

Matthew Devotionals - C H Spurgeon

Spurgeon's Devotionals from Morning and Evening and Faith's Checkbook

Matthew 1

He shall save his people from their sins."—Matthew 1:21

Many persons, if they are asked what they understand by salvation, will reply, "Being saved from hell and taken to heaven." This is one result of salvation, but it is not one tithe of what is contained in that boon. It is true our Lord Jesus Christ does redeem all his people from the wrath to come; he saves them from the fearful condemnation which their sins had brought upon them; but his triumph is far more complete than this. He saves his people "from their sins." Oh! sweet deliverance from our worst foes. Where Christ works a saving work, he casts Satan from his throne, and will not let him be master any longer. No man is a true Christian if sin reigns in his mortal body. Sin will be in us—it will never be utterly expelled till the spirit enters glory; but it will never have dominion. There will be a striving for dominion—a lusting against the new law and the new spirit which God has implanted—but sin will never get the upper hand so as to be absolute monarch of our nature. Christ will be Master of the heart, and sin must be mortified. The Lion of the tribe of Judah shall prevail, and the dragon shall be cast out. Professor! is sin subdued in you? If your life is unholy your heart is unchanged, and if your heart is unchanged you are an unsaved person. If the Saviour has not sanctified you, renewed you, given you a hatred of sin and a love of holiness, he has done nothing in you of a saving character. The grace which does not make a man better than others is a worthless counterfeit. Christ saves his people, not in their sins, but from them. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." If not saved from sin, how shall we hope to be counted among his people. Lord, save me now from all evil, and enable me to honour my Saviour.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus."—Matthew 1:21

When a person is dear, everything connected with him becomes dear for his sake. Thus, so precious is the person of the Lord Jesus in the estimation of all true believers, that everything about him they consider to be inestimable beyond all price. "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia," said David, as if the very vestments of the Saviour were so sweetened by his person that he could not but love them. Certain it is, that there is not a spot where that hallowed foot hath trodden—there is not a word which those blessed lips have uttered—nor a thought which his loving Word has revealed—which is not to us precious beyond all price. And this is true of the names of Christ—they are all sweet in the believer's ear. Whether he be called the Husband of the Church, her Bridegroom, her Friend; whether he be styled the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the King, the Prophet, or the Priest—every title of our Master—Shiloh, Emmanuel, Wonderful, the Mighty Counsellor—every name is like the honeycomb dropping with honey, and luscious are the drops that distil from it. But if there be one name sweeter than another in the believer's ear, it is the name of Jesus. Jesus! it is the name which moves the harps of heaven to melody. Jesus! the life of all our joys. If there be one name more charming, more precious than another, it is this name. It is woven into the very warp and woof of our psalmody. Many of our hymns begin with it, and scarcely any, that are good for anything, end without it. It is the sum total of all delights. It is the music with which the bells of heaven ring; a song in a word; an ocean for comprehension, although a drop for brevity; a matchless oratorio in two syllables; a gathering up of the hallelujahs of eternity in five letters.

"Jesus, I love thy charming name,
'Tis music to mine ear."

From Every Sin

"He shall save His people from their sins" ([Matthew 1:21](#)).

LORD, save me from my sins. By the name of Jesus I am encouraged thus to pray. Save me from my past sins, that the habit of them may not hold me captive. Save me from my constitutional sins, that I may not be the slave of my own weaknesses. Save me from the sins which are continually under my eye that I may not lose my horror of them. Save me from secret sins; sins unperceived by me from my want of light. Save me from sudden and surprising sins: let me not be carried off my feet by a rush of temptation.

Save me, LORD, from every sin. Let not any iniquity have dominion over me. Thou alone canst do this. I cannot snap my own chains or slay my own enemies. Thou knowest temptation, for Thou wast tempted. Thou knowest sin, for Thou didst bear the weight of it. Thou knowest how to succor me in my hour of conflict; Thou canst save me from sinning and save me when I have sinned. It is promised in Thy very name that Thou wilt do this, and I pray Thee let me this day verify the prophecy. Let me not give way to temper, or pride, or despondency, or any form of evil; but do Thou save me unto holiness of life, that the name of Jesus may be glorified in me abundantly.

Matthew 3

“He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove.”—Matthew 3:16

As the Spirit of God descended upon the Lord Jesus, the head, so he also, in measure, descends upon the members of the mystical body. His descent is to us after the same fashion as that in which it fell upon our Lord. There is often a singular rapidity about it; or ever we are aware, we are impelled onward and heavenward beyond all expectation. Yet is there none of the hurry of earthly haste, for the wings of the dove are as soft as they are swift. Quietness seems essential to many spiritual operations; the Lord is in the still small voice, and like the dew, his grace is distilled in silence. The dove has ever been the chosen type of purity, and the Holy Spirit is holiness itself. Where he cometh, everything that is pure and lovely, and of good report, is made to abound, and sin and uncleanness depart. Peace reigns also where the Holy Dove comes with power; he bears the olive branch which shows that the waters of divine wrath are assuaged. Gentleness is a sure result of the Sacred Dove's transforming power: hearts touched by his benign influence are meek and lowly henceforth and for ever. Harmlessness follows, as a matter of course; eagles and ravens may hunt their prey—the turtledove can endure wrong, but cannot inflict it. We must be harmless as doves. The dove is an apt picture of love, the voice of the turtle is full of affection; and so, the soul visited by the blessed Spirit, abounds in love to God, in love to the brethren, and in love to sinners; and above all, in love to Jesus. The brooding of the Spirit of God upon the face of the deep, first produced order and life, and in our hearts, he causes and fosters new life and light. Blessed Spirit, as thou didst rest upon our dear Redeemer, even so rest upon us from this time forward and for ever.

“The wrath to come.”—Matthew 3:7

It is pleasant to pass over a country after a storm has spent itself; to smell the freshness of the herbs after the rain has passed away, and to note the drops while they glisten like purest diamonds in the sunlight. That is the position of a Christian. He is going through a land where the storm has spent itself upon his Saviour's head, and if there be a few drops of sorrow falling, they distil from clouds of mercy, and Jesus cheers him by the assurance that they are not for his destruction. But how terrible is it to witness the approach of a tempest: to note the forewarnings of the storm; to mark the birds of heaven as they droop their wings; to see the cattle as they lay their heads low in terror; to discern the face of the sky as it groweth black, and look to the sun which shineth not, and the heavens which are angry and frowning! How terrible to await the dread advance of a hurricane—such as occurs, sometimes, in the tropics—to wait in terrible apprehension till the wind shall rush forth in fury, tearing up trees from their roots, forcing rocks from their pedestals, and hurling down all the dwelling-places of man! And yet, sinner, this is your present position. No hot drops have as yet fallen, but a shower of fire is coming. No terrible winds howl around you, but God's tempest is gathering its dread artillery. As yet the water-floods are dammed up by mercy, but the flood-gates shall soon be opened: the thunderbolts of God are yet in his storehouse, but lo! the tempest hastens, and how awful shall that moment be when God, robed in vengeance, shall march forth in fury! Where, where, where, O sinner, wilt thou hide thy head, or whither wilt thou flee? O that the hand of mercy may now lead you to Christ! He is freely set before you in the gospel: his riven side is the rock of shelter. Thou knowest thy need of him; believe in him, cast thyself upon him, and then the fury shall be overpast for ever.

Matthew 4

The Word, Necessary Food

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” ([Matthew 4:4](#)).

If God so willed it we could live without bread, even as Jesus did for forty days; but we could not live without His Word. By that Word we were created, and by it alone can we be kept in being, for he sustaineth all things by the Word of His power. Bread is a second cause; the LORD Himself is the first source of our sustenance. He can work without the second cause as well as with it; and we must not tie Him down to one mode of operation. Let us not be too eager after the visible, but let us look to the invisible God. We have

heard believers say that in deep poverty, when bread ran short, their appetites became short, too; and to others, when common supplies failed, the LORD has sent in unexpected help. But we must have the Word of the LORD. With this alone we can withstand the devil. Take this from us, and our enemy will have us in his power, for we shall soon faint. Our souls need food, and there is none for them outside of the Word of the LORD. All the books and all the preachers in the world cannot furnish us a single meal: it is only the Word from the mouth of God that can fill the mouth of a believer. LORD, evermore give us this bread. We prize it above royal dainties.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."—Matthew 4:1

A holy character does not avert temptation—Jesus was tempted. When Satan tempts us, his sparks fall upon tinder; but in Christ's case, it was like striking sparks on water; yet the enemy continued his evil work. Now, if the devil goes on striking when there is no result, how much more will he do it when he knows what inflammable stuff our hearts are made of. Though you become greatly sanctified by the Holy Ghost, expect that the great dog of hell will bark at you still. In the haunts of men we expect to be tempted, but even seclusion will not guard us from the same trial. Jesus Christ was led away from human society into the wilderness, and was tempted of the devil. Solitude has its charms and its benefits, and may be useful in checking the lust of the eye and the pride of life; but the devil will follow us into the most lovely retreats. Do not suppose that it is only the worldly-minded who have dreadful thoughts and blasphemous temptations, for even spiritual-minded persons endure the same; and in the holiest position we may suffer the darkest temptation. The utmost consecration of spirit will not insure you against Satanic temptation. Christ was consecrated through and through. It was his meat and drink to do the will of him that sent him: and yet he was tempted! Your hearts may glow with a seraphic flame of love to Jesus, and yet the devil will try to bring you down to Laodicean lukewarmness. If you will tell me when God permits a Christian to lay aside his armour, I will tell you when Satan has left off temptation. Like the old knights in war time, we must sleep with helmet and breastplate buckled on, for the arch-deceiver will seize our first unguarded hour to make us his prey. The Lord keep us watchful in all seasons, and give us a final escape from the jaw of the lion and the paw of the bear.

Matthew 5

The Mourner Comforted

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" ([Matthew 5:4](#)).

By the valley of weeping we come to Zion. One would have thought mourning and being blessed were in opposition, but the infinitely wise Savior puts them together in this Beatitude. What He has joined together let no man put asunder. Mourning for sin -- our own sins, and the sins of others -- is the LORD's seal set upon His faithful ones. When the Spirit of grace is poured upon the house of David, or any other house, they shall mourn. By holy mourning we receive the best of our blessings, even as the rarest commodities come to us by water. Not only shall the mourner be blessed at some future day, but Christ pronounces him blessed even now. The Holy Spirit will surely comfort those hearts which mourn for sin. They shall be comforted by the application of the blood of Jesus and by the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost. They shall be comforted as to the abounding sin of their city and of their age by the assurance that God will glorify Himself, however much men may rebel against Him. They shall be comforted with the expectation that they shall be wholly freed from sin before long and shall soon be taken up to dwell forever in the glorious presence of their LORD.

We Receive as We Give

"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" ([Matthew 5:7](#) - [see note](#)).

It is not meet that the man who will not forgive should be forgiven, nor shall he who will not give to the poor have his own wants relieved. God will measure to us with our own bushels, and those who have been hard masters and hard creditors will find that the LORD will deal hardly with them. "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy." This day let us try to give and to forgive. Let us mind the two bears - bear and forbear. Let us be kind, gentle, and tender. Let us not put harsh constructions upon men's conduct, nor drive hard bargains, nor pick foolish quarrels, nor be difficult to please. Surely we wish to be blessed, and we also want to obtain mercy: let us be merciful, that we may have mercy. Let us fulfill the condition, that we may earn the beatitude. Is it not a pleasant duty to be kind? Is there not much more sweetness in it than in being angry and ungenerous? Why, there is a blessedness in the thing itself! Moreover, the obtaining of mercy is a rich reward. What but sovereign grace could suggest such a promise as this! We are merciful to our fellow mortal in pence, and the LORD forgives us "all the debt."

"Blessed are the are pure in heart: for they shall see God" ([Matthew 5:8](#)).

Purity, even purity of heart, is the main thing to be aimed at. We need to be made clean within through the Spirit and the Word, and then we shall be clean without by consecration and obedience. There is a close connection between the affections and the understanding: if we love evil we cannot understand that which is good. If the heart is foul, the eye will be dim. How can those men see a holy God who love unholy things? What a privilege it is to see God here! A glimpse of Him is heaven below! In Christ Jesus the pure in heart behold the Father. We see Him, His truth, His love, His purpose, His sovereignty, His covenant character, yea, we see Himself in Christ. But this is only apprehended as sin is kept out of the heart. Only those who aim at godliness can cry, "Mine eyes are ever towards the LORD." The desire of Moses, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," can only be fulfilled in us as we purify ourselves from all iniquity. We shall "see him as he is," and "every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." The enjoyment of present fellowship and the hope of the beatific vision are urgent motives for purity of heart and life. LORD, make us pure in heart that we may see Thee!

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." —Matthew 5:9

This is the seventh of the beatitudes: and seven was the number of perfection among the Hebrews. It may be that the Saviour placed the peacemaker the seventh upon the list because he most nearly approaches the perfect man in Christ Jesus. He who would have perfect blessedness, so far as it can be enjoyed on earth, must attain to this seventh benediction, and become a peacemaker. There is a significance also in the position of the text. The verse which precedes it speaks of the blessedness of "the pure in heart: for they shall see God." It is well to understand that we are to be "first pure, then peaceable." Our peaceableness is never to be a compact with sin, or toleration of evil. We must set our faces like flints against everything which is contrary to God and his holiness: purity being in our souls a settled matter, we can go on to peaceableness. Not less does the verse that follows seem to have been put there on purpose. However peaceable we may be in this world, yet we shall be misrepresented and misunderstood: and no marvel, for even the Prince of Peace, by his very peacefulness, brought fire upon the earth. He himself, though he loved mankind, and did no ill, was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Lest, therefore, the peaceable in heart should be surprised when they meet with enemies, it is added in the following verse, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Thus, the peacemakers are not only pronounced to be blessed, but they are compassed about with blessings. Lord, give us grace to climb to this seventh beatitude! Purify our minds that we may be "first pure, then peaceable," and fortify our souls, that our peaceableness may not lead us into cowardice and despair, when for thy sake we are persecuted.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour." —Matthew 5:43

"Love thy neighbour." Perhaps he rolls in riches, and thou art poor, and living in thy little cot side-by-side with his lordly mansion; thou seest every day his estates, his fine linen, and his sumptuous banquets; God has given him these gifts, covet not his wealth, and think no hard thoughts concerning him. Be content with thine own lot, if thou canst not better it, but do not look upon thy neighbour, and wish that he were as thyself. Love him, and then thou wilt not envy him.

Perhaps, on the other hand, thou art rich, and near thee reside the poor. Do not scorn to call them neighbour. Own that thou art bound to love them. The world calls them thy inferiors. In what are they inferior? They are far more thine equals than thine inferiors, for "God hath made of one blood all people that dwell upon the face of the earth." It is thy coat which is better than theirs, but thou art by no means better than they. They are men, and what art thou more than that? Take heed that thou love thy neighbour even though he be in rags, or sunken in the depths of poverty.

But, perhaps, you say, "I cannot love my neighbours, because for all I do they return ingratitude and contempt." So much the more room for the heroism of love. Wouldst thou be a feather-bed warrior, instead of bearing the rough fight of love? He who dares the most, shall win the most; and if rough be thy path of love, tread it boldly, still loving thy neighbours through thick and thin. Heap coals of fire on their heads, and if they be hard to please, seek not to please them, but to please thy Master; and remember if they spurn thy love, thy Master hath not spurned it, and thy deed is as acceptable to him as if it had been acceptable to them. Love thy neighbour, for in so doing thou art following the footsteps of Christ.

Matthew 6

Giving Without a Whisper

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father

which seeth in, secret Himself shall regard thee openly" (Matthew 6:3-4).

No promise is made to those who give to the poor to be seen of men. They have their reward at once and cannot expect to be paid twice. Let us hide away our charity -- yes, hide it even from ourselves. Give so often and so much as a matter of course that you no more take note that you have helped the poor than that you have eaten your regular meals. Do your alms without even whispering to yourself, How generous I am! Do not thus attempt to reward yourself. Leave the matter with God, who never fails to see, to record, and to reward. Blessed is the man who is busy in secret with his kindness: he finds a special joy in his unknown benevolences. This is the bread, which eaten by stealth, is sweeter than the banquets of kings. How can I indulge myself today with this delightful luxury? Let me have a real feast of tenderness and flow of soul. Here and hereafter the LORD Himself will personally see to the rewarding of the secret giver of alms. This will be in His own way and time; and He will choose the very best. How much this promise means it will need eternity to reveal.

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, etc."—Matthew 6:9

This prayer begins where all true prayer must commence, with the spirit of adoption, "Our Father." There is no acceptable prayer until we can say, "I will arise, and go unto my Father." This child-like spirit soon perceives the grandeur of the Father "in heaven," and ascends to devout adoration, "Hallowed be thy name." The child lisping, "Abba, Father," grows into the cherub crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy." There is but a step from rapturous worship to the glowing missionary spirit, which is a sure outgrowth of filial love and reverent adoration—"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Next follows the heartfelt expression of dependence upon God—"Give us this day our daily bread." Being further illuminated by the Spirit, he discovers that he is not only dependent, but sinful, hence he entreats for mercy, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors:" and being pardoned, having the righteousness of Christ imputed, and knowing his acceptance with God, he humbly supplicates for holy perseverance, "Lead us not into temptation." The man who is really forgiven, is anxious not to offend again; the possession of justification leads to an anxious desire for sanctification. "Forgive us our debts," that is justification; "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," that is sanctification in its negative and positive forms. As the result of all this, there follows a triumphant ascription of praise, "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen." We rejoice that our King reigns in providence and shall reign in grace, from the river even to the ends of the earth, and of his dominion there shall be no end. Thus from a sense of adoption, up to fellowship with our reigning Lord, this short model of prayer conducts the soul. Lord, teach us thus to pray.

"Your heavenly Father." —Matthew 6:26

God's people are doubly his children, they are his offspring by creation, and they are his sons by adoption in Christ. Hence they are privileged to call him, "Our Father which art in heaven." Father! Oh, what precious word is that. Here is authority: "If I be a Father, where is mine honour?" If ye be sons, where is your obedience? Here is affection mingled with authority; an authority which does not provoke rebellion; an obedience demanded which is most cheerfully rendered—which would not be withheld even if it might. The obedience which God's children yield to him must be loving obedience. Do not go about the service of God as slaves to their taskmaster's toil, but run in the way of his commands because it is your Father's way. Yield your bodies as instruments of righteousness, because righteousness is your Father's will, and his will should be the will of his child. Father!—Here is a kingly attribute so sweetly veiled in love, that the King's crown is forgotten in the King's face, and his sceptre becomes, not a rod of iron, but a silver sceptre of mercy—the sceptre indeed seems to be forgotten in the tender hand of him who wields it. Father!—Here is honour and love. How great is a Father's love to his children! That which friendship cannot do, and mere benevolence will not attempt, a father's heart and hand must do for his sons. They are his offspring, he must bless them; they are his children, he must show himself strong in their defence. If an earthly father watches over his children with unceasing love and care, how much more does our heavenly Father? Abba, Father! He who can say this, hath uttered better music than cherubim or seraphim can reach. There is heaven in the depth of that word—Father! There is all I can ask; all my necessities can demand; all my wishes can desire. I have all in all to all eternity when I can say, "Father."

Divine Provision

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" ([Matthew 6:30](#))

Clothes are expensive, and poor believers may be led into anxiety as to where their next suit will come from. The soles are thin; how shall we get new shoes? See how our thoughtful LORD has provided against this care. Our heavenly Father clothes the grass of the field with a splendor such as Solomon could not equal: will He not clothe His own children? We are sure He will. There may be many a patch and a darn, but raiment we shall have. A poor minister found his clothes nearly threadbare, and so far gone that they would hardly hold together; but as a servant of the LORD he expected his Master to find him his livery. It so happened that the writer on a visit to a friend had the loan of the good man's pulpit, and it came into his mind to make a collection for him, and there was his suit.

Many other cases we have seen in which those who had served the LORD have found Him considerate of their wardrobe. He who made man so that when he had sinned he needed garments, also in mercy supplied him with them; and those which the LORD gave to our first parents were far better than those they made for themselves.

God First, Then Extras

"But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

See how the Bible opens: "In the beginning God." Let your life open in the same way. Seek with your whole soul, first and foremost, the kingdom of God, as the place of your citizenship, and His righteousness as the character of your life. As for the rest, it will come from the LORD Himself without your being anxious concerning it. All that is needful for this life and godliness "shall be added unto you." What a promise this is! Food, raiment, home, and so forth, God undertakes to add to you while you seek Him. You mind His business, and He will mind yours. If you want paper and string, you get them given in when you buy more important goods; and just so all that we need of earthly things we shall have thrown in with the kingdom. He who is an heir of salvation shall not die of starvation; and he who clothes his soul with the righteousness of God cannot be left of the LORD with a naked body. Away with carping care. Set all your mind upon seeking the LORD. Covetousness is poverty, and anxiety is misery: trust in God is an estate, and likeness of God is a heavenly inheritance. LORD, I seek Thee; be found of me.

Matthew 7

"Ask, and it shall be given you."—Matthew 7:7

We know of a place in England still existing, where a dole of bread is served to every passerby who chooses to ask for it. Whoever the traveller may be, he has but to knock at the door of St. Cross Hospital, and there is the dole of bread for him. Jesus Christ so loveth sinners that he has built a St. Cross Hospital, so that whenever a sinner is hungry, he has but to knock and have his wants supplied. Nay, he has done better; he has attached to this Hospital of the Cross a bath; and whenever a soul is black and filthy, it has but to go there and be washed. The fountain is always full, always efficacious. No sinner ever went into it and found that it could not wash away his stains. Sins which were scarlet and crimson have all disappeared, and the sinner has been whiter than snow. As if this were not enough, there is attached to this Hospital of the Cross a wardrobe, and a sinner making application simply as a sinner, may be clothed from head to foot; and if he wishes to be a soldier, he may not merely have a garment for ordinary wear, but armour which shall cover him from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. If he asks for a sword, he shall have that given to him, and a shield too. Nothing that is good for him shall be denied him. He shall have spending-money so long as he lives, and he shall have an eternal heritage of glorious treasure when he enters into the joy of his Lord.

If all these things are to be had by merely knocking at mercy's door, O my soul, knock hard this morning, and ask large things of thy generous Lord. Leave not the throne of grace till all thy wants have been spread before the Lord, and until by faith thou hast a comfortable prospect that they shall be all supplied. No bashfulness need retard when Jesus invites. No unbelief should hinder when Jesus promises. No cold-heartedness should restrain when such blessings are to be obtained.

Matthew 9

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We know of a place in England still existing, where a dole of bread is served to every passerby who chooses to ask for it. Whoever the traveller may be, he has but to knock at the door of St. Cross Hospital, and there is the dole of bread for him. Jesus Christ so loveth sinners that he has built a St. Cross Hospital, so that whenever a sinner is hungry, he has but to knock and have his wants supplied. Nay, he has done better; he has attached to this Hospital of the Cross a bath; and whenever a soul is black and filthy, it has but to go there and be washed. The fountain is always full, always efficacious. No sinner ever went into it and found that it could not wash away his stains. Sins which were scarlet and crimson have all disappeared, and the sinner has been whiter than snow. As if this were not enough, there is attached to this Hospital of the Cross a wardrobe, and a sinner making application simply as a sinner, may be clothed from head to foot; and if he wishes to be a soldier, he may not merely have a garment for ordinary wear, but armour which shall cover him from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. If he asks for a sword, he shall have that given to him, and a shield too. Nothing that is good for him shall be denied him. He shall have spending-money so long as he lives, and he shall have an eternal heritage of glorious treasure when he enters into the joy of his Lord.

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Matthew 10

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master."—Matthew 10:25

No one will dispute this statement, for it would be unseemly for the servant to be exalted above his Master. When our Lord was on earth, what was the treatment he received? Were his claims acknowledged, his instructions followed, his perfections worshipped, by those whom he came to bless? No; "He was despised and rejected of men." Outside the camp was his place: cross-bearing was his occupation. Did the world yield him solace and rest? "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." This inhospitable country afforded him no shelter: it cast him out and crucified him. Such—if you are a follower of Jesus, and maintain a consistent, Christ-like walk and conversation—you must expect to be the lot of that part of your spiritual life which, in its outward development, comes under the observation of men. They will treat it as they treated the Saviour—they will despise it. Dream not that worldlings will admire you, or that the more holy and the more Christ-like you are, the more peaceably people will act towards you. They prized not the polished gem, how should they value the jewel in the rough? "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" If we were more like Christ, we should be more hated by his enemies. It were a sad dishonour to a child of God to be the world's favourite. It is a very ill omen to hear a wicked world clap its hands and shout "Well done" to the Christian man. He may begin to look to his character, and wonder whether he has not been doing wrong, when the unrighteous give him their approbation. Let us be true to our Master, and have no friendship with a blind and base world which scorns and rejects him. Far be it from us to seek a crown of honour where our Lord found a coronet of thorn.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven" [Matthew 10:32](#)).

Gracious promise! It is a great joy to me to confess my LORD. Whatever my faults may be, I am not ashamed of Jesus, nor do I fear to declare the doctrines of His cross. O LORD, I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart. Sweet is the prospect which the text sets before me! Friends forsake and enemies exult, but the LORD does not disown His servant. Doubtless my LORD will own me even here and give me new tokens of His favorable regard. But there comes a day when I must stand before the great Father. What bliss to think that Jesus will confess me then! He will say, "This man truly trusted Me and was willing to be reproached for My name's sake; and therefore I acknowledge him as Mine." The other day a great man was made a knight, and the Queen handed him a jeweled garter; but what of that? It will be an honor beyond all honors for the LORD Jesus to confess us in the presence of the divine Majesty in the heavens. Never let me be ashamed to own my LORD. Never let me indulge a cowardly silence or allow a fainthearted compromise. Shall I blush to own Him who promises to own me?

Reward Is Certain

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" ([Matthew 10:42](#)).

Well, I can do as much as that. I can do a kind act toward the LORD's servant. The LORD knows I love them all and would count it an honor to wash their feet. For the sake of their Master, I love the disciples. How gracious of the LORD to mention so insignificant an action -- "to give to drink a cup of cold water only"! This I can do, however poor: this I may do, however lowly: this I will do right cheerfully. This, which seems so little, the LORD notices -- notices when done to the least of His followers. Evidently it is not the cost, nor the skill, nor the quantity, that He looks at, but the motive: that which we do to a disciple, because he is a disciple, his LORD observes and recompenses. He does not reward us for the merit of what we do but according to His riches of His grace. I give a cup of cold water, and He makes me to drink of living water. I give to one of His little ones, and He treats me as one of them. Jesus finds an apology for His liberality in that which His grace has led me to do, and He says, "He shall in no wise lose his reward."

"I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword."—Matthew 10:34

The Christian will be sure to make enemies. It will be one of his objects to make none; but if to do the right, and to believe the true, should cause him to lose every earthly friend, he will count it but a small loss, since his great Friend in heaven will be yet more

friendly, and reveal himself to him more graciously than ever. O ye who have taken up his cross, know ye not what your Master said? "I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Christ is the great Peacemaker; but before peace, he brings war. Where the light cometh, the darkness must retire. Where truth is, the lie must flee; or, if it abideth, there must be a stern conflict, for the truth cannot and will not lower its standard, and the lie must be trodden under foot. If you follow Christ, you shall have all the dogs of the world yelping at your heels. If you would live so as to stand the test of the last tribunal, depend upon it the world will not speak well of you. He who has the friendship of the world is an enemy to God; but if you are true and faithful to the Most High, men will resent your unflinching fidelity, since it is a testimony against their iniquities. Fearless of all consequences, you must do the right. You will need the courage of a lion unhesitatingly to pursue a course which shall turn your best friend into your fiercest foe; but for the love of Jesus you must thus be courageous. For the truth's sake to hazard reputation and affection, is such a deed that to do it constantly you will need a degree of moral principle which only the Spirit of God can work in you; yet turn not your back like a coward, but play the man. Follow right manfully in your Master's steps, for he has traversed this rough way before you. Better a brief warfare and eternal rest, than false peace and everlasting torment.

Matthew 11

"At that time Jesus answered." —Matthew 11:25

This is a singular way in which to commence a verse—"At that time Jesus answered." If you will look at the context you will not perceive that any person had asked him a question, or that he was in conversation with any human being. Yet it is written, "Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father." When a man answers, he answers a person who has been speaking to him. Who, then, had spoken to Christ? his Father. Yet there is no record of it; and this should teach us that Jesus had constant fellowship with his Father, and that God spake into his heart so often, so continually, that it was not a circumstance singular enough to be recorded. It was the habit and life of Jesus to talk with God. Even as Jesus was, in this world, so are we; let us therefore learn the lesson which this simple statement concerning him teaches us. May we likewise have silent fellowship with the Father, so that often we may answer him, and though the world wotteth not to whom we speak, may we be responding to that secret voice unheard of any other ear, which our own ear, opened by the Spirit of God, recognizes with joy. God has spoken to us, let us speak to God—either to set our seal that God is true and faithful to his promise, or to confess the sin of which the Spirit of God has convinced us, or to acknowledge the mercy which God's providence has given, or to express assent to the great truths which God the Holy Ghost has opened to our understanding. What a privilege is intimate communion with the Father of our spirits! It is a secret hidden from the world, a joy with which even the nearest friend intermeddleth not. If we would hear the whispers of God's love, our ear must be purged and fitted to listen to his voice. This very evening may our hearts be in such a state, that when God speaks to us, we, like Jesus, may be prepared at once to answer him.

"Come unto me." —Matthew 11:28

The cry of the Christian religion is the gentle word, "Come." The Jewish law harshly said, "Go, take heed unto thy steps as to the path in which thou shalt walk. Break the commandments, and thou shalt perish; keep them, and thou shalt live." The law was a dispensation of terror, which drove men before it as with a scourge; the gospel draws with bands of love. Jesus is the good Shepherd going before his sheep, bidding them follow him, and ever leading them onwards with the sweet word, "Come." The law repels, the gospel attracts. The law shows the distance which there is between God and man; the gospel bridges that awful chasm, and brings the sinner across it.

From the first moment of your spiritual life until you are ushered into glory, the language of Christ to you will be, "Come, come unto me." As a mother puts out her finger to her little child and woos it to walk by saying, "Come," even so does Jesus. He will always be ahead of you, bidding you follow him as the soldier follows his captain. He will always go before you to pave your way, and clear your path, and you shall hear his animating voice calling you after him all through life; while in the solemn hour of death, his sweet words with which he shall usher you into the heavenly world shall be—"Come, ye blessed of my Father."

Nay, further, this is not only Christ's cry to you, but, if you be a believer, this is your cry to Christ—"Come! come!" You will be longing for his second advent; you will be saying, "Come quickly, even so come Lord Jesus." You will be panting for nearer and closer communion with him. As his voice to you is "Come," your response to him will be, "Come, Lord, and abide with me. Come, and occupy alone the throne of my heart; reign there without a rival, and consecrate me entirely to thy service."

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" [Matthew 11:28](#).

We who are saved find rest in Jesus. Those who are not saved will receive rest if they come to Him, for here He promises to "give" it. Nothing can be freer than a gift; let us gladly accept what He gladly gives. You are not to buy it, nor to borrow it, but to receive it as a gift ([Jn 1:12, 13](#)). You labor under the lash of ambition, covetousness, lust, or anxiety: He will set you free from this iron bondage and give you rest. You are "laden," yes, "heavy laden" with sin, fear, care, remorse, fear of death; but if you come to Him He will unload you ([Jn 8:36](#)). He carried the crushing mass of our sin that we might no longer carry it ([Ro 6:11-note](#)). He made Himself the great Burden-bearer ([1Pe 2:24-note](#)), that every laden one might cease from bowing down under the enormous pressure. Jesus gives rest. It is so. Will you believe it? ([Jn 8:24](#)) Will you put it to the test? Will you do so at once? ([Acts 16:31](#)) Come to Jesus by quitting every other hope, by thinking of Him, believing God's testimony about Him, and trusting everything with Him ([Jn 10:37, 38](#)). If you thus come to Him the rest which He will give you will be deep, safe, holy, and everlasting. He gives a rest which develops into heaven, and He gives it this day to all who come to Him.

Matthew 12

"Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all."—Matthew 12:15

What a mass of hideous sickness must have thrust itself under the eye of Jesus! Yet we read not that he was disgusted, but patiently waited on every case. What a singular variety of evils must have met at his feet! What sickening ulcers and putrefying sores! Yet he was ready for every new shape of the monster evil, and was victor over it in every form. Let the arrow fly from what quarter it might, he quenched its fiery power. The heat of fever, or the cold of dropsy; the lethargy of palsy, or the rage of madness; the filth of leprosy, or the darkness of ophthalmia—all knew the power of his word, and fled at his command. In every corner of the field he was triumphant over evil, and received the homage of delivered captives. He came, he saw, he conquered everywhere. It is even so this morning. Whatever my own case may be, the beloved Physician can heal me; and whatever may be the state of others whom I may remember at this moment in prayer, I may have hope in Jesus that he will be able to heal them of their sins. My child, my friend, my dearest one, I can have hope for each, for all, when I remember the healing power of my Lord; and on my own account, however severe my struggle with sins and infirmities, I may yet be of good cheer. He who on earth walked the hospitals, still dispenses his grace, and works wonders among the sons of men: let me go to him at once in right earnest.

Let me praise him, this morning, as I remember how he wrought his spiritual cures, which bring him most renown. It was by taking upon himself our sicknesses. "By his stripes we are healed." The Church on earth is full of souls healed by our beloved Physician; and the inhabitants of heaven itself confess that "He healed them all." Come, then, my soul, publish abroad the virtue of his grace, and let it be "to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off."

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench."—Matthew 12:20

What is weaker than the bruised reed or the smoking flax? A reed that groweth in the fen or marsh, let but the wild duck light upon it, and it snaps; let but the foot of man brush against it, and it is bruised and broken; every wind that flits across the river moves it to and fro. You can conceive of nothing more frail or brittle, or whose existence is more in jeopardy, than a bruised reed. Then look at the smoking flax—what is it? It has a spark within it, it is true, but it is almost smothered; an infant's breath might blow it out; nothing has a more precarious existence than its flame. Weak things are here described, yet Jesus says of them, "The smoking flax I will not quench; the bruised reed I will not break." Some of God's children are made strong to do mighty works for him; God has his Samsons here and there who can pull up Gaza's gates, and carry them to the top of the hill; he has a few mighties who are lion-like men, but the majority of his people are a timid, trembling race. They are like starlings, frightened at every passer by; a little fearful flock. If temptation comes, they are taken like birds in a snare; if trial threatens, they are ready to faint; their frail skiff is tossed up and down by every wave, they are drifted along like a sea bird on the crest of the billows—weak things, without strength, without wisdom, without foresight. Yet, weak as they are, and because they are so weak, they have this promise made specially to them. Herein is grace and graciousness! Herein is love and lovingkindness! How it opens to us the compassion of Jesus—so gentle, tender, considerate! We need never shrink back from his touch. We need never fear a harsh word from him; though he might well chide us for our weakness, he rebuketh not. Bruised reeds shall have no blows from him, and the smoking flax no damping frowns.

Matthew 13

Possess, Not Only Profess

"For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance" [Matthew 13:12](#)).

When the LORD has given to a man much grace, He will give him more. A little faith is a nest egg; more faith will come to it. But then it must not be seeming faith, but real and true. What a necessity is laid upon us to make sure work in religion and not to profess much, and possess nothing! For one of these days the very profession will be taken from us, if that be all we have. The threatening is as true as the promise. Blessed be the LORD, it is His way when He has once made a beginning to go on bestowing the graces of His Spirit, till He who had but little, and yet truly had that little, is made to have abundance. Oh, for that abundance! Abundance of grace is a thing to be coveted, It would be well to know much but better to love much. It would be delightful to have abundance of skill to serve God but better still to have abundance of faith to trust in the LORD for skill and everything. LORD, since Thou hast given me a sense of sin, deepen my hatred of evil. Since Thou hast caused me to trust Jesus, raise my faith to full assurance. Since Thou hast made me to love Thee, cause me to be carried away with vehement affection for Thee!

Matthew 14

"Beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." —Matthew 14:30

Sinking times are praying times with the Lord's servants. Peter neglected prayer at starting upon his venturesome journey, but when he began to sink his danger made him a suppliant, and his cry though late was not too late. In our hours of bodily pain and mental anguish, we find ourselves as naturally driven to prayer as the wreck is driven upon the shore by the waves. The fox hides to its hole for protection; the bird flies to the wood for shelter; and even so the tried believer hastens to the mercy seat for safety. Heaven's great harbour of refuge is All-prayer; thousands of weather-beaten vessels have found a haven there, and the moment a storm comes on, it is wise for us to make for it with all sail.

Short prayers are long enough. There were but three words in the petition which Peter gasped out, but they were sufficient for his purpose. Not length but strength is desirable. A sense of need is a mighty teacher of brevity. If our prayers had less of the tail feathers of pride and more wing they would be all the better. Verbiage is to devotion as chaff to the wheat. Precious things lie in small compass, and all that is real prayer in many a long address might have been uttered in a petition as short as that of Peter.

Our extremities are the Lord's opportunities. Immediately a keen sense of danger forces an anxious cry from us the ear of Jesus hears, and with him ear and heart go together, and the hand does not long linger. At the last moment we appeal to our Master, but his swift hand makes up for our delays by instant and effectual action. Are we nearly engulfed by the boisterous waters of affliction? Let us then lift up our souls unto our Saviour, and we may rest assured that he will not suffer us to perish. When we can do nothing Jesus can do all things; let us enlist his powerful aid upon our side, and all will be well.

Matthew 15

"And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."—Matthew 15:27

This woman gained comfort in her misery by thinking GREAT THOUGHTS OF CHRIST. The Master had talked about the children's bread: "Now," argued she, "since thou art the Master of the table of grace, I know that thou art a generous housekeeper, and there is sure to be abundance of bread on thy table; there will be such an abundance for the children that there will be crumbs to throw on the floor for the dogs, and the children will fare none the worse because the dogs are fed." She thought him one who kept so good a table that all that she needed would only be a crumb in comparison; yet remember, what she wanted was to have the devil cast out of her daughter. It was a very great thing to her, but she had such a high esteem of Christ, that she said, "It is nothing to him, it is but a crumb for Christ to give." This is the royal road to comfort. Great thoughts of your sin alone will drive you to despair; but great thoughts of Christ will pilot you into the haven of peace. "My sins are many, but oh! it is nothing to Jesus to take them all away. The weight of my guilt presses me down as a giant's foot would crush a worm, but it is no more than a grain of dust to him, because he has already borne its curse in his own body on the tree. It will be but a small thing for him to give me full remission, although it will be an infinite blessing for me to receive it." The woman opens her soul's mouth very wide, expecting great things of Jesus, and he fills it with his love. Dear reader, do the same. She confessed what Christ laid at her door, but she laid fast hold upon him, and drew arguments even out of his hard words; she believed great things of him, and she thus overcame him. SHE WON THE VICTORY BY BELIEVING IN HIM. Her case is an instance of prevailing faith; and if we would conquer like her, we must imitate her tactics.

"But he answered her not a word." —Matthew 15:23

Genuine seekers who as yet have not obtained the blessing, may take comfort from the story before us. The Saviour did not at once bestow the blessing, even though the woman had great faith in him. He intended to give it, but he waited awhile. "He answered her not a word." Were not her prayers good? Never better in the world. Was not her case needy? Sorrowfully needy. Did she not feel her need sufficiently? She felt it overwhelmingly. Was she not earnest enough? She was intensely so. Had she no faith? She had such a high degree of it that even Jesus wondered, and said, "O woman, great is thy faith." See then, although it is true that faith brings peace, yet it does not always bring it instantaneously. There may be certain reasons calling for the trial of faith, rather than the reward of faith. Genuine faith may be in the soul like a hidden seed, but as yet it may not have budded and blossomed into joy and peace. A painful silence from the Saviour is the grievous trial of many a seeking soul, but heavier still is the affliction of a harsh cutting reply such as this, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Many in waiting upon the Lord find immediate delight, but this is not the case with all. Some, like the jailer, are in a moment turned from darkness to light, but others are plants of slower growth. A deeper sense of sin may be given to you instead of a sense of pardon, and in such a case you will have need of patience to bear the heavy blow. Ah! poor heart, though Christ beat and bruise thee, or even slay thee, trust him; though he should give thee an angry word, believe in the love of his heart. Do not, I beseech thee, give up seeking or trusting my Master, because thou hast not yet obtained the conscious joy which thou longest for. Cast thyself on him, and perseveringly depend even where thou canst not rejoicingly hope.

Matthew 19

"Good Master."—Matthew 19:16

If the young man in the gospel used this title in speaking to our Lord, how much more fitly may I thus address him! He is indeed my Master in both senses, a ruling Master and a teaching Master. I delight to run upon his errands, and to sit at his feet. I am both his servant and his disciple, and count it my highest honour to own the double character. If he should ask me why I call him "good," I should have a ready answer. It is true that "there is none good but one, that is, God," but then he is God, and all the goodness of Deity shines forth in him. In my experience, I have found him good, so good, indeed, that all the good I have has come to me through him. He was good to me when I was dead in sin, for he raised me by his Spirit's power; he has been good to me in all my needs, trials, struggles, and sorrows. Never could there be a better Master, for his service is freedom, his rule is love: I wish I were one thousandth part as good a servant. When he teaches me as my Rabbi, he is unspeakably good, his doctrine is divine, his manner is condescending, his spirit is gentleness itself. No error mingles with his instruction—pure is the golden truth which he brings forth, and all his teachings lead to goodness, sanctifying as well as edifying the disciple. Angels find him a good Master and delight to pay their homage at his footstool. The ancient saints proved him to be a good Master, and each of them rejoiced to sing, "I am thy servant, O Lord!" My own humble testimony must certainly be to the same effect. I will bear this witness before my friends and neighbours, for possibly they may be led by my testimony to seek my Lord Jesus as their Master. O that they would do so! They would never repent so wise a deed. If they would but take his easy yoke, they would find themselves in so royal a service that they would enlist in it for ever.

Matthew 20

Help Wanted

"They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.'" [Matthew 20:7](#)).

Yes, there is work in Christ's vineyard for old bodies. It is the eleventh hour, and yet He will let us work. What grace is this! Surely every old man ought to jump at this invitation! After men are advanced in years nobody wants them as servants; they go from shop to shop, and employers look at their gray hairs and shake their heads. But Jesus will engage old people and give them good wages, too! This is mercy indeed. LORD, help the aged to enlist in Thy service without an hour's delay. But will the LORD pay wages to worn-out old men? Do not doubt it. He says He will give you what is right if you will work in His field. He will surely give you grace here and glory hereafter. He will grant present comfort and future rest; strength equal to your day and a vision of glory when the night of death comes on. All these the LORD Jesus will as freely give to the aged convert as to one who enters His service in his youth. Let me tell this to some unsaved old man or old woman and pray the LORD to bless it for Jesus' sake, Where can I find such persons? I will be on the lookout for them and kindly tell them the news.

"Call thy labourers, and give them their hire."—Matthew 20:8

God is a good paymaster; he pays his servants while at work as well as when they have done it; and one of his payments is this: an easy conscience. If you have spoken faithfully of Jesus to one person, when you go to bed at night you feel happy in thinking, "I have this day discharged my conscience of that man's blood." There is a great comfort in doing something for Jesus. Oh, what a happiness to place jewels in his crown, and give him to see of the travail of his soul! There is also very great reward in watching the first buddings of conviction in a soul! To say of that girl in the class, "She is tender of heart, I do hope that there is the Lord's work within." To go home and pray over that boy, who said something in the afternoon which made you think he must know more of divine truth than you had feared! Oh, the joy of hope! But as for the joy of success! it is unspeakable. This joy, overwhelming as it is, is a hungry thing—you pine for more of it. To be a soul-winner is the happiest thing in the world. With every soul you bring to Christ, you get a new heaven upon earth. But who can conceive the bliss which awaits us above! Oh, how sweet is that sentence, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Do you know what the joy of Christ is over a saved sinner? This is the very joy which we are to possess in heaven. Yes, when he mounts the throne, you shall mount with him. When the heavens ring with "Well done, well done," you shall partake in the reward; you have toiled with him, you have suffered with him, you shall now reign with him; you have sown with him, you shall reap with him; your face was covered with sweat like his, and your soul was grieved for the sins of men as his soul was, now shall your face be bright with heaven's splendour as is his countenance, and now shall your soul be filled with beatific joys even as his soul is.

Matthew 22

"What think ye of Christ?"—Matthew 22:42

The great test of your soul's health is, What think you of Christ? Is he to you "fairer than the children of men"—"the chief among ten thousand"—the "altogether lovely"? Wherever Christ is thus esteemed, all the faculties of the spiritual man exercise themselves with energy. I will judge of your piety by this barometer: does Christ stand high or low with you? If you have thought little of Christ, if you have been content to live without his presence, if you have cared little for his honour, if you have been neglectful of his laws, then I know that your soul is sick—God grant that it may not be sick unto death! But if the first thought of your spirit has been, how can I honour Jesus? If the daily desire of your soul has been, "O that I knew where I might find him!" I tell you that you may have a thousand infirmities, and even scarcely know whether you are a child of God at all, and yet I am persuaded, beyond a doubt, that you are safe, since Jesus is great in your esteem. I care not for thy rags, what thinkest thou of his royal apparel? I care not for thy wounds, though they bleed in torrents, what thinkest thou of his wounds? are they like glittering rubies in thine esteem? I think none the less of thee, though thou liest like Lazarus on the dunghill, and the dogs do lick thee—I judge thee not by thy poverty: what thinkest thou of the King in his beauty? Has he a glorious high throne in thy heart? Wouldest thou set him higher if thou couldest? Wouldest thou be willing to die if thou couldest but add another trumpet to the strain which proclaims his praise? Ah! then it is well with thee. Whatever thou mayest think of thyself, if Christ be great to thee, thou shalt be with him ere long.

"Though all the world my choice deride,
Yet Jesus shall my portion be;
For I am pleased with none beside,
The fairest of the fair is he"

Matthew 24

Because of Us

"For the elect's sake those days be shortened" ([Matthew 24:22](#)).

For the sake of His elect the LORD withholds many judgments and shortens others. In great tribulations the fire would devour all were it not that Out of regard to His elect the LORD damps the flame. Thus, while He saves His elect for the sake of Jesus, He also preserves the race for the sake of His chosen. What an honor is thus put upon saints! How diligently they ought to use their influence with their LORD! He will hear their prayers for sinners and bless their efforts for their salvation. He blesses believers that they may be a blessing to those who are in unbelief. Many a sinner lives because of the prayers of a mother, or wife, or daughter to whom the LORD has respect. Have we used aright the singular power with which the LORD entrusts us? Do we pray for our country, for other lands, and for the age? Do we, in times of war, famine, pestilence, stand out as intercessors, pleading that the days may be shortened? Do we lament before God the outbursts of infidelity, error, and licentiousness? Do we beseech our LORD Jesus to shorten the reign of sin by hastening His own glorious appearing? Let us get to our knees and never rest till Christ appeareth.

"And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."—Matthew 24:39

Universal was the doom, neither rich nor poor escaped: the learned and the illiterate, the admired and the abhorred, the religious and the profane, the old and the young, all sank in one common ruin. Some had doubtless ridiculed the patriarch—where now their merry jests? Others had threatened him for his zeal which they counted madness—where now their boastings and hard speeches? The critic who judged the old man's work is drowned in the same sea which covers his sneering companions. Those who spoke patronizingly of the good man's fidelity to his convictions, but shared not in them, have sunk to rise no more, and the workers who for pay helped to build the wondrous ark, are all lost also. The flood swept them all away, and made no single exception. Even so, out of Christ, final destruction is sure to every man of woman born; no rank, possession, or character, shall suffice to save a single soul who has not believed in the Lord Jesus. My soul, behold this wide-spread judgment and tremble at it.

How marvellous the general apathy! they were all eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, till the awful morning dawned. There was not one wise man upon earth out of the ark. Folly duped the whole race, folly as to self-preservation—the most foolish of all follies. Folly in doubting the most true God—the most malignant of fooleries. Strange, my soul, is it not? All men are negligent of their souls till grace gives them reason, then they leave their madness and act like rational beings, but not till then.

All, blessed be God, were safe in the ark, no ruin entered there. From the huge elephant down to the tiny mouse all were safe. The timid hare was equally secure with the courageous lion, the helpless cony as safe as the laborious ox. All are safe in Jesus. My soul, art thou in him?

Matthew 26

God Only, You Can Trust

"Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended" [Matthew 26:33](#).

Why," cries one, "this is no promise of God." Just so, but it was a promise of man, and therefore it came to nothing. Peter thought that he was saying what he should assuredly carry out; but a promise which has no better foundation than a human resolve will fall to the ground. No sooner did temptations arise than Peter denied his Master and used oaths to confirm his denial. What is man's word? An earthen pot broken with a stroke. What is your own resolve? A blossom, which, with God's care, may come to fruit, but which, left to itself, will fall to the ground with the first wind that moves the bough. On man's word hang only what it will bear. On thine own resolve depend not at all. On the promise of thy God hang time and eternity, this world and the next, thine all and the all of all thy beloved ones. This volume is a checkbook for believers, and this page is meant as a warning as to what bank they draw upon and whose signature they accept. Rely upon Jesus without limit. Trust not thyself nor any horn of woman, beyond due bounds; but trust thou only and wholly in the LORD.

And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed."—Matthew 26:39

There are several instructive features in our Saviour's prayer in his hour of trial. It was lonely prayer. He withdrew even from his three favoured disciples. Believer, be much in solitary prayer, especially in times of trial. Family prayer, social prayer, prayer in the Church, will not suffice, these are very precious, but the best beaten spice will smoke in your censer in your private devotions, where no ear hears but God's.

It was humble prayer. Luke says he knelt, but another evangelist says he "fell on his face." Where, then, must be THY place, thou humble servant of the great Master? What dust and ashes should cover thy head! Humility gives us good foot-hold in prayer. There is no hope of prevalance with God unless we abase ourselves that he may exalt us in due time.

It was filial prayer. "Abba, Father." You will find it a stronghold in the day of trial to plead your adoption. You have no rights as a subject, you have forfeited them by your treason; but nothing can forfeit a child's right to a father's protection. Be not afraid to say, "My Father, hear my cry."

Observe that it was persevering prayer. He prayed three times. Cease not until you prevail. Be as the importunate widow, whose continual coming earned what her first supplication could not win. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Lastly, it was the prayer of resignation. "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Yield, and God yields. Let it be as God wills, and God will determine for the best. Be thou content to leave thy prayer in his hands, who knows when to give, and how to give, and what to give, and what to withhold. So pleading, earnestly, importunately, yet with humility and resignation, thou shalt surely prevail

Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.”—Matthew 26:56

He never deserted them, but they in cowardly fear of their lives, fled from him in the very beginning of his sufferings. This is but one instructive instance of the frailty of all believers if left to themselves; they are but sheep at the best, and they flee when the wolf cometh. They had all been warned of the danger, and had promised to die rather than leave their Master; and yet they were seized with sudden panic, and took to their heels. It may be, that I, at the opening of this day, have braced up my mind to bear a trial for the Lord's sake, and I imagine myself to be certain to exhibit perfect fidelity; but let me be very jealous of myself, lest having the same evil heart of unbelief, I should depart from my Lord as the apostles did. It is one thing to promise, and quite another to perform. It would have been to their eternal honour to have stood at Jesus' side right manfully; they fled from honour; may I be kept from imitating them! Where else could they have been so safe as near their Master, who could presently call for twelve legions of angels? They fled from their true safety. O God, let me not play the fool also. Divine grace can make the coward brave. The smoking flax can flame forth like fire on the altar when the Lord wills it. These very apostles who were timid as hares, grew to be bold as lions after the Spirit had descended upon them, and even so the Holy Spirit can make my recreant spirit brave to confess my Lord and witness for his truth.

What anguish must have filled the Saviour as he saw his friends so faithless! This was one bitter ingredient in his cup; but that cup is drained dry; let me not put another drop in it. If I forsake my Lord, I shall crucify him afresh, and put him to an open shame. Keep me, O blessed Spirit, from an end so shameful.

Holy Foresight

Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven ([Matthew 26:64](#))

Ah, LORD, Thou wast in Thy lowest state when before Thy persecutors Thou wast made to stand like a criminal! Yet the eyes of Thy faith could see beyond Thy present humiliation into Thy future glory. What words are these, "Nevertheless - hereafter!" I would imitate Thy holy foresight, and in the midst of poverty, or sickness, or slander, I also would say, "Nevertheless - hereafter." Instead of weakness, Thou hast all power; instead of shame, all glory; instead of derision, all worship, Thy cross has not dimmed the splendor of Thy crown, neither has the spittle marred the beauty of Thy face. Say, rather, Thou are the more exalted and honored because of Thy sufferings. So, LORD, I also would take courage from the "hereafter." I would forget the present tribulation in the future triumph. Help thou me by directing me into Thy Father's love and into Thine own patience, so that when I am derided for Thy name I may not be staggered but think more and more of the hereafter, and, therefore, all the less of today. I shall be with Thee soon and behold Thy glory. Wherefore, I am not ashamed but say in my inmost soul, "Nevertheless - hereafter."

Matthew 27

“He answered him to never a word.” —Matthew 27:14

He had never been slow of speech when he could bless the sons of men, but he would not say a single word for himself. “Never man spake like this man,” and never man was silent like him. Was this singular silence the index of his perfect self-sacrifice? Did it show that he would not utter a word to stay the slaughter of his sacred person, which he had dedicated as an offering for us? Had he so entirely surrendered himself that he would not interfere in his own behalf, even in the minutest degree, but be bound and slain an unstruggling, uncomplaining victim? Was this silence a type of the defencelessness of sin? Nothing can be said in palliation or excuse of human guilt; and, therefore, he who bore its whole weight stood speechless before his judge. Is not patient silence the best reply to a gainsaying world? Calm endurance answers some questions infinitely more conclusively than the loftiest eloquence. The best apologists for Christianity in the early days were its martyrs. The anvil breaks a host of hammers by quietly bearing their blows. Did not the silent Lamb of God furnish us with a grand example of wisdom? Where every word was occasion for new blasphemy, it was the line of duty to afford no fuel for the flame of sin. The ambiguous and the false, the unworthy and mean, will ere long overthrow and confute themselves, and therefore the true can afford to be quiet, and finds silence to be its wisdom. Evidently our Lord, by his silence, furnished a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy. A long defence of himself would have been contrary to Isaiah's prediction. “He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” By his quiet he conclusively proved himself to be the true Lamb of God. As such we salute him this morning. Be with us, Jesus, and in the silence of our heart, let us hear the voice of thy love.

“Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.”—Matthew 27:51

No mean miracle was wrought in the rending of so strong and thick a veil; but it was not intended merely as a display of power—many lessons were herein taught us. The old law of ordinances was put away, and like a worn-out vesture, rent and laid aside. When Jesus died, the sacrifices were all finished, because all fulfilled in him, and therefore the place of their presentation was marked with an evident token of decay. That rent also revealed all the hidden things of the old dispensation: the mercy-seat could now be seen, and the glory of God gleamed forth above it. By the death of our Lord Jesus we have a clear revelation of God, for he was “not as Moses, who put a veil over his face.” Life and immortality are now brought to light, and things which have been hidden since the foundation of the world are manifest in him. The annual ceremony of atonement was thus abolished. The atoning blood which was once every year sprinkled within the veil, was now offered once for all by the great High Priest, and therefore the place of the symbolical rite was broken up. No blood of bullocks or of lambs is needed now, for Jesus has entered within the veil with his own blood. Hence access to God is now permitted, and is the privilege of every believer in Christ Jesus. There is no small space laid open through which we may peer at the mercy-seat, but the rent reaches from the top to the bottom. We may come with boldness to the throne of the heavenly grace. Shall we err if we say that the opening of the Holy of Holies in this marvellous manner by our Lord’s expiring cry was the type of the opening of the gates of paradise to all the saints by virtue of the Passion? Our bleeding Lord hath the key of heaven; he openeth and no man shutteth; let us enter in with him into the heavenly places, and sit with him there till our common enemies shall be made his footstool.

Matthew 28

“As it began to dawn, came Magdalene, to see the sepulchre.”—Matthew 28:1

Let us learn from Mary Magdalene how to obtain fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Notice how she sought. She sought the Saviour very early in the morning. If thou canst wait for Christ, and be patient in the hope of having fellowship with him at some distant season, thou wilt never have fellowship at all; for the heart that is fitted for communion is a hungering and a thirsting heart. She sought him also with very great boldness. Other disciples fled from the sepulchre, for they trembled and were amazed; but Mary, it is said, “stood” at the sepulchre. If you would have Christ with you, seek him boldly. Let nothing hold you back. Defy the world. Press on where others flee. She sought Christ faithfully—she stood at the sepulchre. Some find it hard to stand by a living Saviour, but she stood by a dead one. Let us seek Christ after this mode, cleaving to the very least thing that has to do with him, remaining faithful though all others should forsake him. Note further, she sought Jesus earnestly—she stood “weeping”. Those tear-droppings were as spells that led the Saviour captive, and made him come forth and show himself to her. If you desire Jesus’ presence, weep after it! If you cannot be happy unless he come and say to you, “Thou art my beloved,” you will soon hear his voice. Lastly, she sought the Saviour only. What cared she for angels, she turned herself back from them; her search was only for her Lord. If Christ be your one and only love, if your heart has cast out all rivals, you will not long lack the comfort of his presence. Mary Magdalene sought thus because she loved much. Let us arouse ourselves to the same intensity of affection; let our heart, like Mary’s, be full of Christ, and our love, like hers, will be satisfied with nothing short of himself. O Lord, reveal thyself to us this evening!

“I am with you always.”—Matthew 28:20

It is well there is One who is ever the same, and who is ever with us. It is well there is one stable rock amidst the billows of the sea of life. O my soul, set not thine affections upon rusting, moth-eaten, decaying treasures, but set thine heart upon him who abides for ever faithful to thee. Build not thine house upon the moving quicksands of a deceitful world, but found thy hopes upon this rock, which, amid descending rain and roaring floods, shall stand immovably secure. My soul, I charge thee, lay up thy treasure in the only secure cabinet; store thy jewels where thou canst never lose them. Put thine all in Christ; set all thine affections on his person, all thy hope in his merit, all thy trust in his efficacious blood, all thy joy in his presence, and so thou mayest laugh at loss, and defy destruction. Remember that all the flowers in the world’s garden fade by turns, and the day cometh when nothing will be left but the black, cold earth. Death’s black extinguisher must soon put out thy candle. Oh! how sweet to have sunlight when the candle is gone! The dark flood must soon roll between thee and all thou hast; then wed thine heart to him who will never leave thee; trust thyself with him who will go with thee through the black and surging current of death’s stream, and who will land thee safely on the celestial shore, and make thee sit with him in heavenly places for ever. Go, sorrowing son of affliction, tell thy secrets to the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Trust all thy concerns with him who never can be taken from thee, who will never leave thee, and who will never let thee leave him, even “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” “Lo, I am with you always,” is enough for my soul to live upon, let who will forsake me.

“Lo, I am with you always.”—Matthew 28:20

The Lord Jesus is in the midst of his church; he walketh among the golden candlesticks; his promise is, "Lo, I am with you alway." He is as surely with us now as he was with the disciples at the lake, when they saw coals of fire, and fish laid thereon and bread. Not carnally, but still in real truth, Jesus is with us. And a blessed truth it is, for where Jesus is, love becomes inflamed. Of all the things in the world that can set the heart burning, there is nothing like the presence of Jesus! A glimpse of him so overcomes us, that we are ready to say, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me." Even the smell of the aloes, and the myrrh, and the cassia, which drop from his perfumed garments, causes the sick and the faint to grow strong. Let there be but a moment's leaning of the head upon that gracious bosom, and a reception of his divine love into our poor cold hearts, and we are cold no longer, but glow like seraphs, equal to every labour, and capable of every suffering. If we know that Jesus is with us, every power will be developed, and every grace will be strengthened, and we shall cast ourselves into the Lord's service with heart, and soul, and strength; therefore is the presence of Christ to be desired above all things. His presence will be most realized by those who are most like him. If you desire to see Christ, you must grow in conformity to him. Bring yourself, by the power of the Spirit, into union with Christ's desires, and motives, and plans of action, and you are likely to be favoured with his company. Remember his presence may be had. His promise is as true as ever. He delights to be with us. If he doth not come, it is because we hinder him by our indifference. He will reveal himself to our earnest prayers, and graciously suffer himself to be detained by our entreaties, and by our tears, for these are the golden chains which bind Jesus to his people.