unanswered — but many a prayer that seems unanswered is actually over-answered. The very thing we ask, God does not grant — because He is able to do something *infinitely better* for us. We ask *only* for physical help or relief — and He sees that we need some far more spiritual blessing. **He answers our soul's needs** — before He gratifies our personal wishes. We ask for a material favor — and He does not give it to us; but instead He gives us a spiritual good to enrich us forever. We ask for the lifting of a burden, or the removal of sorrow; but our plea is not granted in the form we ask — instead we receive new filling with the grace of Christ. Thus many times our little prayers are really answered over and above our requests.

"No good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless." Psalm 84:11

"The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing." Psalm 34:10

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us — to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **We are always under God's orders**

"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, *serve one another in love*. The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:13-14

Wherever God puts us, He has something definite right there for us to do. There is something He created for you to do in a special way. Every day He brings you into places where you have a definite purpose. Every time we find ourselves in the presence of a need or an opportunity to be helpful — we may well stop and ask if God has not brought us to this place for this very thing. Really, **we are always under God's orders**. Oftentimes the orders are sealed — and are opened only as the time goes by. To realize this, gives our common life a sacredness which should make us revere God. We need to continually serve our King.

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do — do it all for the glory of God!" 1 Corinthians 10:31

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Our lives should be New Testament pages that all can read!**

"Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the Word, they may be won over without words by the *behavior* of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives." 1 Peter 3:1-2

Unbelievers do not read the Bible, nor come to church to hear the gospel message. All they learn about Christ and the Christian life — they must learn from those who bear Christ's name and represent Him.

If all church members lived truly consecrated lives — holy, beautiful, separate from the world, loyal to Christ in business, in pleasure, and in all things — it would impossible to estimate what the influence of the Church would be, by *godly example* alone. It is awful to think that professing Christians, by the inconsistencies of their personal lives, lead souls away from the Savior. We are all responsible for our example to others. **Our lives should be New Testament pages that all can read!**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Beautiful enough to be the epitaph on our gravestone**

We do not know, when we are aiming for immortality, by what deeds or words of ours — we shall be remembered. It may be the most obscure aspect of our life, which shall shine with the most radiant glory. Let us, then, seek to make everything we do, **beautiful enough to be the epitaph on our gravestone**. To neglect the least duty, may be to spoil the way in which we are remembered. One opportunity missed, may hurt the rest of our reputation. If our hearts are always full of love — then our lives will be full of gentle deeds which will please God and bless the world. Then we shall write our names where . . .

no floods of years,  
no *wasting tooth of decay*,  
no hungry waves of time eating away the rock we stand on  
— can ever destroy the record of our holy life!



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **What are you doing with your time?**

"Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise — making the most of the time" Ephesians 5:15-16

Our **days**, as God gives them to us — are like beautiful summer fields.  
The **hours** are like trees with their rich fruit, or vines with their blossoms of purple clusters.  
The **minutes** are blooming flowers, and silvery blades of grass, and stalks of wheat with their golden grains.

Oh the endless, blessed possibilities of the *days* and *hours* and *minutes* — as they come to us from God's hands!

But what did you do with *yesterday*? How does the little acre of that one day look to you now?

**What are you doing with your time?** Every moment God gives us, has in it a possibility of beauty or usefulness — as well as something to be accounted for. *Are we using our time for God?*

"Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life!" Psalm 39:4

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Nevertheless, not as I will**

"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; **nevertheless, not as I will**, but as You will." Matthew 26:39

We pray earnestly, pressing our very heart into heaven — but it is for the doing of our *own* will that we ask, not for the doing of *God's* will. Do we have a true childlike spirit, when we insist on having our way with God, pushing *our* will without regard to His?

Are we not God's children? Should we not learn *obedience* and *submission* in all things to Him? No prayer is acceptable to God which, after all its intensity and effort, is not still left to God's choice, and given to His superior wisdom. Who but He knows what is *best* for us?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The treadmill which never ends**

There is nothing like *life's drudgery* to make men and women of us. You chafe under it. You sigh for relief to be freed from bondage to long hours, duties, tasks, appointments, rules — to **the**

## **treadmill which never ends.**

Yet this is *God's school* for you. It may be a *cross*. Yes, but all true blessing comes to us hidden under the *ruggedness and the heaviness of a cross*. We do not grow best in *easy, comfortable living*. Accept your treadmill, your plodding along, your dull tasks — and do everything well, and you will grow in strong and noble Christian character!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **The Eloquence of Godly Living**

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." 1 Corinthians 13:1

Tongues of angels without love to inspire their silvery melody, are but tinkling cymbals. *Life* itself is infinitely more influential than *speech*. *Character* far surpasses strong speeches, as a force for change in this world. The standard of *words* is a false one, in the estimating of the value and power of Christian workers. Do what you have gifts to do — but be sure that your *heart* is in it. Make your *personal character* a strong force in the world. Then when the sounds of silvery speech have died away, your influence will still remain a living legacy in the hearts of everyone, and an unfading light in the world.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Other people's awkwardness and clumsiness**

"Love . . .  
*bears* all things,  
*believes* all things,  
*hopes* all things,  
*endures* all things."  
1 Corinthians 13:7

Most of us are awkward in performing even our most loving deeds. We must learn to be patient, then — with **other people's awkwardness and clumsiness**. Their hearts may be gentler than their hands. Do not misinterpret their actions, judging . . .

the wrong motive, where purest love is meant;  
indifference, where affection is the warmest;  
insult, where honor was meant.

Away with petty suspicions! Be patient even with people's true faults. Let us train ourselves to discover the *best* in every act of others, to believe the best always of people and their actions, and to find some beauty in everything they do.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Possessing and Giving

It is not *having* that makes us great.  
You may have the largest abundance of God's gifts . . .  
of money,  
of abilities,  
of power,  
of influence,  
of noble qualities —  
yet if you only hold and hoard what you have for yourself — you are not great.

We are great, only in the measure that we bless others. We are God's stewards, and the gifts which come to us are His, not ours — and are to be used as He would use them. When we come to Christ's feet in consecration — we lay all that we have before Him. He accepts our gifts; and then putting them back into our hands, He tells us to go now and use them to bless others.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Prayer in Busy Days

"Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place" Mark 6:31

It is in prayer . . .  
that God shows His face to His children,  
that they have visions of His beauty and glory,  
that the sweet promises of His love come down as gifts into their hearts,  
that they are transformed into His likeness.

If you wish to be blessed, allow many seasons of prayer into your busy, harassed, tempted, and struggling life. It is in these quiet moments, that you really grow. Somewhere in every stressful, frantic day, get a little "silent time" for prayer. It will bring Jesus down into your heart, and make you strong for His service.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Our mission in life

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye."  
Psalm 32:8

We should never be anxious about **our mission in life**. Nor should we perplex ourselves in the least, as to try to know what God wants us to do, and what role He wants us to fill. Our whole duty — is to do the work of the present hour well.

There are some people who waste entire years wondering what God would have them do, expecting to have their *life's work* pointed out to them. But that is not the divine way. If you want to know *God's plan for you* — do God's will each day; that, indeed, is God's plan for you in the

here and now. If He has a wider sphere, and larger responsibility for you — He will bring you to it at the right time, and then you will know what will be God's plan for you, and your next mission.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Scripture Truth**

"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly!" Colossians 3:16

*Character* never can be strong, noble, and beautiful; nor can *conduct* be worthy of intelligent beings bearing God's image — if scriptural truth is not breathed into the very soul, by our personal searching and pondering of those truths. Do not stay forever in the basics of religious knowledge, amid the easy lessons learned at your mother's knee. There are glorious things beyond these — so let us go on to learn of the greater things! The Word of Christ will get into your heart to dwell and *transform* you only through serious thought and consideration.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Fidelity to Duty**

Too often we want to know what the result of our duty is going to be, *before* we are ready to accept it and do it. But that is wrong, for we have nothing whatever to do with the *cost* or with the *outcome* of duty; we have to know only that it is our duty, and then go right on and do it. The true way to live, is to bring to each duty that comes our way, our wisest considerations and our best skill, doing what appears to us at the time to be the right thing to do — and then leaving it, never regretting nor fretting about results.

God has promised to guide us. If we are living in true relationship to Him, we may expect guidance moment by moment as we go on. "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." Psalm 32:8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **His heart is still the same!**

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to *sympathize* with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are" Hebrews 4:15

Unless words mean nothing, unless the Scriptures cheat us with symbolic images and illustrations — Christ truly feels our every grief and every struggle, and *sympathizes* with us in each one.

Remember how His heart responded to all human need, when He was on earth. Sorrow stirred His compassion. Every cry of distress went to the depths of His soul. **His heart is still the same!** When angels are thronging around Him, and a poor, weary sufferer in some lowly home on

earth; or a broken, sorrowful person crouching in the darkness somewhere, reaches out a *trembling fingertip of faith* and touches the hem of His garment — He turns around with a loving look and asks, "*Who touched Me?*" Mark 5:30

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **An Eye for Flaws**

"He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends." Proverbs 17:9

We should not use our keen-sightedness to discover our neighbor's little faults. By some strange perverseness in human nature, we have far keener eyes for flaws and blemishes in others — than for the lovely things that are in them. Not many of us go around talking to everyone we meet about our neighbor's good points and praising the lovely things. Many of us, however, can speak about an indefinite number of faults in many of our neighbors. Would it not be better to change this approach, and begin gossiping about the good and beautiful things in others?

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins!" 1 Peter 4:8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **True Living**

"For to me, to live is Christ!" Philippians 1:21

Life means far more than many of us ever dream. It is not merely passing through the world with a fair amount of comforts, with enough food when we are hungry, and enough clothes to keep us warm. Life means growing . . .

into the image of Christ Himself,

into His strength,

into mature Christian character,

into holy men and women,

and into the blessed peace of God.

But the peace He guides us into, consists of victory over all our trials, and a quietness and confidence which no external circumstances can break.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Silence That Is Not Golden**

"A man finds joy in giving an apt reply — and how good is a timely word!" Proverbs 15:23

Is any selfishness so base, as that which holds loving and gentle words in the heart left unspoken, when the dear lives of those close beside us would benefit from our words? Use your gift of speech to give comfort, joy, cheer, and hope to all around you. Use it . . .

to encourage the weary and disheartened,  
to warn those who are treading in paths of danger,  
to inspire the lethargic and discouraged ones with high and holy motives,  
to kindle the fires of heavenly aspiration on the cold altars of their hearts.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **God's Giving**

"Ask and it will be given to you;  
seek and you will find;  
knock and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

God does not dole out His gifts in little portions. He pours out blessings, until there is no more room to receive. He gives, until our emptiness is altogether filled. He is never finished giving, when you cease receiving — He still gives far more. Nothing limits the supplies we get from God, except our capacity to take from Him. He would give without limit, if we had room to receive that moment. The only reason we are not supplied in this glorious way, according to God's riches — is because we will not take all that God would give. The only thing that stands in the way of our being blessed to the full, is the smallness of our faith.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **No troubled tomorrow**

Should the *uncertainty of all human affairs* sadden our lives? No; God does not want us to allow *tomorrow's possible clouds*, to shadow today. He does not want us to be unhappy while the sun shines — because by and by it will be dark. He wants us to live in *today* and enjoy its blessings and do its work well — though tomorrow may bring calamity.

How can we? Only by calm, quiet, trustful *faith* in God and *obedience* to Him at every step. Then **no troubled tomorrow** can ever bring us harm. Those who do God's will each day — God will hide under His wings when the storm breaks.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:34

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **It is hard, costly, and painful**

A religion that is satisfied with only ordinary accomplishments — indeed, that is ever satisfied at all — is not a *living* religion. The Master's blessing is upon those who *hunger* and *thirst* after righteousness. It is the longing soul, who is satisfied. There are better things before you, than you have yet attained. Strive to reach them. It is not easy to rise Christward, heavenward, to advance in the Christian life, to grow more holy. **It is hard, costly, and painful.**

Many people are discouraged because they do not appear to themselves to be any better, to be any more like Christ, today than they were yesterday. But even true longing is growth. It consists of the soul's reaching Godward.

"As the deer pants for the water brooks — so my soul pants for You, O God!" Psalm 42:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Fault-finding**

"Why do you look at the *speck* that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the *beam* that is in your own eye?" Matthew 7:3

It is strange how oblivious we can be of our own faults and of the blemishes in our *own* character — and how clearly we can see the faults and blemishes of *other* people!

Finding so much wrong in others, is not a flattering indication of what our hearts contain. We ought to be very quiet and modest in criticizing others, for in many cases we are merely telling the world what our own faults are. Before we turn our microscopes on others to search out the less than beautiful things in them, we had better look in our mirrors to see whether or not we are free ourselves from the blemishes we wish to correct in our neighbor. There is a wise portion of Scripture telling us to get clear of the beams in our own eyes, that we may see clearly to pick the specks out of the eyes of others.

"A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense." Proverbs 19:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Laws of nature**

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands!" Psalm 19:1

We talk about the **laws of nature**, and we say they are fixed and unchanging. Yes, but *God* is behind the laws of nature. They are merely His ways of working in the world. They do not work and run like a great, heartless machine. There is a heart of love, a Father's heart, at the center of all this vast order we call *nature*.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **These qualities do not come naturally**

We can never bless the world, by merely living for ourselves. We must suffer, give, and sacrifice — if we wish to do good to others. It will cost you, even to simply be genuinely kind. Some of us know what self-repression, self-restraining, self-crucifixion, and long, severe discipline — lie behind calmness, peacefulness, sweet disposition, good-temper, kindly feelings, and

thoughtfulness. Most of us have lived long enough to know that **these qualities do not come naturally**. We have to learn to be good-tempered, thoughtful, gentle, and even to be courteous. Learning this is always hard. Indeed we attain nothing good or beautiful in our spiritual life, without a cost.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The furnace of suffering**

"Man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward." Job 5:7

"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows." John 16:33

The real goal of pain, is not just to endure the suffering that comes into our life, to bear it bravely, without wincing, to pass through it patiently, even rejoicing in it. Pain has a higher mission to us than to teach us heroism. We should endure pain, seeking the *blessing* of it — a *message from God* which we should not fail to hear. It lifts the veil hiding God's face for us, and we glimpse His beauty every time we are called to suffer. Pain is like a *furnace fire*, and we should come out of it always with the gold of our character gleaming a little more brightly. Every experience of suffering ought in some way . . .

to lift us nearer God,  
to make us more gentle and loving, and  
to leave the image of Christ shining a little clearer in our lives.

"I have refined you, but not as silver is refined. Rather, I have refined you in **the furnace of suffering**." Isaiah 48:10

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The Ministry of Sympathy**

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble." 1 Peter 3:8

No ministry in this world is more beautiful or more helpful, than that of those who have become familiar with life's hard paths, and have learned life's secrets in the *school of experience* — and then go about inspiring, strengthening, and guiding younger souls who follow them.

Nothing in Christ is more precious than this knowledge of life's ways, gained by His own actual experience in walking this earth. He has not forgotten what life was like back then. He remembers how He felt when He was hungry, or weary, or in struggle with the tempter, or forsaken by His friends. And it is because He went through all these experiences, that now in Heaven, He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities and can give us sympathy, help, and guidance. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin." Hebrews 4:15



"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Contentment, Not Satisfaction**

"I have learned to be **content** in whatever circumstances I am." Philippians 4:11

"As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be **satisfied** when I awake in Your likeness!" Psalm 17:15

We must distinguish between *contentment* and *satisfaction*. We are to strive to be *content* in every state; but we are never to be *satisfied* in this world, whether our circumstances are prosperous or adverse. *Satisfaction* can come only when we awake in Christ's likeness in the next world of eternal blessedness. We are not to seek *contentment* by restraining or crushing the continual cravings and longings of our souls. Yet we are meant as Christians to live amid all circumstances in quiet calmness and unbroken peace, in sweet restfulness of soul, wholly independent of the strifes and storms about us, and undisturbed by them. Content in whatever state, yet never satisfied — that is the ideal life for every Christian.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Divine and human forgiveness**

"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us." Luke 11:4

In the model prayer which Jesus gave to His disciples — He linked together **divine and human forgiveness**. While we pray to God to forgive our countless and enormous sins — we are taught to extend the same forgiveness we ask for ourselves, to others who harm us in little ways. Let us hold no *bitterness* in our hearts even for a moment. Let us put away all *grudges* and all *ill feelings*. Let us remember the *good* things others do to us — and forget the *evil* things. Then we can pray sincerely, "Forgive us our sins — as we forgive others." If we cannot do this, I do not know how we can pray at all for forgiveness.

"Forgive — and you will be forgiven." Luke 6:37

"But if you do not forgive men their sins — your Father will not forgive your sins." Matthew 6:15

"In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you — unless you forgive your brother from your heart!" Matthew 18:34-35

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Little white lies

"Do not **lie**. Do not **deceive** one another." Leviticus 19:11

"Better to be poor than a **liar**." Proverbs 19:22

There are other forms of untruthfulness, besides the direct lie. There are those in our society who would not speak an untrue word — who still twist their statements so as to make them false in the impression they leave with others; or they would not *spea*k a lie — but they will *live* one. Their lives are full of small *deceits, concealment, pretense, insincerity, dishonesty*. Be true in your inmost soul — true in every word, act, look, tone, and feeling. Never deceive anyone. There are no **little white lies** in God's sight; it is a terrible fiction to think there are.

"Do not **lie** to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices" Colossians 3:9

"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and **all liars** — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur!" Revelation 21:8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Two hearts split apart

"Do not let the sun go down on your anger" Ephesians 4:26

Conflicts between friends should not be permitted to continue overnight. Scriptures say we should not let the sun go down on our anger. Why? Because there may not be another day to heal the wound, and fix the broken relationship.

"But it was not my fault," you say. Noble souls, inspired by the love of Christ, must not look for blame, nor argue who should first seek restoration. If it was not your fault — then you are the better person to begin the reconciliation. It is Christlike for the one who is not to blame, to take the first step toward the healing of the breach. That is the way He did, and always does it, with us.

Do not delay any longer. Is the sun close to setting? Before the evening shadows, be reconciled with your friend. Let not the stars look down on **two hearts split apart** by anger or misunderstanding.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Your labor is not in vain in the Lord

We must not measure life by any earthly standard. There are lives which the world crowns as successful — but that God rates as failures. And there are other lives which some may pity — but, in God's sight, are noble successes. Earnest Christians bless others truly for Christ — but

there may seem to be little result. Yet we do not know what good may come out of a true work that has at first appeared to fail.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that **your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**" 1 Corinthians 15:58. Results may not come immediately, but they will somewhere, sometime.

Outside the mill, a waterwheel turns, and seems to accomplish nothing. But inside, machinery makes flour to feed the hungry. Our lives may seem, with all their activities, to produce no result — but who knows what blessings they shall become, what impressions they leave on other lives for eternity?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Deeply and truly useful**

"Serve one another in love" Galatians 5:13

We must live purely ourselves — if we would be able to bless others. We must resist sin, even to blood — if we would teach others how to be victorious in temptation. We must bear trials and endure sorrows with patience, submission, and faith — in order to be victorious — if we would become comforters and helpers of others in their trials. You must learn before you can teach, and the learning costs you much. At no small price, can we become *true helpers of others* in this world. That which has cost us nothing in the *getting* — will not be any great blessing to any other person. It is only when we lose our life and sacrifice it to God, that we become **deeply and truly useful.**

"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it!" Luke 9:24

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **A fatal word**

There are duties which must be done at a particular moment — or they cannot be done at all.

It is today that the sick neighbor needs your visit and your help — tomorrow he may be dead!

It is today that your friend needs your sympathy, and your comfort — it will not be of any use to her tomorrow.

It is today that a tempted person needs your help in his struggle — by tomorrow he may be defeated, lying in the dust of shame.

It is today that today you must tell the story of the love of Christ — tomorrow it may be too late.

Learn well the meaning of "now" in all of life. Tomorrow is **a fatal word**; thousands of lives and countless thousands of hopes have been wrecked by it. Today is the time of divine blessing.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Not by wrestling, but by clinging**

Jacob had victory and blessing not by wrestling, but by *clinging*. His limb was out of joint and he could struggle no more, but he would not let go. Unable to wrestle, he wound his arms around the mysterious opponent, and held on until at last he conquered.

Just so, we do not get victory in prayer until we cease struggling, give up our own will, and throw our arms around our Father's neck in clinging faith! Human strength cannot take blessing from God. It is never the strength of our willfulness which prevails with God, but rather clinging faith. It is not when we press and seek our own will, but when humility and trust unite and say, "Not my will — but Yours be done." We are persuasive with God, only to the degree that self is conquered and is dead. **Not by wrestling, but by clinging** — do we get the blessing.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **There is a strange absence of uplifting, wholehearted, cheerful words**

We let our friends go through life, without enough *tokens of appreciation*. We avoid compliments. We hide our tender interest and our kind feelings from them. We are afraid to give one another words of praise or of encouragement — in case we should seem to *flatter* them, or we should encourage their *pride*. Even in many of our homes, **there is a strange absence of uplifting, wholehearted, cheerful words**. Let us not be afraid to say appreciative and complimentary things, when they are deserved and are sincere. Let us lose no opportunity . . .  
to show kindnesses,  
to express sympathy,  
to give encouragement.

When encouragement is warranted — our silence can be sinful.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Use your gift!**

Bring every virtue and gift of your life, to Christ's service. Use well the gifts you have at work now, and develop what you have, into greater skill and power for service. Strive always to *excel*. Grow by working. Don't stand with idle hands for a moment, because you must give account for each moment. Do not allow your spiritual gifts to rest in dusty niches merely to look at. Take them all down and put life into them, that they may be useful. Do not play at Christian work. The King's business requires haste.

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The highest quality of Christians**

They are **the highest quality of Christians** — who live for others, whose lives are spent in loving, unselfish ministry. And they rank highest of all — who serve deeply and unselfishly. It is only in serving, that we begin to be like Jesus Himself. It is when the worker for Christ utterly forgets herself, and sacrifices herself in the fire of her love for Christ — that her labor for souls yields the richest and best results. When we care only that Christ may be magnified, whether by honor or dishonor, whether by life or death in us — then will He honor us by using us to be useful for His kingdom.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Our defeats**

If we repent of our mistakes and sins, they will be used by God to help in the growth and upbuilding of our character. Even when we fall — through the grace and tender love of Christ, these defeats become blessings. In the hot fires of repentance — we leave behind the dross, and come out again as pure gold.

But we must remember that it is only Christ who can make our sins turn into blessing. If we are Christ's true followers, even our defeats shall become blessings to us, stepping-stones on which we may climb higher. This is one of the marvels of divine grace, that "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose!" Romans 8:28

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Home friendships**

Friendships in each family require the most gentle care and cultivation. We must win one another's love within our own doors, just as we win the love of those outside — by the sweet acts and virtues of affection. We must prove ourselves worthy of being loved by those who are nearest to us; they will not truly love us, merely because we are of the same household — unless we love them. We must show ourselves unselfish, thoughtful, gentle, and helpful. **Home friendships** must be *formed* as all friendships are formed — by the patient knitting of soul to soul and the slow growing of one life into another life. Then we *retain* other friends — by a thousand little winning expressions of love. We must be watchful of our acts and words — especially at home!

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing" 1 Peter 3:8-9

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **The all-victorious Christ**

**The all-victorious Christ** is like a great rock in a weary land, to whose shelter we may flee in every time of sorrow or trial, finding quiet refuge and peace in him.

"I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!" Psalm 18:1-2

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Friends**

"A friend loves at all times" Proverbs 17:17

"A man who has friends, must show himself friendly" Proverbs 18:24

Make friends who are *worthy* of friendship. We can have friends only by giving our lives for them. It costs to do this. Selfishness never wins a friend. We can make others love us — only by truly loving them. The greatest personality wins us no real friends — if we do not show love.

God will never be jealous of pure human affections. Loving God supremely, will not drive out of our hearts the love of dear ones knit to us during the years of earthly fellowship in joy and sorrow. The better we love Christ — the deeper, purer, stronger, and more tender will be our love for our human friends.

"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another!" 1 John 4:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Our Savior's love for His own redeemed people**

"Greater love has no one than this — that he lay down his life for his friends!" John 15:13

The most wonderful fact in the universe, is **our Savior's love for His own redeemed people**.  
Jesus . . .

bears with all our infirmities,  
never tires of our inconsistency and unfaithfulness,  
goes on forever forgiving and forgetting,  
follows us, when we go astray,  
does not forget us, when we forget Him.

Through all our stumbling and sinning,  
through all our provocation and disobedience,  
through all our waywardness and stubbornness,  
through all our doubting and unfaithfulness —

He still clings to us, and never lets go!

"Having loved His own who were in the world — He loved them to the end!" John 13:1

"I give them eternal life, and they will never perish — ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:28

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Other people's faults**

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8

It is easier to see other people's faults, than our own. We are more troubled more about the way our neighbors live — than we are with our own shortcomings. We are more concerned about the failures of others, than for our own.

We shall not be called to answer at God's judgment for the deeds of others. Rather, we shall give account for our every act, word, attitude, and feeling. We should train ourselves to keep a conscientious watch over every aspect of our own life.

It is better to give less attention to our neighbor's foibles and failures — and more to our own. If we give strict attention to our own faults — there is little time to look after other people's. Seeing and knowing our own defects — makes us more charitable to those of others.

"So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another." Romans 14:12-13

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Your heavenly Father**

"**Your heavenly Father** knows that you need all these things." Matthew 6:32

How it would brighten and bless our lives, if we were to always keep *the concept of God as our Father* in our hearts! When we can look up into God's face and say out of a warm and responding heart, "Our Father," all the world and all life take on a new appearance before our eyes. Duty is no longer hard nor a drudgery, but becomes a joy.

Keeping the commandments is hard — if we think of God merely as a King; but if we look up to Him as our Father, everything is changed, and our desire to please Him, make obedience a joy. We can then say, "I delight to do your will, O my God."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Life's opportunities

"Make the most of every opportunity." Colossians 4:5

Our days come to us filled with opportunities for . . .

gathering knowledge,  
growing wise,  
growing in character,  
becoming stronger, truer, purer, nobler, more Christ-like,  
doing heroic things for Christ,  
performing caring ministries, and  
rendering sweet services in Christ's name, to those who need loving sympathy and deeds of kindness.

Opportunities come to every Christian. They continually come on all the ordinary days — and oftentimes in the simplest common things. Yet the trouble with too many of us, is that we do not improve upon them, and do not seize them as they arrive.

"I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is *day*; the *night* is coming when no one can work." John 9:4

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## We represent Christ in this world

The blind man begging by the wayside,  
to the poor wretch who comes to our door for aid,  
to the crippled old woman who sits muffled up on a doorstep and holds out a wrinkled hand — we owe something, if we are Christians. We may not wish to give money — usually we should not give money — but we ought to give *something*. **We represent Christ in this world**, and we ought to treat every case of need and misfortune — as our Master would do, if He were standing in our place. We ought to give at least a patient answer, a kind look, and sympathetic attention.

"And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is My disciple — I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward!" Matthew 10:42

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Doing God's will

"I delight to do Your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart." Psalm 40:8

**Doing God's will**, builds godly character in us. It builds up in us, that which shall never need to be torn down. "He who does the will of God, abides forever." Every act of obedience adds a new touch of beauty to our soul. Every true work we do in Christ's name, though it leaves no mark



anywhere else in God's universe — leaves an imperishable mark on our own life. Every deed of kindness or unselfishness that we perform, with love in our hearts for Christ, may not bless another soul in all the wide world — but will leave its blessing on us. We are sure, therefore, of getting a blessing in our own life when we are obedient, even though no one else benefits.

"And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple — I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward!" Matthew 10:42

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Forgive as the Lord forgave you**

We should not keep count of offenses and forgiven acts. The time should never come when we shall say that we can forgive someone no more. When we are hurting from some injury done to us by another, and when our feeling of resentment is burning like a flame within us — we should remember that the wrong we have done to God is infinitely greater, and that He in His love has freely forgiven us. Should we not, then, be willing to forgive others their little offenses against us? This is why our Lord put into the prayer He taught His disciples the words, "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us." He wants us always to remember that we ourselves need forgiveness, and that if we would be like Him, we must forgive as He does.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**" Colossians 3:12-13

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Stand still!**

"When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous *stand firm* forever." Proverbs 10:25

"Do not be afraid. **Stand still**, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today!" Exodus 14:13

One of the first things in military training, is to learn to stand your ground. Old soldiers will tell you that there is nothing which so tests courage and obedience, as being required to stand still on the field and hold a position in the face of the enemy. Oftentimes the battle depends on simply standing firm.

The same principle applies in all of life. Much of Christian duty is not active, bustling work — but quiet, patient waiting. There come many times in the experience of each of our lives, when victory can be gained in no other way. We must *stand still* and wait for God. Immeasurable harm is brought about in our personal lives, because we are impatient and cannot wait for the divine call to go forward.

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm!" 1 Corinthians 15:58

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### God's providence

We are apt to interpret **God's providence**, in accordance with our own desires. When we are wishing to be led in a certain way — we are quite sure to find 'signs' which seem to favor our own preference. We must be careful to correctly interpret the meaning of events and circumstances. We are not to enter every *door* that is thrown open before us. The devil opens *doors of temptation*, but we are not to call opportunities to sin — guiding directions from God. His voice in *circumstances* — never contradicts the voice of His *Word*.

God moves in mysterious ways,  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm!

Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill,  
He treasures up His bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will!

You fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The *clouds* you so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head!

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence,  
He hides a smiling face!

His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower!

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain!  
(*William Cowper*)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Amid the grim and severe experiences of life**

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved — clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12

We ought to keep our hearts warm and full of kindness and sweet human tenderness — even through the harshest experiences. Many of us find life hard and full of pain. We meet misfortunes, serious trials, and disappointments. We should not allow these difficult experiences to deaden our sensitivities, or make us stoic or sour. Nothing but the love of God shed abroad in us by the Holy Spirit, can keep any of us in such gentleness and tenderness, **amid the grim and severe experiences of life**. Yes, it is possible to carry a gentle heart through all life's hardness and frost, into a full and ripe old age.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Praying for our country**

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior" 1 Timothy 2:1-3

We need to pray much for our country. We often fail in this, by making our prayers only for ourselves and for our own little world. Certainly our country ought to have a place in the daily prayers of every Christian. Those who govern us, ought to be continually remembered. They are only human, and need divine wisdom and guidance. They are people under the sway of party influence, and we need to pray that they be kept free from any control that would lead them to forget God. We need to pray for our institutions, that they be kept pure and holy — that righteousness may prevail throughout the land. We need to pray for all our people, that they may be made good citizens — that uprightness and integrity may characterize them. "Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **We should never allow the sun to go down!**

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." Ephesians 4:31

Let us instantly crush the beginning of envy, jealousy, and hate in our hearts, never allowing the day to close with a bitter feeling remaining. The hour of evening prayer, when we bow at God's feet — should always be a time for getting everything right which may have gone wrong with us and in us during the day. Next, every injury should be forgiven when we pray, "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us." Finally every spark of envy or jealousy or anger should be quenched, and the love of Christ should be allowed to flood our hearts. **We should never allow the sun to go down** on our anger.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Mamma, this little hand never struck me!**

"Why? What crime has He committed?" asked Pilate.  
But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify Him!" Matthew 27:23

That was a fair question. The Jews wanted Pilate to put Jesus to death; but Pilate had a right to ask why such sentence should be pronounced. No man should ever be condemned without a trial.

We have a right to ask the same now, of those who condemn and reject Christ. What *wrong* thing has He done? What *flaws* are there in His character? Whom has He *injured*? The Jews attempted no answer to Pilate's question; indeed there was no answer possible, for no accusation could be brought against Jesus. *He had never injured anyone!*

A little girl kissed her young brother's hand as he lay in the coffin, and said, "**Mamma, this little hand never struck me.**" It could well have been said of Christ when He lay in death:  
"This *hand* never struck anyone.  
These *lips* never spoke a word that gave pain.  
This *heart* never cherished an unkind thought of feeling."

On the other hand, the life of Christ was *a perpetual blessing* to all who knew Him. His *hands* were ever stretched out in healing — until finally they were stretched out on the cross and fastened to it — but outstretched still in blessing. His *lips* were ever speaking words of comfort, of love. His *heart* was ever full of love and grace.

Who could ever bring any accusation against Him? In truth, no one ever did! He was hurried to death by men's hatred, without reason or charge of any kind.

"Why? What crime has He committed?" asked Pilate.  
But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify Him!" Matthew 27:23

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Assurance**

While living close to Christ, it is the Christian's privilege is to enjoy unbroken **assurance** of His love. God wants us to trust Him just as fully in the *shadows*, as in the *sunshine*. There is grace enough in Christ to give light and joy to the darkest experience. Yet it is also true that many of God's noblest saints, in all ages, have had seasons of depression, when they lost the joy of salvation, and could not speak triumphantly of their hope. It is true, also, that there have been many devoted followers of Christ who throughout their life could not get beyond the *mere hope* that they were Christ's disciples. Is this the best that the love of God and the grace of Christ can do for those who are saved?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **New incarnations of Christ**

We should not be satisfied with only small accomplishments. If Christ dwells in each Christian, we should all be **new incarnations of Christ**. We should be able to say to others: "*Look at me — and see what Christ is like!*" The beauties of Christ should be seen in us. This will become true to the degree that Christ rules in us, and transforms our lives. It should be our aim and prayer, that the word of Christ would richly dwell in in us.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **A faithful man**

"**A faithful man**, who can find?" Proverbs 20:6

Many people *promise* anything you ask of them, but consider it a small matter to *keep* their promises. They enter into commitments with you to do this or that, to meet you, or call on you at a certain time, or to do some favor for you — and utterly fail to fulfill their word. To be unfaithful in keeping promises and engagements, is a very serious matter. Surely we ought to keep close watch over ourselves in this regard. We ought to be faithful to the promises we make, cost what it may.

A noble person's promise is as sure as the rising of the sun; and his simplest word is as good as his oath. He does just what he says he will do, at the moment he says he will do it. That is the kind of faithfulness God wants of each of His redeemed people.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **The Test of Love**

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35

There is a great difference between love for people whom you never saw and never shall see — and for those with whom you mingle in close relationships. There are some people whose souls glow with compassionate affection for unknown lost people in foreign countries — yet who utterly fail to love their nearest neighbors, those who jostle against them every day in business, in the pew, in the home, and in society. The test of Christian love, is that it does not fail even when brought into closest contact, even into friction with others.

"The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Blessed are the peacemakers**

"**Blessed are the peacemakers**, for they will be called sons of God." Matthew 5:9

There are enough causes to separate people, and to produce friction and alienation. Let us not add bitterness and grief to the world, by ever encouraging strife or putting a single coal on the fire of anger. Rather let us try to heal people's friendships. The unkind thoughts we find in another's mind — we should seek to change to kind thoughts. We can do no more Christlike service in this world, than habitually and continually to seek to promote peace, to keep people from drifting apart, and to draw friends and neighbors closer together in love.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Before the blessing can come**

The day may come to us, when we shall cry to the Lord — and He will not seem to hear. Whenever this experience may come, let us remember that Christ's silence is not a refusal to bless. There may be some problem in ourselves, and a work of preparation is needed in us, **before the blessing can come**. Instead of doubting or blaming the Master, we should look within ourselves and ask what it is which keeps His answer from us. When we are low in the dust of humiliation, when our weak faith has grown stronger, when our self-will is gone, and we are ready to receive the blessing in God's way and in His time — the silence will be broken by God's most gracious answer.

"In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me." Psalm 86:7

"He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him." Psalm 91:15

"Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me." Psalm 27:7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **He put a new song in my mouth!**

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Ephesians 5:19-20

Christ teaches us to set our deepest and saddest experiences to music. We should sing about even our heart's bitterest anguish. It gives us anthems rather than dirges, for the expression of our deepest grief, because it reveals something of beauty and blessing in every dark hour, something other eyes cannot see. It lets us hear in our deepest trials, the voices of divine love, encouraging, cheering, and assuring us. Surely the lesson is worth the learning. It is nobler to sing a victorious song in time of trial — than to lie crushed in grief. Our songs bless the world, and they honor God. It is better for our own heart, too, to put our sorrows and pains into songs.

"He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God!" Psalm 40:3

"I will praise God's name in song and glorify Him with thanksgiving!" Psalm 69:30

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Nevertheless not My will**

As we go through life — we learn more and more to doubt our own wishing and choosing, as we see how little really comes from our own ways and plans. We learn not to choose at all for ourselves, but to prefer God's choice for us.

No doubt we miss heavenly blessings at times, because we do not have faith to receive them in their disguise of pain or grief, preferring our own way to our Father's. Then God sometimes lets us have in our willfulness, what we persist in choosing, just to teach us that our own way is not the best. We learn at last to plead, "Bless me, my Father," not daring to tell Him what way the blessing should come — but preferring that it should be as God wills.

"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; **nevertheless not My will**, but Yours, be done." Luke 22:42

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Everyone carries an *atmosphere* about him**

**Everyone carries an *atmosphere* about him.** It may be healthful and invigorating, or it may be unwholesome and depressing. It may make a little spot of the world a sweeter, better, safer place to live in; or it may make it harder for those to live worthily and beautifully who dwell within its circle.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The duty of making others happy**

We speak much of **the duty of making others happy**. No day should pass on which we do not .

..

put a little cheer into some discouraged heart,  
make the path a little smoother for someone's tired feet,  
or help some fainting robin unto its nest again.

This is right. We cannot put too great emphasis upon the duty of giving happiness and cheer to others. But it is no less a duty that we should be happy and cheerful ourselves.

We have a mission to others — to add to their cheer. This we cannot do, unless we have first learned the lesson of cheerfulness ourselves.

Nothing else in all life is such a maker of joy and cheer, as the privilege of doing good.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Because he is My disciple**

"And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones **because he is My disciple** — I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward!" Matthew 10:42

Work done in Christ's vineyard,  
gifts to missions,  
charities given to the poor,  
money given to good causes,  
ministries among the sick and the needy

— these things please Christ only when there is love for Him in them, when they are done truly for Him, and in His name. We need to look honestly into our hearts, when we crowd our days with Christian activity — to know the true spirit which prompts it all. "*Do you love Me?*" is the Master's question as each act of service is rendered, as each job is done. There is no other true motive.

"It is the Lord Christ you are serving!" Colossians 3:24

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Your labor is not in vain in the Lord**

"She has done what she could!" Mark 14:8

God is not so limited in His resources of power, that if one of His people fails to do his appointed duty — then His great cause will be defeated. He has large plans, in which the humblest of us have our own allotted place and part. Even if we do not perform our little piece of work — God's plan will still go on without us, and other hands will do what we refuse to do.

The *only effect* of our failure in the duty assigned to us, will be in ourselves. Our own hearts will be hurt by our failure to do our duty, and we shall be set aside, missing the honor and blessing which would have been ours, had we done our part.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that **your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**" 1 Corinthians 15:58

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **It takes our heart's blood**

Unselfishness, even in its smallest acts and effects — costs some sacrifice. Work for others



which costs us nothing, is scarcely worth doing. **It takes our heart's blood**, to heal other hearts. It is those who sow in tears, who shall reap in joy.

Take easy work if you will, work that costs you nothing, give only what you will not miss, spare yourself from self-denial and waste and sacrifice; but do not be surprised if your hands are empty in the harvest-time. We must give if we are to receive; we must sow if we would reap.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Loving God**

"I love You, O LORD, my strength!" Psalm 18:1

We must never think that all our service for Christ, all our acts of love for Him — must be also in some way acts of practical benefit and help to our fellow human beings. We must never consider all deeds and gifts wasted, which do not feed the hungry or clothe the naked.

In secret we may pour our broken heart's love upon Christ, bathing His feet with sorrowful tears — even though we do nothing in these acts directly for any human life. In our worship we may adore Him and love Him, though we comfort no sad heart, and help no one who is weary. Nothing makes Christ so honored as our love, and surely we should sometimes just love Christ, forgetting every other person, in the ecstasy of our heart's adoring Him.

"As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God!" Psalm 42:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Piles of doctrines**

Many Christians have their heads stored full of catechisms, creeds, and Scriptures — and yet when trouble comes, they have not one truth on which they can really lean, or which gives them any actual support or help. **Piles of doctrines** — but no shepherd's rod and staff to lean on in weakness; lamps hung up in great numbers — but not one of them burning to throw its light upon the darkness; bundles of backpacks tied up in creed and text — but no staff to walk with over the dark mountains. Let us learn to study the Scriptures for ourselves, and to know what we should believe and why we should believe. Second-hand Bible truth is not the kind of food our souls need.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Fishers of men**

"Follow Me, and I will make you **fishers of men.**" Matthew 4:19

We must love those we seek to save — but we must love Christ more; we must love them, because we love Christ. We must strive to win souls, not for ourselves, but for Christ. It is not

sufficient to get people to love us — we must get them to love our Savior, to trust in Him, and to commit their lives to Him. We must remain out of sight. Anyone who thinks of his own honor as he engages in any Christian service, is not a vessel ready to be used by Christ. We need to be careful that no shadows of our pride, our ambition, or our self-seeking, fall upon our work for Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **The true and the beautiful life**

While God's gifts are in our hands, they are to be employed not for ourselves alone, or at all, primarily — but to give help, comfort, joy, light, and cheer, to others. This is the law of the heavenly kingdom. Nothing whatever is given to us — to be kept for ourselves alone. Everything that is ours — is ours to use and then pass to others. If we but carried out this teaching and fulfilled this law of Christ's kingdom in every particular, it would make this earth a Heaven. Yet that is just what we should aim to do.

**The true and the beautiful life**, is the one which seeks to be a blessing to every other life it touches.

It is not easy to live *a life of perpetual blessing* to people. Jesus did it, but it was very expensive living for him. He gave out something of Himself to everyone He touched. Christian love *gives* and *serves* and *sacrifices* unto the uttermost.

While we are serving men — we are also and *primarily* serving Christ. "The King will answer and say to them: Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." Matthew 25:40

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **True greatness**

A life does not need to be *great* to be beautiful. There may be as much beauty . . .  
in a tiny flower — as in a majestic tree,  
in a little gem — as in a great mountain,  
in the smallest creature — as in a massive one.

"The greatest among you will be your servant!" Matthew 23:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **If your hand is always ready to serve**

"Whatever your hand finds to do — do it with all your might; for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom." Ecclesiastes 9:10

Find your work wherever Christ has put you. Do whatever He gives you to do. Strive to be full of Christ; then strive to *be Christ* to the souls around you who are lost and perishing, or who are in need or sorrow. Seek to make one little place in this world, a little brighter, better, and purer. Christ has redeemed you and lifted you up, that you may lift up other souls around you. **If your hand is always ready to serve** — you will always find work ready for your hand to do.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**It is more blessed to give than to receive!**

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said: **It is more blessed to give than to receive!**" Acts 20:35

We can always do our best work, when we do it not for ourselves but so that it may bless others. If the motive in all our ambition, all our toil, all our effort — is to become wiser, stronger, greater, and more influential — in order that we may do more in Christ's name for others — then whatever we do will be beautiful and noble. The right *motive* exalts and makes the work noble. We get the largest measure of good for ourselves, from our actions when our first aim is to do good to another. If you wish to get the best from any good thing, receive it from God — and then quickly minister it in Christ's name to others. The richest blessing comes not in the receiving, but in giving and doing.

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31