

Our Daily Walk by F B Meyer - July

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July 1

THE CALL TO SERVICE

**"Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they left the nets, and followed Him."--
Mar 1:7-18.**

AS OF old, Christ is still passing through the centres of busy, thronging life, calling men from their nets and boats, from the countinghouse and the market-place, or from the seclusion of the study, and saying, with His own inimitable and irresistible charm: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." It may be that He has already come to you, casting over you the mantle of service, as Elijah over the young ploughman whilst following his team.

You may be startled at the suggestion, but probably all the mighty band of men and women who have responded to His Call, were similarly startled when first the summons awoke them to action. Samuel was startled when the Divine voice rang out in the night; Gideon was startled, and replied: "Behold my family is poor, and I am the least in my father's house"; Jeremiah said, when the call came to him: "Ah, Lord God! Behold I cannot speak, for I am a child." Moses drew back, and said that he was unequal for the task to which God summoned him.

Christ's Call comes specially to the young--to Henry Martyn amid his books, to David Livingstone at his loom, to Carey at his cobbler's bench, to Mary Slessor in the Scottish factory, and to many another. Young people have a marvellous power of acquiring languages, and mastering any difficulties of country, race, or condition, and what other men and women are doing for fame, position, and wealth, surely we can do for Jesus. We are His blood-bought slaves, and surely He has the right to say to each of us, Come, Go, Do this, Follow Me!

Listen to the appeal of Christ on behalf of the millions of souls for whom He died, and to some of whom He wants to send you. Yield yourself to Him, and let Him infuse into you His mighty passion for their salvation. Do not look at your circumstances, or count your five loaves and two small fishes, wondering if they will suffice; or at the waves, questioning if they will bear you up. Keep your eyes fixed on Him, and your ears open to His voice, and when once you are sure of His leading, go forward in His Name. Jordan will divide before you, and the walls of Jericho will fall flat.

PRAYER

Lord, here am I, send me wheresoever thou wilt. Only make me to know Thy will beyond possibility of mistake, and work through me to accomplish all Thy good pleasure. AMEN.

July 2

THE JOY OF SERVICE

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled."-- Joh 15:11 (R.V.).

"My servants shall sing for joy of heart."-- Isa 65:14.

ON THE eve of Gethsemane and the night before His crucifixion "these things" were said by our Lord: how could He have even a thought of Joy? Note how confidently He speaks of it--abiding, remaining, persistent joy! Like a hot geyser-spring, rising from unknown depths on an ice-bound world. How could He think of joy at such a moment? One answer alone seems possible. He knew that by His supreme sacrifice He was creating a well-spring of joy for all future generations. The spring of His joy was perennial because of the joy He was about to create for myriads.

This joy was characteristic of His whole ministry. It seems to have been an unfailling fountain. How could it be otherwise when He was always ministering to others, when He was for ever fulfilling His Father's loving Will for men? It is in harmony with His oft-repeated "Be of good courage," whether He was about to heal pain and disease, or proclaim the forgiveness of sin. The New Testament rings with this call to rejoice, and to rejoice greatly!

Life of Self-giving. Our joy, like Christ's, consists in self-giving. We pass on to others the joy and love with which He fills our hearts, and in doing so, we are made infinitely happy. Let us today fix these thoughts in our mind. God is Love, and that Love cannot be self-contained.

Day by day let us abide in Him, with our heart-gate open to the incoming of His love, that He may be able to speak a word to those that are weary, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. We are not to create, but to pass on! Not to inaugurate, but to transmit! The love and grace of Christ were always expressed in acts of ministry. He was not content with speaking the word of cheer, but ministered in such a way that joy and gladness were the immediate result. We must not be well-wishers only, but well-doers, If it be only to help to lift a burden, or to guide the perplexed, or to give a caress to some lonely despairing soul. In all such acts of ministry we are giving our Saviour the opportunity of expressing Himself through us, and of fulfilling our joy.

PRAYER

O Blessed Lord, give me to know the joy that is unspeakable, the love that passeth knowledge, and the peace that passeth understanding. AMEN

July 3

SERVICE FOR OTHERS

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Be diligent in these things."-- 1Ti 4:14-15 (R.V.).

"Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands."-- 2Ti 1:6 (R.V.).

MOST YOUNG people are fond of athletics, and the Roman and Greek youth were specially addicted to them. The Divine Spirit does not under-value any of these means for keeping our physical health vigorous. But if we pay such earnest attention to these things we ought, all the more, to give attention to godliness, which disciplines the soul for Eternal Life. We all know what it is to discover and bring into play certain muscles of the body which we had not previously used. Are we equally keen to discover the hidden properties and resources of the soul and spirit?

Timothy was gifted in various ways, but specially for public ministry; and in this Epistle and the next, the Apostle bids him stir it up, i.e. stir into flame (marg.). The fire may be well provided with coal, the heat and light may be present, but the poker needs to be used to let in the air. We may have gifts, but we must carefully practise the duties in which they can be used for the benefit of others. It becomes us all to give ourselves to the duties which lie immediately to our hands, not shirking or scamping them. We must not give part of our thought and care to our appointed tasks, but give our whole selves. What our hands find to do must be done with our might. Just as men build arches of brick over slight structures of wood, and when these are taken away the substantial material remains, so on the passing duties of an hour we are building up habits and character which will live for ever. What we do is comparatively unimportant, but how we do what we do is all-important. We must always be on guard, always on the alert, for we have in our hands the interests of others as well as our own (1Ti 4:16).

The grace of God can so reveal itself in a young man or girl, that he or she will become an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity (1Ti 4:12).

PRAYER

Prosper us, O God, we pray Thee, in all that we put our hands unto. May our hearts be filled with Thy love, our lips with gentle, helpful words, and our hands with kind, unselfish deeds. May Thy Holy Spirit in all things direct and rule our hearts. AMEN.

July 4

SERVING CHRIST AND SERVING MEN

"He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"-- Joh 6:5.

NOTICE THAT little pronoun We! As our Lord stood face to face with the vast crowd of hungry people, He might have said to His disciples, "What are you going to do?" He might have bidden them devise some way of meeting their hunger and weariness. Instead of that, He identified Himself with them, saying, How shall we do it? Is not that His way still? He knows the needs of the world of men, but He calls us into fellowship with Himself with respect to them, saying, This is a matter not for Me alone, not for you, but for us together. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches."

Whilst our Lord talked about buying bread, "He knew what He would do." Before His eye was the entire plan of the meal, of which He would be the Host, but He spoke of buying, that He might see what they would suggest, whether they would turn to Him in simple faith, or begin to meet the need according to their own ideas. They took the latter course. It is almost always the case, that when we are face to face with some emergency, we begin to calculate our ways and means. When we are tested, we take out pencils and paper, and begin to count up our resources, as the disciples did when they said: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not enough, that every one may take a little!

Then it was that Andrew bethought himself of the little lad, whom he had seen in the course of the day. How proud and pleased the boy would be when they told him that Jesus wanted his little store. He gladly gave it up at the call of that Voice which had thrilled him with its accent.

How can we serve Christ, and what have we to give Him? Five tiny loaves and two small fishes do not look much in themselves, but He will take the poorest and simplest things, and make wonderful use of them for His glory and the blessing of men. It is wonderful how much Jesus will do with our lives, if we will only put them into His dear hands. If you have no great gift to offer Him, you can bring the special power of doing one thing best, which every one possesses, and He will use you to arrange the people in orderly ranks, and to carry round the bread and wine of the Gospel message, offering it without money and without price.

PRAYER

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

AMEN.

July 5

GOD'S BOUNTIFUL PROVISION

"They did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full."-- Mat 14:20.

WHEN GOD is Host, there is enough for all! Probably the disciples at first doled out the supplies with great care, but as they discovered that group after group were provided for, their faith increased, and they became lavish in their distribution. Every appetite could enjoy bread and fish, and there was plenty of it. God's supplies are as great as the demand; nay, greater, for He is able to make all grace abound toward each soul of man.

But though there was prolific provision, there was wise administration, and prudent husbanding of what was left. "Gather up the fragments," said the Master (Joh 6:12). It is marvellous to notice in the world of nature, how careful the Creator is that what might seem to be refuse should be wrought into new texture. Even the body, when it has fulfilled its functions, returns to mother earth, so that its particles may pass into the harvests of coming years. There is no waste in God's great world. Let there be no waste in our lives!

There are other lessons to be learned from this wonderful story. All things are to be done decently and in order. The multitude was made to sit down in companies of fifty. There was to be no crowding or pushing; the strong must wait for the weak.

Each meal should begin with the giving of thanks. "Looking up to Heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave to the disciples." The holy custom of giving thanks appears to be fading away, from even Christian homes, to our great loss, for "He was made known to them in the breaking of bread" (Luk 24:30-31).

We may expect more than the bare necessities of life at the hands of our gracious God, who "giveth us richly all things to enjoy." He gives not bread only, but fish; luxuries, as well as necessities. How much there is in life which we enjoy, but which is not absolutely necessary--music and art, flowers and fruit, sunrise and sunset, as well as ordinary daylight. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy spirit to them that ask Him."

PRAYER

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

July 6

TRUE BENEFICENCE

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men."-- Gal 6:10.

WE ALL have a mission in the world, though we may never be called to cross the sea, or to visit distant lands to preach the gospel.

Christ's command to each of us, is begun with the person next to you. Do not wait to be neighbored, but neighbour somebody who is in need. The best way to bring in the Kingdom of God is to bring the person whom you can most easily influence to the Saviour. All great work in the world has commenced, not by committees, but by the consecration, self-sacrifice, and devotion of single individuals.

The Apostle indicates three methods of helping people. The restoration of the fallen (Gal 6:1). How often in daily life a Christian man or woman is suddenly overtaken by some temptation, to which they yield, and which leaves a deep stain on character. Thus was David overtaken and also Peter! What an agony of remorse ensues! The Psalms are full of bitter repentance for such transgression. The sinful soul has to bear a heavy burden indeed; and too often his fellow-Christians pass him by with averted faces and frowns. No one visits him, or cares to be seen in his company, or tries to help him regain his former footing.

"Christ's law," which we are called to fulfil, is to seek out the erring one, to go after that which is lost, to restore the wanderer, to help carry his burden, considering lest we be tempted, and lapse into the same sin.

The care of Pastors and Ministers (Gal 6:6). If all who are being taught in Church and Sunday School would set themselves to minister to those that teach them, how many a weary servant of Christ would pluck up new courage and hope. Communicate helpfulness, sympathy, prayer, the grip of the hand, the expression of thankfulness for blessing received.

The ministry of all men (Gal 6:9-10). These opportunities of doing good are always recurring, and at every turn there are those who need a helping hand. "The poor," said our Lord, "ye have always with you." Let us bear a little of the burden of each, and specially do it for those who belong to the household of faith.

PRAYER

Give us grace to be encouragers of others, never discouragers; always making life easier, never harder, for those who come within our influence. AMEN.

July 7

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."-- Jam 1:27 (R.V.).

IT IS the experiences of life that reveal us to ourselves. They cannot put into us qualities that are not there, but can develop them. The whole of this wonderful chapter is filled with the diverse discipline of life. "Manifold trials" (Jam 1:2), which probably refer to the persecutions and losses of the early Christians., "Temptations" (Jam 1:12) which refer to the solicitation of evil from without and within. The burning heat of the fire of prosperity (Jam 1:11). The "good gifts" which are strewn around our pathway by the Father of lights--home, parents, friendship, love!

The greatest training-ground for us all is the Word of God (Jam 1:21-25). It is here compared to a mirror which reflects us to ourselves, but alas, too often we go our way and forget what manner of men we are. The human soul has a wonderful habit of forgetting any statements that seem to reflect on itself, and to contradict its own notions of its pride and respectability. If, however, we avoid this mistake, and set ourselves to doing, and not hearing only, then we shall grow into strong, brave, and beautiful souls, and shall be blessed in our deed.

Do not stand gazing at the imperfections which the Word of God reveals but having learnt where you come short, dare to believe that Jesus Christ is the true counterpart of your need; that He is strong where you are weak, and full where you are empty.

"Keep himself unspotted from the world." We love the dimpled innocence and purity of a sweet child. But there is something nobler--the face of man or woman who has fought and suffered in the great battle against corruption that is in the world through lust. To keep oneself unspotted from the evil of the world, though perpetually accosted and surrounded by it, is a greater thing than to live in a glass-house, where the blight and dust cannot enter. What a training for character is this daily warfare!

To visit those in affliction. We are related to the world of pain and sorrow by the troubles which are constantly overtaking those with whom we come in contact in dally life. Where the conditions of life are hard, we obtain our best perfecting in Christian character.

PRAYER

Make our life deeper, stronger, richer, more Christlike, more full of the spirit of heaven, more devoted to Thy service and glory.
AMEN.

July 8

RICH TOWARD GOD

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."-- Luk 12:15.

"I have all, and abound."-- Phi 4:18.

LET US never forget this wonderful assertion, that life consists not in what we possess, but in what we are; not in goods, but in goodness; not in things, but qualities. "How much was he worth?" we ask when a man dies, and we expect an answer in the amount that stood to his credit, and on which his estate must pay death duties. Yet surely a man is worth only the love, humility, generosity, and sweet reasonableness which characterize him. Take away some people's wealth, and, as in the case of the rich man of whom our Lord speaks in His parable, you have nothing left; but take away all things from St. John or St. Paul, from St. Francis or Augustine, or Wesley, and you have an abundance left which makes them the millionaires of all time! "Poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

The rich man in the parable made three foolish mistakes. First, he treated his wealth as though it were absolutely his own. There is no suggestion that he had made it wrongfully. His wealth had evidently accrued as the gift of prolific harvests, and was certainly due to the goodness of the Creator, on whose co-operation the results of husbandry evidently depend. But to lift up grateful eyes in thankful acknowledgment to God seems never to have occurred to him! Are we not all too prone to magnify our own shrewdness and aptitude, and to exclude God when we make up our accounts for the year.

Second, he thought that the best receptacle for his overplus was in barns, and forgot that there were multitudes of poor and needy souls around. When we begin to accumulate more than we need for our use, or the provision for our families, we should consider, not further investments, but the pressing need of others.

Third, he thought that goods could stay the hunger of the soul. How often has the heart of man or woman been surfeited with goods and remained unsatisfied? Let us give, expecting nothing again, with full measure, pressed down, and running over; give, not only money, but love and tenderness and human sympathy; give as one who is always receiving from the boundless resources of God.

PRAYER

Help us, O God, to set our affections on things above, not on things on earth, for nothing beneath these skies can satisfy the hearts which Thou hast made for Thyself. AMEN.

July 9

LIFE'S BALANCE SHEET

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"-- Mar 8:36.

SIMON PETER had been urging our Lord to spare Himself the suffering to which He had referred, but He answered that this could not be for Himself, or for any other who would follow in His footsteps. Proceeding from His own deep experience, He went on to show that in the same measure every one must deny his own choice and will and pleasure, in order that he may reach the highest life for himself and others.

It is not necessary for any man to make a cross; it is our part simply to take up that which God has laid down for us. The cross is no exceptional piece of asceticism, but it is the constant refusal to gratify our self-life; the perpetual dying to pride and self-indulgence, in order to follow Christ in His redemptive mission for the salvation of men. And it is in proportion as men live like this that they realize the deepest and truest and highest meaning of life. When we live only to save ourselves, to build warm nests, to avoid every discomfort and annoyance, to make money entirely for our own use and enjoyment, to invent schemes for our own pleasure, we become the most discontented and miserable of mankind. How many there are who have given themselves up to a life of selfishness and pleasure-seeking, only to find their capacity for joy has shrivelled, and their lives plunged into gloom and despair. They have lost their souls!

If a fire is raging, and a millionaire saves his palace from destruction, but in so doing loses his own life, does it pay? And are there not many who are building for themselves palaces of wealth and pleasure, but are losing the power of enjoyment because they are destroying all the finest sensibilities of their nature. Our Lord asks, what does it profit to gain the whole world, and forfeit one's own soul?

But not to adopt the policy of the world is certain to bring upon us dislike and hatred, before which many have been daunted; and yet to refuse Christ's policy of life, and to be ashamed of acknowledging that we are His followers, will mean ultimately our rejection. For how can our Lord use us in any great schemes of the future, if we have failed Him in the limited sphere of our human life?

PRAYER

O God, we have been disappointed because the cisterns that we have hewn out for ourselves have not given the water needed to quench our thirst. Fountain of Living Water, of Thee may we drink! Bread of Life, of Thee may we eat! Light of Life, shine upon our hearts, that we may walk in Thy light. AMEN.

July 10

LOVE'S CONSTRAINT

"For the love of Christ constraineth us....We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us."-- 2Co 5:14-20.

AN AMBASSADOR may live in a foreign country, but he does not belong to it. He is there to represent his own country, and no opportunity of helping forward her interests is allowed to pass. We have to represent Christ to the world. The word "constrain" suggests a constant pressure, an urge, as when water is forced down a certain channel. St. Paul says: "I act as I do because I am under the spell of a mighty constraint; I can do no other; I am not master of myself. Do not wonder at what may seem to be unusual and extravagant. Attribute my eccentricity to Christ--His love actuates me, and bears me along."

What is meant by "the love of Christ?" Is it His to us, or ours to Him? It is impossible to divide them thus, for they are one. As the sunlight strikes the moon, and is reflected from her to the earth, so the love we have to Christ, or to man, is the reflection of His love to us. All love in our cold and loveless hearts is the emanation and reflection of the Love which began in Him, was mediated to us in Calvary, and is reflected from us, as sunlight from a mirror.

The love of Christ does not constrain all Christian people, because they do not understand the profound significance of the Cross; but when the soul once appreciates that, and passes through the gate of death into the life of God, then it begins to feel the constraining love of Christ. The pivot of our life must be the Risen Christ: "We no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him who rose again." We sometimes hear people described as eccentric--out of the centre. A man is ex-centric to the world when he is concentric with Christ. It is thus that we become a new creation. When by faith we are united to Jesus Christ in His Cross and Grave, the transition is made. We pass over into the Easter life. He has reconciled us unto Himself, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation--therefore we are ambassadors. We have to proclaim forgiveness to the sinful, the loosening of their chains to those who sit in prison-houses, and the near approach of salvation to all (Isa 52:7-10).

PRAYER

This empty cup for Thee to fill;

This trembling heart for Thee to still;

This yielded life to do Thy will,

O Lord of Love, I bring Thee. AMEN.

July 11

SEEKING LOST SOULS

"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost....Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."-- Luk 15:6-7.

OUR LORD sought the proximity of sinners, not because there was any affinity between His character and theirs, but because He desired bring them back from the far country into which they had wandered. The straying sheep heedlessly nibbles at the grass which lies immediately in front, and so crops its way until it has wandered a great distance from the shepherd, and the rest of the flock.

Is this a picture of your life? Have you lived only for personal gratification, drifting in thoughtlessness and unconsciousness of the dangers which threaten to destroy you? Then remember, that though you care not for yourself, your condition is stirring the deepest solicitude in the heart of Christ. Probably you will never find your way back to Him, but Christ is on your track, and He will not relinquish his quest until He has come just where you are, and has extricated you from the rocks on which you have fallen, or from the thorns in which you are entangled.

The lost coin bears the image and superscription of the sovereign, once clear-cut by the mint, but it lies unused, tarnished and perhaps defaced, amidst the dust of the corner, or the chink of the floor. Its owner sweeps, ransacks, and explores every possible hiding-place until it is found. How aptly that lost coin represents the soul of man, made in the image of God, lying amid the dust of sin. The one hope for the sinner is the anxiety in the heart of God, who leaves no stone unturned that He may win us back. There is disturbance and removal, and the house of life is upset in every part, for no other reason than that we should be recovered.

PRAYER

Halts by me that footfall:

Is my gloom, after all,

Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?

He, fondest, blindest, weakest,

I am He Whom thou seekest!

Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.

Alack, thou knowest not

How little worthy of any love thou art!

Whom will thou find to love ignoble thee

Save Me, save only Me?

Rise, clap My hand, and come! AMEN.

July 12

OUR BOUNDEN DUTY AND SERVICE

"When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."-- Luk17:10.

IN CHRIST'S service there are no hours when we cease to be His bondservants, or pass from under His eye (R.V. marg.). We are always His, always at His disposal, always bound to ask, what He would have us do. In this there is no hardship, because He knows our frame, and understands the complex machinery of life needs time to cool and rest and recreate itself. We remember that our Lord bade His disciples leave the crowded lake-side, to come with Him apart and rest awhile. He knows that we need rest and change, but He would keep these hours of relaxation under His own command because they are often the most perilous to the soul's health. How often, when we have been engaged in earnest service to others for Christ's sake, we are inclined to say: "Now we may have a good time for ourselves; we may relax the girdle, we may sit down to meat." We are inclined to act at such times as if we were off duty, and as though our Lord had no jurisdiction over us.

But it is when we have done our Master's work that He sometimes says to us; "You have been so taken up with My work that you have neglected Me. You have thought more of the depth and straightness of the furrow; more of the wool and safety of the flock, than of the One for whom you work. Give Me a little of your thought and love! Make ready where-with I sup; gird thyself and serve Me!"

He! our Lord Jesus wants our love, and He will not be satisfied if we give time, energy, and thought to His service, and forget Him.

When we have done all that Christ asks of us, we have nothing to be proud of. Our good works do not earn our salvation, nor merit anything at the hand of our Saviour. Our uttermost service is only our bounden duty and privilege. It is a blessed thing, when we are wholly yielded to obey Him, for His service is perfect freedom from envy, dissatisfaction with our lot, jealousy of others, and pride. The wonder is that He takes us into partnership with Himself (Joh 13:13-16).

PRAYER

Lord, we go to our daily work; help us to take pleasure therein. Show us clearly what our duty is; help us to be faithful in doing it. Give us strength to do, patience to bear; by our true love to Thee, make unlovely things shine in the light of Thy great love. AMEN.

July 13

GOD'S CHALLENGE TO MAN

"I heard the voice of the Lord. saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I Here am I; send me."-- Isa 6:8.

FROM THE midst of Heaven there comes to our earth this cry for help, an appeal from the Eternal Trinity: "Who will go for us!" It reminds us of the last commission of our Lord to His disciples, that they should go into all the world, and preach His Gospel to every creature. The Seraphim may minister to those who have become the heirs of salvation, but only those who have been redeemed from among men have the high privilege of being called to the supreme work of redemption.

Notice the preparation for responding to that appeal. The vision of the Eternal: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne." Suddenly the material temple, in which Isaiah was probably worshipping, gave place to the eternal, the altar and the laver to the Throne of God; the cloud of incense, to the skirts of glory that filled the air; the choir of Levites, to the bands of the Seraphim that engirdled the sapphire throne. And above all, he beheld the glory of Christ (Joh 12:41).

This led to The vision of his own heart: "Woe is me, for I am undone." It is when a man reaches the snowline that he realizes the comparative impurity of the whitest white that earth can produce. Probably there was no one in all Jerusalem who lived nearer to God than Isaiah, but when he learned that, in the estimation of the Seraphim, God was thrice holy; when he saw them veil their faces in adoration; when he discovered that the whole universe was filled with God, then he remembered the hidden evil of his own heart, and cried out "I am unclean!" Not a moment intervened between his confession and the cleansing of his iniquity, and he was able to say: "Send me.

Have you heard that cry for help from the heart of Christ? Are you seeking to enter into His yearning love for the souls of men? He says to each one of us: "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Give yourself to Him that you may be used in His service: "Here am I, send me, use me."

PRAYER

Lord, grant us ears to hear, eyes to see, wills to obey, hearts to love; then declare what Thou wilt, reveal what Thou wilt, command what Thou wilt, demand what Thou wilt. AMEN.

July 14

ENTERING THE KING'S SERVICE

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: For He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him."-- Psa 45:10-11.

IT IS difficult to decide the occasion of this Psalm, which was written to celebrate a royal marriage. But there is much which goes far beyond the immediate circumstances out of which it sprang. We recognize its prophetic character, as well as its historic basis, and that it points onward to Christ the King. It is so quoted in Heb 1:8-9, and we may therefore certainly appropriate the Psalm as directly addressed to our Lord, who is our rightful King.

Christ's claim rests on these grounds: The Righteousness of His Rule. His sceptre is not a rod of iron, but of "uprightness." Our King loves righteousness and hates wickedness. Therefore His throne stands firm, and He claims the allegiance of all pure and upright souls. Would that all rulers and leaders realized that right makes might!

The Gladness of His Reign. The righteous heart is the joyful one; and our King teaches us that so far from holiness meaning gloom and depression, it is the root and fountain of true and abiding joy. Jesus was "the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief," but underneath was an abiding and eternal joy, like the spring flowers that nestle under the warm coverlet of snow. There is a blessed attractiveness in Christian joy and gladness, which is characteristic of our King, and should mark all His subjects.

The Love of His Heart. The bride is willing to forsake her own people and her father's house, and if we take the Lord Jesus to be our King and Husband, we shall be willing to count all things but loss for love of Him. Therefore He said, "Whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."

"He is thy Lord." We are reminded that however tender may be the sense of Christ's love to us, we must reverence Him as our King. Reverence is the best foundation for true affection. We shall never fully know His salvation until we recognize and own Him as King. "Thy King cometh unto thee, having salvation." "He is exalted as Prince and Saviour." Lift up your heads, O gates of Mansoul, and the King of Glory shall come in! (Rev 3:20).

PRAYER

In all things attune our hearts to the holiness and harmony of Thy Kingdom. Hasten the time when Thy Kingdom shall come, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. AMEN.

July 15

THREE AMBITIONS

"We make it our aim (we are ambitious) to be well-pleasing unto Him."-- 2Co 5:9 (R.V., see marg.).

THERE IS scope for ambition within the sphere of the Christian Faith, and to be without it is to miss an influential incentive to high and holy endeavour. Our Lord does not destroy any natural faculty, but directs it to a worthy object. Instead of living for material good, or the applause of the world, we must stir ourselves to seek those things which are the legitimate objects of holy ambition. In two other passages the Apostle Paul uses this same word. See 1Th 4:11; Rom 15:20 (R.V. marg.).

There is the ambition of daily toil,--"Be ambitious to be quiet, to do your own business, to work with your own hands." In the age in which the Apostles lived there was much unrest, and in the case of the Christian Church this was still further increased by the expectation of the approaching end of the world; many were inclined to surrender their ordinary occupations, and give themselves up to restlessness and excitement, all of which was prejudicial to the regular ordering of their homes and individual lives, But the injunction is that we are not to yield to the ferment of restlessness; we are not to be disturbed by the feverishness around us, whether of social upheavals or for pleasure or gain.

The ambition to be well-pleasing to Christ. At His judgment-seat He will weigh up the worth of our individual mortal life, and He is doing so day by day. Not only when we pass the threshold of death, but on this side, our Lord is judging our character and adjudicating our reward. Let us strive to be as well-pleasing to Him in this life, as we hope to be in the next.

The ambition of Christian work--"Being ambitious to preach the Gospel." The great world lies open to us, many parts of it still unevangelized; and all around us in our own country are thousands, among the rich and poor, who have no knowledge of Christ. Let us make it our ambition to bring them to Him, always remembering that the things we do for Christ must be that which He works through us in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:18-19).

PRAYER

Give us grace, O Lord, to work while it is day, fulfilling diligently and patiently whatever duty Thou appointest us; doing small things in the day of small things, and great labours if Thou summon us to any; rising and working, sitting still and suffering, according to Thy word. AMEN.

July 16

GOD'S APPOINTMENT

"I formed thee... I knew thee... I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee."-- Jer 1:5 (R.V.).

GOD HAS a plan for each of his children. From the foot of the Cross, where we are cradled in our second birth, to the brink of the river, where we lay down our armour, there is a path which He has prepared for us to walk in. God also prepares us for the path He has chosen. We are His workmanship, created unto the good works which He has before prepared. There is no emergency in the path for which there has not been provision made in our nature. From the earliest inception of his being, God had a plan for Jeremiah's career, for which He prepared him.

Ask what your work in the world is, that for which you were born, to which you were appointed, and on account of which you were conceived in the creative thought of God. That there is a Divine purpose in thy being is indubitable. Seek that you may be permitted to realize it, and never doubt that you have been endowed with all the special aptitudes which that purpose may demand. God has formed you, and stored your mind with all that He knew to be requisite for your life-work. It is your part to elaborate and improve to the utmost the one or two talents entrusted to your care.

Do not be jealous or covetous; do not envy another his five talents, but answer the Divine intention in your creation, redemption, and call to service. It is enough for thee to be what God made thee to be, and to be always at thy best.

But in cases where the Divine purpose is not clearly disclosed, in which life is rived piecemeal, and the bits of marble for the tessellated floor are heaped together with no apparent plan, we must dare to believe that God has an intention for each of us; and that if we are true to our noblest ideals, we shall certainly work out the Divine pattern, and be permitted some day to see it in its unveiled symmetry and beauty. To go on occupying the position in which we have been placed by the Providence of God, and to hold it for God till He bids us do something else! Such are golden secrets of blessedness and usefulness.

PRAYER

O Lord, may Thy all-powerful grace make us perfect as Thou hast commanded us to be; through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

July 17

THE EAGER HOUSEHOLDER

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard."-- Mat 20:1.

OUR LORD, beneath the veil of this parable, tells us what God is like. The heart of God our Father yearns over the perishing souls of men. For some reason, at present withheld, He must have the co-operation of men to reach the hearts of men, and therefore at every stage of life He approaches us, saying, "Go work! During what remains of life's brief day, go work in My vineyard, and whatsoever is fight I will give you. I need you to help in the salvation of the myriads of souls, whose redemption I am seeking with blood and tears."

He comes to you, dear children, in the dawn of your life. The dew is still in the grass, the birds are only just awaking from their dreams, life is yet the spring, and God's voice comes to you, saying: "I want you to help Me in my great Vineyard. The ground needs weeding, the vines require watering and pruning, there is much to do and few to do it, and I have a tiny plot for you to cultivate. Make haste, and come."

He comes to you, young men and women. Three hours have passed, and is yet you are standing idle, and have not chosen your life-work. Are you going to be a Missionary, or Minister, a Doctor, or School-teacher; does art, Music, or Commerce appeal to you? Whatever sphere you choose, yet it be subordinated to the one great purpose of helping God to save the world.

He comes to you who are in the meridian or late afternoon of life. Perhaps you have been fortunate enough to make a competence, and need not oil as formerly. To you the Master comes, saying, "Go, work in My vineyard. Administer your money, time, influence for Me." Even though it be but an hour before sunset, the same urgent appeal rings out; though you have been unemployed all the days, He seeks your help. Oh, that the urgency of God's compassions may touch and move us! Will you listen to the call of the great Husbandman, and now answer in your heart, "Here am I, send me"?

PRAYER

O God, we have heard Thy call! Wilt Thou accept our hands to labour for Thee, and our lips to speak for Thee. Send us into Thy Vineyard, and use us in Thy holy service. AMEN.

July 18

FROM DISCIPLE TO APOSTLE

"And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chafe twelve, whom also He named apostles."---
Luk 6:13.

AT THE basis of all things there is a Divine order. We hear it in the noblest music, we find traces of it in the highest art; we are in contact with it in our purest and simplest meditations. Our souls bear witness to its beauty and truth whenever it confronts us. Our Lord Jesus bears a true witness to this in His beatitudes, and the enunciation of other principles, which appeal to our conscience as right and good. As we travel in His company along the road, we find He explains mysteries and enigmas in a fashion which appeals to our heart; we know that He speaks true. Finally, we come to a point where He passes beyond the road of our knowledge to the upper reaches of the mountains which we have not trodden before. He speaks to us of the nature of God, He assures us of the forgiveness of sin, He draws aside the veil from the unseen and the eternal. He lifts us into a new and blessed vision of the working together of all things according to the eternal purpose. And we who trusted Him where our own conscience substantiated His statements, are able to trust God, and follow Him when He deals with questions which eye hath not seen, nor the heart of man conceived. Thus we become His disciples, or pupils in His School.

Out of the disciples, our Lord chose some to be Apostles. We begin by learning, and after a while, we are sent forth to teach. During the first years we serve our apprenticeship, and afterwards we are permitted to be master hands. The disciple becomes an Apostle, and the Apostle is chosen not for his own comfort and enjoyment, but that he may be the instrument through which Christ achieves His eternal purpose. Election is not primarily to salvation, but to service. We are not elect that we may be sheltered from destruction, but that we may go forth to serve men, to teach them the law and love of God, and to help bring the world into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

PRAYER

Most Blessed Lord, we thank Thee that we may become Thy disciples. Give us teachable hearts and listening ears; may we sit at Thy feet and be moulded according to Thy mind. Oh, choose us, and send us forth, and trust us with Thy sacred ministry, fulfilling in us the good pleasure of Thy will. AMEN.

July 19

CHOSEN AND PLACED

"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit."-- Joh 15:16.

WE DID not choose Him--there we have the evil of the human heart, the film of blindness which sin casts on the sight, the deafness with which it dulls the ear. For to have missed Jesus, to pass Him by, is as though the pearl-hunter were unable to recognize the pearl of greatest price; or the mother to recognize her own babe; or the seeker after the holy grail to fail to discover its mystic sheen!

"But I chose you." He chose us probably because we were useless and helpless, and He wanted to show what supreme miracles His grace could achieve. The prophet says that the branches of the vine are more useless than any others (Eze 16:1-5). The principle of God's choice is to take what all others reject--the fire-brand plucked from the burning, the feebly-smoking tow, the bruised reed; the younger sons, the halt and lame, the last and least; the things that are foolish, despised, and weak--these are God's choice, that He may bring to nought things that are, that no flesh may glory in His presence.

There was no error in the foreknowledge which preceded our election. God knew all that we were, all that we should be. He foresaw our down-sittings, our hours of depression, our obstinacy, our wanderings into the far country, but He swerved not. Having chosen us, He is going to justify His choice, unless we definitely refuse to let Him have his way.

"And appointed you." Our Master has placed us just where we are, that He might have a suitable outlet for His abundant life, which He longs to pour forth upon the world. Do not repine or murmur at your lot in life, but remember that He has appointed and placed you there. As the branch is nailed to the wall that it may cover it with foliage and fruit, so Christ has placed you where you are. That inevitable circumstance is the rough piece of cloth, that sorrow is the nail, that pain the restraint such as He suffered on the Cross.

"That ye should go." "Whither, Master? Into all the world, as My disciples! I have chosen you out of it and now I send you back as My representatives, through whom I may pour out My life and love. Go and bear fruit!"

PRAYER

O Heavenly Master, enable us by Thy grace to fill the opportunity, and do the work that Thou hast assigned. May we not murmur or complain because our place is obscure and the time long, but bear much fruit for Thy glory. AMEN.

July 20

MINISTERING TO CHRIST

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."-- Mat 25:40.

IS IT not wonderful that our Lord should identify Himself thus with the hungry and thirsty, the weary and homeless, the outcast and suffering? If any who read these words should be in one of these conditions, be greatly comforted, for Jesus suffered thus in His earthly career, and remembers what it is like. His sympathy and understanding are warm and inexhaustible, and He accepts any kindness as though it were done directly to Himself.

We must be on the outlook for those whom we can help, remembering that the outstretched hand or petition is His. But we must beware, on the other hand, and endeavour to help people wisely. In giving to every beggar that asks alms we may inflict injury on the moral nature by encouraging them to be lazy and careless. We are not to distribute money, food, and clothing alone, but to give personal ministry which may cost us more!

Christ speaks of those who give hand-help to others as righteous, because it is only as we are really right with God that we are merciful to men. Righteousness and mercifulness are one.

The sin of omission! Notice that those who were banished and exiled from the presence of the King were judged because of what they did not do. We may be condemned not simply for actual sins committed, but for what we neglect to do. Not to bind up and care for the wounded or ill-treated, but to pass by on the other side; not to have the oil ready for the lamp; not to make use of the talent or gift entrusted, this involves condemnation, and degrades the soul to the level of the devil and his angels.

Let us ask for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may follow in the steps of our Lord Jesus, who went about doing good, and healing all who were sick and in need. He has made over the great debt we owe to Him to the poor and needy, and says that whatever we do to others for His sake, He will accept as payment to Himself.

PRAYER

O God, we have been too self-centred. We have forgotten that our best and happiest life must be lived in fellowship with the needs, and sorrows, and trials of others. Help us to cheer them with our love, to hearten them with our courage, and to bear their burdens so far as we may. AMEN.

July 21

VICTORIOUS OVER LIMITATIONS

"The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen."-- Col 4:18.

AT THE close of his dictation, St. Paul took the stylus from the hand of his amanuensis, and appended his signature to the letter, which was awaiting that necessary endorsement. As he did so, he contrasted his irregular and clumsy writing with the flowing current-hand of his scribe, and in excuse, said pathetically, "Remember my bonds!" It was as though he said, "You cannot expect a man who for thrice years has had his wrist fettered by an iron chain to write as well as when he was a student at Gamaliel's feet!" He makes reference to the same subject in Gal 6:11, where he speaks of the "large letters" which he had written with his own hand; but in this case it was caused by his failing eyesight rather than the iron fetter.

There are other bonds than iron chains which impose on us their straits and limitations. Many of us, as we review our work at the close of the day, are overwhelmed with the sense of failure. As we kneel before our Lord, we are constrained to say, "Alas, we have inscribed Thy Name on the hearts which lay open to us, as paper the hand, in very clumsy and unworthy style. Forgive us, and remember our bonds."

Let us accept our limitations as from the Will of God. There is no way to peace or power, save in accepting the Will of God, making no distinction between what He appoints or permits, but believing that in either we are in contact with the Eternal purpose for us. Paul never forgot that he was the prisoner of Jesus Christ. He believed that for every limitation on the earthward side there would be enlargement on the other and spiritual side. Weakness here, added strength there; the being hourly delivered unto the cross, and from the ground the blossoming of endless life.

Let us do all the good we can in spite of fetters. St. Paul could not continue his travels over the world, but there were many avenues of service open to him. He could pray, and he did (Col 1:3; Col 2:1; Col 4:12). He could influence others (Phi 1:11-14). He employed his leisure in writing the epistles that have been the perennial solace of sorrowful hearts. There is a door, nearer to you than you think, opening out of your prison, through which God will enable you to render helpful service for Him.

PRAYER

Our Father, we thank Thee Thou canst make no mistakes. We believe that all things are working together for our good, and we trust Thy guiding hand. AMEN.

July 22

SURRENDER LEADING TO SONG

"And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel."-- 2Ch 29:27.

THE HEBREW Psalmody became famous throughout the world. Even their fierce conquerors recognized the sublime beauty of the Hebrew temple music. By the waters of Babylon they urged them to sing one of the Songs of Zion, not knowing how impossible it was for the captives to sing the Lord's song in a strange land! For sixteen years no song had poured forth from the sacred shrine. Ahaz had shut the doors, dispersed the Levites, and allowed the holy fabric to remain unkempt, unlit, and unused. There were no sacrifices on the Altar, no sweet incense in the Holy Place, no blood on the Mercy-Seat, no Song of the Lord!

For too many Christians this, alas, is a picture of their life. The soul, intended to be a holy temple for God, shows signs of disorder and neglect. The lights are not lit, the sweet incense of prayer does not ascend, the doors of entrance to fellowship and exit to service are closed. Outwardly the ordinances of the religious life are preserved, but inwardly silence and darkness prevail, into which bat-like thoughts intrude. Thorns have come up in the court of the Holy Place, where the scorpion makes her nest. The Song of the Lord had died out of heart and life.

Why should not this miserable condition be ended to-day? Why should you not be cleansed from the traces of sin and neglect through the Blood of the Cross? Why should you not come back into fellowship with God, who waits to receive and forgive? Surrender yourself to Him now. Do not be general, but specific in your consecration. Weld yourself to some life or lives that sorely need help. Give not words only, but deeds and blood. Merge your little life in the life of Christ, as the streamlet in the wide ocean. And as you yield yourself to Christ first, and next to all who need you for His sake, you will find the Song of the Lord breaking forth again in your heart like a spring, which was formerly choked with debris.

PRAYER

We pray Thee, Heavenly Father, to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

July 23

CONFESSING CHRIST BEFORE MEN

"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven."-- Mat 10:32.

CHRIST'S ULTIMATE aim is to secure peace for our sin-stricken race, and the proclamation of the tidings of peace is spreading throughout the world. We must not falter in our testimony, or hide in our heart the truth which has been committed to us, because it may bring us to contumely and suffering. Nothing is so like to promote our own earnestness and devotion as our constant testimony for Christ. The advance of the Kingdom of God is determined much less by remarkable missions and sermons, as by each one saying to his neighbour: "Know the Lord!"

We should begin with our next of kin. Andrew's testimony and confession brought Peter to Jesus (Joh 1:40-42). And whatever blessing came to the Church, and to the world through the testimony and confession of Peter must be partly credited to his brother Andrew.

We must confess Christ to our nearest friends. Philip found Nathanael. Our friends expect that we should let them share our inner thoughts and experience. Sometimes we can only give our simple testimony: "We have found Christ," but as we bring those whom we love to Christ, we shall ever find Him sympathetic and willing to meet our endeavours with His mighty help and fellowship. How He welcomed Peter, and read the character of Nathanael.

Our personal testimony is invaluable. The woman of Samaria brought the entire city to the feet of Jesus by her confession. Many of the Samaritans believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, "He told me all that ever I did." That was the beginning of a great revival.

It was Mr. Moody's custom to speak each day, personally, to some one about the Lord Jesus. If any shall say that this habit is apt to become mechanical and formal, I can only answer that the days when I have lived like that have been the most radiant of my life. It is not necessary that one should be always interlarding phraseology with references to religion, but there must be no coveting of the light within us (Mat 5:14-16). How great an honour it will be to be confessed by Christ before all worlds, and to be presented by Him with exceeding joy before the Father (Jud 1:24). "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us."

PRAYER

May we so represent Christ our Lord in this world that men may love Him for what they see of His likeness in us. AMEN.

July 24

GLORIFYING GOD IN OUR RECREATIONS

"All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."-- 1Co 10:23-31.

THE WORD Recreation is preferable to Pastime, for as one realizes the priceless moments, with all their opportunities, getting fewer, one is averse to hear people talk of "killing time." But "recreation" is a good word, and we all need to find some way of re-creating the exhausted grey-matter of the brain which is being used up in long application to study or work.

We must not be the "dull boys" of the old adage, but as Christians our faces should shine like the morning sun; we should be quick, bright, intelligent, and in no danger of being reckoned among the "back-numbers," of which the piles are generally shabby and dusty!

"All things edify not" is one of the first conditions of healthy recreation. There is really no limit but this to the recreations in which a Christian person can indulge. He may play at many games, row, skate, swim, drive a motor, sail the ocean, or scale the mountain snows! The more the better, so long as they are recreative; and are not the end, but the means to the end of a healthy manhood and womanhood. That is, they must edify, build up physique, muscle, brain, to be used afterwards in the main business of life. Nothing is a greater curse than when people neglect their real business in order to get to their sports and games. Then, so far from edifying, these in turn begin to pull down and destroy.

Probably the words "edify not" put in a plea on the behalf of others. We are not to do things which in themselves may be lawful and innocent enough, but which might have a prejudicial effect on those who are watching every movement of our life.

"Do all to the glory of God." So many seem afraid of joy! They fear if they are too happy, God will send some trouble as make weight. How different is the command in Deu 26:11 and Phi 4:4. Even when things do not appear to be good, let us dare to be thankful in all things, and give praise for all. All our Father's gifts are good, whatever be the wrappings or packing-cases in which they come to hand.

PRAYER

May the Holy Spirit so fill us with Christ our Lord, that there may be no room in our life for anything inconsistent with His perfect purity and love. AMEN.

July 25

TIMELINESS

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."-- Ecc 3:1.

DO NOT be in too great a hurry. There is time for everything that has to be done. He who gave you your life-work has given you just enough time to do it in. The length of life's candle is measured out according to the length of your required task. You must take necessary time for meditation, for sleep, for food, for the enjoyment of human love and friendship; and even then there will be time enough left for your necessary duties. More haste, less speed! The feverish hand often gives itself additional toil. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

Do not be impatient. He who made you has prepared the successive steps along which you must travel to realize your full human development. God knows what you need and will bring you to its fulfilment, only you must wait His leisure with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. He can mature events with marvellous rapidity, and you will find that He will perfect that which concerneth you, so that no good thing will fail. He who feeds the wild things of the prairie and woodland, giving to each its appropriate portion, will not fail any one of us. He will supply us with food convenient for us. The Creator is faithful to the creature.

Do not be cast down. Sorrow and trial are only for a time. They have their seasons, and pass. It is not always winter, and God puts bright and beautiful things into our lives which we need not be afraid of enjoying, it being understood that we do not snatch at them, or use them for our personal pleasure alone. Everything is beautiful after its sort and in its season, and every day has some element of goodwill in it, but we sometimes so strain our eyes towards a distant spot on the horizon that we miss the flowers on which we are treading.

God is in all; find Him there! "Every good gift is from the Father of lights." They were created that they might be received with thanksgiving, and the altar sanctifies the gift. It is only when the gifts of God are severed from the Giver that they do us harm (Ecc 3:13).

God has set Eternity in our heart, and man's infinite capacity cannot be filled or satisfied with the things of time and sense (see Ecc 3:11, R.V. marg.).

PRAYER

Cause Thy grace to abound toward us, that we may have all sufficiency in all things, and abound to every good work. Help us to fulfil all the duties and responsibilities that this day may bring. AMEN.

July 26

SPIRITUAL GYMNASTICS

"Exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come."-- 1Ti 4:7-8 (R.V.).

THE RELATION of the body to religion has always engaged the attention of thoughtful religious men. Human opinion has oscillated between two extremes. On the one hand, some have considered that the body was the seat of sin, and have set themselves to degrade and debase it with every indignity and torture. This conception has influenced devoutly-intentioned people in the East, and also in Western monasticism. But sin must be dealt with in the heart and soul, where it has its inception and spring. It is easy to macerate the body, whilst the pride of self-mortification is undetected. If we deal with bad thought and evil suggestion, we shall not have so much trouble with the body, which is only the dial-plate, registering the workings within. The other extreme was represented in the Greek religion. The temples that stand in ruins: the superb works of art which have survived the wreck of centuries; its poetry and literature, sustain and illustrate the supreme devotion of the Greek mind to beauty. The Christian position differs from both. To us the body is the temple, the instrument, the weapon of the soul. The Holy Spirit quickens our mortal body by His indwelling, and in the faces and lives of holy men and women we may trace the growing results of the inward power and beauty of pure and undefiled religion. It is good to care for the body, but only as we should care for a complex and fine piece of machinery which is to serve us. There are gifts in us, which we must not neglect, or it will go hard with us when we meet our Master, who entrusted them to our stewardship. Probably the trials and temptations of life are intended to give us that inward training which shall bring our spiritual muscles into play. In each of us there is much unused force; many moral and spiritual faculties, which would never be used, if it were not for the wrestling which we are compelled to take up with principalities and powers, with difficulty and sorrow. The Apostle bids us take heed to ourselves, and to live in the atmosphere of uplifting thought and of self-denying ministry (1Ti 4:13-15).

PRAYER

Mould us, O God, into forms of beauty and usefulness by the wheel of Thy providence, and by the touch of Thy hand. Fulfil Thine ideal, and conform us to the image of Thy Son. AMEN.

July 27

FIRST, RECONCILIATION

"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift, go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."-- Mat 5:23-24.

THERE IS a marked difference between memory and recollection.

Memory resembles a great box or chest into which a man casts his letters, accounts, and MSS.; recollection is the readiness, be it less or more, with which he can lay his hand on what he requires. We know that it is somewhere in our possession, we remember to have seen and turned it over, but search as we may we cannot find or recall it.

But there is a moment of quickened recollection when we stand before God: "When thou bringest thy gift to the altar and rememberest." As the Divine searchlight plays upon our past life it reveals many things which had passed from our mind. Conscience is a keen quickener of our powers of recollection.

What has your brother against you? This--that you flamed out against him in passion, with bitter, angry words, in hatred and contempt; or this--that you have been sullen and sulky, scarcely answering his advances, meeting his salutations with grudging courtesy. Perhaps you have done him a positive wrong, and have taken from him his only covering, or have forborne to help him when he stood in sore need (Exo 22:26-27; Exo 23:4-9).

We are bidden to get right with man, as the first step to acceptance with God--" first be reconciled to thy brother." Humility is necessary in every approach to God, and nothing so humbles our pride as to confess our faults to our brethren. Truth is necessary to all right dealings with God, and nothing will so promote truth in our inward parts as to be transparent and simple in our dealings with our fellows. Sincerity in confession of sin is an essential beginning of peace with God, but how can we be sure that our confession is sincere unless it costs us something more than words. "First, be reconciled with thy brother"--not only with the brother of human flesh--but with our great Brother in the Glory (Gen 1:17-21; Heb 2:11). Then comet Offer thyself, as thy gift; He will accept thee, and thy gifts.

PRAYER

Give unto us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, broken and contrite hearts. Help us to do all that ought to be done to make amends, and grant unto our brother the willingness to meet us with forgiveness and peace. So shall we have peace with Thee, our Elder Brother, against whom we have grievously sinned. AMEN.

July 28

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

"He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."-- Heb 12:17.

"O Jerusalem how often would I have gathered thy children together and ye would not!"-- Mat 23:37.

THE GREEKS represented Opportunity as bald, with no lock of hair by which she could be laid hold of as she turned away and fled. Every one has opportunity, but there is often no symptom of its approach, no sign of its departure; when once it is missed, it rarely comes again! It is said that Queen Victoria once gave a comparatively unknown painter the opportunity of a private sitting. She came at the exact time that was arranged, but he was five minutes late, and he lost his opportunity!

Esau bartered his birthright! What cared he for the spiritual prerogative of the first-born to act as the priest of the clan, and to stand in the possible lineal descent of the Messiah. He craved what would satisfy and please his senses. But when he had sold his birthright, he was held to the transaction. "He found no place of repentance" does not mean that he wished to and could not, but that the die was cast, the decision was deemed final. It is within the range of every one to do an act, to make a choice, to barter away the spiritual for the material so absolutely, that the decision is held irrevocable. Let us take care lest we be betrayed by passion into an act which may affect our entire destiny.

The outstretched wing of God's love would have sheltered Jerusalem from its impending fate, but she refused Him in His servants and His Son, and her day of opportunity passed!

Even so, salvation waits for us all, and there is hope and opportunity for us to repent as long as the day of grace is not closed, but let us not forget, as McCheyne said, that Christ gives last knocks. The present is your time of hope, of a fresh beginning, of a new opportunity. Open the door of your life to Christ and make Him King. He offers you your chance, rise to it; do your very best, find your niche of service in His Kingdom, and set yourself to follow Him with all your heart, and mind, and strength.

PRAYER

O Lord, let us not serve Thee with the spirit of bondage as slaves, but with the cheerfulness and gladness of children, delighting ourselves in Thee and rejoicing in Thy work. AMEN.

July 29

THE CHRISTIAN EXTRA

"Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."-- Mat 5:41.

OUR LORD refers here to the usage of the East in the transmission of royal messages, which were carried forward by relays of messengers, much in the fashion of the fiery cross in the Highlands, as described in "The Lady of the Lake." The messengers were "press-men"; each town or village was compelled to forward the message to the next, and the first man happened upon was bound to forward the courier with his horses or mules.

In some such way emergencies are continually happening to us all. We arise in the morning not expecting any special demand for help, or any other circumstance to interfere with the regular routine of the day's work, and then suddenly and unexpectedly a demand bursts upon us, and we are obliged to go in a direction which we never contemplated. We are compelled to go one mile! Then the question arises. Now you have done your duty, performed what you were bound to perform, given what any other person would have given, what are you going to do about the next mile? You had no option about the first; about the second you have an opportunity of choice. Your action in the matter which is optional determines whether or not you have entered into the spirit and ministry of Christ.

Let us not be stingy and niggardly in our dealings with men. There are certain things that must be done, but let us go beyond the must, and do our duty with a smile, and with generous kindness. It is not enough to pay our servants or employees, let us be thankful for their service; it is not enough to pay our debts, let us give the word also of appreciation; it is not enough to simply do the work for which our employer remunerates us, let us do it with alacrity and eagerness, willing to finish a piece of necessary service even at cost to ourselves. As the followers of Christ, we are to be stars bearing our light on the vault of night; flowers shedding fragrance on the world; fountains rising in the arid wastes; always giving love and helpful ministry to this thankless and needy world, and as we break and distribute our barley loaves and fishes, our hands will become filled again, and with the measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again (Luk 6:38).

PRAYER

O God, may we be more gracious to those around us. May we fill up the measure of four possibilities, and so be perfect, as Thou, our Father, art perfect in love. AMEN.

July 30

FRET NOT

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him: Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."-- Psa 37:7.

IT IS a mistake to be always turning back to recover the past. The law for christian living is not backward, but forward; not for experiences that lie behind, but for doing the will of God, which is always ahead and beckoning us to follow. Leave the things that are behind, and reach forward to those that are before, for on each new height to which we attain, there are the appropriate joys that befit the new experience. Don't fret because life's joys are fled. There are more in front. Look up, press forward, the best is yet to be!

Fret not because your ideals appear to mock you. Every ideal which we cherish is the herald and precursor of a reality which, in a better form than ever we dreamed, shall one day come to our possession. The ancient alchemists spent their lives in the pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone, which they thought would turn every substance it touched to gold. They never discovered it, but they laid the foundations of modern chemistry, which has been more fruitful in its blessing to our race than the famous magic-stone would have been. Who shall say that those old explorers were deceived? Was not God leading them on, by a way that they knew not, to better things than they dreamed?

Fret not because the future seems dark. After all, the troubles we anticipate may never really befall. It is a long lane without a turning, and the dreariest day has some glint of light. In any case, worrying will not help matters; it can alter neither the future nor the past, though it will materially affect our power in dealing with troubles. It will not rob to-morrow of its difficulties, but it will rob your brain of its clear-sightedness, and your heart of its courage. Let us turn to God with faith and prayer, looking out for the one or two patches of blue which are in every sky. And if you cannot discover any where you are, dare to anticipate the time when God shall make all things work together for good to them that love Him.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we have been careful and troubled about many things. Forgive us, and breathe into our hearts a great faith in Thee, that doubts and fears may not be able to break in on our peace. Fence us around to-day as with a wall of fire; let us hear Thy voice saying: Fear not, I am with thee. AMEN.

July 31

BELIEVING AND RECEIVING!

"All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them."-- Mar 11:24 (R.V.).

IT IS not enough to pray and ask; we must believe that we have received. We can only do this when we know that we have asked according to God's Will (1Jo 5:14-15). This can be determined by referring to His Word, which teems with great and precious promises, like so many banknotes or cheques waiting to be cashed.

In prayer, it is well to be deliberate, to consider what we are about to ask, to discover some promise under which we can make our request; and then, having asked, to wait while the soul, so to speak, takes or appropriates what it needs. It may be that the time is not ripe for it to be actually bestowed, but the request is granted, and the coveted gift is already set aside in God's storehouse, labelled with the name of the petitioner, just as we sometimes get our Christmas presents ready and put them aside, and at the right moment they shall be dispatched.

PRAYER

We thank Thee, O God, for the daily gifts of Thy Providence, but above all for the gift of Thyself in Jesus our Lord, in whom all good and perfect gifts are contained. AMEN.