

Our Daily Walk by F B Meyer - Oct

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October 1

THE DIMENSIONS OF GOD'S LOVE

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." -- Eph 3:17-note, Ep 3:18, 19-note

THE DIMENSIONS of the Love of Christ! It is broad as humanity, "for God so loved the world" (Jn 3:16, cp 1Jn 3:16); the length God's love had no date of origin, and shall have none of conclusion. God is Love (1Jn 4:8, 16), it continues ever, indissoluble, unchangeable, a perpetual present tense. Its height--as the Flood out-topped the highest mountains, so that Love covers our highest sins (Ro 5:20-note). It is as high as the heaven above the earth. Its depth--Christ our Lord descended into the lowest before He rose to the highest. He has touched the bottomless pit of our sin and misery, sorrow and need. However low your fall, or lowly your lot, the everlasting arms (Dt 33:27) of His love are always underneath.

The Apostle talks by hyperbole, when he prays that we may attain to a knowledge of the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ. We cannot gauge Christ's love, but we can enjoy it. Probably the only way to know the love of Christ is to begin to show it. The emotionalist, who is easily affected by appeals to the senses, does not know it; the theorist or rhapsodist does not know it, but the soul that endeavours to show the love of Christ, knows it. As Christ's love through you broadens, lengthens, deepens, heightens, you will know the love of Christ, not intellectually, but experimentally (1Jn 4:11, 1Jn 4:12; 1Jn 4:20, 21).

But you say, "there are people in my life whom I cannot love." Granted, but you must distinguish between love and the emotion or feeling of love. You may not be able to feel love at the outset, but you can be willing to be the channel of Christ's love. I cannot love, but Christ is in me, and He can. Is it too much to ask that all this should be realized in ourselves and in others? No, because God is already at work within us by His Holy Spirit, and He is able to do infinitely beyond all our highest requests or thoughts. Ask your furthest, think your highest, and the Divine Love is always infinitely in advance.

PRAYER

We thank Thee, O God, for the infinite love which Thou hast given us in Jesus Christ. We have no measure for its heights and depths, its breadths and lengths. Teach us with all saints to know more because we love more. AMEN.

October 2

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S LOVE

"We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. We love Him, because He first loved us."--[1Jo4:16, 17, 18, 19](#)

GOD IS Love. Jesus Christ first brought to men the conception that man loves God only because God has first loved him. In vain we search for such an idea in the philosophies of Greece and Rome. The men who fixed this thought in the literature of mankind were followers of Jesus Christ. Might and majesty were the dominating ideas of B.C., but since A.D., we think of Love enthroned in the Divine Nature.

His Love passeth knowledge. We may apply to it the masterly arraignment of [Psalm 139](#). It winnows our rays. It besets us behind and before. It lays on us its gentle restraining hand. It is high, we cannot attain to it. If we ascend into heaven, it is there; if we make our bed in the grave, it is there to lift us to His heart; if we take the wings of the morning, it shines as sunrise; if we pass into the darkness, it makes the midnight shine as the day. It covered us in our birth, it will tend us in old age. How precious it is, and how multitudinous in its expression, no mortal lips can tell.

Even our sin will not lessen that Love. That Peter sinned deeply, who can doubt, but did it put a screen between him and Christ? Nay, for when Christ arose, He sent specially for him. In the garden He restored him, and at the lakeside He taught him that His love would be as acceptable as ever ([Mar16:7](#); [Joh21:15](#)).

His Love will not spare. Jesus looked on the young roan and loved him! But He read him through and through, and mercifully gave the unwelcome verdict: "Go, sell all that thou hast., and follow Me." He went away sad, and Christ went away sad! But He loves us too well to spare us! God's love is consistent with stern dealings at those things which may cause us to fail of the best.

We believe in God's Love when it seems not so. "We have known," says the Apostle, that "God is Love," unutterable and changeless! But there are times when we have to believe in it, i.e. in the perplexity of life's problems. We are often facing incidents and providences that strike us as inconsistent with God's Love. Then we must believe that the same Love is there. God Is Love, and nothing can reach us save through His Love.

PRAYER

May I not be satisfied with talking or musing on Thy Love, O God. Grant me the grace of manifesting it, not only in great crisis, but amid petty annoyances and the daily fret of life. AMEN.

October 3

THE WONDER OF GOD'S LOVE

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16.

AS CHILDREN we read "Alice in Wonderland," but at the end of life we shall still find ourselves in Wonderland! Perhaps there is a deeper truth than we know in the description of old age as a second childhood, because the child-spirit ever lives in a Paradise of mystery, questioning and wonder!

There are causes for wonder in the small compass of this verse! The first is that God loved and loves the world. We are not surprised to learn that He made the world, because---except where men have spoilt it--it is so beautiful. Or that He has a name for it, because He calleth them all by name, as He bringeth out their hosts by number. So small is our world amid the myriad constellations, but nevertheless it is belted, environed, encompassed by the Love of God!

The second Wonder is that the Only Begotten Son came to dwell with us. Is it not wonderful that the Son of God should have passed by all other worlds, and come to this. That this earth was trodden by His blessed feet; that He has incorporated its transfigured dust into the texture of His Divine Nature--this is all so wonderful, that we are disposed to believe that our world must be the pivot of the universe---its nursery, college, and training ground.

The third wonder is that Eternal Life is within the reach of whosoever. The A.V. gives the word "everlasting," but the R.V. translates it as "eternal." God gives us not quantity but quality of life. Time is a method of thought necessitated by our human limitations, and therefore some day will come to its end. Eternal Life is an ever-present NOW--of Love and Life and Light, enjoyed in fellowship with God. And this is for Whosoever! Each of us may insert his or her name in the blank, and say, "that I may have eternal life." It is so wonderful, that the thought could not have been invented or suggested by the wit of man. It bears the imprint and seal of God Himself, who made us in His image, and after His likeness, that we might become the partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (Gen 1:26; 2Pe1:4).

PRAYER

The world is dear unto Thee, O Heavenly Father; Thou didst send Thine Only Son to save it, and Thy Spirit to comfort and renew. May He brood over the chaos of this distracted world, and may order and peace and love reign among men. AMEN.

October 4

LOVE AND LIBERTY

"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are in the Lord's."-- [Ro14:7-8](#).

THE KEY to this wonderful chapter, so full of sound judgment and sanctified common sense, is the reiterated reference which the Apostle makes to the Lord, which occurs some ten times in fourteen verses. The fact of Jesus being Lord both of the living and of those who have died, and are living on the other side of death, is the solution of the difficulty as to what the Christian should do or leave undone. Let each of us stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, or at least before the reflection of that tribunal which is mirrored in the tranquil expanse of conscience, and we shall have an unerring guide for conduct.

The question agitated in Rome was as to the observance of the seventh or first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath; and, what principle should direct the use of food--that of Leviticus, or of common use. The Apostle insists that these are not questions which affect either our personal salvation or our acceptance with God. In his opinion they are matters for each individual Christian to settle and decide for himself. There are certain factions clear as light, or black as night, about which there can be no controversy; but there are other questions for the solution of which each must apply one or other of these general principles for guidance through the maze.

What would Jesus Christ, my Lord and Master, wish me to do? I am His servant, and He will let me know His will by the teaching of His Spirit in my heart. Whether I act or forbear, it must be done unto Him; and in my liberty or abstinence I must give Him thanks.

What is best for others? I have an influence over some; perhaps more look to me for guidance than I know. I must be on my guard not to put a stumbling block in another's way. Though certain things are innocent to me, yet, if they will destroy, directly or indirectly, one for whom Christ died, it will be better for me to abstain from them.

What is best for myself? I ask God not to lead me into temptation, but I must not put myself into it. I must put aside all weights as well as sins, that I may follow Christ as He goes forth to the conquest of evil.

PRAYER

O Lord and Master, may we be faithful to Thee in the little things, always following the inner light, till it lead us into the perfect day.
AMEN.

October 5

LOVED AND LOOSED

"Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His Blood; and He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."-- Rev 1:5-6 (R.V.).

WHATEVER ELSE the Blood of Christ may mean, it certainly means that Christ has viewed our sin as of tremendous gravity. With Him it is no slight malady to be cured by a regimen of diet and exercise. It is deep-seated, radical, perilous, endangering the fabric of our soul's health and the scope of its outlook on the future.

No religion that ignores this elemental fact in human consciousness is destined to permanence. To say with Buddha--sin can be wiped out with good deeds; or with Mahomet--God is good, and will not be hard on you --is not enough. The religious creed that deals most radically and drastically with sin is the one which will ever appeal most strongly to the human heart, and it is because Jesus Christ has not treated sin lightly, but has loosed men from it by His blood, that He is enthroned for ever.

It is thus that He speaks to every sin-burdened soul, profoundly conscious of its heavy binding links, sighing for the liberty of the sons of God. This forgiveness and loosing is for thee. What Christ was as Alpha, He is as Omega. He is the same to-day as in the yesterday of the past. All that He did for those first believers in Himself, He waits to do for us, if only with humble penitence and faith we will claim it at His hands. He loveth us! He purchased us for Himself, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with His precious blood. He breaks the power of cancelled sin, and tells us that we are loosed from its bondage. He has made us free, and we need not again yield to the evil things of which we are ashamed, any more than the woman whom He healed needed to continue to be bent double Lk 13:11, 12, 13, R.V.). Let us lift up ourselves, and go forth to glorify God in an upright walk and conversation; to reign in this life through the one Man, Christ Jesus (Ro 5:17).

PRAYER

Most holy and adorable Lord, who hast loosed me from my sins, I thankfully accept the redemption which Thou hast purchased, and the glad freedom from the guilt and power of sin. Enable me henceforth to walk in newness of life. And to Thee, my Lord and King, shall be glory and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN.

October 6

GOD'S RESTORING LOVE

"Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely."-- Hos 14:2, 3, 4.

"Simon... lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."-- Jn 21:16.

THE CAUSES of backsliding are many. We have pretended to be living a more devoted life than was actually the case; we neglected to watch unto prayer; we allowed secret sin to eat out the heart of our piety, 'as the white ant works destruction in the East; or we yielded to temptation, and then sought to justify ourselves against the remonstrances of conscience; or we yielded to the fear of man, and drifted with the multitude to do evil; or we became prosperous, and trusted only in our wealth; or poor, and succumbed to covetousness and the bitterness of despair.

The world despises the fallen, and does not believe in the possibility of entire restoration. It is always suspicious of those who have fallen from their high estate--the prisoner in the cell, who was once an honoured financier; the beautiful woman who has come under the degrading influence of drink or drugs; the minister or doctor who has incurred shame and disgrace--all such find it hard to be reinstated. But God stoops over the outcast with infinite compassion and love, and promises forgiveness and restoration to all who will return to Him.

It was thus that our Lord dealt with Peter. He knew that in spite of his grievous fall, there was a strong undercurrent of devoted love, and He did not hesitate to entrust to him the care of His sheep and lambs. In a certain museum there is a lovely marble statue which was found broken into hundreds of pieces. The fragments were carefully collected, and with infinite patience fitted together. Finally a seemingly impossible task was accomplished, and the statue stands in all its original completeness and beauty. So the Lord Jesus will take the broken pieces of any life that will come to Him, and with His skilful and tender touch will remake it into something useful and beautiful in His service. This is the meaning of Redemption. The one thing that Christ asks of any of us is that we should follow Him. Whether we can walk, or need to be carried; whether life is young within us, or waning, let us follow Him, love Him, obey Him, and He will turn back our backslidings, and never mention them again.

PRAYER

O Lord, we would be Thine; let us never fall away from Thee. AMEN.

October 7

STEPPING HEAVENWARD

"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ."--[2Th3:5](#) (R.V.).

THE BELOVED disciple greets his companions as sharing "in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9). It is a noble combination; as though the royalty of Christian character were in proportion to the share we have in the quiet waiting of our Lord. He waited patiently from all eternity, until the fullness of the times had come, and the hour of His Incarnation struck; He waited patiently for thirty years in Nazareth, whilst preparing for His life-work. When He returned in triumph to the Father, He sat down at His right hand until His enemies were made His footstool. Throughout the ages He quietly waits, in sure expectation of the destined end, when all rule and authority and power shall be put down. All the anguish of the world lies on His heart; every question as to the righteousness and equity of God is felt by Him. He bears all with unfaltering patience, because He sees the end, and knows that at the last God will be All in All. It is into this love and patience that we are to be led.

"Into the Love of God." Every time we dare to affirm that, notwithstanding appearances, God is Love; every time that we evince that love to others, even though our own heart is breaking; every time we say No to self and Yes to God, we make further progress into His Love. Dare to believe in the love of God, even when the darkness seems to veil it. Dare to believe that it is over all, and through all, and in all.

"Into the patience of Christ." Let us exercise Christ's patience until the sorrows and trials of life have achieved their destined purpose. There is a sufficient explanation for the present condition of the world, if we knew it. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, but be of good cheer, and stablish your hearts, for your God will come and not keep silence. In the meanwhile let us keep the word of His patience, and manifest that patience and faith of the saints.

PRAYER

Most Blessed Lord, guide our wandering feet, we beseech Thee, into the love of God and into Thine own infinite patience. Forgive us that we have so often been impulsive and headstrong, that we have murmured against Thy apparent slowness in answering our prayers. Hush our unquiet hearts with Thine own peace. AMEN.

October 8

PRACTISING CHRISTIANITY

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."-- 1Jn 3:14.

IT IS a great comfort to find that Love is not regarded by the Apostle as though it were merely an emotional or sentimental matter, for every reference points to action! The love of God was manifested in the laying down of His life, and we are to be willing to follow in His steps (1Jn 3:16). The injunction is that we should love in our deeds. We are not to shut up our hearts in compassion, but to help our brother in need. If we begin with doing kind and loving actions, we shall end by feeling the same. Often when people come to me, saying that love has completely died out of their life towards some other person, I have bidden them go back again, and act with love, making the other one the centre and object of helpful ministry; the invariable result is the refreshing and rekindling of the hot geyser-springs of affection.

Do not wait to feel love, but begin at once to show it, because it is right, and your duty, and as you step out in simple faith you will find that God will make this to abound towards that also abound in grace you may this good work. Love of such kind is self-giving and it is the gift of the Spirit of God. This exotic bloom cannot flourish on our wintry soil; the heart of man cannot furnish it. There may be a few wild growths, but they bear small comparison to its beautiful flower and fruit. Love is of God. It proceeds from His Nature, and is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. "The fruit of the Spirit is love," and as we are united with Christ by faith, the love of God will be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and we shall be able to love with God's love.

We know that we have been born from above as soon as we find ourselves willing to put the interests of another before our own, not because we have a natural affection or affinity for him, but because he and we belong to God. If there is hatred or dislike in our hearts towards any, let us beware! We must uproot it by generous action, or it will bring darkness into our own lives (1Jn 2:9, 10, 11).

PRAYER

Enable us, O God of patience, to bear one another's burdens, and to forbear one another in love. Oh, teach and help us all to live in peace and to love in truth. Subdue all bitter resentments in our minds, and let the law of kindness be in our tongues. AMEN.

October 9

MY BROTHER!

"The Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said: I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"-- Ge 4:9.

"He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness."-- 1Jn 2:11.

MAN'S FALL, whatever else it may have been, resulted in a complete change of the centre of his being. He was made in the likeness of God, and God's nature is absolutely selfless. God's will and purpose was the one rule of man's existence until the moment came when our first parents substituted the gratification of self for the will and law of God. From that hour the self-life became the dominant principle of mankind, and the world is what it is because the essence of life is the service of self.

We do not know what really caused the difference in the disposition of Cain and Abel. There are hints and suggestions, but the fundamental reason why these two brothers differed so is veiled in mystery, though the like of it still shows itself in our homes. St. John gives us the clue in his first Epistle, where he says that Cain slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

God remonstrated with Cain and warned him that sin was lying at the door of his heart, waiting to enter. He exhorted him to watch and not allow it to intrude. When the dreadful deed was done, Cain found that all nature was in arms against him, and he became an outcast. The blood of Abel cried against Cain, for all sin cries to God, and He is the Avenger and Vindicator of wronged ones who in simplicity and faith have cast themselves upon Him. Thank God, also, there is a cry louder than that of Abel's, which pleads not for judgment but for mercy (Heb 12:24).

This world is full of envy, jealousy, strife, and murder, because men keep themselves instead of keeping their brothers; because our own instead of another's welfare revolves round the pivot of "I". The first Epistle of St. John is the antipode of this story in Genesis, and contains its corrective, for it is when we love God first and best that we love our brother, and as we open our whole soul to the tidal wave of God's love, we are lifted above the jagged rocks of the self-life into the broad full ocean of life which is life indeed (1Jn 3:14, 15, 16, 17).

PRAYER

Our Father! Help us to consider the interests of others, and to act generously towards them, because we are Thy children, and Thy infinite resources are at our commands. AMEN.

October 10

FORGIVENESS

"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?"-- [Mat 18:21](#).

THE RELIGIOUS teachers of Christ's day taught that four times was the extreme limit of forgiveness. Peter exceeded this in his estimate, but how far even he fell short of the Divine ideal! Seven was to the Jews the number of perfection, so that no expression could more forcibly convey the impression of ever-renewed, eternal, repetition than "seventy times seven!." What comfort there is for each one of us here! For if God expects man to forgive his brother thus, how may we not count on His forgiveness!

This parable shows the great wrong we do to ourselves as well as to our brother, when we fail to forgive. Here was a man who had been forgiven the enormous debt of two millions sterling, but was not softened and chastened by its remission, for he went immediately from his Master's presence to lay violent hands on an unfortunate fellow-servant, who owed him less than a five-pound note. He is deaf to the reasons which had filled his own mouth previously, and oblivious of everything except that this debt should be paid instantly.

Are we not all tempted to abuse the forgiving love of God, and to be censorious, vindictive, implacable, and unforgiving? If you want to be the reverse of this, consider how much you have been forgiven! Sit down and count up your enormous debt to God, and how freely He has forgiven you. Only the forgiving are forgiven--"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." If we are unrelenting, slow to recognize merit, quick to observe faults, cherishing ill-will and resentment for injuries inflicted, perhaps years ago; and if we cling to and nourish this spirit, we may be sure that we have never been forgiven.

How are we to attain the state of mind which forgives so often, and can win the most wayward? The parable teaches us that we must receive God's pardon in a right spirit, that we must remember our own failures and sins, and that we must ever be willing to cast the mantle of forgiving love over the sins and failures of those around us.

PRAYER

O Lord, may we hear Thee say to us: Thy sins which are many are all forgiven; Go in peace; and may we, in our turn, forgive as we have been forgiven, and may the sun not go down upon our wrath. AMEN.

October 11

OUR POSSESSIONS

"Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth."-- [Lk12:15](#).

"Little children, guard yourselves from idols."-- [1Jo5:21](#) (R.V.).

THE PETITION addressed to Christ, in this paragraph from which our text is selected, has been constantly made to Him in subsequent ages. Men are always demanding that He should divide the inheritance more equally. But our Lord did not come to adjust human relationships by the exercise of His autocratic will. He deals rather with the overreaching and grasping avarice which leads the rich to withhold, and the discontent which compels the poor to murmur. He saw in the demand of the suppliant a tendency to the same covetousness which prompted the other brother to withhold the portion of the inheritance, which was not justly his.

Our Lord announced the far-reaching truth that life does not consist in what we possess, but in what we are. We are rich, not in proportion to the amount standing to our credit in the bank, or to the acreage of our inheritance, but to the purity, strength, and generosity of our nature. When we lay up treasure for ourselves, we become paupers in God's universe. The only way of dealing with covetousness, which makes an idol of money or possessions, is to regard our property only as gifts entrusted to us for the benefit of others. Let us mortify the spirit of greed, which is so strong within us all, by sowing the acreage of our life as indicated in [2Co 9:1-15](#).

Sensual appetite is an idol with many ([Phi3:19](#)). Eating and drinking, feasting and pleasure-seeking are idols before which many prostrate themselves. And there are other idols than these, for whenever any earthly object engrosses our soul, and intercepts the love and faith that should pass from us to God, it is an idol which must be overthrown. Whenever we can look up from anything that we possess into the face of God, and thank Him as its Giver, we may use and enjoy it without fear. We are not likely to make an idol of that which we receive direct from the hand of our Heavenly Father, whose good pleasure it is to give good gifts to His children ([1Ti4:4-5](#)).

PRAYER

O Lord, the Portion of our Inheritance, give us grace, we pray Thee, never to aim at or desire anything out of Thee. What we can enjoy in Thee, give us according to Thy Will; what we cannot, deny us. AMEN.

October 12

GOD'S LARGESSE AND BOUNTY

"Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; Can He give bread also? They did eat, and were well filled."-- Ps78:19, Ps78:20, Ps78:29.

THIS IS always the cry of unbelief, Can God? whilst the triumphant assertion of faith is: God can. What a difference is wrought by the collocation of words! Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? God can spread a table, even in the wilderness, and in the presence of our enemies our cup can overflow. Can He give bread also? He can satisfy the desire of every living thing, by the opening of His hand. Canst Thou do anything for us, our child is grievously possessed of the devil? If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

The wanderings of the Israelites for forty years were due to the fact that they looked at their difficulties and questioned if God could overcome them. Amongst the people, only Caleb and Joshua looked away from the Canaanites and their fortified cities to Him who had brought them where they were, and was pledged to extricate them. Some people speak of Giants with a capital G, and forget to magnify the power of God. what wonder that they account themselves as grass-hoppers, and lose heart! Let us not forget that we are sons and daughters of God, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (cf [Nu13:33](#) and [Ro8:17](#).)

Look back on the past; see what God has done for you; remember He is pledged to finish what He has begun. If He gave water, He can certainly give bread.

"They did eat, and were well filled." When we are poor and needy, we are inclined to humble prayer. But if suddenly our lot is changed, and there is abundance instead of poverty, how often there is a change in our demeanor. We are apt to become self-indulgent, and forgetful of the needs of the world. Instead of remembering that we are still God's pensioners, we magnify ourselves as though we were exclusive owners. Probably this is why God keeps some of us in poverty, for no greater temptation could befall us than to find ourselves with riches. In this way He answers our daily prayer, "Lead us not into temptation!"

PRAYER

We thank Thee our heavenly Father, for the new mercies of each returning day, for all that Thou hast given to us, and not less for that which Thou dost withhold. May we be receptive of all things that pertain to life and godliness. AMEN.

October 13

THE BLESSING OF THANKFULNESS

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."-- Eph 5:20.

"Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually."-- Heb 13:15.

SOME PEOPLE seem born with a sullen and feverish temper, and it is very difficult for them to brighten into smiles and songs. But whatever our natural disposition may be, if we belong to Christ it is our bounden duty to cultivate a thankful heart. A melancholy person has a bad effect upon others. It is miserable to have to work with or under a confirmed pessimist. Nothing is right, nothing pleases, there is no word of praise or encouragement. Once, when I was at Aden, I watched a gang of Lascars trans-shipping the mails. It was a pleasure to see them, one after another, carrying the bags cheerily because their leader kept them all the time singing as they did their work. If, instead of finding fault with our employees or servants we would look out for things for which we could commend and thank them, we should probably find a miraculous change in their attitude.

The advantage of joy and gladness is that it is a source of strength to the individual soul, and to all others who come within its range, and commends our Christianity! Sidney Smith says: "I once gave a lady two and twenty recipes against melancholy; one was a bright fire; another, to remember all the pleasant things said to her; another, to keep a box of sugar-plums on the chimney-piece, and a kettle simmering on the hob. I thought this mere trifling at the moment, but have in after life discovered how true it is, that these little pleasures often banish melancholy better than more exalted objects." We may interpret the advice of this humorist and essayist by turning into joyous praise all the incidents of our daily life, arising with gratitude and thankfulness from every good and perfect gift to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world is sad, and has to pay her jesters and entertainers; it is a mystery to her that the face of the Christian should be bright and smiling, although the fig-tree does not blossom, and there is no fruit in the vine. Let us count up our treasures and blessings, and we shall find that even in the saddest and loneliest life there is something to turn our sorrow into singing (2Co 6:10).

PRAYER

Help us, O Lord, to rejoice always; to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. AMEN.

October 14

BURDEN-BEARING

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."-- Gal 6:2.

IN THESE words the Apostle is evidently thinking more especially of the trespasses and sins into which men and women fall. We are not to rejoice over their failure, nor talk about it to others, but to consider ourselves, remembering our own liability to fall in the event of temptation. We are to be tender, gentle, and compassionate, helping to bear the burden of temptation, remorse, and shame. There is great comfort for us all in these words, for surely, if our Lord expects us to forgive and restore our brother, we may count on Him to do as much for us!

But sin is not the only burden we are to bear with our brethren. The young man or girl who fails to make good; the business man who meets with sudden reverse; those who suffer bitter disappointment; when faces are averted, and tongues are busily engaged in criticism--let us seek out the one who has consciously disappointed everybody, and help by our strong and tender sympathy. It is like the coming of the good Ananias into Saul's darkness, with the greeting: "Brother Saul!"

We may help to bear the burden of bereavement--when the husband is suddenly stricken down, or the mother is taken away and there is no one to care for the children, then we may show our practical sympathy and helpfulness. All through His life on earth our Lord sought to carry the burdens of the people, and we are to follow in His steps. Sympathy means suffering with; and as we endeavour to enter into the griefs and sorrows of those around us, in proportion to the burden of grief that we carry do we succeed in lightening another's load. You cannot bear a burden without feeling its pressure; and in bearing the burdens of others, we must be prepared to suffer with them.

This was the law of Christ, the principle of His life, and the precept which He enjoined on His followers to fulfil. Let us remember, also, that in carrying the burdens of others, we often lose our own.

PRAYER

For friends above; for friends still left below;

For the rare links invisible between.

For sweet hearts tuned to noblest charity;

For great hearts toiling in the outer dark;

For friendly hands stretched out in time of need,

For every gracious thought and word and deed;

We thank Thee Lord! AMEN.

October 15

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."-- Lk 14:33.

THREE TIMES over in this chapter, our Lord says these solemn words: "he cannot be My disciple." There are three conditions of discipleship. First, we must be prepared to put first things first; second, we must be willing to suffer daily crucifixion; third, we must be detached from all things, because attached to Christ. The conditions seem severe, but they must be fulfilled, if we would enter Christ's School.

Disciple stands for learner. (Luke 14:26) Our Lord is prepared to teach us the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; but it is useless to enter His class unless we have resolved to do as He says. Put first things first. When our Lord uses the word hate, He clearly means that the love we are to have for Him is to be so much greater, that comparatively our natural affection will be as if it were hate. No one could have loved His Mother more than our Lord did. In His dying agony His special thought and care was for her, but on three different occasions He put her aside. We are sometimes called to put aside those who are nearest and dearest, if their demands conflict with the claims of Christ.

The daily cross. (Luke 14:27) In each of us there is the self-principle, and for each of us there is a perpetual necessity to deny self. Some talk about bearing the cross in a glib fashion, but its true meaning is shame, suffering, and sorrow, which no one realizes but God, and which perhaps strikes deeper down into the roots of our being as we grow older. There is an opportunity in your life, in respect to some person or circumstance, for an ever-deepening appreciation of union with Christ in His death, and for which you must be dally prepared to surrender your own way and will.

Renunciation. It may be necessary to surrender all we have for Christ, or it may be that He will ask us to hold all as a steward or trustee for Himself and others. No one can lay down the rule for another. The main point to decide is this: "Am I willing to do what Christ wants me to do; to yield my will for Him to mould it, and my life for Him to work through it?" If so, all else will adjust itself.

PRAYER

O Lord, save me in spite of myself. May I be Thine; wholly Thine, and, at all costs, Thine. In humiliation, in poverty, in self abnegation, Thine. Thine in the way Thou knowest to be most fitting, in order that Thou mightest be now and ever mine. AMEN.

October 16

THE JOY OF THE LORD

"This day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength."-- Neh 8:10.

JOY AND gladness is a very necessary element in human well-being. We cannot live our best life if sorrow and depression holds undisputed sway. There are three sources of joy mentioned in this chapter.

The people understood the Divine Word and profited by it. Their eagerness to hear, as Ezra opened the Sacred Book, was remarkable (Neh 8:3,5,12,18,10). Let us also delight in God through His Word. Let us not read the Bible as a task, but dwell upon it, until its beauties become woven into our thoughts and lives. It is thus that life becomes purified and enriched. We shall no longer desire base or corrupting things, but God will give us the desires of our heart, and we shall be satisfied, if we delight ourselves in Him.

They communicated good things to those for whom nothing was prepared (Neh 8:10, 11, 12). There is no cure for sorrow and heart-break like healing broken hearts. There is no such comfort for ourselves as that which we administer to others. Nehemiah could not have given better advice than when he bade his people share their joys and sweets with those whose lives were bare of comfort and luxuries.

Of course Christianity has within it other sources of joy. Our Saviour gives us His joy, because He reveals the Father to us, makes us to rest in Him, and gives a worthy object for our lives; He makes work light because He has appointed it, sorrow supportable because He shares it, and death desirable because He has opened the door of the Father's Home. In His joy we may participate (Jn 15:11; Jn 16:22, 23, 24).

Their obedience. As soon as they understood the words they heard, they began to put them into practice. No wonder there was joy, for in the keeping of God's commandments there is great reward. It was during the Feast of Tabernacles that our Lord spoke of the Holy Spirit entering the heart to remove its thirst, and to pour forth as rivers to a dying world (Jn 7:37, 38, 39). We cannot do much apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Only through Him can we be right with God; only through Him can we be really glad; only through Him can we pass on joy and comfort to others.

PRAYER

We thank Thee, O God, that we may have fellowship with our Lord in His redemptive purpose. May the gifts which He has received even for the rebellious fill our hearts and lives with joy and gladness. AMEN.

October 17

MAKING A COVENANT WITH GOD

"We make a sure covenant, and write it."-- Neh 9:38.

"He is the Mediator of a better covenant."-- Heb 8:6.

IT IS good for a soul to make a covenant with God. On his twenty-third birthday Milton wrote these memorable words:

*"Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me and the will of
Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye."*

This was his covenant with God; and through all the years, now in his prime under Cromwell, and again in his lovely old age under Charles II, he never swerved from the path he had selected.

Who can forget those magnificent lines of Wordsworth, which tell how he was returning from a village merry-making, which had lasted through the night, and lo, the glory of a summer-dawn was breaking over the hills! He describes its beauty, and adds:

"Vows were made for me,
That I should be, else sinning
greatly,
A dedicated spirit."

There are certain principles outlined in these chapters in Nehemiah, which may well be included in our covenant with God:

- (1) Never to allow anything in private or business life which is not in keeping with the high ideals of the Bible.
- (2) To set aside a certain proportion of our income and time for the maintenance of the Work and House of God.
- (3) To observe the Rest-Day.

But a covenant is between two. No resolution of ours is strong enough to keep us true. The most fervent protestations and vows may fail us in the day of trial, and our covenants are permanent only so far as God is party to them. But if Jesus is our Co-Signatory, there will be a safe-guard and certainty which all the powers of evil will not be able to overthrow.

Livingstone's covenant with God was that he might heal the open plague-spot of the Arab slave-trade. A covenant like this, in some cases, has been signed with blood. This was D. L. Moody's prayer, as a young man: "Great God, let the world learn, through my life, what Thou canst do by a man wholly devoted to Thee!"

PRAYER

We present to Thee, O God, ourselves to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, our reasonable service. Fulfil through us the good pleasure of Thy goodness, and the work of faith with power. AMEN

October 18

PREVAILING POWER

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."-- Act 4:31

THE PRAYER which prevails is that which is initiated by the Holy Spirit.

He is the medium of communication between heaven and earth, and reveals to us the thoughts and desires of God, so that we do not ask amiss. Just as the ether will connect up one continent with another, so long as the transmitter and receiver are in accord, so the Holy Spirit is the Medium between ourselves and the glorified Redeemer. Prayer is transmitted from our hearts, borne forward by the Spirit, and registered in the heart of our Lord. It is perhaps better to say that it originates there, is transmitted to us, and sent back from us to Him. We know that by our thought-waves we can help our friends in distant places, so it is surely possible for our thought-waves to reach the Lord Jesus. Oh, that we may be ever in such sympathy and accord with Him that there may be no loss of His thoughts toward us.

There are four kinds of prayer.

The Prayer of Communion and fellowship. It is like a father asking his little boy why he keeps coming into his study, and discovers that the child has no special reason, but only wants to be with him. So we should not be satisfied with the knowledge of God our Father which ordinary men possess, but have such aptitudes and yearnings which can only be satisfied by fellowship, communion, and adoring love.

The Prayer of Request. Perhaps we make more of this at the beginning of life than after. As life goes on we are content to leave ourselves in the wise and tender hands of our Heavenly Father, and it is enough that He cares. We learn to be thankful that some prayers have not been answered, and to realize that God is doing for us ever so much better than we ask or think.

The Prayer of Intercession. This is nearest to the mind of Christ. He wears our names on His heart, and ever lives to intercede.

The Prayer of Conflict. At times we are called to enter into the Garden, and to bear with Him some of the burden of His conflict for souls against the principalities and powers of evil. At such times there is urgent need to watch and pray!

PRAYER

Warm my cold heart, Lord, I beseech Thee. Take away all that hinders me from giving myself to Thee. Give me grace to obey Thee in all things, and ever to follow Thy gracious leading. AMEN.

October 19

THE FAR COUNTRY

"When he came to himself, he said... I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned..."-- Lk 15:17, 18, 19.

WE NEED not travel far to reach the far country--the thought of sin, the wings of passionate evil desire, the lightning flash of a look, may land us as far from God as the east is from the west. The essence of the far country is selfishness. Notice the stress of the prodigal's emphasis upon himself--"give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." It is not wrong to make use of and enjoy all the good and perfect gifts with which God strews our life, so long as they are held in thankful recognition of and fellowship with Himself. But when we depart from God, there is waste, for we lack the one object which gathers up all our activities for a worthy focus; riot, because in the absence of God there is no sufficient corrective or antidote for strong and masterful passion; want, because the soul was made for God, and can never be satisfied till it rests in Him.

How foolish it is for a man to disjoin himself from God, and to join himself to a citizen in the land of forgetfulness! The citizens of this world have nothing to give to the starving soul of man, save to send it forth to feed the swine, which stand for the lower desires of our nature. This is the alternative which too many wiseacres suggest: "See life, take your fill of pleasure; fill the passing hours with revelry, amusement, dissipation." But the hunger of the soul cannot be appeased thus. Though husks are good for swine, they wilt not suffice for the sons of men. Like the wise man of old, we cry, "He hath put eternity in my heart--vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" We cannot rest in that which contents others. From the putrid swine-troughs we long for the food which the servants enjoy in our Father's home; from the stagnant pools we thirst for the crystal water.

It is under such circumstances that we come back to ourselves--that we come back to our Father. Let us believe in the love of God our Father, which yearns after us in our absence from Him, which sees us while we are yet a great way off, and will run to welcome us, as we return, with forgiveness and restoration.

PRAYER

Thou knowest, O Lord, what most I require; help me, and out of the treasury of Thy goodness, succour Thou my needy soul.
AMEN.

October 20

VICTORY OUT OF DEFEAT

"I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth."-- Hos 2:15.

THE VALLEY of Achor is the emblem of defeat, failure, and the fainting heart. Down its long pass the terrified fugitives had fled, bearing to Joshua the story of defeat (Joshua 7.). Is there a single life without its valley of Achor? Is there one of us who has not gone up against a foe, which in the distance appeared quite insignificant, but it has proved to be more than a match for all the resolutions with which we had braced ourselves to meet it. Can good come out of such evil, and sweetness from such bitter despair?

The tragic story told in the seventh chapter of Joshua tells how that defeat wrought good. The disaster led to the searching out of the sin of Achan, and the cutting away of gangrene, which, otherwise, would have eaten out the heart of Israel. It led to humiliation, self-examination, prayer and faith, and finally to victory. May we not say as much of our defeats? Certainly, it would have been better had they not cast their shadow on our past; but they have not been without their lessons of priceless value. Each valley of Achor has had its door of Hope. Sin has reigned unto death, but the grace of God has reigned unto eternal life. Through our sins we have learned, as never before, to appreciate God's forgiveness; through our failures we have been taught our own weakness, and led to magnify the grace which is made perfect in weakness.

Out of such experiences comes the song--"She shall sing as in the days of her youth." You say that the spring and gladness of life are gone for ever. You insist that you must go mourning all your days, and that life will only bring added grief. But God says that you shall sing! Though the summer is gone, there will be a second--an Indian summer, even mellowier than the first. God wants to give you a new revelation of His love, to draw you into His tenderest friendship and fellowship, to lift you into the life of victory and satisfaction. And when all these things come to pass, and they may begin to-day as you return to Him, you will find that He has put a new song into your mouth, even praise unto our God.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for opening doors of Hope in the valley of Achor, for giving us beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning. Put a new song into our mouths to-day, and let us taste afresh the glad sense of Thy pardoning love. AMEN.

October 21

A NEW CREATION

"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." 2Co 5:17(R.V. marg.).

TRUE CHRISTIANITY is very different from much that we see around us, and which is known as such, and is summed up in orthodoxy of creed, in religious service, in gifts and deeds which cost little or nothing. If Christianity is anything, it is self-giving, even to death. If Christianity means anything we must renounce self as the centre of our life and be willing to sacrifice ourselves for others. Nothing will save the world, which is cursed with the spirit of selfishness, but the repetition and filling-up as far as possible of Christ's sacrifice by those who profess to be His servants and followers. Selfishness is destructive, but the love that gives itself even to blood and tears is constructive.

But we must be sure that the supreme thought of every word and act must be Christ who died and rose again (2Co5:14,15). Let us not live only for humanity, but for the Son of Man, and as we live for Him the bitter will be sweet and the rough smooth, and we shall find ourselves living for the whole race of men for whom He died.

When this becomes the law of life, we are necessarily a new creation; we live under a new heaven, and walk over a new earth. There is a new aspect upon the most familiar objects of our environment. It is not that they have altered, but that we are changed from self to the spiritual; from the old life of sin to the new life of which the centre is the glorified Saviour. In his book "Grace Abounding," Bunyan gives expression to this thought of the wonderful change that passes over the face of creation, and the aspect of human life, so soon as the heart is full of the love of God.

Let us notice the emphasis of 2Co5:18. God was in Christ when He bore the burden of the world's sin upon the Cross and that we have been brought to know and love Him as of His grace. It is God also who has given us the right to carry the message of mercy and forgiveness to all within our reach. "He hath given to us," that is, to you and me, "the ministry of reconciliation." It is for us to go forth into the world, our hearts filled with Christ's love, telling men and women that this is a redeemed world, and that God is waiting for them to accept His love and mercy. This is the message of Christianity.

PRAYER

O Lord, forgive what I have been; sanctify what I am; and order what I shall be. AMEN.

October 22

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."-- Act 2:17.

IN HIS sermon, on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter quoted the latter part of this prediction by the Prophet (Joel 2:28). Not much is known of this prophet, who probably lived in Judah during the reign of Uzziah. But evidently his anticipation of the outpouring of the Divine Spirit had its fulfilment in those memorable scenes in which the Christian Church was born.

Before the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit had descended only upon the elect souls of the Hebrew race---upon Abraham and Moses, upon Samuel and Elijah, upon Isaiah and others of the prophets. This supreme gift of God was reserved in those days for the spiritual aristocracy of Israel, for the men who were called to eminent office and responsibility, as kings, prophets, or leaders. But Joel said that the time would come when the Holy Spirit who had been reserved for the few, was to be poured out upon the many--the young men and maidens would prophesy; even the slaves and the most despised classes of the community would partake of the Divine experience.

Whatever Pentecost means--it is open to the reception and enjoyment of us all, "Every one of you," said St. Peter, "shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." To you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:38, 39). Let us take this to heart.

Some years ago, electricity was the perquisite of the few, but now the poorest girl or lad may utilize it and be carded along in the electric car; and it is the boast of our scientists and inventors that they are able to bring the benefits of their discoveries within the reach of the most needy amongst us. And Pentecost resembles this, in that the forces and gifts of the Eternal Spirit are now within the grasp of the feeblest hand which is stretched out to appropriate them. But there must be first the putting away of evil, the emptying of our hearts, the hunger and thirst of the soul for righteousness, before God can give us our share in the Gift which was made once for all to the Church, but must be claimed by each successive believer.

PRAYER

Let Thy Holy Spirit dwell in me continually, and make me Thy temple and sanctuary. AMEN.

October 23

THE ROLL OF FAITH

"Time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah... who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises."-- Heb 11:32, 33

FAITH IS the link between our souls and God. It is the capacity of entering into fellowship with the Eternal Love and Power, so that we are able to do all things with the sense that it is not we who do them, but God in us and with us. Faith is the open door and window towards God. In faith our heart goes out towards God in clinging dependence, and God comes in to strengthen us with His Divine fullness.

In human life, when we trust a man, we draw from him all that he is able to supply; in the Divine life, faith draws upon the resources of God, so that they flow freely into our nature, and the results of our life-work are immensely increased. Faith is possible amid a great deal of ignorance. It is clear that Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah were ignorant of the truth which the Gospel has revealed, and yet we learn that their work was largely due to their faith. Dispensations come and go; the revelation of God grows from less to more; but the attitude of faith is always the same--in the simple woman that touched the hem of Christ's garment, as in St. John the beloved disciple, who had years of training in Christ's School.

Faith achieves very different results. In some, it produces the heroic strength that turns the battle from the gate; in some, the passive suffering that endures the long ordeal of pain. Here, it turns the edge of the sword; there, shuts the mouths of lions. We know how electric force may be applied to all the various machinery of human life. In one place used for the beaming light, in another to drive the motor car, or to flash the message of music and speech from one continent to another. So Faith is able to appropriate God's might for any purpose that lies within the compass of the life-task, whether active or passive. (See Heb 11:32, 33, 34,35, 36, 37, 38, 39)

God bears a witness to all who trust Him. He never fails us in the hour of need. His response is the echo of our appeal. As soon as the uplifted arm of the tramcar touches the overhead wire, there is the spark, and the immediate entrance of electric power. So God answers faith.

PRAYER

O God, we are full of need, but we have learnt that Thou givest power to the faint and to those that have no right. Change our weakness into Thy strength; our ignorance into Thy wisdom; our changefulness into Thine everlasting constancy. AMEN.

October 24

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine."-- Jn 10:14.

GOD DOES not mean merely benevolent and kind, but genuine and true. It is contrasted with the robber and the hireling. Up to a certain point the latter may do his work creditably. He will not desert the flock for trifling considerations; he will earn his pay! But when it comes to the supreme test of sacrificing his life, the hireling breaks down and leaves his flock to the peril of the wild beast. There are such shepherds who have taken up the pastoral office as a livelihood.

How different is our Lord--the Good Shepherd--who gave His life for the sheep. Why did He love us so? It will always be a mystery! He seeks those who belong to His fold, but have wandered off into the dark paths of sin. Jesus goes after the one which is lost until He finds it! That is the way of the Chief Shepherd.

The R.V. rendering brings out the intimate knowledge of Christ of His flock: "I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me; even as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father." None knoweth the Father save the Son, and none the Son save the Father. But in this same intimacy and certainty the Lord Jesus knows each of us. He knows our down-sitting and our uprising; our motives, sometimes misunderstood; the anxieties which overcast our joys; our fears and hopes. He assuages, as no stranger, can, our heart's bitterness. It is good to be known thus, for we need enter into no laboured explanation of ourselves.

Christ seeks those who do not belong to a fold (Jn 10:16). Probably there will always be many folds, for by the constitution of their minds men are ever disposed to view Truth from different angles. Some do not see this, and hold that if we do not believe just as they do, we have no right to assume that we belong to the flock. They forget that there may be many folds, yet one flock. Whatever may be your special fold, the one great question to answer is: Do you hear and obey the Shepherd's voice? If so, you certainly belong to the one flock, and no one shall snatch you out of the Shepherd's hand (Jn 10:27, 28, R.V.).

PRAYER

O Lamb of God! Who art in the midst of the Throne, but wilt be our Good Shepherd and tread the rough pathway of this worm with each trembling heart. May we be abundantly satisfied with Thy provision and follow in Thy footsteps. AMEN.

October 25

OUR LORD'S PRAYER

"Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are."-- Jn 17:11.

THIS MARVELLOUS seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel has been called the Incense Altar of the New Testament. It is full of the sweet fragrance of our Lord's intercession for His own. Let us linger over it for a little, that its wondrous depths may unfold before our eyes. It is a window into His inner consciousness, from which we may read some of the thoughts that habitually filled His soul.

Christ's self-obliteration. The motives that animated our Lord's earthly ministry were all for the Father's glory. He anticipated, in fact, those great words of the Apostle: "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever" (Rom 11:36). In this we have an example, that we should follow His steps. We also must find our fresh springs in Him, as He found them in God; we also must be willing to forsake and surrender all things to Him, holding them as His stewards; we also must appropriate, moment by moment, His unsearchable wealth; If any glory should ever fall to our lot, we must lay it at His feet, and share it with those entrusted to our charge.

Christ's self-assertion. Though our Lord obliterated His own interests, there were many things which were inalienable and of which He could not dispossess Himself. He knew that He had ever been One with God, and ever would be, that the love which had existed between the Fatherland Himself was to be shared by a multitude that no one could number. It is ours to know that we are loved with an unchanging love, that in Christ we are enriched into the measure of God's unchangeable fullness. Oh, why do we not more deeply share the self-obliteration of Christ for others, that we may stand with Him on these glorious heights, beyond the reach of doubt and fear?

Christ's self-realization. Listen to His joyous words: "I am glorified in them." "I in them, Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." It is only as He sees His joy glowing in myriads of redeemed souls, and finds His love reproduced in their lives, that He is fulfilled and satisfied.

PRAYER

We thank Thee, our heavenly Father, for the gift of Jesus our Lord to be our Saviour and Friend. Draw us into closer union with Him, that we may know Thee better through Him, and be conformed to Thine image. AMEN.

October 26

THE BLAMELESS LIFE

"I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."-- 1Th 5:23, 24.

HE WILL do it. There is a tone of confidence in these words which bespeaks the unwavering faith of the Apostle in the faithfulness and power of God to do for these early Christian folk what indeed is needed by all of us; first, to be sanctified wholly, and secondly, to be preserved without blame until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We can hardly realise how much this meant for men and women reared amid the excesses and evils of those days, when religion was another name for unbridled indulgence. Blamelessness of life, the stainless habit of the soul, self-restraint--these were the attributes of the few whose natures seemed cast in a special mould. And yet how strong the assertion of the Apostle that, in the face of the insurmountable difficulties, the God of Peace would do even as much for them.

We must distinguish between blamelessness and faultlessness. The latter can only be ours when we have passed into the presence of His glory, and are presented faultless before Him with exceeding joy (Jude 1:24). The former, however, is within the reach of each of us, because God has said that He will do it. The Agent of the blameless life is God Himself. None beside could accomplish so marvellous a result, and He does it by condescending to indwell the soul. As His glory filled Solomon's Temple, so He waits to infill the spirit, soul, and body of those who trust Him.

He will do it as the God of Peace. The mightiest forces are the stillest. Who ever heard the day break, or detected the footfall of Spring? Who thinks of listening for the throb of gravitation, or the thud of the forces that redden the grape, golden the corn, and cover the peaches with bloom? So God works in the hearts of those who belong to Him. When we think we are making no progress, He is most at work. The presence of ozone in the air can only be detected by a faint colour on a piece of litmus-paper, and God's work in the soul is only apparent as the bloom of perfect love is shown in the life.

PRAYER

Almighty God, who lovest us, and to whom are known our yearnings for this blessed life; work Thou within us, quietly, gently, mightily, ridding us of the love of sin, and producing within us that blamelessness of soul which in Thy sight is of priceless value. AMEN.

October 27

SPRING IN THE HEART

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."-- Isa 35:1.

THERE ARE three things that make Springtide in the soul. The sense of God's Presence. We know that He is near, though the woods are bare, the frost holds the earth in its iron grip, and the wind gathers together the dead leaves; but we feel Him nearer when every hedgerow is clothed with flowers, every bush burns with fire, every tree claps its leafy hands, and every avenue is filled with sweet choristers. The optimism of an illimitable hope. Spring is the minstrel of Hope. She takes her lyre and sings of the fair Summer, which is on her way, Life pours through a myriad channels, and shows itself stronger than death for Spring is victorious over Winter, as good shall prove to be over evil. The exuberance of Love. Spring is the time of love. The whole creation is attracted by a natural affinity, and love rules in forest and field.

These three elements met in the hearts of the returning exiles, and made the world seem young and fair again. The heart views the outer world in lines borrowed from itself. When life is young and gay, all the echoes ring with joy notes; but when the joy of life is fled, what mockery comes back on us from even the tenderest outward scenes!

For us, the lesson is clear. Cherish the sense of the Presence of God; cultivate an illimitable Hope; be conscious of a Love flowing towards you and from you. Dwell on the loving-kindness and tender mercy that have preceded and followed you all the days of your life, and for you, too, the wilderness and solitary place will be glad. After all, life is not altogether what circumstances make it. They may be everything that heart can wish, and yet the Frost-King may reign within and east its icy mantle over all; whereas there are men and women who have everything adverse in their circumstances, but because they have Spring in their hearts, they find flowers and songs everywhere.

The thirsty land shall become springs of water. You know what thirst means--for human affection, for appreciation, for a word of cheer, for success! He, that thirsty land! But when your heart is full of God you will find it musical with streams, and in the places where dragons lay there will be a greenery of rushes.

PRAYER

Lord, bring us back from our captivity. Fill our hearts with the sense of Thy presence that they may be transformed and renewed, and filled with the spirit of Heaven. AMEN.

October 28

GIRD AND SERVE

"Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve Me... and afterward thou shalt eat and drink."-- Lk 17:8.

THERE ARE TWO aspects of rural industry--agricultural, ploughing; pastoral, keeping the sheep. Between them they also cover our service to men for Christ's sake. Some of us are engaged in ploughing. In the short wintry days, when the last leaves are falling from the trees, and the skies are covered by dense and dripping clouds, we go forth with our plough, or bearing precious seed. In loneliness, depression, and fear, we tread athwart the furrows, and return crying: "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Or we are called to keep the flock, seeking the straying, defending the attacked, tenderly nursing the sick and weak. In either of these avocations we often become weary, and in that condition "come in from the field."

When the spell of hard work is finished, how apt are we to relax! Surely, we think, we may give ourselves to the indulgence of natural and innocent appetite! But that is exactly what our Master does not intend, because He knows the subtle temptation of hours of ease. When we return from our labour, He does not say, "Go and sit down to meat," but He meets us on the threshold, saying, "Make ready and serve Me, till I have eaten and drunken, and afterward thou shalt eat and drink."

From this parable we are surely to infer that our Lord says in effect: "You have been working for Me, but I have missed you. You have been so engaged in guiding the plough through the heavy clay, or watching against the lion and bear, that you have forgotten Me, and have allowed the hours to pass without speaking to Me a single word, or listening for My voice."

When Christ's work is done, let us turn to our Lord Himself and minister to Him; prepare for Him a feast of faith and love and joy; of heart-melody and voice-music. After this we may eat and drink. He will even gird Himself, and come forth to serve us (Joh 13:4-14).

PRAYER

We desire, dear Lord, that Thou shouldst be more to us than Thy work. It is not enough for us to plough Thy fields or keep Thy sheep, we want to serve Thee most of all. Help us to keep Thee in view all day, and whatsoever our hands find to do, may we do it in love to Thyself. AMEN.

October 29

KEPT FOR JESUS CHRIST

"Judas, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ."-- Jude 1:1 (R.V. marg.).

THE WORD keep rings like a refrain throughout this letter. It suggests a power which originates in the Divine will and operates through the Holy Spirit's energy within us. Behind our willing and working, our choosing and electing; behind all the influences that are brought to bear upon us, there is a gracious and Divine movement, in virtue of which we are being "kept for Jesus Christ." Our spirit is being kept for His Spirit to tenant it; our soul is being kept that His mind may energize it; our heart is being kept as the bowl of a fountain that His love may flow in and out; our imagination and fancy are being kept, that He may utilize them as He did Bunyan and Rutherford; our body is being kept that He may have the use of its members--a vessel meet for the Master's use! Let us realize how much Christ needs each one of us, and how much we shall miss if we neutralize the very purpose for which we were born and sent into the world.

Do not presume on the Divine keeping power, for there is always the dread possibility of neutralizing it. Keep yourselves therefore in the love of God! Have you the light? Follow the gleam! Are you in mid-current? Do not get turned off into a back eddy! Are you being used by God? Keep under your body and bring it into subjection, lest after having preached to others you may yourself be rejected.

There is One who is able to keep us from stumbling, not only from within, by a garrison, but from without, by sentries which keep watch and ward. We are greater than worlds or suns, greater than time or space, greater than the universe in which we are found, as the child is greater than the royal palace, because the Lord hath need of us. We are "kept for Jesus Christ"; let us not be unmindful or ungrateful, for, throughout the ages, this prayer never ceases to rise from the heart of our Redeemer: "I pray, not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

PRAYER

We thank Thee, Heavenly Father, that Thou hast called us into the fellowship of Thy Son. Keep us by Thy mighty power through faith unto Thy salvation and service. AMEN.

October 30

THE TIMELESS CROSS

"How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"-- Heb 9:14.

WHAT IS the meaning of that great word eternal? Too often it is employed as though it were synonymous with everlasting. But the two words stand for two very different things. Everlasting conveys the idea of the duration of time; whereas eternal stands for the quality and character of the existence referred to, which is absolutely timeless. The eternal is that which is not measured by duration, which has no succession of years, which cannot be described as past or future. It is the dateless present, and can only be used, therefore, of God, the AIM, because He lives in the eternal now. He never was and never will be anything that He is not at this present moment, and only that which partakes of His Being can be termed eternal.

When, therefore, we are told that our Lord offered Himself to God through the Eternal Spirit, we must believe that in the Cross there was this element of Timelessness. Our Lord was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). The Cross of Christ has been contemporaneous with all the generations of mankind, and it is this attribute of Timelessness which gives the Cross its perennial power. There is a sense in which Christ is always being wounded by our transgressions, bruised by our iniquities, chastised for our peace, and bearing the stripes that procure our healing.

The Cross of Christ stands with open arms to welcome every sinful soul. The nails are not rusted or blunted by the years that have passed since they were driven into the flesh of Christ our Lord. And as we humble ourselves, and submit our proud and selfish soul-life to be nailed with Him to the Cross, in the power of the Eternal Spirit, out of suffering comes life to those to whom we minister, as we serve the Living God, and we can say with the Apostle: "Death worketh in us, but life in you." (2Co 4:10-12).

PRAYER

We bless Thee, Lord Jesus, that Thou didst not withhold Thyself from the Cross. Enable us by the Eternal Spirit to surrender our life to Calvary, that Thy risen life may become manifest in our mortal flesh. AMEN.

OCTOBER 31

GIVING GOD PLEASURE

"The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him."--Ps. 147:11.

GOD TAKES pleasure in our faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him"; but surely the alternative is true, that our faith is precious in His sight, though it be only as the touch of the hem of His garment.

God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. The Apostle says that we ought to walk so as to please God. How can we walk thus? it is not within our power. But how blessed to know that if only we will work out what He works in, and abandon ourselves to Him, He will perfect us in every good work to do His Will (Heb. 13:21).

There are many ways in which we may please God. Generosity is a sacrifice well-pleasing and acceptable unto God; obedience is well-pleasing unto the Lord; a holy and humble walk with God, like Enoch's, will elicit this testimony, that it has pleased God. Let us not disappoint Him, but "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."

PRAYER

O God, we pray that Thou wouldst make us what Thou wouldst have us become, that we may perfectly please Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name. AMEN.