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≡ ST. AUGUSTINE ≡

THE CONFESSIONS
OF ST. AUGUSTINE

(Books One to Ten)

GENERAL EDITOR ~ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

MOODY CLASSICS

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CHICAGO

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THE FIRST BOOK



CONFESSION OF THE GREATNESS AND UNSearchABLENESS OF
GOD, OF GOD'S MERCIES IN INFANCY AND BOYHOOD, AND
HUMAN WILFULNESS; OF HIS OWN SINS OF IDLENESS, ABUSE OF
HIS STUDIES, AND OF GOD'S GIFTS UP TO HIS FIFTEENTH YEAR.

1. GREAT ART THOU, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and Thy wisdom infinite (Pss. 145:3; 147:5). And Thee would man praise; man, but a particle of Thy creation; man, that bears about him his mortality, the witness of his sin, the witness, that *Thou resistest the proud* (Jam. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5): yet would man praise Thee; he, but a particle of Thy creation. Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it rest in Thee.

Grant me, Lord, to know and understand which is first, to call on Thee or to praise Thee? and, again, to know Thee or to call on Thee? For who can call on Thee, not knowing Thee? For he that knoweth Thee not, may call on Thee as someone other than Thou art. Or, is it rather, that we call on Thee that we may know Thee? But *how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?* (Rom. 10:14) or *how shall they believe without a*

preacher? And they that seek the Lord shall praise Him (Ps. 22:26). For *they that seek shall find Him* (Matt. 7:7), and they that find shall praise Him. I will seek Thee, Lord, by calling on Thee; and will call on Thee, believing in Thee; for to us hast Thou been preached. My faith, Lord, shall call on Thee, which Thou hast given me, and by which Thou hast inspired me, through the Incarnation of Thy Son, through the ministry of the Preacher.¹

2. And how shall I call upon my God, my God and Lord, since, when I call for Him, I shall be calling Him to myself? and what room is there within me, where my God can come into me? Where can God come into me, God who made heaven and earth? Is there, indeed, O Lord my God, anything in me that can contain Thee? Do then heaven and earth, which Thou hast made, and wherein Thou hast made me, contain Thee? or, because nothing which exists could exist without Thee, doth therefore whatever exists contain Thee? Since, then, I too exist, why do I desire that Thou shouldest enter into me, who were not, if Thou wert not in me? Why? Because I am not now in hell, and yet Thou art there also. For *if I go down into hell, Thou art there*. I could not be then, O my God, could not be at all, wert Thou not in me; or, rather, unless I were in Thee, *of whom are all things, by whom are all things, in whom are all things*. Even so, Lord, even so. Where do I call Thee, since I am in Thee? or whence canst Thou enter into me? For where can I go beyond heaven and earth, that there my God should come into me, who hath said, *I fill the heaven and the earth?*

3. Do the heaven and earth then contain Thee, since Thou fillest them? or dost Thou fill them and yet overflow, since they do not contain Thee? And where, when the heaven and the earth are filled, pourest Thou forth the remainder of Thyself? Or hast Thou no need that anything contain Thee, who containest all things, since what Thou fillest Thou fillest by containing it? For the vessels which Thou fillest restrict Thee not, since, though they were broken, Thou wert not poured out. And when Thou art *poured out* on us (Acts 2:18), Thou art not cast down, but Thou upliftest us; Thou art not scattered, but Thou gatherest us. But Thou who fillest all things, fillest Thou them with Thy whole self? or, since all things cannot contain Thee wholly, do they contain part of Thee? and all at once the same part? or each its own part, the greater more, the smaller less? And is, then, one part of Thee greater, another less? or, art Thou wholly everywhere, while nothing contains Thee wholly?

4. What art Thou then, my God? What, but the Lord God? *For who is Lord but the Lord? or who is God save our God?* (Ps. 35:3). Most highest, most good, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful, yet most just; most hidden, yet most present; most beautiful, yet most strong; stable, yet incomprehensible; unchangeable, yet all-changing; never new, never old; all-renewing, and *bringing age upon the proud, and they know it not*; ever working, ever at rest; still gathering, yet needing nothing; supporting, filling, and over-spreading; creating, nourishing, and maturing; seeking, yet having all things. Thou lovest, yet without passion;

art jealous, without anxiety; repentest, yet grieveest not; art angry, yet serene; changest Thy works, Thy purpose unchanged; receivest again what Thou findest, yet didst never lose; never in need, yet rejoicing in gains; never covetous, yet exacting usury (Matt. 25:27). Thou receivest over and above, that Thou mayest owe; and who hath anything that is not Thine? Thou payest debts, owing nothing; remittest debts, losing nothing. And what have I now said, my God, my life, my holy joy? or what saith any man when he speaks of Thee? Yet woe to him that speaketh not, since the mute are even the most eloquent.

5. Oh! that I might rest on Thee! Oh! that Thou wouldest enter into my heart, and inebriate it, that I may forget my ills, and embrace Thee, my only good. What art Thou to me? In Thy pity, teach me to utter it. Or what am I to Thee that Thou demandest my love, and, if I give it not, are wroth with me, and threatenest me with grievous woes? Is it then a slight woe to love Thee not? Oh! for Thy mercies' sake, tell me, O Lord my God, what Thou art unto me. *Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation* (Ps. 18:31). So speak, that I may hear. Behold, Lord, my heart is turned to Thee; open Thou the ears thereof, and *say unto my soul, I am thy salvation*. After this voice let me run, and take hold on Thee. Hide not Thy face from me. Let me die—lest I die—only let me see Thy face.

6. Narrow is the mansion of my soul; enlarge Thou it, that Thou mayest enter in. It lies in ruins; repair Thou it. It contains that which must offend Thine eyes; I confess and know it. But who shall cleanse it? or to whom should I cry, save Thee? *Lord,*

cleanse me from my secret faults, and spare Thy servant from the power of the enemy. I believe, and therefore do I speak (Pss. 19:12–13; 116:10; 32:5). Lord, thou knowest. *Have I not confessed against myself my transgressions unto Thee, and Thou, my God, hast forgiven the iniquity of my heart? I contend not in judgment with Thee* (Job 9:3), who art the truth; I fear to deceive myself; *lest mine iniquity lie unto itself* (Ps. 26:12). Therefore I contend not in judgment with Thee; *for if Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall abide it?* (Ps. 130:3).

7. Yet allow me to speak unto Thy mercy, me, *dust and ashes* (Gen. 18:27). Yet allow me to speak, since I speak to Thy mercy, and not to scornful man. Thou too, perhaps, despisest me, yet wilt Thou *return and have compassion* upon me (Jer. 12:15). For what would I say, O Lord my God, but that I know not whence I came into this dying life (shall I call it?) or living death. Then immediately did the comforts of Thy compassion take me up, as I heard (for I remember it not) from the parents of my flesh, out of whose substance Thou didst sometime fashion me. Thus there received me the comforts of woman's milk. For neither my mother nor my nurses filled their own breasts for me; but Thou didst bestow the food of my infancy through them, according to Thine ordinance, whereby Thou distributest Thy riches through the hidden springs of all things. Thou also gavest me to want no more than Thou gavest; and to my nurses willingly to give me what Thou gavest them. For they, with an heaven-taught affection, willingly gave me, what they abounded with from Thee. For

this my good from them, was good for them. Nor, indeed, from them was it, but through them; for from Thee, O God, come all good things, and *from my God is all my health*. This I since learned, Thou, through these Thy gifts, within me and outside me, proclaiming Thyself unto me. For then I knew but to suck; to be satisfied in what pleased, and cry at what hurt my flesh; nothing more.

8. Afterwards I began to smile; first in sleep, then waking: for so it was told me about myself, and I believed it; for we see the like in other infants, though of myself I remember it not. Thus, little by little, I became conscious where I was; and to have a wish to express my wishes to those who could satisfy them, and I could not; for the wishes were within me, and they without; nor could they by any power of theirs enter within my spirit. So I tossed about at random limbs and voice, making the few signs I could, and such as I could, like, though in truth very little like, what I wished. And when I was not presently obeyed (my wishes being hurtful or unintelligible), then I was indignant with my elders for not submitting to me, with those owing me no service, for not serving me; and avenged myself on them by tears. Such have I learnt about infants from observing them; and, that I was myself such, they, without knowing it, have shown me better than my nurses who knew it.

9. But my infancy died long since, and I live. But Thou, Lord, who for ever livest, and in whom nothing dies: for before all that can be called "before," Thou art, and art God and Lord of all

which Thou hast created: in Thee abide, fixed for ever, the first causes of all things unabiding; and of all things changeable, the springs abide in Thee unchangeable: and in Thee live the eternal reasons of all things unreasoning and temporal. Tell me, Lord, Thy suppliant; say, all-pitying, to me, Thy pitiable one; say, did my infancy succeed another age of mine that died before it? Was it that which I spent within my mother's womb? for of that I have heard something, and have myself seen women with child? and what before that life again, O God my joy, was I any where or any body? For this have I none to tell me, neither father nor mother, nor experience of others, nor mine own memory. Dost Thou laugh at me for asking this, and bid me praise Thee and acknowledge Thee, for all I do know?

10. I acknowledge Thee, Lord of heaven and earth, and praise Thee for my first rudiments of being, and my infancy, whereof I remember nothing; for Thou hast endowed man that he should from others guess much concerning himself; and believe much on the strength of weak women. Even then I had being and life, and (at my infancy's close) I could seek for signs, whereby to make known to others my sensations. Whence could such a being be, save from Thee, Lord? Shall any be his own artificer? Or can there elsewhere be derived any channel, which may stream essence and life into us, save from Thee, O Lord, in whom essence and life are one? for Thou Thyself art supremely Essence and Life. *For Thou art most high, and art not changed* (Mal. 3:6), neither in Thee doth Today come to a close; yet in Thee doth it

come to a close; because all such things also are in Thee. For they had no way to pass away, unless Thou upheldest them. And since *Thy years fail not* (Ps. 102:27), Thy years are this very day. How many of ours and our fathers' years have flowed away through Thy "today," and from it received the measure and the mould of such being as they had; and still others shall flow away, and so receive the measure of their degree of being. But *Thou art still the same* (Ibid.), and all things of tomorrow, and all beyond, and all of yesterday, and all behind it, Thou hast done today. What is it to me, if anyone comprehend not this? Let him also rejoice and say, *What thing is this?* (Ex. 16:15). Let him rejoice even thus; and be content rather by not discovering to discover Thee, than by discovering not to discover Thee.

11. Hear, O God. Alas, for man's sin! So saith man, and Thou pitiest him; for Thou madest him, but sin in him Thou madest not. Who remindeth me of the sins of my infancy? *for in Thy sight none is pure from sin, not even the infant whose life is but a day upon the earth* (Job 25:4). Who brings this to my mind? Doth not each little infant, in whom I see what of myself I remember not? What then was my sin? Was it that I hung upon the breast and cried? For should I now so do for food suitable to my age, justly should I be laughed at and reproof. What I then did was worthy of reproof; but since I could not understand reproof, custom and reason forbade me to be reproof. For those habits, when grown, we root out and cast away. Now no man, though he roots out the bad, wittingly casts away what is good

(John 15:2). Or was it then good, even for a while, to cry for what, if given, would be harmful? bitterly to resent, that persons free, and its own elders, yea, that very authors of its birth, served it not? that many other persons besides, wiser than it, obeyed not the orders of its good pleasure? to do its best to strike and hurt, because commands were not obeyed, which had been obeyed to its hurt? The weakness then of infant limbs, not its will, is its innocence. Myself have seen and known even a baby envious; it could not speak, yet it turned pale and looked bitterly on its foster-brother. Who knows not this? Mothers and nurses tell you, that they subdue these things by I know not what remedies. Is that too innocence, when the fountain of milk is flowing in rich abundance, not to endure one to share it, though in extremest need, and whose very life as yet depends thereon? We bear gently with all this, not as being no or slight evils, but because they will disappear as years increase; for, though tolerated now, the very same tempers are utterly intolerable when found in later years.

12. Thou, then, O Lord my God, who gavest life to this my infancy, furnishing thus with senses (as we see) the body Thou gavest, equipping it with limbs, ornamenting its proportions, and, for its general good and safety, implanting in it all vital functions, Thou commandest me to praise Thee for these things, *to confess unto Thee, and sing unto Thy name, Thou most Highest* (Ps. 92:1). For Thou art God, Almighty and Good, even hadst Thou done nothing but only this, which none could do but Thou: whose oneness is the mould of all things; who out of Thy own

fairness makest all things fair; and orderest all things by Thy law. This age then, Lord, whereof I have no remembrance which I take on others' word, and guess from other infants that I have passed, true though the guess be, I am yet reluctant to count in this life of mine which I live in this world. For no less than that which I spent in my mother's womb, is it hid from me in the shadows of forgetfulness. But if *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me* (Ps. 51:7), where, I beseech Thee, O my God, where, Lord, or when, was I Thy servant innocent? But, lo! that period I pass by; and what have I now to do with that, of which I can recall no trace?

13. Passing hence from infancy, I came to boyhood, or rather it came to me, displacing infancy. Nor did that depart,—(for whither went it?)—and yet it was no more. For I was no longer a speechless infant, but a speaking boy. This I remember; and have since observed how I learned to speak. It was not that my elders taught me words (as, soon after, other sorts of learning) in any set method; but I, longing by cries and broken accents and various motions of my limbs to express my thoughts, so that I might have my will, and yet unable to express all I wished, or to whom I willed, did myself, by the understanding which Thou, my God, gavest me, practise the sounds in my memory. When they named any thing, and as they spoke turned towards it, I saw and remembered what they called what they would point out, by the name they uttered. And that they meant this thing and no other, was plain from the motion of their body, and natural language, as it

were, of all nations, expressed by the countenance, glances of the eye, gestures of the limbs, and tones of the voice, indicating the affections of the mind, as it pursues, possesses, rejects, or shuns. And thus by constantly hearing words, as they occurred in various sentences, I understood gradually for what they stood; and having broken in my mouth to these signs, I thereby gave expression to my will. Thus I exchanged with those about me these current signs of our wills and so launched deeper into the stormy exchanges of human life, yet depending on parental authority and the desires of my elders.

14. O God my God, what miseries and mockeries did I now experience, when obedience to my teachers was proposed to me, as proper in a boy, in order that in this world I might prosper, and excel in the art of speech, which should serve to the "praise of men," and to deceitful riches. Next I was sent to school to get learning, in which I (poor wretch) knew not what use there was; and yet, if slow in learning, I was beaten. For this was judged right by our forefathers; and many, passing the same course before us, formed for us weary paths, through which we were fain to pass; multiplying toil and grief upon the sons of Adam. But, Lord, we found that men called upon Thee, and we learnt from them to think of Thee (according to our powers) as of some great One, who, though hidden from our senses, couldst hear and help us. For so I began, as a boy, to pray to Thee, my aid and refuge; and broke the restraints of my tongue to call on Thee, praying Thee, though small, yet with no small earnestness, that I might not be beaten

at school. And when Thou heardest me not (*not thereby giving me over to folly*) (Ps. 21:3), my elders, yea, my very parents, who yet wished me no ill, laughed at my punishments, my then great and grievous ill.

15. Is there, Lord, any man of soul so great, and cleaving to Thee with so intense affection (for a sort of stupidity will in a way do it); but is there any one, who, from clinging devoutly to Thee, is endowed with so great a spirit, that he can think as lightly of the racks and hooks and other torments (against which, throughout all lands, men call on Thee with extreme dread), mocking at those by whom they are feared most bitterly, as our parents laughed at the torments which we suffered in boyhood from our masters? For we feared not our torments less; nor prayed we less to Thee to escape them. And yet we sinned, in writing or reading or studying less than was exacted of us. For we lacked not, O Lord, memory or capacity, whereof Thy will gave enough for our age; but our sole delight was play; and for this we were punished by those who yet themselves were doing the same thing. But elder folks' idleness is called "business;" that of boys, being really the same, is punished by those elders; and none pities either boys or men. For will anyone of sound discretion approve of my being beaten as a boy, because, by playing at ball, I made less progress in studies which I was to learn, only that, as a man, I might play in an unseemly fashion? And what else did he, who beat me? who, surpassed in some trifling discussion with his fellow-tutor, was more embittered and jealous than I, when beaten at ball by a play-fellow?

DR. & MRS.
— HOWARD TAYLOR —

HUDSON *TAYLOR'S*
SPIRITUAL SECRET

FOREWORD BY GEORGE VERWER
MOODY CLASSICS

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An Open Secret



BEAR NOT A SINGLE CARE THYSELF,
ONE IS TOO MUCH FOR THEE;
THE WORK IS MINE, AND MINE ALONE;
THY WORK—TO REST IN ME.

—*Selected*

HUDSON TAYLOR was no recluse. He was a man of affairs, the father of a family, and one who bore large responsibilities. Intensely practical, he lived a life of constant change among all sorts and conditions of men. He was no giant in strength, no Atlas to bear the world upon his shoulders. Small in stature and far from strong, he had always to face physical limitations. Next to godly parentage, the chief advantage of his early years was that he had to support himself from the time he was about sixteen. He became a hard worker and an efficient medical man; he was able to care for a baby, cook a dinner, keep accounts, and comfort the sick and sorrowing, no less than to originate great enterprises and afford spiritual leadership to thoughtful men and women the wide world over.

Above all, he put to the test the promises of God, and proved

it possible to live a consistent spiritual life on the highest plane. He overcame difficulties such as few men have ever had to encounter, and left a work which long after his death is still growing in extent and usefulness. Inland China opened to the Gospel largely as an outcome of this life, tens of thousands of souls won to Christ in previously unreached provinces, twelve hundred missionaries depending upon God for the supply of all their needs without promise of salary, a mission which has never made an appeal for financial help, yet has never been in debt, that never asks man or woman to join its ranks, yet has sent to China recently two hundred new workers given in answer to prayer—such is the challenge that calls us to emulate Hudson Taylor's faith and devotion.

What was the secret, we may well ask, of such a life? Hudson Taylor had many secrets, for he was always going on with God, yet they were but one—the simple, profound secret of drawing for every need, temporal or spiritual, upon “the fathomless wealth of Christ.” To find out how he did this, and to make our own his simple, practical attitude toward spiritual things, would solve our problems and ease our burdens, so that we too might become all that God would make us. We want, we need, we may have Hudson Taylor's secret and his success, for we have Hudson Taylor's Bible and his God.

Remember them that have the rule over you . . . and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and forever.*

Soul-Growth in Early Years



TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS,
LOOK FULL IN HIS WONDERFUL FACE;
AND THE THINGS OF EARTH WILL GROW STRANGELY DIM
IN THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY AND GRACE.

—*H. Lemmel*

THE BEGINNING of it all was a quiet hour among his father's books, when young Hudson Taylor sought something to interest him. His mother was away from home and the boy was missing her. The house seemed empty, so he took the story he found to a favorite corner in the old warehouse, thinking he would read it as long as it did not get prosy.

Many miles away, the mother was specially burdened that Saturday afternoon about her only son. Leaving her friends she went alone to plead with God for his salvation. Hour after hour passed while that mother was still upon her knees, until her heart was flooded with a joyful assurance that her prayers were heard and answered.

The boy was reading, meanwhile, the booklet he had picked up, and as the story merged into something more serious he was

arrested by the words: "The finished work of Christ." Who can explain the mystery of the Holy Spirit's working? Truth long familiar, though neglected, came back to mind and heart.

"Why does the writer use those words?" he questioned. "Why does he not say, 'the atoning or propitiatory work of Christ'?"

Immediately, *It is finished* shone out as in letters of light. Finished? What was finished?

"A full and perfect atonement for sin," his heart replied. "The debt was paid by the great Substitute. 'Christ died for our sins,' and 'not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'"

Then came the thought with startling clearness, "If the whole work is finished, the whole debt paid, what is there left for me to do?"

The one, the only answer took possession of his soul: "There was nothing in the world for me to do save to fall upon my knees and accepting this Saviour and His salvation to praise Him for evermore."

Old doubts and fears were gone. The reality of the wonderful experience we call conversion filled him with peace and joy. New life came with that simple acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ, for to "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." And great was the change that new life brought.

Longing to share his newfound joy with his mother, he was the first to welcome her on her return.

"I know, my boy, I know," she said with her arms about him. "I have been rejoicing for a fortnight in the glad news you have to tell."

Another surprise awaited him not long after, when, picking up a notebook he thought was his own, he found an entry in his sister's writing to the effect that she would give herself daily to prayer until God should answer in the conversion of her only brother. The young girl had recorded this decision just a month previously.

Brought up in such a circle [Hudson Taylor wrote] and saved under such circumstances, it was perhaps natural that from the very commencement of my Christian life I was led to feel that the promises of the Bible are very real, and that prayer is in sober fact transacting business with God, whether on one's own behalf or on behalf of those for whom one seeks His blessing.

The brother and sister were now one in a new way, and young though they were, for he was only seventeen, they began to do all they could to win others to Christ. This was the secret of the rapid growth which followed in spiritual things. They entered from the very first into the Lord's own yearning of heart over the lost and perishing. Not "social service," but living for others with a supreme concern for their soul's salvation was the line on which they were led out. And this not with any sense of

superiority, but simply from a deep, personal love to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was that love that as the days went on made it such a keen distress to fail in the old ways and lose the joy of His conscious presence. For there were ups and downs as with most young Christians, and neglect of prayer and feeding on God's Word always brings coldness of heart. But the outstanding thing about Hudson Taylor's early experience was that he could not be satisfied with anything less than the best, God's best—the real and constant enjoyment of His presence. To go without this was to live without sunlight, to work without power. That he knew the joy of the Lord in those early days is evident from recollections such as the following. A leisure afternoon had brought opportunity for prayer, and moved by deep longings he sought his room to be alone with God.


Well do I remember how in the gladness of my heart I poured out my soul before God. Again and again confessing my grateful love to Him who had done everything for me, who had saved me when I had given up all hope and even desire for salvation, I besought Him to give me some work to do for Him as an outlet for love and gratitude. . . .

Well do I remember as I put myself, my life, my friends, my all upon the altar, the deep solemnity that came over my soul with the assurance that my offering was accepted. The presence of God became unutterably real and blessed, and I

remember . . . stretching myself on the ground and lying there before Him with unspeakable awe and unspeakable joy. For what service I was accepted I knew not, but a deep consciousness that I was not my own took possession of me which has never since been effaced.

If we think that boys or girls in their teens are too young for such soul-experiences, we are indeed mistaken. At no time in life is there greater capacity for devotion, if the heart's deepest springs are open to the love of Christ.

THE APOSTOLIC
*F*ATHERS

FOREWORD BY  MARK GALLI

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The Letter of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth, Commonly Called Clement's First Letter



THE TEXT

THE CHURCH OF GOD, living in exile in Rome, to the church of God, exiled in Corinth—to you who are called and sanctified by God's will through our Lord Jesus Christ. Abundant grace and peace be yours from God Almighty through Jesus Christ.

¹ Due, dear friends, to the sudden and successive misfortunes and accidents we have encountered, we have, we admit, been rather long in turning our attention to your quarrels. We refer to the abominable and unholy schism, so alien and foreign to those whom God has chosen, which a few impetuous and headstrong fellows have fanned to such a pitch of insanity that your good name, once so famous and dear to us all, has fallen into the gravest ill repute. ²Has anyone, indeed, stayed with you without attesting the excellence and firmness of your faith? without admiring your

sensible and considerate Christian piety? without broadcasting your spirit of unbounded hospitality? without praising your perfect and trustworthy knowledge? ³For you always acted without partiality and walked in God's laws. You obeyed your rulers and gave your elders the proper respect. You disciplined the minds of your young people in moderation and dignity. You instructed your women to do everything with a blameless and pure conscience, and to give their husbands the affection they should. You taught them, too, to abide by the rule of obedience and to run their homes with dignity and thorough discretion.

2 You were all humble and without any pretensions, obeying orders rather than issuing them, more gladly giving than receiving. Content with Christ's rations and mindful of them, you stored his words carefully up in your hearts and held his sufferings before your eyes. ²In consequence, you were all granted a profound and rich peace and an insatiable longing to do good, while the Holy Spirit was abundantly poured out on you all. ³You were full of holy counsels, and, with zeal for the good and devout confidence, you stretched out your hands to almighty God, beseeching him to have mercy should you involuntarily have fallen into any sin. ⁴Day and night you labored for the whole brotherhood, that by your pity and sympathy the sum of his elect might be saved. ⁵You were sincere and guileless and bore no grudges. ⁶All sedition and schism were an abomination to you. You wept for the faults of your neighbors, while you reckoned their shortcomings as your own. ⁷You never regretted all the good

you did, being “ready for any good deed.” Possessed of an excellent and devout character, you did everything in His fear. The commands and decrees of the Lord were engraven on the tablets of your heart.

3 You were granted great popularity and growing numbers, so that the word of Scripture was fulfilled: “My beloved ate and drank and filled out and grew fat and started to kick.” ²From this there arose rivalry and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and anarchy, war and captivity. ³And so “the dishonored” rose up “against those who were held in honor,” those of no reputation against the notable, the stupid against the wise, “the young against their elders.” ⁴For this reason righteousness and peace are far from you, since each has abandoned the fear of God and grown purblind in his faith, and ceased to walk by the rules of his precepts or to behave in a way worthy of Christ. Rather does each follow the lusts of his evil heart, by reviving that wicked and unholy rivalry, by which, indeed, “death came into the world.”

4 For Scripture runs thus: “And it happened after some days that Cain brought God a sacrifice from the fruits of the earth, while Abel made his offering from the first-born of the sheep and of their fat. ²And God looked with favor on Abel and on his gifts; but he did not heed Cain and his sacrifices. ³And Cain was greatly upset and his face fell. ⁴And God said to Cain, ‘Why are you so upset, and why has your face fallen? If you have made a correct offering but not divided it correctly, have you not sinned? ⁵Keep quiet. Your brother will turn to you and you shall rule over him.’

⁶And Cain said to his brother Abel, 'Let us go into the field.' And it happened that while they were in the field Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him."

⁷You see, brothers, rivalry and envy are responsible for fratricide. ⁸Because of rivalry our forefather Jacob fled from the presence of his brother Esau. ⁹It was rivalry that caused Joseph to be murderously persecuted and reduced to slavery. ¹⁰Rivalry forced Moses to flee from the presence of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, when he heard his fellow clansman say: "Who made you a ruler or judge over us? Do you want to slay me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" ¹¹By reason of rivalry Aaron and Miriam were excluded from the camp. ¹²Rivalry cast Dathan and Abiram alive into Hades because they revolted against Moses, God's servant. ¹³Because of rivalry David not only incurred the envy of foreigners but was even persecuted by Saul, the king of Israel.

5 But, passing from examples in antiquity, let us come to the heroes nearest our own times. Let us take the noble examples of our own generation. ²By reason of rivalry and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the Church] were persecuted, and battled to the death. ³Let us set before our eyes the noble apostles: ⁴Peter, who by reason of wicked jealousy, not only once or twice but frequently endured suffering and thus, bearing his witness, went to the glorious place which he merited. ⁵By reason of rivalry and contention Paul showed how to win the prize for patient endurance. ⁶Seven times he was in chains; he was exiled, stoned, became a herald [of the gospel] in East and West, and won

the noble renown which his faith merited. ⁷To the whole world he taught righteousness, and reaching the limits of the West he bore his witness before rulers. And so, released from this world, he was taken up into the holy place and became the greatest example of patient endurance.

6 To these men who lived such holy lives there was joined a great multitude of the elect who by reason of rivalry were the victims of many outrages and tortures and who became outstanding examples among us. ²By reason of rivalry women were persecuted in the roles of Danaids and Dircae. Victims of dreadful and blasphemous outrages, they ran with sureness the course of faith to the finish, and despite their physical weakness won a notable prize. ³It was rivalry that estranged wives from their husbands and annulled the saying of our father Adam, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." ⁴Rivalry and contention have overthrown great cities and uprooted mighty nations.

7 We are writing in this vein, dear friends, not only to admonish you but also to remind ourselves. For we are in the same arena and involved in the same struggle. ²Hence we should give up empty and futile concerns, and turn to the glorious and holy rule of our tradition. ³Let us note what is good, what is pleasing and acceptable to Him who made us. ⁴Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ and let us realize how precious it is to his Father, since it was poured out for our salvation and brought the grace of repentance to the whole world. ⁵Let us go through all the generations and observe that from one generation to another the

Master “has afforded and opportunity of repentance” to those who are willing to turn to him. ⁶Noah preached repentance and those who heeded him were saved. ⁷Jonah preached destruction to the Ninevites; and when they had repented of their sins, they propitiated God with their prayers and gained salvation despite the fact they were not God’s people.

8 The ministers of God’s grace spoke about repentance through the Holy Spirit, ²and the Master of the universe himself spoke of repentance with an oath: “For as I live, says the Lord, I do not desire the death of the sinner, but his repentance.” ³He added, too, this generous consideration: “Repent, O house of Israel, of your iniquity. Say to the sons of my people, Should your sins reach from earth to heaven, and be redder than scarlet and blacker than sackcloth, and should you turn to me with your whole heart and say ‘Father!’ I will heed you as though you were a holy people.” ⁴And in another place this is what he says: “Wash and become clean: rid your souls of wickedness before my eyes. Cease from your wickedness, learn to behave well, devote yourselves to justice, rescue the wronged, uphold the rights of the orphan and grant the widow justice. And come, let us reason together, says the Lord; and if your sins are like purple, I will make them white as snow, and if they are like scarlet, I will make them white as wool. And if you are willing and heed me, you shall eat the good things of the earth. But if you are unwilling and do not heed me, the sword shall devour you. For it is the mouth of the Lord that has spoken thus. ⁵Since, there, he wanted all

those he loved to have an opportunity to repent, he confirmed this by his almighty will.

9 So, then, let us fall in with his magnificent and glorious intention, and let us prostrate ourselves before him as suppliants of his mercy and kindness. Let us turn to his compassion and give up useless ventures and strife, and rivalry that leads to death. ²Let us father our eyes on those who have served his magnificent glory to perfection. ³Let us take Enoch, for instance, who, because he proved upright by his obedience, was translated and never died. ⁴Noah proved faithful in his ministry and preached a new birth to the world. Through him, therefore, the Master saved those living creatures that entered peacefully into the ark.

10 Abraham, who was called "The Friend," proved faithful in obeying God's words. ²It was obedience which led him to quit his country, his kindred, and his father's house, so that by leaving a paltry country, a mean kindred, and an insignificant house, he might inherit God's promises. ³For he told him: "Depart from your country and from your kindred and from the house of your father, and go to a land which I will show you. And I will make you great among the nations and I will bless you and I will make your name great and you will be blessed. And I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you, and all the tribes of the earth will be blessed through you." ⁴And again, when he separated from Lot, God told him: "Lift up your eyes and from where you now are look to the North, the South, the East, and the West, for all the land that you see I will give you and your

seed forever. ⁵And I will make your seed like the dust of the earth. If anybody can count the dust of the earth, then your seed will be counted." ⁶And again he says: "God led Abraham out and told him: Look up to heaven and count the stars, if you can. That is how numerous your seed will be! And Abraham believed God and this was put down to his credit as an upright deed." ⁷Because of his faith and hospitality a son was granted to him in his old age, and he obediently offered him as a sacrifice to God on one of the hills which he indicated.

11 Because of his hospitality and religious devotion, Lot was saved from Sodom, when the whole countryside was condemned to fire and brimstone. In that way the Master made it clear that he does not forsake those who put their hope on him, but delivers to punishment and torment those who turn away from him. ²Of this latter, to be sure, his wife became an example. After quitting the city with him, she changed her mind and fell out with him, with the result that she became a pillar of salt that exists to this day. In this way it was made evident to all that the double-minded and those who question God's power are condemned and become a warning to all generations.

upstairs under stalks of flax. ⁴When the king's men learned of it, they said to her: "The men who are spying on our country went into your house. Bring them out, for this is the king's command." But she at once answered, "The men you seek came into my house, but they immediately departed and are on their way," and she pointed in the opposite direction. ⁵And she said to the men: "I am absolutely certain that the Lord God is handing this country over to you; for fear and terror of you have fallen on all its people. When, therefore, you come to take it, rescue me and my father's house." ⁶And they said to her: "It shall be exactly as you say. When you learn of our approach, you shall gather together all your family under your roof and they shall be saved. But whoever is found outside the house will perish." ⁷And in addition they gave her a sign that she should hang a piece of scarlet from her house. By this they made it clear that it was by the blood of the Lord that redemption was going to come to all who believe in God and hope on him. ⁸You see, dear friends, that not only faith but prophecy as well is exemplified in this woman.

13 Let us then, brothers, be humble and be rid of all pretensions and arrogance and silliness and anger. Let us act as Scripture bids us, for the Holy Spirit says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man of his might or the rich man of his wealth. But let him that boasts boast of the Lord; and so he will seek Him out and act justly and uprightly." Especially let us recall the words of the Lord Jesus, which he uttered to teach considerateness and patience. ²For this is what he said: "Show mercy,

that you may be shown mercy. Forgive, that you may be forgiven. As you behave to others, so they will behave to you. As you give, so will you get. As you judge, so you will be judged. As you show kindness, so will you receive kindness. The measure you give will be the measure you get.”³Let us firmly hold on to this commandment and these injunctions so that in our conduct we may obey his holy words and be humble. ⁴For Holy Scripture says, “On whom shall I look except on him who is humble and gentle and who trembles at my words?”

14 It is right, then, and holy, brothers, that we should obey God rather than follow those arrogant and disorderly fellows who take the lead in stirring up loathsome rivalry. ²For we shall incur no ordinary harm, but rather great danger, if we recklessly give ourselves over to the designs of men who launch out into strife and sedition to alienate us from what is right. ³Let us be kind to one another in line with the compassion and tenderness of him who created us. ⁴For it is written: “The kind shall inhabit the land, and the innocent shall be left upon it. But those who transgress shall be destroyed from off it.” ⁵And again he says: “I saw an ungodly man exalted and elevated like the cedars of Lebanon. But I passed by and, look, he had vanished! And I searched for his place and could not find it. Maintain innocence and have an eye for uprightness, for a man of peace will have descendants.”

15 Let us, then, attach ourselves to those who are religiously devoted to peace, and not to those who wish for it hypocritically. ²For somewhere it is said, “This people honors me with its

≡ J. OSWALD SANDERS ≡

THE
INCOMPARABLE
CHRIST

FOREWORD BY J. I. PACKER
MOODY CLASSICS

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CHICAGO

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"He Is Altogether Lovely."

The Moral Perfection of Christ



IN A LETTER published after his death, the poet Robert Browning cited several utterances of men of genius concerning the Christian faith, and among them was this one from Charles Lamb: "In a gay fancy with some friends as to how they would feel if some of the greatest of the dead were to appear suddenly in flesh and blood once more—on the final suggestion, 'And if Christ entered this room?' he changed his manner at once and stuttered out as his manner was when moved, 'You see if Shakespeare entered we should all rise; if HE appeared, we must kneel.'" Such was his conception of the moral glory of Christ.

A similar impression was produced on a brilliant Brahmin scholar. Disturbed by the progress of the Christian faith among his own people, he determined to do all in his power to arrest it. His plan was to prepare for widespread distribution a brochure highlighting the weaknesses and failings of Christ, and exposing the fallacy of believing in Him.

For eleven years he diligently studied the New Testament,

searching for inconsistencies in Christ's character and teaching. Not only did he fail to discover any, but he became convinced that the one he sought to discredit was what He claimed to be, the Son of God. The scholar boldly confessed his faith.

The moral perfection of Christ impresses itself on the thoughtful reader of the gospels. In them the evangelists present the portrait of a Man, a real Man, who displays perfection at every stage of development and in every circumstance of life. This is the more remarkable, as He did not immure Himself in some secluded cloister but mixed freely and naturally with the imperfect men of His own generation. So deeply involved in the life of the ordinary people did He become that His democratic tendencies earned the most bitter criticism of the sanctimonious Pharisees.

And yet there was a sense in which He was so ordinary that many of His contemporaries saw Him only as "the carpenter's son," a despised Nazarene. With eyes blinded by sin and self-will, they saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him (Isaiah 53:2). To all except those with eyes enlightened by love and faith, His moral grandeur and divine glory passed unnoticed. The shallow crowds were deceived by the entire absence of pomp and show.

Symmetry of Character

The character of our Lord was wonderfully balanced, with neither excess nor deficiency. Its excellence is recognized not only

by Christians but also by Jews and others of many forms of unbelief. It stands out faultlessly perfect, so symmetrical in all its proportions that its strength and greatness are not immediately obvious to the casual observer. It has been said that in Jesus' character no strong points were obvious because there were no weak ones. Strong points necessarily presuppose weak ones, but no weaknesses can be alleged of Him. In the best of men there is obvious inconsistency and inequality, and since the tallest bodies cast the longest shadows, the greater the man, the more glaring his faults are likely to be. With Christ it was far otherwise. He was without flaw or contradiction.

Virtue readily degenerates into vice. Courage may degenerate into cowardice on the one hand or rashness on the other. Purity may slip into either prudery or impurity. The pathway to virtue is narrow and slippery, but in our Lord there was no deflection. Throughout His earthly life He maintained every virtue unsullied.

In speech as in silence His perfect balance of character was displayed. He never spoke when it would have been wiser to remain silent, never kept silence when He should have spoken. Mercy and judgment blended in all His actions and judgments, yet neither prevailed at the expense of the other. Exact truth and infinite love adorned each other in His winsome personality, for He always spoke the truth in love. His severe denunciations of apostate Jerusalem were tremulous with His sobs (Matthew 23:37). True to His own counsel, He manifested the prudence of the serpent and the simplicity of the dove. His tremendous inner strength never

degenerated into mere obstinacy. He mastered the difficult art of displaying sympathy without surrendering principle.

The excellences of both sexes coalesced in Him. But while possessing all the gentler graces of womanhood He could never be regarded as effeminate. Indeed, he was linked in popular thought with the rugged Elijah, and the austere John the Baptist (Matthew 16:14). There is contrast yet not contradiction in His delicacy and gentleness in handling people who merited such treatment, and the blistering denunciations He poured on the hypocrites and parasites.

Another distinctive feature is that our Lord's character was complete in itself. "He entered on life with anything but a passionless simplicity of nature; yet it was a complete and finished character, with entire moral adulthood." Most men are notable for one conspicuous virtue or grace—Moses for meekness, Job for patience, John for love. But in Jesus you find everything. He is always consistent in Himself. No act or word contradicts anything that has gone before. The character of Christ is one and the same throughout. "He makes no improvements, prunes no extravagances, returns from no eccentricities. Its balance is never disturbed or readjusted."

Uniqueness of Character

The uniqueness of Christ is demonstrated most clearly in the things that every other great human teacher has done, but that He did not do.

No word He spoke needed to be modified or withdrawn, because He never spoke inadvisedly or fell into the evil of exaggeration. No half-truth or misstatement ever crossed His lips. He who was the Truth spoke the whole truth, and no occasion arose for modification or retraction of His spoken word.

He never apologized for word or action. And yet, is it not true that the ability to apologize is one of the elements of true greatness? It is the small-souled man who will not stoop to apologize. But Christ performed no action, spoke no word that required apology.

He confessed no sin. The holiest men of all ages have been the most abject in their confession of shortcoming and failure. Read for example the classic diary of Andrew A. Bonar, the Scottish saint. But no admission of failure to live up to the highest divine standards fell from Jesus' lips. On the contrary, He invited the closest investigation and scrutiny of His life by friend or foe. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He challenged (John 8:46). His life was an open book. Nothing He did was done in secret. He shouted His criticisms from the housetops. No other life could have survived the virulent criticism of His enemies, but He emerged with reputation untarnished.

Because that was the case, He never asked for pardon. Nowhere is it indicated that He ever felt remorse, or exhibited any fear of future penalty. He admonished His disciples when they prayed to say, "Forgive us our debts," but He never took those words on His own lips, because He owed no debts, either moral or spiritual.

He never sought advice from even the wisest men of His day. All other great leaders had those with whom they consulted, even Moses and Solomon. On the rare occasions on which well-meaning friends tendered advice to Jesus, He rejected it, as for example when His mother reminded Him of the failing wine at the wedding feast (John 2:4–5).

He was at no pains to justify ambiguous conduct, as for example, when He lay sleeping in the stern of the boat in the midst of a raging storm, apparently indifferent to the fears of His companions. Jesus volunteered no explanation, offered no apology (Mark 4:37–41). His delay in responding to the urgent appeal of the two sisters when Lazarus was ill was equally open to misunderstanding. We would have been unable to refrain from explaining and justifying our seeming neglect, but He was content to leave the passage of time and the unfolding of His Father's plan to vindicate His enigmatical actions (John 11:3, 6, 21, 32, 37).

Finally, He never asked or permitted prayer for Himself. True, He invited His three intimates to watch with Him, but not to pray for Him. Their prayer was to be for themselves lest they enter into temptation (Matthew 26:36–46).

Combination of Characteristics

There have been men who have lived two lives, one open to the scrutiny of all, the other hidden from their fellowmen. In His one person, Jesus possessed two natures that were manifested and exhibited simultaneously. Certain qualities that seldom coexist in

the same person combined without incongruity in Him.

A strange admixture of dependence and independence was observable in the life of the Master. Although conscious that He had at His disposal every resource, human and divine, He yet craved the solace of human company and sympathy. He exhibited a sublime independence of the praise or censure of the crowd, yet the companionship of His inner circle of friends was warmly appreciated.

Joyousness and seriousness blended in Him in perfect naturalness. The tender words of His farewell discourse are shot through with "an inexpressible sadness of joy" (John 15:11; 16:20, 33). He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3), yet the One Who was "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows" (Hebrews 1:9).

Although there is no record of our Lord laughing, He leaves the very opposite impression to that of gloom or austerity. Otto Borchert maintains that "fun and humor found no place in Jesus' life, because the strain induced by the sin of the world was too great." He poses the question: "Did He ever actually laugh?" Surely if He was anointed by God with the oil of gladness above His contemporaries there must have been room for holy laughter. It is unthinkable that He constantly paraded His sorrows, poignant though they were. The gospels unite to present a man winsome, radiant, and irresistibly attractive.

Perhaps the most arresting of these combinations of qualities was that of His majesty and humility. Though always meek and

lowly (Luke 22:27; Philippians 2:5–8), on occasion His divine majesty blazed through the veil of His humanity, as on the occasion of His arrest, when He said to the soldiers, “I AM,” and “they went backward, and fell to the ground” (John 18:6; see also John 7:46; 10:39). The simultaneous manifestation of both qualities is seen on the occasion of the foot washing. The utter humility of Christ is highlighted by the fact that it was in the full consciousness that “the Father had given all things into His hand, and that He was come from God and went to God,” that He took a towel and washed His followers’ dirty feet (John 13:3–5).

The wonder of the unity and uniqueness of His character is the more amazing since He had so short a time in which to work out what have been termed “the tremendous contradictions and collisions of His vast soul.” He was surely Lord of Himself and of all besides.

To sum up, “*He is altogether lovely.*” Every element of moral and spiritual beauty resides in Him. In a painting by Michelangelo, Christ is depicted sitting with other men, but the artist has been careful to ensure that it is on His face the light most strongly falls. The same impression is conveyed in the word pictures of the four gospels. In the succeeding chapters it will be our task to examine the glorious colors that emanate from the prism of His holy person and redemptive work.

*I'd sing the character He bears,
And all the forms of love He wears,
Exalted on His throne.
In loftiest songs of sweetest praise,
I would to everlasting days
Make all His glories known.*

≡ G. K. CHESTERTON ≡

 ORTHODOXY

FOREWORD BY ~ CHARLES COLSON

MOODY CLASSICS

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Introduction: In Defence of Everything Else



THE ONLY POSSIBLE EXCUSE for this book is that it is an answer to a challenge. Even a bad shot is dignified when he accepts a duel. When some time ago I published a series of hasty but sincere papers, under the name of "Heretics," several critics for whose intellect I have a warm respect (I may mention specially Mr. G. S. Street) said that it was all very well for me to tell everybody to affirm his cosmic theory, but that I had carefully avoided supporting my precepts with example. "I will begin to worry about my philosophy," said Mr. Street, "when Mr. Chesterton has given us his." It was perhaps an incautious suggestion to make to a person only too ready to write books upon the feeblest provocation. But after all, though Mr. Street has inspired and created this book, he need not read it. If he does read it, he will find that in its pages I have attempted in a vague and personal way, in a set of mental pictures rather than in a series of deductions, to state the philosophy in which I have come to believe. I will not call it my philosophy; for I did not make it. God and humanity made it; and it made me.

I have often had a fancy for writing a romance about an English yachtsman who slightly miscalculated his course and discovered England under the impression that it was a new island in the South Seas. I always find, however, that I am either too busy or too lazy to write this fine work, so I may as well give it away for the purposes of philosophical illustration. There will probably be a general impression that the man who landed (armed to the teeth and talking by signs) to plant the British flag on that barbaric temple which turned out to be the Pavilion at Brighton, felt rather a fool. I am not here concerned to deny that he looked a fool. But if you imagine that he felt a fool, or at any rate that the sense of folly was his sole or his dominant emotion, then you have not studied with sufficient delicacy the rich romantic nature of the hero of this tale. His mistake was really a most enviable mistake; and he knew it, if he was the man I take him for. What could be more delightful than to have in the same few minutes all the fascinating terrors of going abroad combined with all the humane security of coming home again? What could be better than to have all the fun of discovering South Africa without the disgusting necessity of landing there? What could be more glorious than to brace one's self up to discover New South Wales and then realize, with a gush of happy tears, that it was really old South Wales. This at least seems to me the main problem for philosophers, and is in a manner the main problem of this book. How can we contrive to be at once astonished at the world and yet at home in it? How can this queer cosmic town, with its

many-legged citizens, with its monstrous and ancient lamps, how can this world give us at once the fascination of a strange town and the comfort and honour of being our own town?

To show that a faith or a philosophy is true from every standpoint would be too big an undertaking even for a much bigger book than this; it is necessary to follow one path of argument; and this is the path that I here propose to follow. I wish to set forth my faith as particularly answering this double spiritual need, the need for that mixture of the familiar and the unfamiliar which Christendom has rightly named romance. For the very word "romance" has in it the mystery and ancient meaning of Rome. Any one setting out to dispute anything ought always to begin by saying what he does not dispute. Beyond stating what he proposes to prove he should always state what he does not propose to prove. The thing I do not propose to prove, the thing I propose to take as common ground between myself and any average reader, is this desirability of an active and imaginative life, picturesque and full of a poetical curiosity, a life such as western man at any rate always seems to have desired. If a man says that extinction is better than existence or blank existence better than variety and adventure, then he is not one of the ordinary people to whom I am talking. If a man prefers nothing I can give him nothing. But nearly all people I have ever met in this western society in which I live would agree to the general proposition that we need this life of practical romance; the combination of something that is strange with something that is secure. We need so to

view the world as to combine an idea of wonder and an idea of welcome. We need to be happy in this wonderland without once being merely comfortable. It is *this* achievement of my creed that I shall chiefly pursue in these pages.

But I have a peculiar reason for mentioning the man in a yacht, who discovered England. For I am that man in a yacht. I discovered England. I do not see how this book can avoid being egotistical; and I do not quite see (to tell the truth) how it can avoid being dull. Dulness will, however, free me from the charge which I most lament; the charge of being flippant. Mere light sophistry is the thing that I happen to despise most of all things, and it is perhaps a wholesome fact that this is the thing of which I am generally accused. I know nothing so contemptible as a mere paradox; a mere ingenious defence of the indefensible. If it were true (as has been said) that Mr. Bernard Shaw lived upon paradox, then he ought to be a mere common millionaire; for a man of his mental activity could invent a sophistry every six minutes. It is as easy as lying; because it is lying. The truth is, of course, that Mr. Shaw is cruelly hampered by the fact that he cannot tell any lie unless he thinks it is the truth. I find myself under the same intolerable bondage. I never in my life said anything merely because I thought it funny; though of course, I have had ordinary human vainglory, and may have thought it funny because I had said it. It is one thing to describe an interview with a gorgon or a griffin, a creature who does not exist. It is another thing to discover that the rhinoceros does exist and then take pleasure in the

fact that he looks as if he didn't. One searches for truth, but it may be that one pursues instinctively the more extraordinary truths. And I offer this book with the heartiest sentiments to all the jolly people who hate what I write, and regard it (very justly, for all I know) as a piece of poor clowning or a single tiresome joke.

For if this book is a joke it is a joke against me. I am the man who with the utmost daring discovered what had been discovered before. If there is an element of farce in what follows, the farce is at my own expense; for this book explains how I fancied I was the first to set foot in Brighton and then found I was the last. It recounts my elephantine adventures in pursuit of the obvious. No one can think my case more ludicrous than I think it myself; no reader can accuse me here of trying to make a fool of him: I am the fool of this story, and no rebel shall hurl me from my throne. I freely confess all the idiotic ambitions of the end of the nineteenth century. I did, like all other solemn little boys, try to be in advance of the age. Like them I tried to be some ten minutes in advance of the truth. And I found that I was eighteen hundred years behind it. I did strain my voice with a painfully juvenile exaggeration in uttering my truths. And I was punished in the fittest and funniest way, for I have kept my truths: but I have discovered, not that they were not truths, but simply that they were not mine. When I fancied that I stood alone I was really in the ridiculous position of being backed up by all Christendom. It may be, Heaven forgive me, that I did try to be

original; but I only succeeded in inventing all by myself an inferior copy of the existing traditions of civilized religion. The man from the yacht thought he was the first to find England; I thought I was the first to find Europe. I did try to found a heresy of my own; and when I had put the last touches to it, I discovered that it was orthodoxy.

It may be that somebody will be entertained by the account of this happy fiasco. It might amuse a friend or an enemy to read how I gradually learnt from the truth of some stray legend or from the falsehood of some dominant philosophy, things that I might have learnt from my catechism—if I had ever learnt it. There may or may not be some entertainment in reading how I found at last in an anarchist club or a Babylonian temple what I might have found in the nearest parish church. If any one is entertained by learning how the flowers of the field or the phrases in an omnibus, the accidents of politics or the pains of youth came together in a certain order to produce a certain conviction of Christian orthodoxy, he may possibly read this book. But there is in everything a reasonable division of labour. I have written the book, and nothing on earth would induce me to read it.

I add one purely pedantic note which comes, as a note naturally should, at the beginning of the book. These essays are concerned only to discuss the actual fact that the central Christian theology (sufficiently summarized in the Apostles' Creed) is the best root of energy and sound ethics. They are not intended to discuss the very fascinating but quite different question of what

is the present seat of authority for the proclamation of that creed. When the word "orthodoxy" is used here it means the Apostles' Creed, as understood by everybody calling himself Christian until a very short time ago and the general historic conduct of those who held such a creed. I have been forced by mere space to confine myself to what I have got from this creed; I do not touch the matter much disputed among modern Christians, of where we ourselves got it. This is not an ecclesiastical treatise but a sort of slovenly autobiography. But if any one wants my opinions about the actual nature of the authority, Mr. G. S. Street has only to throw me another challenge, and I will write him another book.

— GEORGE MUELLER —

ANSWERS TO
PRAYER

FROM
GEORGE MUELLER'S NARRATIVES
COMPILED BY
A. E. C. BROOKS

GENERAL EDITOR ~ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

MOODY CLASSICS

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CHICAGO

A decorative rectangular box with a dark, ornate background and a light border. The word "CONTENTS" is centered within the box in a white, serif, all-caps font.

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Beginning and Early Days of the Orphan Work



THAT THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE
PRECIOUS THAN OF GOLD THAT PERISHETH, THOUGH IT BE TRIED
WITH FIRE, MIGHT BE FOUND UNTO PRAISE AND HONOUR AND
GLORY AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST.—*1 Peter, 1:7*

MR. GEORGE MUELLER, the founder of the New Orphan-Houses, Ashley Down, Bristol (institutions that have been for many years the greatest monuments of modern times to a prayer-answering God), gives in that most valuable and instructive book, "A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Mueller," Vol. I., among other reasons for establishing an Orphan-House, the following:—

"Sometimes I found children of God tried in mind by the prospect of old age, when they might be unable to work any longer, and therefore were harassed by the fear of having to go into the poorhouse. If in such a case I pointed out to them, how their Heavenly Father has always helped those who put their trust in Him, they might not, perhaps, always say, that times have changed; but yet it was evident enough, that God

was not looked upon by them as the LIVING God. My spirit was oftentimes bowed down by this, and I longed to set something before the children of God, whereby they might see, that He does not forsake, even in our day, those who rely upon Him.

“Another class of persons were brethren in business, who suffered in their souls, and brought guilt on their consciences, by carrying on their business, almost in the same way as unconverted persons do. The competition in trade, the bad times, the overpeopled country, were given as reasons why, if the business were carried on simply according to the Word of God, it could not be expected to do well. Such a brother, perhaps, would express the wish, that he might be differently situated; but very rarely did I see *that there was a stand made for God, that there was the holy determination to trust in the living God, and to depend on Him, in order that a good conscience might be maintained.* To this class likewise I desired to show, by a visible proof, that God is unchangeably the same.

“Then there was another class of persons, individuals who were in professions in which they could not continue with a good conscience, or persons who were in an unscriptural position with reference to spiritual things; but both classes feared, on account of the consequences, to give up the profession in which they could not abide with God, or to leave their position, lest they should be thrown out of employment. My spirit longed to be instrumental in strengthening their faith, by giving them not only instances from the word of God, of

His willingness and ability to help all those who rely upon Him, but to show them by *proofs*, that He is the same in our day. I well knew *that the Word of God ought to be enough*, and it was, by grace, enough to me; but still, I considered that I ought to lend a helping hand to my brethren, if by any means, by this visible proof to the unchangeable faithfulness of the Lord, I might strengthen their hands in God; for I remembered what a great blessing my own soul had received through the Lord's dealings with His servant A. H. Franke, who in dependence upon the living God alone, established an immense Orphan-House, which I had seen many times with my own eyes. I, therefore, judged myself bound to be the servant of the Church of God, in the particular point on which I had obtained mercy: namely, in *being able to take God by His word and to rely upon it*. All these exercises of my soul, which resulted from the fact that so many believers, with whom I became acquainted, were harassed and distressed in mind, or brought guilt on their consciences, on account of not trusting in the Lord; were used by God to awaken in my heart the desire of setting before the church at large, and before the world, a proof that He has not in the least changed; and this seemed to me best done, by the establishing of an Orphan-House. It needed to be something which could be seen, even by the natural eye. Now, if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained without asking any individual, the means for establishing and carrying on an Orphan-House, there would be something which, with

the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted, of the reality of the things of God. This, then, was the primary reason for establishing the Orphan-House. I certainly did from my heart desire to be used by God to benefit the bodies of poor children, bereaved of both parents, and seek in other respects, with the help of God, to do them good for this life;—I also particularly longed to be used by God in getting the dear orphans trained up in the fear of God;—but still, the first and primary object of the work was (and still is): that God might be magnified by the fact, that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need, only by *prayer and faith* without anyone being asked by me or my fellow-laborers whereby it may be seen, that God is faithful still, and hears prayer still. That I was not mistaken, has been abundantly proved since November, 1835, both by the conversion of many sinners who have read the accounts, which have been published in connection with this work, and also by the abundance of fruit that has followed in the hearts of the saints, for which from my inmost soul, I desire to be grateful to God, and the honor and glory of which not only is due to Him alone, but, which I, by His help, am enabled to ascribe to Him."

“Open Thy Mouth Wide”

In the account written by Mr. Mueller dated January 16, 1836, respecting the Orphan-House intended to be estab-

lished in Bristol in connection with the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad, we read:—

“When, of late, the thoughts of establishing an Orphan-House, in dependence upon the Lord, revived in my mind, during the first two weeks I only prayed that if it were of the Lord, He would bring it about, but if not that He graciously would be pleased to take all thoughts about it out of my mind. My uncertainty about knowing the Lord’s mind did not arise from questioning whether it would be pleasing in His sight, that there should be an abode and Scriptural education provided for destitute fatherless and motherless children; but whether it were His will that I should be the instrument of setting such an object on foot, as my hands were already more than filled. My comfort, however, was, that, if it were His will, He would provide not merely the means, but also suitable individuals to take care of the children, so that my part of the work would take only such a portion of my time, as, considering the importance of the matter, I might give, notwithstanding my many other engagements. The whole of those two weeks I never asked the Lord for money or for persons to engage in the work.

“On December 5th, however, the subject of my prayer all at once became different. I was reading Psalm 131, and was particularly struck, more than at any time before, with verse 10: *“Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”* I thought a few moments about these words, and then was led to apply them

to the case of the Orphan-House. It struck me that I had never asked the Lord for anything concerning it, except to know His will, respecting its being established or not; and I then fell on my knees and opened my mouth wide, asking Him for much. I asked in submission to His will, and without fixing a time when He should answer my petition. I prayed that He would give me a house, i. e., either as a loan, or that someone might be led to pay the rent for one, or that one might be given permanently for this object; further, I asked Him for £1000; and likewise for suitable individuals to take care of the children. Besides this, I have been since led to ask the Lord, to put into the hearts of His people to send me articles of furniture for the house, and some clothes for the children. When I was asking the petition, I was fully aware what I was doing, i. e., that I was asking for something which I had no natural prospect of obtaining from the brethren whom I know, but which was not too much for the Lord to grant."

"December 10, 1835.—This morning I received a letter, in which a brother and sister wrote thus:— 'We propose ourselves for the service of the intended Orphan-House, if you think us qualified for it; also to give up all the furniture, &c.' which the Lord has given us, for its use; and to this without receiving any salary whatever; believing that if it be the will of the Lord to employ us, He will supply all our needs, &c."

"Dec. 13.—A brother was influenced this day to give 4s. per week, or £10 8s yearly, as long as the Lord gives the means;

8s. was given by him as two weeks' subscriptions. Today a brother and sister offered themselves, with all their furniture, and all the provisions which they have in the house, if they can be usefully employed in the concerns of the Orphan-House."

A Great Encouragement

"Dec. 17.—I was rather cast down last evening and this morning about the matter, questioning whether I ought to be engaged in this way, and was led to ask the Lord to give me some further encouragement. Soon after were sent by a brother two pieces of print, the one seven and the other $23 \frac{3}{4}$ yards, $6 \frac{3}{4}$ yards of calico, four pieces of lining, about four yards altogether, a sheet, and a yard measure. This evening another brother brought a clothes horse, three frocks, four pinafores, six handkerchiefs, three counterpanes, one blanket, two pewter salt cellars, six tin cups, and six metal tea spoons; he also brought 3s. 6d. given to him by three different individuals. At the same time he told me that it had been put into the heart of an individual to send tomorrow £100."

One Thousand Pounds

"June 15, 1837.—Today I gave myself once more earnestly to prayer respecting the remainder of the £1000. This evening £5 was given, so that now the whole sum is made up. To the Glory of the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, I would state again, that every shilling of this money, and all the articles

of clothing and furniture, which have been mentioned in the foregoing pages, have been given to me, *without one single individual having been asked by me for anything.*"

Orphans for the Building

In a third statement, containing the announcement of the opening of the Orphan-House, for destitute female children, and a proposal for the establishment of an Infant Orphan-House, which was sent to the press on May 18, 1836, Mr. Mueller wrote:—

"So far as I remember, I brought even the most minute circumstances concerning the Orphan-House before the Lord in my petitions, being conscious of my own weakness and ignorance. There was, however, one point I never had prayed about, namely that the Lord would send children; for I naturally took it for granted that there would be plenty of applications. The nearer, however, the day came which had been appointed for receiving applications, the more I had a secret consciousness, that the Lord might disappoint my natural expectations, and show me that I could not prosper in one single thing without Him. The appointed time came, and not even one application was made. I had before this been repeatedly tried, whether I might not, after all, against the Lord's mind, have engaged in the work. This circumstance now led me to lie low before my God in prayer the whole of the evening, February 3, and to examine my heart once more as to all the motives concern-

ing it; and being able, as formerly, to say, that His glory was my chief aim, i.e., that it might be seen that it is not a vain thing to trust in the living God,—and that my second aim was the spiritual welfare of the orphan-children,—and the third their bodily welfare; and still continuing in prayer, I was at last brought to this state, that I could say *from my heart*, that I should rejoice in God being glorified in this matter, though it were *by bringing the whole to nothing*. But as still, after all, it seemed to me more tending to the glory of God, to establish and prosper the Orphan-House, I could then ask Him heartily, to send applications. I enjoyed now a peaceful state of heart concerning the subject, and was also more assured than ever that God would establish it. *The very next day*, February 4, the first application was made, and since then 42 more have been made.”

“Just for Today”

Later on, when there were nearly 100 persons to be maintained, and the funds were reduced to about £20, Mr. Mueller writes:—

“July 22 [1838].—This evening I was walking in our little garden, meditating on Heb. xiii. 8, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” Whilst meditating on His unchangeable love, power, wisdom, &c.—and turning all, as I went on, into prayer respecting myself; and whilst applying likewise His unchangeable love, and power and wisdom, &c,

both to my present spiritual and temporal circumstances:—all at once the present need of the Orphan-House was brought to my mind. Immediately I was led to say to myself, Jesus in His love and power has hitherto supplied me with what I have needed for the Orphans, and in the same unchangeable love and power He will provide me with what I may need for the future. A flow of joy came into my soul whilst realising thus the unchangeableness of our adorable Lord. About one minute after, a letter was brought me, enclosing a bill for £20. In it was written: “Will you apply the amount of the enclosed bill to the furtherance of the objects of your Scriptural Knowledge Society, or of your Orphan Establishment, or in the work and cause of our Master in any way that He Himself, on your application to Him, may point out to you. It is not a great sum, but it is a sufficient provision for the exigency of today; and it is for today’s exigencies, that, ordinarily, the Lord provides. Tomorrow, as it brings its demands, will find its supply, etc.”

“[Of this £20 I took £10 for the Orphan fund, and £10 for the other objects, and was thus enabled to meet the expenses of about £34 which, in connection with the Orphan-Houses, came upon me within four days afterwards, and which I knew beforehand would come.]”

Waiting for Help

“Nov. 21, 1838.—Never were we so reduced in funds as today. There was not a single half-penny in hand between the

matrons of the three houses. Nevertheless there was a good dinner, and by managing so as to help one another with bread, etc., there was a prospect of getting over this day also; but for none of the houses had we the prospect of being able to take in bread. When I left the brethren and sisters at one o'clock, after prayer, I told them that we must wait for help, and see how the Lord would deliver us this time. I was sure of help, but we were indeed straitened. When I came to Kingsdown, I felt that I needed more exercise, being very old; wherefore I went on the nearest way home, but round by Clarence Place. About twenty yards from my house, I met a brother who walked back with me, and after a little conversation gave me £10 to be handed over to the brethren, the deacons, towards providing the poor saints with coals, blankets and warm clothing; also £5 for the Orphans, and £5 for the other objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. The brother had called twice while I was gone to the Orphan-Houses, and had I now been one *half minute* later, I should have missed him. But the Lord knew our need, and therefore allowed me to meet him. I sent off the £5 immediately to the matrons."

Beyond Disappointment

"Sept. 21 [1840], Monday. By what was in hand for the Orphans, and by what had come in yesterday, the need of today is more than supplied, as there is enough for tomorrow also. Today a brother from the neighbourhood of London gave me £10, to

be laid out as it might be most needed. As we have been praying many days for the School,—Bible,—and Missionary Funds, I took it all for them. This brother knew nothing about our work, when he came three days since to Bristol. Thus the Lord, to show His continued care over us, raises up new helpers. They that trust in the Lord shall never be confounded! Some who helped for a while may fall asleep in Jesus; others may grow cold in the service of the Lord; others may be as desirous as ever to help, but have no longer the means; others may have both a willing heart to help, and have also the means, but may see it the Lord's will to lay them out in another way,—and thus, from one cause or another, were we to lean upon man, we should surely be confounded; but, in leaning upon the living God alone, we are *BEYOND disappointment, and BEYOND being forsaken because of death, or want of means, or want of love, or because of the claims of other work*. How precious to have learned in any measure to stand with God alone in the world, and yet to be happy, and to know that surely no good thing shall be withheld from us whilst we walk uprightly!"

A Great Sinner Converted

In his REVIEW OF THE YEAR 1841, Mr. Mueller writes:—

“During this year I was informed about the conversion of one of the very greatest sinners that I ever heard of in all my service for the Lord. Repeatedly I fell on my knees with his wife, and asked the Lord for his conversion, when she came

to me in the deepest distress of soul, on account of the most barbarous and cruel treatment that she received from him, in his bitter enmity against her for the Lord's sake, and because he could not provoke her to be in a passion, and *she would not* strike him again, and the like. At the time when it was at its worst I pleaded especially on his behalf the promise in Matthew xviii. 19: 'Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven.' And now this awful persecutor is converted."

Prayer for Spiritual Blessing Among the Saints

"On May 25th, I began to ask the Lord for greater real spiritual prosperity among the saints, among whom I labour in Bristol, than there ever yet had been among them; and now I have to record to the praise of the Lord that truly He has answered this request; for, considering all things, at no period has there been more manifestation of grace and truth, and spiritual power among us, than there is now while I am writing this for the press (1845). Not that we have attained to what we might; we are far, very far from it; but the Lord has been very, very good to us, and we have most abundant cause for thanksgiving."

Withholding the Report

"Dec. 9 [1841].—Today came in for the Orphans by the sale of stockings 10s. 10d.—We are now brought to the close of

the sixth year of this part of the work, *having only in hand the money which has been put by for the rent*; but during the whole of this year we have been supplied with all that was needed.

“During the last three years we had closed the accounts on this day, and had, a few days after, some public meetings, at which, for the benefit of the hearers, we stated how the Lord had dealt with us during the year, and the substance of what had been stated at these meetings was afterwards printed for the benefit of the church at large. This time, however, it appeared to us better to delay for a while both the public meetings and the publishing of the Report. Through grace we had learned to lean upon the Lord only, being assured, that, if we were never to speak or write one single word more about this work, yet should we be supplied with means, as long as He should enable us to depend on Himself alone. But whilst we neither had had those public meetings for the purpose of exposing our necessity, nor had had the account of the Lord’s dealings with us published for the sake of working thereby upon the feelings of the readers, and thus inducing them to give money, but only that we might by our experience benefit other saints; yet it might have appeared to some that, in making known our circumstances, we were actuated by some such motives. What better proof, therefore, could we give of our depending upon the living God alone, and not upon public meetings or printed Reports, than that, *in the midst of our deep poverty*, instead

of being glad for the time to have come when we could make known our circumstances, we still went on quietly for some time longer, without saying anything. We therefore determined, as we sought and still seek in this work to act for the profit of the saints generally, to delay both the public meetings and the Report for a few months. *Naturally* we should have been, of course, as glad as anyone to have exposed our poverty at that time; but *spiritually* we were unable to delight even then in the prospect of the increased benefit that might be derived by the church at large from our acting as we did.

* * * *

“Dec. 18, Saturday morning. There is now the greatest need, and only 4d. in hand, which I found in the box at my house; yet I fully believe the Lord will supply us this day also with all that is required.—Pause a few moments, dear reader! Observe two things! We acted *for* God in delaying the public meetings and the publishing of the Report; but *God’s way leads always into trial, so far as sight and sense are concerned. Nature always will be tried in God’s ways.* The Lord was saying by this poverty, ‘I will now see whether you truly lean upon me, and whether you truly look to me.’ Of all the seasons that I had ever passed through since I had been living in this way, up to *that time*, I never knew any period in which my faith was tried so sharply, as during the four months from Dec. 12, 1841, to April 12, 1842. But observe further: We might even now have altered our minds with respect to the public meetings

and publishing the Report; *for no one knew our determination, at this time*, concerning the point. Nay, on the contrary, we knew with what delight very many children of God were looking forward to receive further accounts. But the Lord kept us steadfast to the conclusion, at which we had arrived under His guidance."

"He Abideth Faithful"

Under the date Jan. 25, 1842, Mr. Mueller writes: —

"Perhaps, dear reader, you have said in your heart before you have read thus far: 'How would it be, suppose the funds for the Orphans were reduced to nothing, and those who are engaged in the work had nothing of their own to give, and a meal time were come, and you had no food for the children.'

"Thus indeed it may be, for our hearts are desperately wicked. If ever we should be so left to ourselves, as that either we depend no more upon the living God, or that 'we regard iniquity in our hearts,' then such a state of things, we have reason to believe, would occur. But so long as we shall be enabled to trust in the living God, and so long as, though falling short in every way of what we might be, and ought to be, we are at least kept from living in sin, such a state of things cannot occur. Therefore, dear reader, if you yourself walk with God, and if, on that account, His glory is dear to you, I affectionately and earnestly entreat you to beseech Him to uphold us; for how awful would be the disgrace brought upon His holy

name if we, who have so publicly made our boast in Him, and have spoken well of Him, should be left to disgrace Him, either by unbelief in the hour of trial, or by a life of sin in other respects."

Delayed but Sure

"March 9 [1842].—At a time of the greatest need, both with regard to the Day Schools and the Orphans, so much so that we could not have gone on any longer without help, I received this day £10 from a brother who lives near Dublin. The money was divided between the Day Schools and the Orphan-Houses. The following little circumstance is to be noticed respecting this donation:—As our need was so great, and my soul was, through grace, truly waiting upon the Lord, I looked out for supplies in the course of this morning. The post, however, was out, and no supplies had come. This did not in the least discourage me. I said to myself, the Lord can send means without the post, or even now, though the post is out, by this very delivery of letters He may have sent means, though the money is not yet in my hands. It was not long after I had thus spoken to myself, when, according to my hope in God, we were helped; for the brother who sent us the £10, had this time directed his letter to the Boys' Orphan-House, whence it was sent to me."

"Like as a Father"

"March 17.—From the 12th to the 16th had come in £4 5s. 11

1/2d. for the Orphans. This morning our poverty, which now has lasted more or less for several months, had become exceedingly great. I left my house a few minutes after seven to go to the Orphan-Houses, to see whether there was money enough to take in the milk, which is brought about eight o'clock. On my way it was specially my request that the Lord would be pleased to pity us, even as a father pitieth his children, and that He would not lay more upon us than He would enable us to bear, I especially entreated Him that He would now be pleased to refresh our hearts by sending us help. I likewise reminded Him of the consequences that would result, both in reference to believers and unbelievers, if we should have to give up the work because of want of means, and that He therefore would not permit of its coming to nought. I moreover again confessed before the Lord that I deserved not that He should continue to use me in this work any longer. While I was thus in prayer, about two minutes' walk from the Orphan-Houses, I met a brother who was going at this early hour to his business. After having exchanged a few words with him, I went on; but he presently ran after me, and gave me £1 for the Orphans. Thus the Lord speedily answered my prayer. Truly, it is worth being poor and greatly tried in faith, for the sake of having day by day such precious proofs of the loving interest which our kind Father takes in everything that concerns us. And how should our Father do otherwise? He that has given us the greatest possible proof of His love which He could have done, in giving us

His own Son, surely He will with Him also freely give us all things."

Trust in the Lord Better than Man's Promises

"May 6 [1845].—About six weeks ago intimation was kindly given by a brother that he expected a certain considerable sum of money, and that, if he obtained it, a certain portion of it should be given to the Lord, so that £100 of it should be used for the work in my hands, and the other part for Brother Craik's and my own personal expenses. However, day after day passed away, and the money did not come. I did not trust in this money, yet, as during all this time, with scarcely any exception, we were more or less needy, I thought again and again about this brother's promise; though I did not, by the grace of God, trust in the brother who had made it, but in the Lord. Thus week after week passed away, and the money did not come. Now this morning it came to my mind, that such promises ought to be valued, in a certain sense, as nothing, i.e., that the mind ought never for a moment to be directed to them, but to the living God, and to the living God only. I saw that such promises ought not to be of the value of one farthing, so far as it regards thinking about them for help. I therefore asked the Lord, when, as usual, I was praying with my beloved wife about the work in my hands that He would be pleased to take this whole matter, about that promise, completely out of my mind, and to help me, not to value it in the least, yea,

to treat it as if not worth one farthing, but to keep my eye directed only to Himself. I was enabled to do so. We have not yet finished praying when I received the following letter:

May 5, 1845 Beloved Brother,

Are your bankers still Messrs. Stuckey and Co. of Bristol, and are their bankers still Messrs. Robarts and Co. of London? Please to instruct me on this; and if the case should be so, please to regard this as a letter of advice that £70 are paid to Messrs. Robarts and Co., for Messrs. Stuckey and Co., for you. This sum apply as the Lord may give you wisdom. I shall not send to Robarts and Co. until I hear from you.

Ever affectionately yours,

* * * *

“Thus the Lord rewarded at once this determination to endeavour not to look in the least to that promise from a brother, but only to Himself. But this was not all. About two o’clock this afternoon I received from the brother, who had more than forty days ago, made that promise, £166 18s., as he this day received the money, on the strength of which he had made that promise. Of this sum £100 are to be used for the work in my hands, and the remainder for brother Craik’s and my own personal expenses.”

Under date 1842 Mr. Mueller writes:—

“I desire that all the children of God, who may read these details, may thereby be lead to increased and more simple con-

fidence in God for everything which they may need under any circumstances, and that these many answers to prayer may encourage them to pray, particularly as it regards the conversion of their friends and relatives, their own progress in grace and knowledge, the state of the saints whom they may know personally, the state of the church of God at large, and the success of the preaching of the Gospel. Especially I affectionately warn them against being led away by the device of Satan, to think that these things are peculiar to me, and cannot be enjoyed by all the children of God; for though, as has been stated before, every believer is not called upon to establish Orphan-Houses, Charity Schools, etc., and trust in the Lord for means; yet all believers are called upon, in the simple confidence of faith, to cast all their burdens upon Him, to trust in Him for everything, and not only to make every thing a subject of prayer, but to expect answers to their petitions which they have asked according to His will, and in the name of the Lord Jesus.—Think not, dear reader, that I have *the gift of faith*, that is, that gift of which we read in 1 Cor. 12:9, and which is mentioned along with ‘the gifts of healing,’ ‘the working of miracles,’ ‘prophecy,’ and that on that account I am able to trust in the Lord. *It is true* that the faith, which I am enabled to exercise, is altogether God’s own gift; it is true that He alone supports it, and that He alone can increase it; it is true that, moment by moment, I depend upon Him for it, and that, if I were only one moment left to myself, my faith would utterly

fail; but *it is not true* that my faith is that gift of faith which is spoken of in 1 Cor. 12:9 for the following reasons:—

“1. The faith which I am enabled to exercise with reference to the Orphan-Houses and my own temporal necessities, is not that ‘faith’ of which it is said in 1 Cor. 13:2 (evidently in allusion to the faith spoken of in 1 Cor. 12:9), ‘Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love), I am nothing’; but it is the self-same faith which is found in every believer, and the growth of which I am most sensible of to myself; for, by little and little, it has been increasing for the last sixty-nine years.

“2. This faith which is exercised respecting the Orphan-Houses and my own temporal necessities, shows itself in the same measure, for instance, concerning the following points: I have never been permitted to doubt during the last sixty-nine years that my sins are forgiven, that I am a child of God, that I am beloved of God, and that I shall be finally saved; because I am enabled, by the grace of God, to exercise faith upon the word of God, and believe what God says in those passages which settle these matters (1 John v. 1—Gal. 3:26—Acts 10:43—Romans 10:9, 10—John 3:16, etc.) . . .

Further, when sometimes all has been dark, exceedingly dark, with reference to my service among the saints, judging from natural appearances; yea, when I should have been overwhelmed indeed in grief and despair, had I looked at things after the outward appearance; at such times I have sought to

encourage myself in God, by laying hold in faith on His mighty power, His unchangeable love, and His infinite wisdom, and I have said to myself: God is able and willing to deliver me, if it be good for me; for it is written: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32. This, this it was which, being believed by me through grace, kept my soul in peace.—Further, when in connection with the Orphan-Houses, Day Schools, etc., trials have come upon me which were far heavier than the want of means when lying reports were spread that the Orphans had not enough to eat, or that they were cruelly treated in other respects, and the like; or when other trials, still greater, but which I cannot mention, have befallen me in connexion with this work, and that at a time when I was nearly a thousand miles absent from Bristol, and had to remain absent week after week: at such times my soul was stayed upon God; I believed His word of promise which was applicable to such cases; I poured out my soul before God, and arose from my knees in peace, because the trouble that was in the soul was in believing prayer cast upon God, and thus I was kept in peace, though I saw it to be the will of God to remain far away from the work.—Further, when I needed houses, fellow-labourers, masters and mistresses for the Orphans or for the Day Schools, I have been enabled to look for all to the Lord and trust in Him for help.—Dear reader, I may seem to boast; but, by the grace of God, I do not boast

in thus speaking. From my inmost soul I do ascribe it to God alone that He has enabled me to trust in Him, and that hitherto He has not suffered my confidence in Him to fail. But I thought it needful to make these remarks, lest anyone should think that my depending upon God was a particular gift given to me, which other saints have no right to look for; or lest it should be thought that this my depending upon Him had *only to do with the obtaining of MONEY by prayer and faith*. By the grace of God I desire that my faith in God should extend towards EVERY thing, the smallest of my own temporal and spiritual concerns, and the smallest of the temporal and spiritual concerns of my family, towards the saints among whom I labour, the church at large, everything that has to do with the temporal and spiritual prosperity of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, etc. Dear reader, do not think that I have attained in faith (and how much less in other respects!) to that degree to which I might and ought to attain; but thank God for the faith which He has given me, and ask Him to uphold and increase it. And lastly, once more, let not Satan deceive you in making you think that you could not have the same faith but that it is only for persons who are situated as I am. When I lose such a thing as a key, I ask the Lord to direct me to it, and I look for an answer to my prayer; when a person with whom I have made an appointment does not come, according to the fixed time, and I begin to be inconvenienced by it, I ask the Lord to be pleased to hasten him to me and I look for an answer;

when I do not understand a passage of the word of God, I lift up my heart to the Lord, that He would be pleased, by His Holy Spirit to instruct me, and I expect to be taught, though I do not fix the time when, and the manner how it should be; when I am going to minister in the Word, I seek help from the Lord, and while I, in the consciousness of natural inability as well as utter unworthiness begin this His service, I am not cast down, but of good cheer, because I look for His assistance, and believe that He, for His dear Son's sake will help me. And thus in other of my temporal and spiritual concerns I pray to the Lord, and expect an answer to my requests; and may not you do the same, dear believing reader? Oh! I beseech you, do not think me an extraordinary believer, having privileges above other of God's dear children, which they cannot have; nor look on my way of acting as something that would not do for other believers. Make but trial! Do but stand still in the hour of trial, and you will see the help of God, if you trust in Him. But there is so often a forsaking the ways of the Lord in the hour of trial, and thus the *food of faith*, the means whereby our faith may be increased, is lost. This leads me to the following important point. You ask, How may I, a true believer, have my faith strengthened? The answer is this:—

“I.—Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” James 1:17. As the increase of faith is a good gift, it must come from God, and

therefore He ought to be asked for this blessing.

“II.—The following means, however, ought to be used:—1. The *careful reading of the word of God, combined with meditation on it*. Through reading of the word of God, and especially through meditation on the word of God, the believer becomes more and more acquainted with the nature and character of God, and thus sees more and more, besides His holiness and justice, what a kind, loving, gracious, merciful, mighty, wise, and faithful Being He is, and, therefore, in poverty, affliction of body, bereavement in his family, difficulty in his service, want of a situation or employment, he will repose upon the ability of God to help him, because he has not only learned from His word that He is of almighty power and infinite wisdom, but he has also seen instance upon instance in the Holy Scriptures in which His almighty power and infinite wisdom have been actually exercised in helping and delivering His people; and he will repose upon the willingness of God to help him, because he has not only learned from the Scriptures what a kind, good, merciful, gracious, and faithful being God is, but because he has also seen in the word of God how, in a great variety of instances He has proved Himself to be so. And the consideration of this, *if God has become known to us through prayer and meditation on His own word*, will lead us, in general at least, with a measure of confidence to rely upon Him: and thus the reading of the word of God, together with meditation on it, will be one especial means to strengthen our faith. 2. As with

reference to the growth of every grace of the Spirit, it is of the utmost importance that we seek to maintain an upright heart and a good conscience, and, therefore, do not knowingly and habitually indulge in those things which are contrary to the mind of God, so it is also particularly the case with reference to the *growth in faith*. How can I possibly continue to act faith upon God, concerning anything, if I am habitually grieving Him, and seek to detract from the glory and honour of Him in whom I profess to trust, upon whom I profess to depend? All my confidence towards God, all my leaning upon Him in the hour of trial will be gone, if I have a guilty conscience, and do not seek to put away this guilty conscience, but still continue to do the things which are contrary to the mind of God. And if, in any particular instance, I cannot trust in God, because of the guilty conscience, then my faith is weakened by that instance of distrust; for faith with every fresh trial of it either increases by trusting God, and thus getting help, or it decreases by not trusting Him; and then there is less and less power of looking simply and directly to Him, and a habit of self-dependence is begotten or encouraged. One or the other of these will always be the case in each particular instance. Either we trust in God, and in that case we neither trust in ourselves, nor in our fellow-men, nor in circumstances, nor in anything besides; or we DO trust in one or more of these, and in that case do NOT trust in God. 3. If we, indeed, desire our faith to be strengthened, we should not shrink from opportu-

nities where our faith may be tried, and, therefore, through the trial, be strengthened. In our natural state we dislike dealing with God alone. Through our natural alienation from God we shrink from Him, and from eternal realities. This cleaves to us more or less, even after our regeneration. Hence it is, that more or less, even as believers, we have the same shrinking from standing with God alone,—from depending upon Him alone,—from looking to Him alone:—and yet this is the very position in which we ought to be, if we wish our faith to be strengthened. The more I am in a position to be tried in faith with reference to my body, my family, my service for the Lord, my business, etc., the more shall I have opportunity of seeing God's help and deliverance; and every fresh instance, in which He helps and delivers me, will tend towards the increase of my faith. On this account, therefore, the believer should not shrink from situations, positions, circumstances, in which his faith may be tried; but should cheerfully embrace them as opportunities where he may see the hand of God stretched out on his behalf, to help and deliver him, and whereby he may thus have his faith strengthened. 4. The last important point for the strengthening of our faith is, that we let God work for us, when the hour of the trial of our faith comes, and do not work a deliverance of our own. Wherever God has given faith, it is given, among other reasons, for the very purpose of being tried.

“Yea, however weak our faith may be, God will try it; only

with this restriction, that as in every way, He leads on gently, gradually, patiently, so also with reference to the trial of our faith. At first our faith will be tried very little in comparison with what it may be afterwards; for God never lays more upon us than He is willing to enable us to bear. Now when the trial of faith comes, we are naturally inclined to distrust God, and to trust rather in ourselves, or in our friends, or in circumstances.

“We will rather work a deliverance of our own somehow or other, than simply look to God and wait for His help. But if we do not patiently wait for God’s help, if we work a deliverance of our own, then at the next trial of our faith it will be thus again, we shall be again inclined to deliver ourselves; and thus with every fresh instance of that kind, our faith will decrease; whilst on the contrary, were we to stand still, in order to see the salvation of God, to see His hand stretched out on our behalf, trusting in Him alone, then our faith would be increased, and with every fresh case in which the hand of God is stretched out on our behalf in the hour of the trial of our faith, our faith would be increased yet more.

“Would the believer, therefore, have his faith strengthened, he must especially, *give time to God*, who tries his faith in order to prove to His child, in the end, how willing He is to help and deliver him, the moment it is good for him.”

In the early years of the Institution, Mr. Mueller and his fellow labourers had to endure many severe trials of faith, as

some of these instances show.

Mr. Mueller when writing of this period says:—

“Though now (July, 1845) for about seven years our funds have been so exhausted, that it has been a rare case that there have been means in hand to meet the necessities of more than 100 persons for *three days* together; yet I have been only once tried in spirit, and that was on September 18, 1838, when, for the first time the Lord seemed not to regard our prayer. But when He did send help at that time, and I saw that it was only for the trial of our faith, and because He had not forsaken the work, that we were brought so low, my soul was so strengthened and encouraged, that I have not only not been allowed to distrust the Lord, but *I have not been even cast down when in the deepest poverty since that time.*”

A Gift of £12

“Aug. 20 [1838].—The £5 which I had received on the 18th. had been given for housekeeping, so that today I was again penniless. But my eyes were up to the Lord. I gave myself to prayer this morning, knowing that I should want again this week at least £13, if not above £20. Today I received £12 in answer to prayer, from a lady who is staying at Clifton, whom I had never seen before. Adorable Lord, grant that this may be a fresh encouragement to me!”

A Solemn Crisis

Regarding one of the sharpest times of trial, Mr. Mueller writes: —

“Sept. 10 [1838], Monday morning. Neither Saturday nor yesterday had any money come in. It appeared to me now needful to take some steps on account of our need, i.e., to go to the Orphan-Houses, call the brethren and sisters together, (who, except brother T—, had never been informed about the state of the funds), state the case to them, see how much money was needed for the present, tell them that amidst all this trial of faith I still believed that God would help, and to pray with them. Especially, also, I mean to go for the sake of telling them that no more articles must be purchased than we have the means to pay for, but to let there be nothing lacking in any way to the children as it regards nourishing food and needful clothing; for I would rather at once send them away than that they should lack. I meant to go for the sake also of seeing whether there were still articles remaining which had been sent for the purpose of being sold, or whether there were any articles really needless, that we might turn them into money. I felt that the matter was now come to a solemn crisis. About half-past nine sixpence came in, which had been put anonymously into the box at Gideon Chapel. This money seemed to me like an earnest, that God would have compassion and send more. About ten, after I had returned from brother Craik, to whom I had unbosomed my heart again, whilst once more in prayer

for help, a sister called who gave two sovereigns to my wife for the Orphans, stating that she had felt herself stirred up to come and that she had delayed coming already too long. A few minutes after, when I went into the room where she was, she gave me two sovereigns more, and all this without knowing the least about our need. Thus the Lord most mercifully has sent us a little help, to the great encouragement of my faith. A few minutes after I was called on for money from the Infant Orphan-House, to which I sent £2, and £1 os. 6d. to the Boys' Orphan-House, and £1 to the Girls' Orphan-House."

A Precious Deliverance

"Sept. 17 [1838].—The trial still continues. It is now more and more trying, even to faith, as each day comes. Truly, the Lord has wise purposes in allowing us to call so long upon Him for help. But I am sure God will send help, if we can but wait. One of the labourers had had a little money come in of which he gave 12s. 6d.; another labourer gave 11s. 8d., being all the money she had left; this, with 17s. 6d., which, partly, had come in, and, partly was in hand, enabled us to pay what needed to be paid, and to purchase provisions, so that nothing yet, in any way, has been lacking. This evening I was rather tired respecting the long delay of larger sums coming; but being led to go the Scriptures for comfort, my soul was greatly refreshed, and my faith again strengthened, by the 34th Psalm, so that I went very cheerfully to meet with my dear fellow-labourers

for prayer. I read to them the Psalm, and sought to cheer their hearts through the precious promises contained in it."

"Sept. 18.—Brother T. had 25s. in hand, and I had 3s. This £1 8s. enabled us to buy the meat and bread, which was needed; a little tea for one of the houses, and milk for all; no more than this is needed. Thus the Lord has provided not only for this day; for there is bread for two days in hand. Now, however, we are come to an extremity. The funds are exhausted. The labourers, who had a little money, have given as long as they had any left. Now observe how the Lord helped us! A lady from the neighbourhood of London who brought a parcel with money from her daughter, arrived four or five days since in Bristol, and took lodgings next door to the Boys' Orphan-House. This afternoon she herself kindly brought me the money, amounting to £3 2s. 6d. We had been reduced so low as to be on the point of selling those things which could be spared; but this morning I had asked the Lord, if it might be, to prevent the necessity, of our doing so. That the money had been so near the Orphan-Houses for several days without being given, is a plain proof that it was from the beginning in the heart of God to help us; but because He delights in the prayers of His children, He had allowed us to pray so long; also to try our faith, and to make the answer so much the sweeter. It is indeed a precious deliverance. I burst out into loud praises and thanks the first moment I was alone, after I had received the money. I met with my fellow-labourers again this evening for prayer and praise; their hearts were not a

little cheered. This money was this evening divided, and will comfortably provide for all that will be needed tomorrow."

HANNAH
— WHITALL SMITH —

THE
CHRISTIAN'S SECRET
OF A HAPPY LIFE

FOREWORD BY ♡ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

M O O D Y C L A S S I C S

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Is It Scriptural?



WHEN I APPROACH this subject of the true Christian life,—that life which is hid with Christ in God, so many thoughts struggle for utterance that I am almost speechless. Where shall I begin? What is the most important thing to say? How shall I make people read and believe? The subject is so glorious, and human words seem so powerless!

But something must be said by some one. The secret must be told. For it is one concerning that victory which overcometh the world,—that promised deliverance from all our enemies, for which every child of God longs and prays, but which seems so often and so generally to elude their grasp. May God grant me so to tell it, that every believer to whom this book shall come, may have his eyes opened to see the truth as it is in Jesus, and may be enabled to enter into possession of this glorious life for himself!

For sure I am, that every converted soul longs for victory and rest, and nearly every one feels instinctively, at times, that they are his birthright. Can you not remember, some of you, the shout

of triumph your souls gave, when you first became acquainted with the Lord Jesus, and had a glimpse of His mighty saving power? How sure you were of victory, then! How easy it seemed to be more than conquerors, through Him that loved you! Under the leadership of a Captain who had never been foiled in battle, how could you dream of defeat? And yet, to many of you, how different has been your real experience. The victories have been too few and fleeting, the defeats many and disastrous. You have not lived as you feel children of God ought to live. There has been a resting in a clear understanding of doctrinal truth, without pressing after the power and life thereof. There has been a rejoicing in the knowledge of things testified of in the Scriptures, without a living realization of the things themselves, consciously felt in the soul. Christ is believed in, talked about, and served, but He is not known as the soul's actual and very life, abiding there forever, and revealing Himself there continually in His beauty. You have found Jesus as your Saviour from the penalty of sin, and you have tried to serve God, and advance the cause of His kingdom. You have carefully studied the Holy Scriptures and have gathered much precious truth therefrom, which you have endeavored faithfully to practice. But notwithstanding all your knowledge and all your activities in the service of the Lord, your souls are secretly starving, and you cry out again and again for that bread and water of life which you see promised in the Scriptures to all believers. In the very depths of your hearts, you know that your experience is not a Scriptural experience; that, as an old writer

says, your religion is “but a *talk* to what the early Christians enjoyed, possessed, and lived in.” And your souls have sunk within you, as day after day, and year after year, your early visions of triumph have seemed to grow more and more dim, and you have been forced to settle down to the conviction, that the best you can expect from your religion is a life of alternate failure and victory; one hour sinning, and the next repenting, and beginning again, only to fail again, and again to repent.

But *is* this all? Had the Lord Jesus only this in His mind, when He laid down His precious life to deliver you from your sore and cruel bondage to Satan? Did He propose to Himself only this partial deliverance? Did He intend to leave you thus struggling along under a weary consciousness of defeat and discouragement? Did He fear that a continuous victory would dishonor Him, and bring reproach on His name? When all those declarations were made concerning His coming, and the work He was to accomplish, did they mean only this that you have experienced? Was there a hidden reserve in each promise, that was meant to deprive it of its complete fulfillment? Did “delivering us out of the hand of our enemies,” mean from only a few of them? Did “enabling us always to triumph,” mean only sometimes; or being “more than conquerors through Him that loved us,” mean constant defeat and failure? No, No, a thousand times No! God is able to save us to the uttermost, and He meant to do it. His promise, confirmed by His oath, was, that “He would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might

serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." It is a mighty work to do, but our Deliverer is able to do it. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and dare we dream for a moment that He is not able or not willing to accomplish His own purposes?

In the very outset, then, settle down on this one thing; that Jesus came to save you fully, now, in this life, from the power and dominion of sin, and to deliver you altogether out of the hands of your enemies. If you do not think He did, search your Bible, and collect together every announcement or declaration concerning the purposes and object of His death on the cross. You will be astonished to find how full they are. Everywhere and always His work is said to be to deliver us from our sins, from our bondage, from our defilement; and not a hint is given, anywhere, that this deliverance was to be only the limited and partial one with which the Church so continually tries to be satisfied.

Let me give you a few texts on this subject. When the angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream, and announced the coming birth of the Saviour, he said—"and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

When Zacharias was "filled with the Holy Ghost" at the birth of his son, and "prophesied," he declared that God had visited His people in order to fulfill the promise and the oath He had made them, which promise was, "That He would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might

serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life."

When Peter was preaching in the porch of the temple to the wondering Jews, he said, "Unto you first, God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

When Paul was telling out to the Ephesian Church the wondrous truth that Christ had loved them so much as to give Himself for them, he went on to declare that His purpose in thus doing was "that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

When Paul was seeking to instruct Titus, his own son after the common faith, concerning the grace of God, he declared that the object of that grace was to teach us "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;" and adds as the reason of this that Christ "gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

When Peter was urging upon the Christians to whom he was writing a holy and Christlike walk, he tells them that "even hereunto were ye called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:" and adds, "who His own self

bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

When Paul was contrasting in the Ephesians the walk suitable for a Christian, with the walk of an unbeliever, he sets before them the truth in Jesus as being this—"that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

And when in Romans vi. He was answering forever the question as to continuing in sin, and showing how utterly foreign it was to the whole spirit and aim of the salvation of Jesus, he brings up the fact of our judicial death and resurrection with Christ as an unanswerable argument for our practical deliverance from it, and says "God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." And adds "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Dear Christians, will you receive the testimony of the Scripture on this matter? The same questions that troubled the

church in Paul's day are troubling it now. First, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" And second, "Do we then make void the law through faith?" Shall our answer to these be Paul's emphatic "God forbid," and his triumphant assertions that instead of making it void "we establish the law;" and that "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Can we suppose for a moment that the holy God who hates sin in the sinner, is willing to tolerate it in the Christian, and that He has even arranged the plan of salvation in such a way as to make it impossible for those who are saved from the guilt of sin to find deliverance from its power?

As Dr. Chalmers well says, "Sin is that scandal which must be rooted out from the great spiritual household over which the Divinity rejoices . . . Strange administration, indeed, for sin to be so hateful to God, as to lay all who had incurred it under death, and yet when readmitted into life, that sin should be permitted; and that what was before the object of destroying vengeance, should now become the object of an upheld and protected toleration. Now that the penalty is taken off, think you it is possible that the unchangeable God has so given up His antipathy to sin, as that man—ruined and redeemed man—may now perseveringly indulge under the new arrangement in that which under the old

destroyed him? Does not the God who loved righteousness and hated iniquity six thousand years ago, bear the same love to righteousness and hatred to iniquity still? . . . I now breathe the air of loving kindness from heaven, and can walk before God in peace and graciousness; shall I again attempt the incompatible alliance of two principles so adverse as that of an approving God and a persevering sinner? How shall we, recovered from so awful a catastrophe, continue that which first involved us in it? The cross of Christ, by the same mighty and decisive stroke where-with it moved the curse of sin away from us, also surely moves away the power and the love of it from over us."

And not Dr. Chalmers only, but many other holy men of his generation and of our own, as well as of generations long past, have united in declaring that the redemption accomplished for us by our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary, is a redemption from the power of sin as well as from its guilt, and that He *is* able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

A quaint old divine of the last century says, "There is nothing so contrary to God as sin, and God will not suffer sin always to rule his masterpiece, man. When we consider the infiniteness of God's power for destroying that which is contrary to Him, who can believe that the devil must always stand and prevail? I believe it is inconsistent and disagreeable with true faith for people to be Christians, and yet to believe that Christ, the eternal Son of God, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, will suffer sin and the devil to have dominion over them.

“But you will say no man by all the power he hath can redeem himself, and no man can live without sin. We will say amen to it. But if man tell us that, when God’s power comes to help us and redeem us out of sin, that it cannot be effected, then this doctrine we cannot away with; nor I hope you neither.

“Would you approve of it if I should tell you that God puts forth His power to do such a thing, but the devil hinders Him? That it is impossible for God to do it because the devil does not like it? That it is impossible that any one should be free from sin because the devil hath got such a power in them that God cannot cast him out? This is lamentable doctrine, yet hath not this been preached? It doth in plain terms say, though God doth interpose His power, it is impossible, because the devil hath so rooted sin in the nature of man. Is not man God’s creature, and cannot He new make him, and cast sin out of him? If you say sin is deeply rooted in man, I say so, too; yet not so deeply rooted but Christ Jesus hath entered so deeply into the root of the nature of man, that He hath received power to destroy the devil and his works, and to recover and redeem man into righteousness and holiness. Or else it is false that ‘He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.’ We must throw away the Bible if we say that it is impossible for God to deliver man out of sin.

“We know,” he continues, “when our friends are in captivity, as in Turkey, or elsewhere, we pay our money for their redemption; but we will not pay our money if they be kept in their fetters still. Would not any one think himself cheated to pay so

much money for their redemption, and the bargain be made so that he shall be *said* to be redeemed, and be *called* a redeemed captive, but he must wear his fetters still? How long? As long as he hath a day to live.

“This is for bodies, but now I am speaking of souls. Christ must be made to me redemption, and rescue me from captivity. Am I a prisoner anywhere? Yes, verily, verily, he that committeth sin, saith Christ, he is a servant of sin, he is a slave of sin. If thou hast sinned, thou art a slave, a captive that must be redeemed out of captivity. Who will pay a price for me? I am poor; I have nothing; I cannot redeem myself; who will pay a price for me? There is One come who hath paid a price for me. That is well; that is good news, then I hope I shall come out of my captivity. What is His name, is He called a Redeemer? So, then, I do expect the benefit of my redemption, and that I shall go out of my captivity. No, say they, you must abide in sin as long as you live. What! Must we never be delivered? Must this crooked heart and perverse will always remain? Must I be a believer and yet have no faith that reacheth to sanctification and holy living? Is there no mastery to be had, no getting victory over sin? Must it prevail over me as long as I live? What sort of a Redeemer, then, is this, or what benefit have I in this life, of my redemption?”

Similar extracts might be quoted from Marshall and Romaine and many others, to show that this doctrine is no new one in the church, however much it may have been lost sight of by the present generation of believers. It is the same old story that has filled

with songs of triumph the daily lives of many saints of God throughout all ages; and it is now afresh being sounded forth to the unspeakable joy of weary and burdened souls.

Do not reject it, then, dear reader, until you have prayerfully searched the Scriptures to see whether these things be indeed so. Ask God to open the eyes of your understanding by His Spirit, that you may “know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to reward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.” And when you have begun to have some faint glimpses of this power, learn to look away utterly from your own weakness, and putting your case into His hands, trust Him to deliver you.

“When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be when ye are come nigh unto the battle that the priest shall approach, and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, oh Israel; ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint; fear not and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is He that goeth with you to fight for you against your enemies to save you.”

≡ E. M. BOUNDS ≡

POWER THROUGH *P*RAYER

FOREWORD BY ♡ STORMIE ◻ MARTIAN

MOODY CLASSICS

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The Divine Channel of Power



WE ARE CONSTANTLY straining to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the Gospel.

This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organization. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method.

The church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6). The dispensation that heralded and prepared the way for Christ was bound up in that man John. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isaiah 9:6). The world's salvation comes out of that cradled Son. When Paul appeals to the personal character of the men who rooted the gospel in the world, he solves the mystery of their success. The glory and efficiency of the gospel are staked on the men who proclaim it. When God declares that "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout

the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chronicles 16:9), He declares the necessity of men and His dependence on them as a channel through which to exert His power upon the world.

This vital, urgent truth is one that this age of machinery is apt to forget. The forgetting of it is as baneful on the work of God as would be the striking of the sun from his sphere. Darkness, confusion, and death would ensue.

What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.

An eminent historian has said that the accidents of personal character have more to do with the revolutions of nations than either philosophic historians or democratic politicians will allow. This truth has its application in full to the gospel of Christ, the character and conduct of the followers of Christ—Christianize the world, transfigure nations and individuals. Of the preachers of the gospel it is eminently true.

The character as well as the fortunes of the gospel are committed to the preacher. He makes or mars the message from God to man. The preacher is the golden pipe through which the divine oil flows. The pipe must not only be golden, but open and flawless, that the oil may have a full, unhindered, unwasted flow.

The man makes the preacher. God must make the man. The messenger is, if possible, more than the message. The preacher is more than the sermon. The preacher makes the sermon. As life-giving milk from the mother's bosom is but the mother's life, so all the preacher says is tintured, impregnated by what the preacher is. The treasure is in earthen vessels, and the taste of the vessel impregnates and may discolour. The man, the whole man, lies behind the sermon. Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life. It takes twenty years to make a sermon, because it takes twenty years to make the man. The true sermon is a thing of life. The sermon grows because the man grows. The sermon is forceful because the man is forceful. The sermon is holy because the man is holy. The sermon is full of the divine unction because the man is full of the divine unction.

Paul termed it "my gospel"; not that he had degraded it by his personal eccentricities or diverted it by selfish appropriation, but the gospel was put into the heart and lifeblood of the man Paul, as a personal trust to be executed by his Pauline traits, to be set aflame and empowered by the fiery energy of his fiery soul. Paul's sermons—what were they? Where are they? Skeletons, scattered fragments, afloat on the sea of inspiration! But the man Paul, greater than his sermons, lives forever, in full form, feature, and stature, with his molding hand on the church. The preaching is but a voice. The voice in silence dies, the text is forgotten, the sermon fades from memory; the preacher lives.

The sermon cannot rise in its life-giving forces above the

man. Dead men give out dead sermons, and dead sermons kill. Everything depends on the spiritual character of the preacher. Under the Jewish dispensation the high priest had inscribed in jeweled letters on a golden frontlet: "Holiness to the Lord." So every preacher in Christ's ministry must be molded into and mastered by this same holy motto. It is a crying shame for the Christian ministry to fall lower in holiness of character and holiness of aim than the Jewish priesthood. Jonathan Edwards said: "I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ. The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness." The gospel of Christ does not move by popular waves. It has no self-propagating power. It moves as the men who have charge of it move. The preacher must impersonate the gospel. Its divine, most distinctive features must be embodied in him. The constraining power of love must be in the preacher as a projecting, eccentric, and all-commanding, self-oblivious force. The energy of self-denial must be his being, his heart and blood and bones. He must go forth as a man among men, clothed with humility, abiding in meekness, wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove; the bonds of a servant with the spirit of a king in high, royal independent bearing, with the simplicity and sweetness of a child. The preacher must throw himself, with all the abandon of a perfect self-emptying faith and a self-consuming zeal, into his work for the salvation of men. Hearty, heroic, compassionate, fearless martyrs must the men be who take hold of and shape a generation for God. If they be timid time-servers, place-seekers, if they

be men-pleasers or men-fearers, if their faith has a weak hold on God or His Word, if their denial be broken by any phrase of self or the world, they cannot take hold of the church nor the world for God.

The preacher's sharpest and strongest preaching should be to himself. His most difficult, delicate, laborious, and thorough work must be with himself. The training of the twelve was the great, difficult and enduring work of Christ. Preachers are not sermon-makers, but men-makers and saint-makers and he only is well trained for this business who has made himself a man and a saint. It is not great talents or great learning or great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness, great in faith, great in love, great in fidelity, great for God—men always preaching by holy sermons in the pulpit, by holy lives out of it. These can mold a generation for God.

After this order, the early Christians were formed. Men they were of solid mold, preachers after the heavenly type—heroic, stalwart, soldierly, saintly. Preaching with them meant self-denying, self-crucifying, serious, toilsome, martyr business. They applied themselves to it in a way that told on their generation, and formed in its womb a generation yet unborn for God. The preaching man is to be the praying man. Prayer is the preacher's mightiest weapon. An almighty force in itself, it gives life and force to all.

The real sermon is made in the closet. The man—God's man—is made in the closet. His life and his profoundest convictions were born in his secret communion with God. The burdened and

tearful agony of his spirit, his weightiest and sweetest messages were got when alone with God. Prayer makes the man; prayer makes the preacher; prayer makes the pastor.

The pulpit of this day is weak in praying. The pride of learning is against the dependent humility of prayer. Prayer is with the pulpit too often only official—a performance for the routine of service. Prayer is not to the modern pulpit the mighty force it was in Paul's life or Paul's ministry. Every preacher who does not make prayer a mighty factor in his own life and ministry is weak as a factor in God's work and is powerless to advance God's cause in this world.

— THOMAS À KEMPIS —

THE IMITATION
OF CHRIST

GENERAL EDITOR ~ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

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Of the Imitation of Christ, and Contempt of All the Vanities of the World



“**HE THAT** followeth me, walketh not in darkness,”¹ saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are taught, how we ought to imitate his life and manners, if we will be truly enlightened, and be delivered from all blindness of heart.

Let therefore our chief endeavor be, to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ.

2. The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the doctrines of holy men; and he that hath the Spirit, will find therein a hidden manna.

But it falleth out, that many who often hear the gospel of Christ, are yet but little affected, because they lack the spirit of Christ.

But whosoever would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ, must endeavor to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ.

3. What will it avail thee to dispute profoundly of the Trinity,

if thou be lacking in humility, and art thereby displeasing to the Trinity?

Surely high words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life makes him dear to God.

I had rather feel compunction than understand the definition thereof.

If thou didst know the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would all that profit thee without the love of God,² and without grace?

Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity,³ except to love God, and to serve him only.

This is the highest wisdom, by contempt of the world to tend toward the kingdom of heaven.

4. Vanity therefore it is, to seek after perishing riches, and to trust in them.

It is also vanity to hunt after honors, and to climb to high degree.

It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh, and to labor for that for which thou must afterward suffer more grievous punishment.

Vanity it is, to wish to live long, and to be careless to live well.

It is vanity to mind only this present life, and not to foresee those things which are to come.

It is vanity to set thy love on that which speedily passes away, and not to hasten thither where everlasting joy abides.

5. Call often to mind that proverb that, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."⁴

Endeavor therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and to turn thyself to the invisible.

For they that follow their lusts, do stain their own consciences, and lose the favor of God.

1. John 8:12
2. 1 Cor. 13:2
3. Eccles. 1:3
4. Eccles. 1:8

Of Thinking Humbly of Ourselves



ALL MEN naturally desire to know;¹ but what does knowledge avail without the fear of God?

Surely an humble husbandman that serveth God is better than a proud philosopher that, neglecting himself, laboreth to understand the course of the heavens.

Whoso knoweth himself well, is lowly in his own sight and delighteth not in the praises of men.

If I understood all things in the world, and were not charitable, what would that help me in the sight of God, who will judge me according to my deeds?

2. Cease from an inordinate desire of knowing, for therein is much distraction and deceit.

The learned are well-pleased to seem so to others, and to be accounted wise.²

There are many things, which to know is of little or no profit to the soul:

And he is very unwise, that is intent upon other things than those that may serve for his salvation.

Many words do not satisfy the soul; but a good life comforteth the mind, and a pure conscience giveth great assurance in the sight of God.

3. How much the more thou knowest, and how much the better thou understandest, so much the more severely shalt thou therefore be judged, unless thy life be also more holy.

Be not therefore extolled in thine own mind for any art or science which thou knowest, but rather let the knowledge given thee make thee more humble and cautious.

If thou thinkest that thou understandest and knowest much, know also that there be many things more which thou knowest not.

Do not seem to be overwise, but rather acknowledge, thine own ignorance.³

Why wilt thou prefer thyself before others, since there be many more learned, and more skillful in the Scripture than thou art?

If thou wilt know or learn anything profitably, desire to be unknown, and to be little esteemed by man.

4. The highest and most profitable reading is the true knowledge and consideration of ourselves.

It is great wisdom and perfection to esteem ourselves as nothing, and to think always well and highly of others.

If thou shouldest see another openly sin, or commit some

heinous offence, yet oughtest thou not to esteem the better of thyself; for thou knowest not how long thou shalt be able to remain in good estate.

We are all frail,⁴ but thou oughtest to hold none more frail than thyself.

1. Eccles. 1:13

2. 1 Cor. 8:1

3. Rom. 12:16

4. Gen. 8:21

≡ ANDREW MURRAY ≡

THE TRUE
VINE

GENERAL EDITOR ♡ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

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ONLY A BRANCH

"I am the vine, ye are the branches." JOHN 15:5

'Tis only a little Branch,
A thing so fragile and weak,
But that little Branch hath a message true
To give, could it only speak.

"I'm only a little Branch,
I live by a life not mine,
For the sap that flows through my tendrils small
Is the life-blood of the Vine.

"No power indeed have I
The fruit of myself to bear,
But since I'm part of the living Vine,
Its fruitfulness I share.

"Dost thou ask how I abide?
How this life I can maintain?—
I am bound to the Vine by life's strong band,
And I only need remain.

"Where first my life was given,
In the spot where I am set,
Upborne and upheld as the days go by,
By the stem which bears me yet.

"I fear not the days to come;
I dwell not upon the past,
As moment by moment I draw a life,
Which for evermore shall last.

"I bask in the sun's bright beams,
Which with sweetness fills my fruit,
Yet I own not the clusters hanging there,
For they all come from the root."

A life which is not my own,
But another's life in me:
This, this is the message the Branch would speak,
A message to thee and me.

Oh, struggle not to "abide,"
Nor labor to "bring forth fruit,"
But let Jesus unite thee to Himself,
As the Vine's Branch to the root.

So simple, so deep, so strong
That union with Him shall be:
His life shall forever replace thine own,
And His love shall flow through thee;

For His Spirit's fruit is love,
And love shall thy life become,
And for evermore on His heart of love
Thy spirit shall have her home.

FREDA HANBURY

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1. The Vine



I AM THE TRUE VINE.—*John 15:1*

ALL EARTHLY THINGS are the shadows of heavenly realities—the expression, in created, visible forms, of the invisible glory of God. The life and the truth are in heaven; on earth we have figures and shadows of the heavenly truths. When Jesus says: "I am the true vine," He tells us that all the vines of earth are pictures and emblems of Himself. He is the divine reality, of which they are the created expression. They all point to Him, and preach Him, and reveal Him. If you would know Jesus, study the vine.

How many eyes have gazed on and admired a great vine with its beautiful fruit? Come and gaze on the heavenly Vine till your eye turns from all else to admire Him. How many, in a sunny climate, sit and rest under the shadow of a vine? Come and be still under the shadow of the true Vine, and rest under it from the heat of the day. What countless numbers rejoice in the fruit of the vine! Come, and take, and eat of the heavenly fruit of the true Vine, and let your soul say: "I sat under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste."

I am the true vine.—This is a heavenly mystery. The earthly vine can teach you much about this Vine of heaven. Many interesting and beautiful points of comparison suggest themselves and help us to get conceptions of what Christ meant. But such thoughts do not teach us to know what the heavenly Vine really is, in its cooling shade and its life-giving fruit. The experience of this is part of the hidden mystery, which none but Jesus Himself, by His Holy Spirit, can unfold and impart.

I am the true vine.—The Vine is the living Lord, who Himself speaks, and gives, and works all that He has for us. If you would know the meaning and power of that word, do not think to find it by thought or study; these may help to show you what you must get from Him to awaken desire and hope and prayer, but they cannot show you the Vine. Jesus alone can reveal Himself. He gives His Holy Spirit to open the eyes to gaze upon Himself, to open the heart to receive Himself. He must Himself speak the word to you and me.

I am the true vine.—And what are you to do, if you want the mystery, in all its heavenly beauty and blessing, opened up to you? With what you already know of the parable, bow down and be still, worship and wait, until the divine Word enters your heart and you feel His holy presence with you and in you. The overshadowing of His holy love will give you the perfect calm and rest of knowing that the Vine will do all.

I am the true vine.—He who speaks is God, in His infinite power able to enter into us. He is man, one with us. He is the crucified One, who won a perfect righteousness and a divine life for us through His death. He is the glorified One, who from the throne gives His Spirit to make His presence real and true. He speaks—oh, listen, not to His words only, but to Himself, as He whispers secretly day by day: "I am the true Vine! All that the Vine can ever be to its branch, I will be to you."

* * *

Holy Lord Jesus, the heavenly Vine of God's own planting, I beseech You, reveal Yourself to my soul. Let the Holy Spirit, not only in thought, but in experience, give me to know all that You, the Son of God, are to me as the true Vine.

2. The Husbandman



AND MY FATHER IS THE HUSBANDMAN.—*John 15:1*

A VINE MUST have a husbandman to plant and watch over it, to receive and rejoice in its fruit. Jesus says: "My Father is the husbandman." Jesus was "the vine of God's planting." All He was and did, He owed to the Father; in all things He only sought the Father's will and glory. He had become man to show us what a creature ought to be to its Creator. He took our place, and the spirit of His life before the Father was ever what He seeks to make ours: "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things" (Romans 11:36). He became the true Vine, that we might be true branches. Both in regard to Christ and ourselves the words teach us the two lessons of absolute dependence and perfect confidence.

My Father is the husbandman.—Christ ever lived in the spirit of what He once said: "The Son can do nothing of himself" (John 5:19). As dependent as a vine is on a husbandman for the place where it is to grow, for its fencing in and watering and pruning, Christ felt Himself entirely dependent on the Father every day for the wisdom and the strength to do the Father's will. As He said in the previous chapter (John 14:10): "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." This absolute dependence had as its blessed counterpart the most blessed confidence that He had nothing to fear: The Father could not disappoint Him. With such a Husbandman as His Father, He could enter death and the grave. He could trust God to raise Him up. All that Christ is and has, He has, not in Himself, but from the Father.

My Father is the husbandman.—That is as blessedly true for us as for Christ. Christ is about to teach His disciples about their being branches. Before He ever uses the word, or speaks at all of abiding in Him or bearing fruit, He turns their eyes heavenward to the Father watching over them and working all in them.

At the very root of all Christian life lies the thought that God is to do all, that our one work is to leave ourselves in His hands, in the confession of utter helplessness and dependence, in the assured confidence that He gives us all we need. The great lack of the Christian life is that, even where we trust Christ, we leave God out of the count. Christ came to bring us to God. Christ lived the life of a man exactly as we have to live it. Christ the Vine points to God the Husbandman. As He trusted God, let us trust God, that everything we ought to be and have, as those who belong to the Vine, will be given to us from above.

Isaiah said: "A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Before we begin to think of fruit or branches, let us have our heart filled with the faith that as glorious as the Vine is the Husbandman. As high and holy as is our calling, so mighty and loving is the God who will work it all. As surely as the Husbandman made the Vine what it was to be, will He make each branch what it is to be. Our Father is our Husbandman, the surety for our growth and fruit.

3. The Branch



EVERY BRANCH IN ME THAT BEARETH NOT FRUIT HE TAKETH AWAY.—*John 15:2*

HERE WE HAVE one of the chief words of the parable—*branch*. A vine needs branches: Without branches it can do nothing, can bear no fruit. As important as it is to know about the Vine and the Husbandman, it is to realize what the branch is. Before we listen to what Christ has to say about it, let us first of all take in what a branch is and what it teaches us of our life in Christ. A branch is simply a bit of wood, brought forth by the vine for the one purpose of serving it in bearing its fruit. It is of the same nature as the vine, and it has one life and one spirit with it. Just think a moment of the lessons this suggests.

There is the lesson of *entire consecration*. The branch has but one object for which it exists, one purpose to which it is entirely given up, to bear the fruit the vine wishes to bring forth. And so the believer has but one reason for being a branch—but one reason for his existence on earth—that the heavenly Vine may through him *bring* forth His fruit. Happy the soul that knows this, that has consented to it, and that says, "I have been redeemed and I live for one thing. As exclusively as the natural branch exists only to bring forth fruit, I too; as exclusively as the heavenly Vine exists to bring forth fruit, I too. As I have been planted by God into Christ, I have wholly given myself to bear the fruit the Vine desires to bring forth."

There is the lesson of *perfect conformity*. The branch is exactly like the vine in every aspect—the same nature, the same life, the same place, the same work. In all this they are inseparably one. And so the believer needs to know that he is partaker of the divine nature, that he has the very nature and spirit of Christ in him, and that his one calling is to yield himself to a perfect conformity to Christ. The branch is a perfect likeness of the vine; the only difference is the one is great and strong, and the source of strength; the other little and feeble, ever needing and receiving strength. Even so the believer is, and is to be, the perfect likeness of Christ.

There is the lesson of *absolute dependence*. The vine has its stores of life and sap and strength not for itself, but for the branches. The branches are and have nothing but what the vine provides and imparts. The believer is called to, and it is his highest blessedness to enter upon, a life of entire and unceasing dependence upon Christ. Day and night, every moment, Christ is to work in him all he needs.

And then there is the lesson of *undoubting confidence*. The branch has no care; the vine provides all; it has but to yield it and receive. It is the sight of this truth that leads to the blessed rest of faith, the true secret of growth and strength: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." What a life would come to us if we only consented to be branches! Dear child of God, learn the lesson. You have but one thing to do: Only be a branch—nothing more, nothing less! Just be a branch; Christ will be the Vine that gives all. And the Husbandman, the mighty God, who made the Vine what it is, *will as surely make the branch what it ought to be*.

* * *

Lord Jesus, I pray, reveal to me the heavenly mystery of the branch, in its living union with the Vine, in its claim on all its fullness. And let Your all-sufficiency, holding and filling Your branches, lead me to the rest of faith that knows that You work all.

4. The Fruit



EVERY BRANCH IN ME THAT BEARETH NOT FRUIT HE TAKETH AWAY.—*John 15:2*

FRUIT. This is the next great word we have: the Vine, the Husbandman, the branch, the fruit. What has our Lord to say to us about fruit? Simply this—that fruit is the one thing the branch is for, and that if it bear not fruit, the husbandman takes it away. The vine is the glory of the husbandman; the branch is the glory of the vine; the fruit is the glory of the branch. If the branch bring not forth fruit, there is no glory or worth in it; it is an offense and a hindrance; the husbandman takes it away. The one reason for the existence of a branch, the one mark of being a true branch of the heavenly Vine, the one condition of being allowed by the divine Husbandman to share the life of the Vine is bearing fruit.

And what is fruit? Something that the branch bears, not for itself, but for its owner; something that is to be gathered and taken away. The branch does indeed receive from the vine sap for its own life, by which it grows thicker and stronger. But this supply for its own maintenance is entirely subordinate to its fulfillment of the purpose of its existence—bearing fruit. It is because Christians do not understand or accept this truth that they so fail in their efforts and prayers to live the branch life. They often desire it earnestly; they read and meditate and pray, and yet they fail, and they wonder why. The reason is very simple: They do not know that *fruitbearing is the one thing they have been saved for*.

Just as entirely as Christ became the true Vine with the one object, you have been made a branch, with the one object of bearing fruit for the salvation of men. The Vine and the branch are equally under the unchangeable law of fruitbearing as the one reason of their being. Christ and the believer, the heavenly Vine and the branch, have equally their place in the world exclusively for one purpose: to carry God's saving love to men. Hence the solemn word: Every branch that bears not fruit, He takes away.

Let us especially beware of one great mistake. Many Christians think their own salvation is the first thing; their temporal life and prosperity, with the care of their family, the second; and what time and interest is left may be devoted to fruitbearing, to the saving of men. No wonder that in most cases very little time or interest can be found. No, Christian, the one object with which you have been made a member of Christ's body is that the Head may have you to carry out His saving work. The one object God had in making you a branch is that Christ may through you bring life to men. Your personal salvation, your business and care for your family, *are entirely subordinate to this*. Your first aim in life, your first aim every day, should be to know how Christ desires to carry out His purpose in you.

Let us begin to think as God thinks. Let us accept Christ's teaching and respond to it. The one object of my being a branch, the one mark of my being a true branch, the one condition of my abiding and growing strong, is that I bear the fruit of the heavenly Vine for dying men to eat and live. And the one thing of which I can have the most perfect assurance is that, with Christ as my Vine, and the Father as my Husbandman, I can indeed be a fruitful branch

* * *

Our Father, You come seeking fruit. Teach us, we pray, to realize how truly this is the one object of our existence and of our union to Christ. Make it the one desire of our hearts to be branches, so filled with the Spirit of the Vine as to bring forth fruit abundantly.

≡ JOHN BUNYAN ≡

THE PILGRIM'S
PROGRESS

FROM THIS WORLD TO THAT WHICH IS TO COME
DELIVERED UNDER THE
SIMILITUDE OF A DREAM

GENERAL EDITOR ~ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

MOODY CLASSICS

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO



Pilgrim's Progress



THAT THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE
PRECIOUS THAN OF GOLD THAT PERISHETH, THOUGH IT BE TRIED
WITH FIRE, MIGHT BE FOUND UNTO PRAISE AND HONOUR AND
GLORY AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST.—*1 Peter, 1:7*

AS I WALKED through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den,¹ and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed with rags standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back (Isaiah 64:6; Luke 14:33; Psalm 38:4). I looked, and saw him open the Book and read therein; and as he read he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he break out with a lamentable cry, saying:

PILGRIM: What shall I do? (Acts 2:37; 16:30; Habakkuk 1:2–3).

In this plight, therefore, he went home, and restrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because

¹ *Bedford Jail, in which the author was a prisoner for conscience' sake.*

that his trouble increased. Wherefore at length he break his mind to his wife and children; and thus he began to talk to them:

PILGRIM: O my dear wife, and you my children, I, your dear friend, am in myself undone by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me. Moreover, I am certainly informed that this our city will be burned with fire from Heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee my wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (the which yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered.

At this his relations were sore amazed, not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper had got into his head. Therefore, it drawing toward night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed. But the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when the morning was come, they would know how he did. He told them:

PILGRIM: Worse and worse.

He also set to talking to them again; but they began to be hardened. They also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriage to him. Sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him. Wherefore he began to retire himself

to his chamber to pray for and pity them, and also to condole his own misery; he would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying; and thus for some days he spent his time.

Now I saw, upon a time when he was walking in the fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his Book, and greatly distressed in his mind: and as he read, he burst out as he had done before, crying.

PILGRIM: What must I do to be saved? (Acts 16:30–31).

I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because (as I perceived) he could not tell which way to go.

Pilgrim Meets Evangelist

I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, who asked:

EVANGELIST: Wherefore dost thou cry?

PILGRIM: Sir, I perceive by the Book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment (Hebrews 9:27); and I find that I am not willing to do the first (Job 16:21–22), nor able to do the second (Ezekiel 22:14).

EVANGELIST: Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils?

PILGRIM: Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Tophet (Isaiah 30:33). And, sir, if I be not fit to go to prison,

I am not fit to go to judgment, and from thence to execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

EVANGELIST: If this be thy condition, why standest thou still?

PILGRIM: Because I know not whither to go.

Then he gave him a parchment roll, and there was written within, "Flee from the wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7).

The man therefore read it, and, looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said:

PILGRIM: Whither must I flee?

EVANGELIST: (Pointing with his finger over a very wide field), Do you see yonder wicket gate? (Matthew 7:13–14.)

PILGRIM: No.

EVANGELIST: Do you see yonder shining light? (Psalm 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19.)

PILGRIM: I think I do.

EVANGELIST: Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door, when his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, "Life! life! Eternal life!" (Luke 14:26). So he looked not behind him (Genesis 19:17), but fled toward the middle of the plain.

The neighbors also came out to see him run (Jeremiah

20:10); and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and among those that did so, there were two that resolved to fetch him back by force.

Obstinate and Pliable Pursue Him

The name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other Pliable. Now by this time the man was got a good distance from them; but, however, they were resolved to pursue him, which they did, and in a little time they overtook him. Then said the man:

PILGRIM: Neighbors, wherefore are ye come?

NEIGHBOR: To persuade you to go back with us.

PILGRIM: That can by no means be. You dwell in the city of Destruction, the place also where I was born: I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later you will sink lower than the grave, into a place that burns with fire and brimstone. Be content, good neighbors, and go along with me!

OBSTINATE: What! And leave our friends and our comforts behind us!

CHRISTIAN: Yes (said Christian, for that was his name), because that *all* is not worthy to be compared with a *little* of that I am seeking to enjoy (2 Corinthians 4:18). If you will go along with me, and hold it, you shall fare as I myself; for there, where I go, is enough and to spare (Luke 15:17). Come away, and prove my words.

OBSTINATE: What are the things you seek, since you leave

all the world to find them?

CHRISTIAN: I seek an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away (1 Peter 1:4); and it is laid up in Heaven, and safe there (Hebrews 2:16), to be bestowed, at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my Book.

OBSTINATE: Tush! Away with your Book; will you go back with us or no?

CHRISTIAN: No, not I, because I have laid my hand to the plow (Luke 9:62).

OBSTINATE: Come then, neighbor Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him. There is a company of these crazy-headed coxcombs, that when they take a fancy by the end are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.

PLIABLE: Then don't revile. If what the good Christian says is true, the things he looks after are better than ours. My heart inclines to go with my neighbor.

OBSTINATE: What! More fools still! Be ruled by me and go back. Who knows whither such a brain-sick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise.

CHRISTIAN: Come with me, neighbor Pliable; there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more glories besides. If you believe not me, read here in this Book; and for the truth of what is expressed therein, behold all is confirmed by the blood of Him that made it (Hebrews 9:17–21).

PLIABLE: Well, neighbor Obstinate, I begin to come to a point; I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him. But, my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?

CHRISTIAN: I am directed by a man, whose name is Evangelist, to speed me to a little gate that is before us, where we shall receive instruction about the way.

PLIABLE: Come then, good neighbor, let us be going.

(Then they went both together.)

OBSTINATE: And I will go back to my place; I will be no companion of such misled, fantastical fellows.

Now I saw in my dream that when Obstinate was gone back, Christian and Pliable went talking over the plain; and thus they began their discourse.

CHRISTIAN: Come, neighbor Pliable, how do you do? I am glad you are persuaded to go along with me. Had even Obstinate himself but felt what I have felt of the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the back.

PLIABLE: Come, neighbor Christian, since there are none but us two here, tell me now further what the things are, and how to be enjoyed, whither we are going.

CHRISTIAN: I can better conceive of them with my mind than speak of them with my tongue; but yet, since you are desirous to know, I will read of them in my Book.

PLIABLE: And do you think that the words of your Book are

certainly true?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, verily; for it was made by Him that cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

PLIABLE: Well said; what things are they?

CHRISTIAN: There is an endless kingdom to be inhabited, and everlasting life to be given us, that we may inhabit that kingdom forever (Isaiah 45:17; John 10:27–29).

PLIABLE: Well said; and what else?

CHRISTIAN: There are crowns of glory to be given us, and garments that will make us shine like the sun in the firmament of Heaven (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:5; Matthew 13:43).

PLIABLE: This is excellent; and what else?

CHRISTIAN: There shall be no more crying, nor sorrow; for He that is owner of the place will wipe all tears from our eyes (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 7:16–17; 21:4).

PLIABLE: And what company shall we have there?

CHRISTIAN: There we shall be with seraphim and cherubim (Isaiah 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Revelation 5:11), creatures that will dazzle our eyes to look on them. There also we shall meet with thousands and ten thousands that have gone before us to that place; none of them are hurtful, but loving and holy, everyone walking in the sight of God, and standing in His presence with acceptance forever. In a word, there we shall see the elders with their golden crowns (Revelation 4:4); there we shall see the holy virgins with their golden

harp (Revelation 14:1–5); there we shall see men that by the world were cut in pieces, burned in flames, eaten of beasts, drowned in the seas, for the love they bare to the Lord of the place (John 12:25); all well, and clothed with immortality as with a garment (2 Corinthians 5:2, 3, 5).

PLIABLE: The hearing of this is enough to ravish one's heart. But are these things to be enjoyed? How shall we get to be sharers thereof?

CHRISTIAN: The Lord, the Governor of the country, hath recorded that in this Book (Isaiah 55:1–2; 7:37; Revelation 21:6; 22:17), the substance of which is, if we be truly willing to have it, He will bestow it upon us freely.

PLIABLE: Well, my good companion, glad am I to hear of these things; come on, let us mend our pace.

CHRISTIAN: I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this burden that is on my back.

The Slough of Despond

Now I saw in my dream, that just as they had ended this talk, they drew nigh to a very miry Slough that was in the midst of the plain; and they being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the Slough was Despond. Here, therefore, they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the mire.

PLIABLE: Ah, neighbor Christian, where are you now?

CHRISTIAN: Truly, I do not know.

At this Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow:

PLIABLE: Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect between this and our journey's end? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave country alone for me!

And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the mire on that side of the Slough which was next to his own house; so away he went, and Christian saw him no more.

Wherefore, Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone; but still he endeavored to struggle to that side of the Slough that was farthest from his own house, and next to the wicket gate; the which he did, but could not get out because of the burden that was upon his back.

Help Comes to the Rescue

But I beheld in my dream that a man came to him, whose name was Help, and asked him what he did there.

CHRISTIAN: Sir, I was bid to go this way by a man called Evangelist, who directed me also to yonder gate, that I might escape the wrath to come. And as I was going thither, I fell in here.

HELP: But why did not you look for the steps?

≡ R. A. TORREY ≡

HOW TO
PRAY

GENERAL EDITOR ~ ROSALIE DE ROSSET

MOODY CLASSICS

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CHICAGO

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The Importance of Prayer



IN EPHESIANS 6:18 we read words that put the tremendous importance of prayer with startling and overwhelming force:

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

When we stop to weigh the meaning of these words, then note the connection in which they are found, the intelligent child of God is driven to say,

“I must pray, pray, pray. I must put all my energy and all my heart into prayer. Whatever else I do, I must pray.”

The *Revised Version* (RV) is, if possible, stronger than the King James:

“With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons

in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

Note the *alls*: "with *all* prayer," "at *all* seasons," "in *all* perseverance," "for *all* the saints." Note the piling up of strong words, "prayer," "supplication," "perseverance." Note once more the strong expression "watching thereunto," more literally, "being sleepless thereunto." Paul realized the natural slothfulness of man, and especially his natural slothfulness in prayer. How seldom we pray things through! How often the church and the individual get right up to the verge of a great blessing in prayer and just then let go, get drowsy, and quit. I wish that these words "being sleepless unto prayer" might burn into our hearts. I wish the whole verse might burn into our hearts.

By why is this constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer so needful?

1. *There is a devil.*

He is cunning, he is mighty, he never rests, he is ever plotting the downfall of the child of God; and if the child of God relaxes in prayer, the Devil will succeed in ensnaring him.

This is the thought of the context. Verse 12 reads: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in

the heavenly places" (RV). Then comes verse 13: "Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand" (RV). Next follows a description of the different parts of the Christian's armor, which we are to put on if we are to stand against the devil and his mighty wiles. Then Paul brings all to a climax in verse 18, telling us that to all else we must add prayer—constant, persistent, untiring sleepless prayer in the Holy Spirit, or all else will go for nothing.

2. Prayer is God's appointed way for obtaining things, and the great secret of all lack in our experience, in our life, and in our work is neglect of prayer.

James brings this out very forcibly in chapter 4 and verse 2 of his epistle: "Ye have not because ye ask not." These words contain the secret of the poverty and powerlessness of the average Christian—neglect of prayer.

Many a Christian is asking, "Why is it I make so little progress in my Christian life?"

"Neglect of prayer," God answers. "You have not because you ask not."

Many a minister is asking, "Why is it I see so little fruit from my labors?"

Again God answers, "Neglect of prayer. You have not because you ask not."

Many a Sunday school teacher is asking, "Why is it that

I see so few converted in my Sunday school class?"

Still God answers, "Neglect of prayer. You have not because you ask not."

Both ministers and churches are asking, "Why is it that the church of Christ makes so little headway against unbelief and error and sin and worldliness?"

Once more we hear God answering, "Neglect of prayer. You have not because you ask not."

3. Those men whom God set forth as a pattern of what He expected Christians to be—the apostles—regarded prayer as the most important business of their lives.

When the multiplying responsibilities of the early church crowded in upon them, they "called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, fully of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But *we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word*" (Acts 6:2–4). It is evident from what Paul wrote to the churches and to individuals about praying for them that much of his time, strength, and thought were given to prayer (Romans 1:9 RV; Ephesians 1:15–16; Colossians 1:9 RV; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 2 Timothy 1:3 RV).

All the mighty men of God outside the Bible have been

men of prayer. They have differed from one another in many things, but in this they have been alike.

4. *Prayer occupied a very prominent place and played a very important part in the earthly life of our Lord.*

Turn, for example, to Mark 1:35. "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." The preceding day had been a very busy and exciting one, but Jesus shortened the hours of needed sleep that He might arise early and give Himself to more sorely needed prayer.

Turn again to Luke 6:12, where we read, "And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Our Savior found it necessary on occasion to take a whole night for prayer.

The words *pray* and *prayer* are used at least twenty-five times in connection with our Lord in the brief record of His life in the four Gospels, and His praying is mentioned in places where the words are not used. Evidently prayer took much of the time and strength of Jesus; a man or woman who does not spend much time in prayer cannot properly be called a follower of Jesus Christ.

5. *Praying is the most important part of the present ministry of our risen Lord.*

This reason for constant, persistent, sleepless, overcom-

ing prayer seems if possible even more forcible.

Christ's ministry did not close with His death. His atoning work was finished then, but when He rose and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He entered upon other work for us just as important in its place as His atoning work. It cannot be divorced from His atoning work; it rests upon that as its basis, but it is necessary to our complete salvation.

What that great present work is, by which He carries our salvation on to completeness, we read in Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing *he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*" This verse tells us that Jesus is able to save us unto the uttermost, not merely *from* the uttermost but *unto* the uttermost unto entire completeness, absolute perfection, because He not merely died but because He also "ever liveth."

The verse also tells us for what purpose He now lives, "*to make intercession*" for us, to pray. Praying is the principal thing He is doing in these days. It is by His prayers that He is saving us.

The same thought is found in Paul's remarkable triumphant challenge in Romans 8:34: "Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, *who also maketh intercession for us*" (RV).

If we then are to have fellowship with Jesus Christ in His present work, we must spend much time in prayer; we

must give ourselves to earnest, constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer. I know of nothing that has so impressed me with a sense of the importance of praying at all seasons, being much and constantly in prayer, as the thought that that is the principal occupation at present of my risen Lord. I want to have fellowship with Him, and to that end I have asked the Father whatever else He may make me, to make me at all events an intercessor, to make me a man who knows how to pray, and who spends much time in prayer.

This ministry of intercession is a glorious and a mighty ministry, and we can all have a part in it. The man or the woman who is shut away from the public meeting by sickness can have part in it; the busy mother; the woman who has to take in washing for a living can have part—she can mingle prayers for the saints, and for her pastor, and for the unsaved, and for foreign missionaries, with the soap and water as she bends over the washtub, and not do the washing any more poorly on that account; the hard-driven man of business can have part in it, praying as he hurries from duty to duty. But of course we must, if we would maintain this spirit of constant prayer, take time—and take plenty of it—when we shall shut ourselves up in the secret place alone with God for nothing but prayer.

6. Prayer is the means that God has appointed for our receiving mercy, and obtaining grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 is one of the simplest and sweetest verses in the Bible. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." These words make it very plain that God has appointed a way by which we shall seek and obtain mercy and grace. That way is prayer; bold, confident, outspoken approach to the throne of grace, the most holy place of God's presence, where our sympathizing High Priest, Jesus Christ, has entered in our behalf (verses 14–15).

Mercy is what we need, grace is what we must have, or all our life and effort will end in complete failure. Prayer is the way to get them. There is infinite grace at our disposal, and we make it ours experimentally by prayer. Oh, if we only realized the fullness of God's grace that is ours for the asking, its height and depth and length and breadth, I am sure that we would spend more time in prayer. The measure of our appropriation of grace is determined by the measure of our prayers.

Who is there that does not feel that he needs more grace? Then ask for it. Be constant and persistent in your asking. Be importunate and untiring in your asking. God delights to have us "shameless" beggars in this direction; for it shows our faith in Him, and He is mightily pleased with faith. Because of our "shamelessness," He will rise and give us as much as we need (Luke 11:8). What little streams of mercy and grace most of us know, when we might know rivers overflowing their banks!

7. *Prayer in the name of Jesus Christ is the way Jesus Christ Himself has appointed for His disciples to obtain fullness of joy.*

He states this simply and beautifully in John 16:24: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "Made full" is the way the *Revised Version* reads. Who is there that does not wish his joy filled full? Well, the way to have it filled full is by praying in the name of Jesus. We all know people whose joy is filled full; indeed, it is just running over, shining from their eyes; bubbling out of their very lips, and running off their fingertips when they shake hands with you. Coming in contact with them is like coming in contact with an electrical machine charged with gladness. Now people of that sort are always people that spend much time in prayer.

Why is it that prayer in the name of Christ brings such fullness of joy? In part, because we get what we ask. But that is not the only reason, nor the greatest. It makes God real. When we ask something definite of God, and He gives it, how real God becomes! He is right there! It is blessed to have a God who is real, and not merely an idea. I remember how once I was taken suddenly and seriously sick all alone in my study. I dropped upon my knees and cried to God for help. Instantly all pain left me—I was perfectly well. It seemed as if God stood right there and had put out His hand and touched me. The joy of the healing was not so great as the joy of meeting God.

There is no greater joy on earth or in heaven than communion with God, and prayer in the name of Jesus brings us into communion with Him. The psalmist was surely not speaking only of future blessedness but also of present blessedness when he said, "In thy presence is fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). Oh, the unutterable joy of those moments when in our prayers we really press into the presence of God!

Does someone say, "I have never known any such joy as that in prayer"?

Do you take enough leisure for prayer to actually get into God's presence? Do you really give yourself up to prayer in the time that you do take?

8. *Prayer, in every care and anxiety and need of life, with thanksgiving, is the means that God has appointed for our obtaining freedom from all anxiety, and the peace of God, which passes all understanding.*

"Be careful for nothing," says Paul, "but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). To many this seems, at the first glance, the picture of a life that is beautiful, but beyond the reach of ordinary mortals; not so at all. The verse tells us how the life is attainable by every child of God: "Be careful for nothing," or as the *Revised Version*

reads, "In nothing be anxious." The remainder of the verse tells us how, and it is very simple: "But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." What could be plainer or more simple than that? Just keep in constant touch with God, and when trouble or vexation, great or small, comes up, speak to Him about it, never forgetting to return thanks for what He has already done. What will the result be? "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (RV).

That is glorious, and as simple as it is glorious! Thank God, many are trying it. Don't you know anyone who is always serene? Perhaps he is a very stormy man by his natural makeup, but troubles and conflicts and reverses and bereavements may sweep around him, and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guards his heart and his thoughts in Christ Jesus.

We all know such persons. How do they manage it?

Just by prayer, that is all. Those persons who know the deep peace of God, the unfathomable peace that passes all understanding, are always men and women of much prayer.

Some of us let the hurry of our lives crowd prayer out, and what a waste of time and energy and nerve force there is by the constant worry! One night of prayer will save us from the many nights of insomnia. Time spent in prayer is not wasted but time invested at big interest.

If we would only spend more time in prayer, there would be more fullness of the Spirit's power in our work. Many and many a man who once worked unmistakably in the power of the Holy Spirit is now filling the air with empty shoutings and beating it with his meaningless gesticulations, because he has let prayer be crowded out. We must spend much time on our knees before God, if we are to continue in the power of the Holy Spirit.

9. Prayer is the means that Christ has appointed whereby our hearts shall not become overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so the day of Christ's return comes upon us suddenly as a snare.

One of the most interesting and solemn passages upon prayer in the Bible is along this line (Luke 21:34–36). "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." According to this passage there is only one way in which we can be prepared for the coming of the Lord when He appears, that is, through much prayer.

The coming again of Jesus Christ is a subject that is

awakening much interest and much discussion in our day; but it is one thing to be interested in the Lord's return, and to talk about it, and quite another thing to be prepared for it. We live in an atmosphere that has a constant tendency to unfit us for Christ's coming. The world tends to draw us down by its gratifications and by its cares. There is only one way by which we can rise triumphant above these things—by constant watching unto prayer, that is, by sleeplessness unto prayer. *Watch* in this passage is the same strong word used in Ephesians 6:18, and *always* the same strong phrase *in every season*. The man who spends little time in prayer, who is not steadfast and constant in prayer, will not be ready for the Lord when He comes. But we may be ready. How? Pray! Pray! Pray!

10. *Because of what prayer accomplishes.*

Much has really been said upon that already, but there is much also that should be added.

(a) Prayer promotes our spiritual growth as almost nothing else, indeed as nothing else but Bible study; and true prayer and true Bible study go hand in hand.

It is through prayer that my sin is brought to light, my most hidden sin. As I kneel before God and pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Psalm 139:23–24),

God shoots the penetrating rays of His light into the innermost recesses of my heart, and the sins I never suspected are brought to view. In answer to prayer, God washes me from mine iniquity and cleanses me from my sin (Psalm 51:2). In answer to prayer, my eyes are opened to behold wondrous things out of God's Word (Psalm 119:18). In answer to prayer, I get wisdom to know God's way (James 1:5) and strength to walk in it. As I meet God in prayer and gaze into His face, I am changed into His own image from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). Each day of true prayer life finds me more like my glorious Lord.

John Welch, son-in-law to John Knox, was one of the most faithful men of prayer this world ever saw. He counted that day ill-spent in which seven or eight hours were not used alone with God in prayer and the study of His Word. An old man speaking of him after his death said, "He was a type of Christ."

How came he to be so like his Master?

His prayer life explains the mystery.

(b) Prayer brings power into our work.

If we wish power for any work to which God calls us, be it preaching, teaching, personal work, or the rearing of our children, we can get it by earnest prayer.

A woman with a little boy who was perfectly incorrigible once came to me in desperation and said:

“What shall I do with him?”

I asked, “Have you ever tried prayer?”

She said that she had prayed for him, she thought. I asked if she had made his conversion and his character a matter of definite, expectant prayer. She replied that she had not been definite in the matter. She began that day, and at once there was a marked change in the child, and he grew up into Christian manhood.

How many a Sunday school teacher has taught for months and years, and seen no real fruit from his labors, and then has learned the secret of intercession and by earnest pleading with God has seen his scholars brought one by one to Christ! How many a poor teacher has become a mighty man of God by casting away his confidence in his own ability and gifts and giving himself up to God to wait upon Him for the power that comes from on high! John Livingstone spent a night, with some others like-minded, in prayer to God and religious conversation, and when he preached next day in the Kirk of Shotts five hundred people were converted or dated some definite uplift in their lives to that occasion. Prayer and power are inseparable.

(c) Prayer avails for the conversion of others.

There are few converted in this world unless in connection with someone’s prayers. I formerly thought that no human being had anything to do with my own conversion,

for I was not converted in church or Sunday school or in personal conversation with anyone. I was awakened in the middle of the night and converted. As far as I can remember, I had not the slightest thought of being converted, or of anything of that character, when I went to bed and fell asleep; but I was awakened in the middle of the night and converted probably inside of five minutes. A few minutes before I was about as near eternal perdition as one gets. I had one foot over the brink and was trying to get the other one over. I say I thought no human being had anything to do with it, but I had forgotten my mother's prayers, and I afterward learned that one of my college classmates had chosen me as one to pray for until I was saved.

Prayer often avails where everything else fails. How utterly all of Monica's efforts and entreaties failed with her son! But her prayers prevailed with God, and the dissolute youth became St. Augustine, the mighty man of God. By prayer the bitterest enemies of the gospel have become its most valiant defenders, the greatest scoundrels the truest sons of God, and the vilest women the purest saints. Oh, the power of prayer to reach down, down, down where hope itself seems vain, and lift men and women up, up, up into fellowship with and likeness to God! It is simply wonderful! How little we appreciate this marvelous weapon!

(d) Prayer brings blessings to the church.

The history of the church has always been a history of grave difficulties to overcome. The Devil hates the church and seeks in every way to block its progress; now by false doctrine, again by division, again by inward corruption of life. But by prayer, a clear way can be made through everything. Prayer will root out heresy, allay misunderstanding, sweep away jealousies and animosities, obliterate immoralities, and bring in the full tide of God's reviving grace. History abundantly proves this. In the hour of darkest portent, when the case of the church, local or universal, has seemed beyond hope, believing men and believing women have met together and cried to God and the answer has come.

It was so in the days of Knox, it was so in the days of Wesley and Whitefield, it was so in the days of Edwards and Brainerd, it was so in the days of Finney, it was so in the days of the great revival of 1857 in this country and of 1859 in Ireland. And it will be so again in your day and mine! Satan has marshaled his forces. Christian Science with its false Christ—a woman—lifts high its head. Others making great pretensions of apostolic methods, but covering the rankest dishonesty and hypocrisy with these pretensions, speak with loud assurance. Christians equally loyal to the great fundamental truths of the gospel are glowering at one another with a devil-sent suspicion. The world, the flesh, and the Devil are holding high carnival. It is now a dark day, *but*—now “it is

time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law" (Psalm 119:126). And He is getting ready to work, and now He is listening for the voice of prayer. Will He hear it? Will He hear it from you? Will He hear it from the church as a body? I believe He will.

— C. H. SPURGEON —

ALL OF GRACE

*An Earnest Word for Those Who Are
Seeking Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ*

FOREWORD BY ROSALIE DE ROSSET

MOODY CLASSICS

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CHICAGO

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To You



HE WHO SPOKE AND WROTE this message will be greatly disappointed if it does not lead many to the Lord Jesus. It is sent forth in childlike dependence upon the power of God the Holy Spirit, to use it in the conversion of millions, if He so pleases. No doubt many poor men and women will take up this little volume, and the Lord will visit them with grace. To answer this end, the very plainest language has been chosen, and many simple expressions have been used. But if those of wealth and rank should glance at this book, the Holy Spirit can impress them also, since that which can be understood by the unlettered is nonetheless attractive to the instructed. Oh that some might read it who will become great winners of souls!

Who knows how many will find their way to peace by what they read here? A more important question for you is this: Will you be one of them?

A certain man placed a fountain by the wayside, and he hung up a cup near to it by a little chain. He was told some time after

that a great art critic had found much fault with its design. "But," said he, "do many thirsty persons drink at it?" Then they told him that thousands of poor people, men, women, and children, quenched their thirst at this fountain, and he smiled and said that he was not troubled by the critic's observation. He only hoped that on some sultry summer's day the critic himself might fill the cup and be refreshed and praise the name of the Lord.

Here is my fountain, and here is my cup. Find fault if you wish, but do drink of the water of life. I only care for this. I would rather bless the soul of the poorest street cleaner or rag-gatherer than please a prince and fail to convert him to God.

Do you mean business in reading these pages? If so, we are agreed at the outset; but nothing short of your finding Christ and heaven is the business aimed at here. Oh that we may seek this together! I do so by dedicating this little book with prayer. Will you not join me by looking up to God and asking Him to bless you while you read? Providence has put these pages before you, you have a little spare time in which to read them, and you feel willing to give them your attention. These are good signs. Who knows but that the time of blessing is come for you? At any rate, "The Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7–8).

What Are We At?



I HEARD A STORY; I think it came from the north country. A minister called upon a poor woman, intending to give her help, for he knew that she was very poor. With his money in his hand, he knocked at the door; but she did not answer. He concluded she was not at home, and went his way. A little later he met her at the church and told her that he had remembered her need: "I called at your house and knocked several times, and I suppose you were not at home, for I had no answer." "At what hour did you call, sir?" "It was about noon." "Oh, dear," she said, "I heard you, sir, and I am so sorry I did not answer, but I thought it was the man calling for the rent." Many poor women know what this meant. Now, it is my desire to be heard, and therefore I want to say that I am not calling for the rent; indeed, it is not the object of this book to ask anything of you, but to tell you that salvation is *all of grace*, which means, free, gratis, for nothing.

Often when we are anxious to win attention, our hearer thinks, "Oh! Now I am going to be told my duty. It is the man

calling for that which is due to God, and I am sure I have nothing to pay it with. I will not be at home." No, this book does not come to make a demand upon you, but to bring you something. We are not going to talk about law and duty and punishment, but about love and goodness and forgiveness and mercy and eternal life. Do not, therefore, act as if you were not at home; do not turn a deaf ear or a careless heart. I am asking nothing of you in the name of God or man. It is not my intent to make any requirement at your hands, but I come in God's name to bring you a free gift which it shall be to your present and eternal joy to receive.

Open the door and let my pleadings enter. "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). The Lord Himself invites you to a conference concerning your immediate and endless happiness, and He would not have done this if He did not mean well toward you. Do not refuse the Lord Jesus who knocks at your door, for He knocks with a hand which was nailed to the tree for such as you are. Since His only and sole object is your good, incline your ear and come to Him. Hearken diligently, and let the good word sink into your soul. It may be that the hour is come in which you shall enter upon that new life which is the beginning of heaven. "Faith cometh by hearing" (Romans 10:17), and reading is a type of hearing; faith may come to you while you are reading this book. Why not? O blessed Spirit of all grace, make it so!

God Justifieth the Ungodly



THIS MESSAGE IS FOR YOU. You will find the text in Romans 4:5, “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

I call your attention to those words, “Him that justifieth the ungodly.” They seem to me to be very wonderful words.

Are you not surprised that there should be such an expression as that in the Bible, “That justifieth the ungodly”? I have heard that men that hate the doctrines of the cross bring it as a charge against God, that He saves wicked men and receives to Himself the vilest of the vile. See how this Scripture accepts the charge and plainly states it! By the mouth of His servant Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, He takes to Himself the title of “Him that justifieth the ungodly.” He makes those just who are unjust, forgives those who deserve no favor. Did you think that salvation was for the good and that God’s grace was for the pure and holy who are free from sin? Perhaps you think that if you were excellent, then God would reward you; and maybe you have

thought that because you are not worthy, therefore there could be no way of enjoying His favor. You must be somewhat surprised to read a text like this: "Him that justifieth the ungodly." I do not wonder that you are surprised; for with all my familiarity with the great grace of God, I never cease to wonder at it. It does sound surprising, does it not, that it should be possible for a holy God to justify an unholy man? We, according to the natural legality of our hearts, are always talking about our own goodness and our own worthiness, and we stubbornly believe that there must be something in us in order to win the notice of God. Now, God, who sees through all deceptions, knows that there is no goodness whatever in us. He says that "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). He knows that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6), and, therefore, the Lord Jesus did not come into the world to look after goodness and righteousness with him, but to bestow them upon persons who have none of them. He comes, not because we are just, but to make us so; he justifieth the ungodly.

When a lawyer comes into court, if he is an honest man, he desires to plead the case of an innocent person and justify him before the court from the things which are falsely laid to his charge. It should be the lawyer's object to justify the innocent person, and he should not attempt to screen the guilty party. It is not man's right nor in his power to truly justify the guilty. This is a miracle reserved for the Lord alone. God, the infinitely just Sovereign, knows that there is not a just man upon earth who

does good and does not sin. Therefore, in the infinite sovereignty of His divine nature and in the splendor of His ineffable love, He undertakes the task, not so much of justifying the just as of justifying the ungodly. God has devised ways and means of making the ungodly man to stand justly accepted before Him. He has set up a system by which with perfect justice He can treat the guilty as if he had been free from offence; yes, can treat him as if he were wholly free from sin. He justifieth the ungodly.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save *sinners*. It is a very surprising thing, a thing to be marveled at most of all by those who enjoy it. I know that it is to me, even to this day, the greatest wonder that I ever heard of that God should ever justify me. I feel myself to be a lump of unworthiness, a mass of corruption, and a heap of sin apart from His almighty love. I know and am fully assured that I am justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus, and I am treated as if I had been perfectly just and made an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. And yet, by nature I must take my place among the most sinful. I, who am altogether undeserving, am treated as if I had been deserving. I am loved with as much love as if I had always been godly, whereas before I was ungodly. Who can help being astonished at this? Gratitude for such favor stands dressed in robes of wonder.

Now, while this is very surprising, I want you to notice how available it makes the Gospel to you and to me. If God justifieth the *ungodly*, then He can justify *you*. Is not that the very kind of person that you are? If you are unconverted at this moment, it is

a very proper description of you. You have lived without God; you have been the reverse of godly. In one word, you have been and are *ungodly*. Perhaps you have not even attended a place of worship on Sunday, but have lived in disregard of God's day and house and Word. This proves you to have been ungodly. Sadder still, it may be you have even tried to doubt God's existence and have gone the length of saying that you did so. You have lived on this fair earth which is full of the tokens of God's presence, and all the while you have shut your eyes to the clear evidences of His power and Godhead. You have lived as if there were no God. Indeed, you would have been very pleased if you could have positively demonstrated to yourself that there was no God whatever. Possibly you have lived a great many years in this way so that you are now pretty well settled in your ways, and yet God is not in any of them. If you were labeled ungodly, it would describe you as well as if the sea were to be labeled *salt water*. Would it not?

Possibly you are a person of another sort. You have regularly attended to all the outward forms of religion, and yet you have had no heart in them at all, but have been really ungodly. Though meeting with the people of God, you have never met with God for yourself; you have been in the choir, and yet have not praised the Lord with your heart. You have lived without any love to God in your heart, or regard to His commands in your life. Well, you are just the kind of person to whom this Gospel is sent, this Gospel which says that God justifieth *the ungodly*. It is very wonderful, but it is happily available for you. It just suits you.

Does it not? How I wish that you would accept it! If you are a sensible person, you will see the remarkable grace of God in providing for someone such as you are, and you will say to yourself, "Justify the ungodly! Why, then, should not I be justified, and justified at once?"

Now, observe further, that it must be so. The salvation of God is for those who do not deserve it and have no preparation for it. It is reasonable that the statement should be put in the Bible, for no others need justifying but those who have no justification of their own. If any of you are perfectly righteous, you want no justifying. You feel that you are doing your duty well, and almost putting heaven under an obligation to you. What do you want with a Saviour or with mercy? What do you want with justification? You will be tired of this book by this time, for it will have no interest to you.

If any of you are giving yourselves such proud airs, listen to me for a little while. You will be lost as sure as you are alive. You righteous men, whose righteousness is all of your own working, are either deceivers or deceived, for the Scripture cannot lie and it says plainly, "There is none righteous, no, not one." In any case, I have no Gospel to preach to the self-righteous, no, not a word. Jesus Christ Himself came not to call the righteous, and I am not going to do what He did not do. If I called you, you would not come; therefore, I will not call you. No, I ask you rather to look at that righteousness of yours till you see what a delusion it is. It is not half so substantial as a cobweb. Be finished with it!

Flee from it! Believe that the only persons that can need justification are those who are not just in themselves. They need something to be done for them to make them just before the judgment seat of God. Depend upon it, the Lord only does that which is needful. Infinite wisdom never attempts that which is unnecessary. Jesus never undertakes that which is superfluous. To make him just who is just is no work for God; that were a labor for a fool. But to make him just who is unjust, that is work for infinite love and mercy. To justify the ungodly is a miracle worthy of God, and it is.

Now, look. If there be anywhere in the world a physician who has discovered sure and precious remedies, to whom is that physician sent? To those who are perfectly healthy? I think not. Put him down in a district where there are no sick persons, and he feels that he is not in his place. There is nothing for him to do. "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick" (Mark 2:17). Is it not equally clear that the great remedies of grace and redemption are for the sick in soul? They cannot be for the whole, for they cannot be of use to such. If you feel that you are spiritually sick, the Physician has come into the world for you. If you are altogether undone by reason of your sin, you are the very person aimed at in the plan of salvation. I say that the Lord of love had just such as you are in His eye when He arranged the system of grace. Suppose a man of generous spirit were to resolve to forgive all those who were indebted to him; it is clear that this can only apply to those really in his debt. One

person owes him a thousand pounds, and another owes him fifty pounds; each one has but to have his bill receipted, and the liability is wiped out. But the most generous person cannot forgive the debts of those who do not owe him anything. It is out of the power of Omnipotence to forgive where there is no sin. Pardon, therefore, cannot be for you who have no sin. Pardon must be for the guilty. Forgiveness must be for the sinful. It would be absurd to talk of forgiving those who do not need forgiveness or pardoning those who have never offended.

Do you think that you must be lost because you are a sinner? This is the reason why you can be saved. Because you realize that you are a sinner, I would encourage you to believe that grace is ordained for such as you. One hymn writer even dared to say:

A sinner is a sacred thing;
The Holy Ghost hath made him so.

It is true that Jesus seeks and saves that which is lost. He died and made a real atonement for real sinners. When men are not playing with words or calling themselves "miserable sinners" in false humility, I feel overjoyed to meet with them. I would be glad to talk all night to bona fide sinners. The inn of mercy never closes its doors upon such, neither on weekdays nor on Sunday. Our Lord Jesus did not die for imaginary sins, but His heart's blood was spilled to wash out deep crimson stains which nothing else can remove.

He that is a dirty sinner is the kind of man that Jesus Christ came to make clean. A Gospel preacher on one occasion preached a sermon from, "Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees" (Luke 3:9), and he delivered such a sermon that one of his hearers said to him, "One would have thought that you had been preaching to criminals. Your sermon ought to have been delivered in the county jail." "Oh, no," said the good man, "if I were preaching in the county jail, I should not preach from that text, there I should preach 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Timothy 1:15). This is true." The Law is for the self-righteous, to humble their pride; the Gospel is for the lost, to remove their despair.

If you are not lost, what do you want with a Saviour? Should the shepherd go after those who never went astray? Why should the woman sweep her house for the pieces of money that were never out of her purse? No, the medicine is for the diseased; the quickening is for the dead; the pardon is for the guilty; liberation is for those who are bound; the opening of eyes is for those who are blind. How can the Saviour and His death upon the cross and the Gospel of pardon be accounted for unless they be upon the supposition that men are guilty and worthy of condemnation? The sinner is the Gospel's reason for existence. If you are undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving, you are the sort of man for whom the Gospel is ordained and arranged and proclaimed. God justifies the ungodly.

I want to make this very plain. I hope that I have done so

already. But, still, plain as it is, it is only the Lord who can make a man see it. At first it does seem most amazing to an awakened man that salvation should really be for him when he is lost and guilty. He thinks that it must be for him when he is penitent, forgetting that his penitence is a part of his salvation. "Oh," he says, "but I must be this and that," all of which is true, for he shall be this and that as the result of salvation. But salvation comes to him before he has any of the results of salvation. It comes to him, in fact, while he deserves only this bare, beggarly, base, abominable description: *ungodly*. That is all he is when God's Gospel comes to justify him.

May I, therefore, urge upon any who have no good thing about them—who fear that they have not even a good feeling or anything whatever that can recommend them to God—to firmly believe that our gracious God is able and willing to take them without anything to recommend them, and to forgive them spontaneously, not because *they* are good, but because *He* is good. Does He not make His sun to shine on the evil as well as on the good? Does He not give fruitful seasons and send the rain and the sunshine in their time upon the most ungodly nations? Yes, even Sodom had its sun, and Gomorrah had its dew. The great grace of God surpasses my conception and your conception, and I would have you think worthily of it. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are God's thoughts above our thoughts. He can abundantly pardon. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; forgiveness is for the guilty.

Do not attempt to touch yourself up and make yourself something other than you really are, but come as you are to Him who justifies the ungodly. A great artist some time ago had painted a picture of a part of the city in which he lived, and he wanted, for historic purposes, to include in his picture certain characters well known in the town. A street sweeper who was unkempt, ragged, and filthy, was known to everybody, and there was a suitable place for him in the picture. The artist said to this ragged and ragged individual, "I will pay you well if you will come down to my studio and let me paint you." He came around in the morning, but he was soon sent away, for he had washed his face, combed his hair, and donned a respectable suit of clothes. He was needed as a beggar and was not invited in any other capacity. Even so, the Gospel will receive you into its halls if you come as a sinner, not otherwise. Wait not for reformation, but come at once for salvation. God justifieth *the ungodly*, and that takes you up where you now are; it meets you in your worst estate.

Come in your disorder. I mean, come to your heavenly Father in all your sin and sinfulness. Come to Jesus just as you are: leprous, filthy, naked, neither fit to live nor fit to die. Come, you that are the very sweepings of creation; come, though you hardly dare to hope for anything but death. Come, though despair is brooding over you, pressing upon your bosom like a horrible nightmare. Come and ask the Lord to justify another ungodly one. Why should He not? Come, for this great mercy of God is meant for such as you. I put it in the language of the text, and I

cannot put it more strongly: the Lord God Himself takes to Himself this gracious title, "Him that justifieth the ungodly." He makes just, and causes to be treated as just, those who by nature are ungodly. Is not that a wonderful word for you? Do not delay till you have considered this matter well.

≡ L. E. MAXWELL ≡

BORN
*C*RUCIFIED

FOREWORD BY ♡ HENRY AND TOM BLACKABY

M O O D Y C L A S S I C S

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO

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The Believer's Identification



DURING THE CIVIL WAR, George Wyatt was drawn by lot to go to the front. He had a wife and six children. A young man named Richard Pratt offered to go in his stead. He was accepted and joined the ranks, bearing the name and number of George Wyatt. Before long Pratt was killed in action.

The authorities later sought again to draft George Wyatt into service. He protested, entering the plea that he had died in the person of Pratt. He insisted that the authorities consult their own records as to the fact of his having died in identification with Pratt, his substitute. Wyatt was thereby exempted as beyond the claims of law and further service. *He had died in the person of his representative.*

There we have the truth of identification in a nutshell. God's way of deliverance is through death—through identification with our Substitute in His death and resurrection.

After setting forth the truth of our justification through faith in Christ's death for us (in Romans 5), the apostle Paul sets forth

at once (in Romans 6) the believer's identification with death. In chapter 5 it is Christ's death for us; in chapter 6 it is our death with Christ. Christ's death for us in chapter 5 is foundational and essential, but we should move on immediately into the next chapter. It is in chapter 6 we learn that our justification is no mere formal or legal transaction (although it is essentially a legal matter), but that it is also in essential union with Christ.

When God declares the ungodly sinner just, He makes no mere legal and lifeless imputation of righteousness apart from a real and deep life-union of the believer with Christ. God has indeed declared righteous "the ungodly," but not *apart* from Christ, not *outside* of Christ. We are justified only in Christ; that is, having come into vital life-union with Christ through faith in His atoning death. Those whom God declares righteous are "created in Christ Jesus." We are actually new creatures "in Christ."

After Paul's declaration in Romans 5:20 that "where sin abounded, grace abounded much more," the question naturally arises in Romans 6:1, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The emphatic "Certainly not!" is based upon our identification with Christ in His death. Having been joined to Christ, it follows that we have been "baptized into His death" (6:3). Since we have been united to Christ crucified (in our justification—Romans 5), our position must be one of death "in Him." Paul says, "One died for all, then all died" (2 Corinthians 5:14). The death of Christ *for all* inevitably involved the death *of all*. We therefore died in Christ to sin. Shall we continue in sin?

Perish the thought! “In sin” and “in Christ”? What an ethical contradiction!

Christ dying for me makes inevitable my death with Him. The very character of Christ’s work on Calvary renders inseparable this double aspect of the once-for-all atonement. “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” The cause of Christ suffers greatly today through what has rightly been termed a “dissected Cross, a decapitated gospel.”

In taking upon Himself my “likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3), apart from which Christ could not have borne the penalty for my sin, He took me up into Himself—*made me one with Himself*. I am legally and ethically involved; I have been sentenced to death in Christ. It is my judicial position. Think a moment. Did I not accept death in order to be saved? When I realized I was death-doomed, I trusted the death of Another. Christ’s death for sin is automatically my death to sin. God’s way of victory and deliverance is to cut us right off from the old Adamic tree and to graft us into Christ, joining us to Him in death.

Apart, then, from any choice of my own, as a believer “I am crucified with Christ.” My being a Christian makes inevitable a crucified life. It is the Christian life—not the deeper spiritual life. As an old theologian puts it, I have been “born crucified” (that is, when I was born again).

Has the reader labored and agonized to please God? You have resolved to read your Bible, to be more meditative and prayerful—all without effect. You are conscious of crushing failure and

defeat. In spite of all your effort, you are not like the Lord Jesus. The commands of Christ seem grievous. They come with no glad welcome. They haunt you. You are conscious that your life is an utter contradiction of the standards erected by the Lord Jesus as the normal Christian life. You may actually have wondered why the Savior made such demands. They only tantalize and torture you. And no matter how deeply you are shamed, pained, and repentant, your struggles avail you nothing.

Christ's requirements are indeed unattainables—that you must learn first of all. In His demands Christ goes far beyond the natural. He asks for no mere imitations. On the one hand He well knows your incapacities; on the other hand He demands the utterly impossible. And the necessary shock that has to come to the believer is that Christ's standards are completely beyond the reach of the flesh. Who naturally loves his enemies, rejoices in persecution, hates himself, and goes the second mile? Yet these things are native to the true Christian life.

We are at once indicted and hopeless. There is an impassable gulf between the humanly possible and the requirements of Christ. The flesh profits nothing. F. J. Huegel, in *Bone of His Bone*, rightly summarizes our failure thus: "We have been proceeding upon a false basis. We have conceived of the Christian life as an imitation of Christ. It is not an imitation of Christ. It is a participation of Christ."

Indeed we are to be partakers of the divine nature; and the doorway into such an experimental participation of the life of

Christ is through identification—identification with Christ in His death and resurrection.

George Wyatt did not find deliverance by fighting the law or endeavoring to please the authorities. He took his death-position according to the government record. He acted on the basis of "It is written." He had died in the person of his representative. Even so, I, too, have a Substitute and Representative. He entered a deadly combat and died my death. I have been "crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

That is a great fact. No amount of struggling on my part can make it more true. I am an actual partaker of Christ, and, therefore, of His death and resurrection. Christ actually liveth in me. His is a life of death to sin and aliveness to God; it is mine to yield my all to Him—to believe and rejoice and rest *in Christ*.

An old missionary had long lived a defeated Christian life. In his despair his eyes fell upon the words, "Christ liveth in me" (KJV). "What," he said, "is Christ actually living in me?" He jumped up—solid Presbyterian though he was—and danced round and round his table, saying, "Christ liveth in me! Christ liveth in me!" When he realized that he was actually indwelt by the Crucified One, he came into blessed emancipation from the old self-life.

The life that is identified with Christ will be a life of sufficiency and fullness and victory. While it must not be confused with a life of emotion or of feelings, it is a life filled with "all joy and peace in believing." We must learn not to live in our feelings, for these are often misleading. The Lord Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and *the truth* shall make you free" (John 8:32; italics added).

The experience of a great pioneer of modern missions, J. Hudson Taylor, greatly illuminates this reality. After months of agony and struggle to realize more life, holiness, and power in his soul, he came in final and utter self-despair to “rest upon the Faithful One.” In a letter to his sister he said in part:

The sweetest part, if one may speak of one part being more sweet than another, is the rest which full identification with Christ brings. I am no longer anxious about anything . . . for He, I know, is able to carry out His will and His will is mine. It makes no matter where He places me or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me. For the easiest positions He must give me grace, and in the most difficult, His grace is sufficient. So, if God places me in great perplexity, must He not give me much guidance; in positions of great difficulty, much grace; in circumstances of great pressure and trial, much strength? . . . As to work, mine was never so plentiful, so responsible, or so difficult; but the weight and strain are all *gone*. His resources are mine, for He is mine . . . all this springs from *the believer's oneness with Christ* (italics added).

*Though I be nothing! I accept
The uttermost Thou givest,
One life alone between us now,
One life—the life Thou livest.*

—LUCY A. BENNETT

≡ J. C. RYLE ≡

HOLINESS

—ABRIDGED—

*Its Nature, Hindrances,
Difficulties, and Roots*

FOREWORD BY JOHN MACARTHUR

MOODY CLASSICS

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO

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Sin



“SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.” (1 John 3:4)

HE WHO WISHES to attain right views about Christian holiness must begin by examining the vast and solemn subject of sin. He must dig down very low if he would build high. A mistake here is most mischievous. Wrong views about holiness are generally traceable to wrong views about human corruption. I make no apology for beginning this volume about holiness by making some plain statements about *sin*.

The plain truth is that a right knowledge of sin lies at the root of all saving Christianity. Without it such doctrines as justification, conversion, sanctification, are “words and names” that convey no meaning to the mind. The first thing, therefore, that God does when He makes anyone a new creature in Christ is to send light into his heart and show him that he is a guilty sinner. The material creation in Genesis began with “light,” and so also does the spiritual creation. God “shines into our hearts” by the

work of the Holy Ghost, and then spiritual life begins (2 Cor. 4:6). Dim or indistinct views of sin are the origin of most of the errors, heresies, and false doctrines of the present day. If a man does not realize the dangerous nature of his soul's disease, you cannot wonder if he is content with false or imperfect remedies. I believe that one of the chief wants of the church has been, and is, clearer, fuller teaching about sin.

(1) I shall begin the subject by supplying some definition of sin. We are all of course familiar with the terms "sin" and "sinners." We talk frequently of "sin" being in the world, and of men committing "sins." But what do we mean by these terms and phrases? Do we really know? I fear there is much mental confusion and haziness on this point. Let me try, as briefly as possible, to supply an answer.

I say, then, that "sin," speaking generally, is, as the Ninth Article of our Church [the Church of England] declares, the fault and corruption of the nature of every man who is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone [*quam longissime* is the Latin] from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusts always against the spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into the world, it deserves God's wrath and damnation.

Sin, in short, is that vast moral disease that affects the whole human race, of every rank, and class, and name, and nation, and people, and tongue; a disease from which there never was but one

born of woman who was free. Need I say that One was Christ Jesus the Lord?

I say, furthermore, that "a sin," to speak more particularly, consists in doing, saying, thinking, or imagining, anything that is not in perfect conformity with the mind and law of God. "Sin," in short, as the Scripture says, is "the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). The slightest outward or inward departure from absolute mathematical parallelism with God's revealed will and character constitutes a sin, and at once makes us guilty in God's sight.

Of course I need not tell anyone who reads his Bible with attention, that a man may break God's law in heart and thought, when there is no overt and visible act of wickedness. Our Lord has settled that point beyond dispute in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:21-28). Even a poet of our own has truly said, "A man may smile and smile, and be a villain."

Again, I need not tell a careful student of the New Testament that there are sins of omission as well as commission, and that we sin, as our Prayer Book justly reminds us, by "leaving undone the things we ought to do," as really as by "doing the things we ought not to do." The solemn words of our Master in the Gospel of St. Matthew place this point also beyond dispute. It is there written, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"; "for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink" (Matt. 25:41-42). It was a deep and thoughtful saying of holy Archbishop Ussher, just before he died—"Lord, forgive me all my sins, and specially my sins of omission."

But I do think it necessary in these times to remind my readers that a man may commit sin and yet be ignorant of it, and fancy himself innocent when he is guilty. I fail to see any scriptural warrant for the modern assertion that "Sin is not sin to us until we discern it and are conscious of it." On the contrary, in the fourth and fifth chapters of that unduly neglected book, Leviticus, and in the fifteenth of Numbers, I find Israel distinctly taught that there were sins of ignorance, which rendered people unclean, and needed atonement (Lev. 4:1–35; 5:14–19; Num. 15:25–29). And I find our Lord expressly teaching that "the servant who knew not his master's will and did it not" was not excused on account of his ignorance, but was "beaten" or punished (Luke 12:48). We shall do well to remember that when we make our own miserably imperfect knowledge and consciousness the measure of our sinfulness, we are on very dangerous ground. A deeper study of Leviticus might do us much good.

(2) Concerning the origin and source of this vast moral disease called "sin," I must say something. I fear the views of many professing Christians on this point are sadly defective and unsound. I dare not pass it by. Let us, then, have it fixed down in our minds that the sinfulness of man does not begin from without, but from within. It is not the result of bad training in early years. It is not picked up from bad companions and bad examples, as some weak Christians are too fond of saying. No! it is a family disease, which we all inherit from our first parents, Adam and Eve, and with which we are born. Created "in the image of God,"

innocent and righteous at first, our parents fell from original righteousness and became sinful and corrupt. And from that day to this all men and women are born in the image of fallen Adam and Eve, and inherit a heart and nature inclined to evil. "By one man sin entered into the world." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." "We are by nature children of wrath." "The carnal mind is enmity against God." "Out of the heart [naturally as out of a fountain] proceed evil thoughts, adulteries," and the like (Rom. 5:12; John 3:6; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 8:7; Mark 7:21). The fairest babe who has entered life this year, and become the sunbeam of a family, is not, as its mother perhaps fondly calls it, a little "angel," or a little "innocent," but a little "sinner." Alas! as it lies smiling and crowing in its cradle, that little creature carries in its heart the seeds of every kind of wickedness! Only watch it carefully, as it grows in stature and its mind develops, and you will soon detect in it an incessant tendency to that which is bad, and a backwardness to that which is good. You will see in it the buds and germs of deceit, evil temper, selfishness, self-will, obstinacy, greediness, envy, jealousy, passion, which, if indulged and let alone, will shoot up with painful rapidity. Who taught the child these things? Where did he learn them? The Bible alone can answer these questions! Of all the foolish things that parents say about their children there is none worse than the common saying, "My son has a good heart at the bottom. He is not what he ought to be; but he has fallen into bad hands. Public schools are bad places. The tutors neglect the boys. Yet he has a good heart

at the bottom." The truth, unhappily, is diametrically the other way. The first cause of all sin lies in the natural corruption of the boy's own heart, and not in the school.

(3) Concerning the extent of this vast moral disease of man called sin, let us beware that we make no mistake. The only safe ground is that which is laid for us in Scripture. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart" is by nature evil and that "continually." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9). Sin is a disease that pervades and runs through every part of our moral constitution and every faculty of our minds. The understanding, the affections, the reasoning powers, the will, are all more or less infected. Even the conscience is so blinded that it cannot be depended on as a sure guide, and is as likely to lead men wrong as right, unless it is enlightened by the Holy Ghost. In short, "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness" about us (Isa. 1:6). The disease may be veiled under a thin covering of courtesy, politeness, good manners, and outward decorum; but it lies deep down in the constitution.

I admit fully that man has many grand and noble faculties left about him, and that in arts and sciences and literature he shows immense capacity. But the fact still remains that in spiritual things he is utterly "dead," and has no natural knowledge, or love, or fear of God. His best things are so interwoven and intermingled with corruption, that the contrast only brings out into sharper relief the truth and extent of the Fall. That one and the

same creature should be in some things so high and in others so low—so great and yet so little—so noble and yet so mean—so grand in his conception and execution of material things, and yet so groveling and debased in his affections—that he should be able to plan and erect buildings like those at Carnac and Luxor in Egypt, and the Parthenon at Athens, and yet worship vile gods and goddesses, and birds, and beasts, and creeping things—that he should be able to produce tragedies like those of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and histories like that of Thucydides, and yet be a slave to abominable vices like those described in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans—all this is a sore puzzle to those who sneer at “God’s Word written,” and scoff at us as bibliolaters. But it is a knot that we can untie with the Bible in our hands. We can acknowledge that man has all the marks of a majestic temple about him—a temple in which God once dwelt, but a temple that is now in utter ruins—a temple in which a shattered window here, and a doorway there, and a column there, still give some faint idea of the magnificence of the original design, but a temple that from end to end has lost its glory and fallen from its high estate. And we say that nothing solves the complicated problem of man’s condition but the doctrine of original or birth-sin and the crushing effects of the Fall.

Let us remember, besides this, that every part of the world bears testimony to the fact that sin is the *universal disease of all mankind*. Search the globe from east to west and from pole to pole—search every nation of every clime in the four quarters of

the earth—search every rank and class in our own country from the highest to the lowest—and under every circumstance and condition, the report will be always the same. The remotest islands in the Pacific Ocean, completely separate from Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, beyond the reach alike of Oriental luxury and Western arts and literature—islands inhabited by people ignorant of books, money, steam, and gunpowder—uncontaminated by the vices of modern civilization, these very islands have always been found, when first discovered, the abode of the vilest forms of lust, cruelty, deceit, and superstition. If the inhabitants have known nothing else, they have always known how to sin! Everywhere the human heart is naturally “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9). For my part, I know no stronger proof of the inspiration of Genesis and the Mosaic account of the origin of man, than the power, extent, and universality of sin. Grant that mankind have all sprung from one pair, and that this pair fell (as Gen. 3 tells us), and the state of human nature everywhere is easily accounted for. Deny it, as many do, and you are at once involved in inexplicable difficulties. In a word, the uniformity and universality of human corruption supply one of the most unanswerable instances of the enormous “difficulties of atheism.”

After all, I am convinced that the greatest proof of the extent and power of sin is the pertinacity with which it cleaves to man even after he is converted and has become the subject of the Holy Ghost’s operations. To use the language of the Ninth Article,

“this infection of nature doth remain—yea, even in them that are regenerate.” So deeply planted are the roots of human corruption, that even after we are born again, renewed, “washed, sanctified, justified,” and made living members of Christ, these roots remain alive in the bottom of our hearts, and, like the leprosy in the walls of the house, we never get rid of them until the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved. Sin, no doubt, in the believer’s heart, has no longer dominion. It is checked, controlled, mortified, and crucified by the expulsive power of the new principle of grace. The life of a believer is a life of victory and not of failure. But the very struggles that go on within his bosom, the fight that he finds it needful to fight daily, the watchful jealousy that he is obliged to exercise over his inner man, the contest between the flesh and the spirit, the inward “groanings” that no one knows but he who has experienced them—all, all testify to the same great truth, all show the enormous power and vitality of sin. Mighty indeed must that foe be who even when crucified is still alive! Happy is that believer who understands it, and while he rejoices in Christ Jesus has no confidence in the flesh; and while he says, “Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory,” never forgets to watch and pray lest he fall into temptation!

(4) Concerning the guilt, vileness, and offensiveness of sin in the sight of God, my words shall be few. I say “few” advisedly. I do not think, in the nature of things, that mortal man can at all realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the sight of that holy and perfect One with whom we have to do. On the one hand, God

is that eternal Being who “chargeth his angels with folly,” and in whose sight the very “heavens are not clean.” He is One who reads thoughts and motives as well as actions, and requires “truth in the inward parts” (Job 4:18; 15:15; Ps. 51:6). We, on the other hand—poor blind creatures, here today and gone tomorrow, born in sin, surrounded by sinners, living in a constant atmosphere of weakness, infirmity, and imperfection—can form none but the most inadequate conceptions of the hideousness of evil. We have no line to fathom it, and no measure by which to gauge it. The blind man can see no difference between a masterpiece of Titian or Raphael and the Queen’s head on a village signboard. The deaf man cannot distinguish between a penny whistle and a cathedral organ. The very animals whose smell is most offensive to us have no idea that they are offensive, and are not offensive to one another. And man, fallen man, I believe, can have no just idea what a vile thing sin is in the sight of that God whose handiwork is absolutely perfect—perfect whether we look through telescope or microscope—perfect in the formation of a mighty planet like Jupiter, with his satellites, keeping time to a second as he rolls round the sun—perfect in the formation of the smallest insect that crawls over a foot of ground. But let us nevertheless settle it firmly in our minds that sin is “the abominable thing that God hates”—that God “is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon that which is evil”—that the least transgression of God’s law makes us “guilty of all”—that “the soul that sinneth shall die”—that “the wages of sin is death”—

that God shall “judge the secrets of men”—that there is a worm that never dies, and a fire that is not quenched that “the wicked shall be turned into hell” and “shall go away into everlasting punishment”—and that “nothing that defiles shall in any wise enter heaven” (Jer. 44:4; Hab. 1:13; James 2:10; Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23; 2:16; Mark 9:44; Ps. 9:17; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 21:27). These are indeed tremendous words, when we consider that they are written in the book of a most merciful God!

No proof of the fullness of sin, after all, is so overwhelming and unanswerable as the cross and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the whole doctrine of His substitution and atonement. Terribly black must that guilt be for which nothing but the blood of the Son of God could make satisfaction. Heavy must that weight of human sin be that made Jesus groan and sweat drops of blood in agony at Gethsemane, and cry at Golgotha, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Nothing, I am convinced, will astonish us so much, when we awake in the resurrection day, as the view we shall have of sin, and the retrospect we shall take of our own countless shortcomings and defects. Never till the hour when Christ comes the second time shall we fully realize the “sinfulness of sin.” Well might George Whitefield say, “The anthem in heaven will be, What hath God wrought!”

(5) One point only remains to be considered on the subject of sin, which I dare not pass over. That point is its deceitfulness. It is a point of most serious importance, and I venture to think it

does not receive the attention that it deserves. You may see this deceitfulness in the wonderful proneness of men to regard sin as less sinful and dangerous than it is in the sight of God; and in their readiness to extenuate it, make excuses for it, and minimize its guilt. "It is but a little one! God is merciful! God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss! We mean well! One cannot be so particular! Where is the mighty harm? We only do as others!" Who is not familiar with this kind of language? You may see it in the long string of smooth words and phrases that men have coined in order to designate things that God calls downright wicked and ruinous to the soul. What do such expressions as "fast," "gay," "wild," "unsteady," "thoughtless," "loose" mean? They show that men try to cheat themselves into the belief that sin is not quite so sinful as God says it is, and that they are not so bad as they really are. You may see it in the tendency even of believers to indulge their children in questionable practices, and to blind their own eyes to the inevitable result of the love of money, of tampering with temptation, and sanctioning a low standard of family religion. I fear we do not sufficiently realize the extreme subtlety of our soul's disease. We are too apt to forget that temptation to sin will rarely present itself to us in its true colors, saying, "I am your deadly enemy, and I want to ruin you forever in hell." Oh no! sin comes to us, like Judas, with a kiss; and like Joab, with an outstretched hand and flattering words. The forbidden fruit seemed good and desirable to Eve; yet it cast her out of Eden. The walking idly on his palace roof

seemed harmless enough to David; yet it ended in adultery and murder. Sin rarely seems sin at first beginnings. Let us then watch and pray, lest we fall into temptation. We may give wickedness smooth names, but we cannot alter its nature and character in the sight of God. Let us remember St. Paul's words: "Exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). It is a wise prayer in our Litany, "From the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, good Lord, deliver us."

And now, before I go further, let me briefly mention two thoughts that appear to me to rise with irresistible force out of the subject.

On the one hand, I ask my readers to observe what deep reasons we all have for *humiliation and self-abasement*. Let us sit down before the picture of sin displayed to us in the Bible, and consider what guilty, vile, corrupt creatures we all are in the sight of God. What need we all have of that entire change of heart called regeneration, new birth, or conversion! What a mass of infirmity and imperfection cleaves to the very best of us at our very best! What a solemn thought it is, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14)! What cause we have to cry with the publican, every night in our lives, when we think of our sins of omission as well as commission, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). How admirably suited are the general and Communion Confessions of the Prayer Book to the actual condition of all professing Christians! How well that language suits

God's children, which the Prayer Book puts in the mouth of every churchman before he goes up to the Communion Table: "The remembrance of our misdoings is grievous unto us; the burden is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past." How true it is that the holiest saint is in himself a miserable sinner, and a debtor to mercy and grace to the last moment of his existence!

With my whole heart I subscribe to that passage in Hooker's sermon on justification, which begins,

Let the holiest and best things we do be considered. We are never better affected unto God than when we pray; yet when we pray, how are our affections many times distracted! How little reverence do we show unto the grand majesty of God unto whom we speak! How little remorse of our own miseries! How little taste of the sweet influence of his tender mercies do we feel! Are we not as unwilling many times to begin, and as glad to make an end, as if in saying, "Call upon me," he had set us a very burdensome task? It may seem somewhat extreme, which I will speak; therefore, let every one judge of it, even as his own heart shall tell him, and not otherwise; I will but only make a demand! If God should yield unto us, not as unto Abraham—if fifty, forty, thirty, twenty—yea, or if ten good persons could be found in a city, for their sakes this city should not be destroyed; but,

and if he should make us an offer thus large, “search all the generations of men since the fall of our father Adam, find one man that hath done one action which hath passed from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all; and for that one man’s only action neither man nor angel should feel the torments which are prepared for both,” do you think that this ransom to deliver men and angels could be found to be among the sons of men? The best things which we do have somewhat in them to be pardoned.¹

That witness is true. For my part I am persuaded the more light we have, the more we see our own sinfulness: the nearer we get to heaven, the more we are clothed with humility. In every age of the church you will find it true, if you will study biographies, that the most eminent saints—men like Bradford, Rutherford, and McCheyne—have always been the humblest men.

On the other hand, I ask my readers to observe *how deeply thankful we ought to be for the glorious gospel of the grace of God*. There is a remedy revealed for man’s need, as wide and broad and deep as man’s disease. We need not be afraid to look at sin, and study its nature, origin, power, extent, and vileness, if we only look at the same time at the almighty medicine provided for us in the salvation that is in Jesus Christ. Though sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded. Yes: in the everlasting covenant of redemption, to which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are parties—in the Mediator of that covenant, Jesus Christ the righteous,

perfect God and perfect Man in one Person—in the work that He did by dying for our sins and rising again for our justification—in the offices that He fills as our Priest, Substitute, Physician, Shepherd, and Advocate—in the precious blood He shed, which can cleanse from all sin in the everlasting righteousness that He brought in—in the perpetual intercession that He carries on as our Representative at God’s right hand—in His power to save to the uttermost the chief of sinners, His willingness to receive and pardon the vilest, His readiness to bear with the weakest—in the grace of the Holy Spirit, which He plants in the hearts of all His people, renewing, sanctifying, and causing old things to pass away and all things to become new—in all this—and oh, what a brief sketch it is!—in all this, I say, there is a full, perfect, and complete medicine for the hideous disease of sin. Awful and tremendous as the right view of sin undoubtedly is, no one need faint and despair if he will take a right view of Jesus Christ at the same time. No wonder Flavel ends many a chapter of his admirable *Fountain of Life* with the touching words, “Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.”

In bringing this mighty subject to a close, I feel that I have only touched the surface of it. It is one that cannot be thoroughly handled in a chapter like this. He who would see it treated fully and exhaustively must turn to such masters of experimental theology as Owen, and Burgess, and Manton, and Charnock, and the other giants of the Puritan school. On subjects like this there are no writers to be compared to the Puritans. It only remains for me

to point out some practical uses to which the whole doctrine of sin may be profitably turned in the present day.

(a) I say, then, in the first place, that a scriptural view of sin is one of the *best antidotes to that vague, dim, misty, hazy kind of theology* that is so painfully current in the present age. It is vain to shut our eyes to the fact that there is a vast quantity of so-called Christianity nowadays that you cannot declare positively unsound, but which, nevertheless, is not full measure, good weight, and sixteen ounces to the pound. It is a Christianity in which there is undeniably “something about Christ, and something about grace, and something about faith, and something about repentance, and something about holiness”; but it is not the real “thing as it is” in the Bible. Things are out of place, and out of proportion. As old Latimer would have said, it is a kind of “mingle-mangle,” and does no good. It neither exercises influence on daily conduct, nor comforts in life, nor gives peace in death; and those who hold it often awake too late to find that they have got nothing solid under their feet. Now I believe the likeliest way to cure and mend this defective kind of religion is to bring forward more prominently the old scriptural truth about the sinfulness of sin. People will never set their faces decidedly toward heaven, and live like pilgrims, until they really feel that they are in danger of hell. Let us all try to revive the old teaching about sin, in nurseries, in schools, in training colleges, in universities. Let us not forget that “the law is good if we use it lawfully,” and that “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (1 Tim. 1:8; Rom. 3:20; 7:7). Let us bring the

law to the front and press it on men's attention. Let us expound and beat out the Ten Commandments, and show the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of their requirements. This is the way of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. We cannot do better than follow His plan. We may depend upon it, men will never come to Jesus, and stay with Jesus, and live for Jesus, unless they really know why they are to come, and what is their need. Those whom the Spirit draws to Jesus are those whom the Spirit has convinced of sin. Without thorough conviction of sin, men may seem to come to Jesus and follow Him for a season, but they will soon fall away and return to the world.

(b) In the next place, a scriptural view of sin is one of the *best antidotes to the extravagantly broad and liberal theology* that is so much in vogue at the present time. The tendency of modern thought is to reject dogmas, creeds, and every kind of bounds in religion. It is thought grand and wise to condemn no opinion whatsoever, and to pronounce all earnest and clever teachers to be trustworthy, however heterogeneous and mutually destructive their opinions may be. Everything forsooth is true, and nothing is false! Everybody is right, and nobody is wrong! Everybody is likely to be saved, and nobody is to be lost! The atonement and substitution of Christ, the personality of the devil, the miraculous element in Scripture, the reality and eternity of future punishment, all these mighty foundation stones are coolly tossed overboard, like lumber, in order to lighten the ship of Christianity, and enable it to keep pace with modern science.

Stand up for these great verities, and you are called narrow, illiberal, old-fashioned, and a theological fossil! Quote a text, and you are told that all truth is not confined to the pages of an ancient Jewish Book, and that free inquiry has found out many things since the Book was completed! Now, I know nothing so likely to counteract this modern plague as constant clear statements about the nature, reality, vileness, power, and guilt of sin. We must charge home into the consciences of these men of broad views, and demand a plain answer to some plain questions. We must ask them to lay their hands on their hearts, and tell us whether their favorite opinions comfort them in the day of sickness, in the hour of death, by the bedside of dying parents, by the grave of beloved wife or child. We must ask them whether a vague earnestness, without definite doctrine, gives them peace at seasons like these. We must challenge them to tell us whether they do not sometimes feel a gnawing "something" within, which all the free inquiry and philosophy and science in the world cannot satisfy. And then we must tell them that this gnawing "something" is the sense of sin, guilt, and corruption, which they are leaving out in their calculations. And, above all, we must tell them that nothing will ever make them feel rest, but submission to the old doctrines of man's ruin and Christ's redemption, and simple childlike faith in Jesus.

(c) In the next place, a right view of sin is the *best antidote to that sensuous, ceremonial, formal kind of Christianity*, which has swept over England like a flood in the last twenty-five years,

and carried away so many before it. I can well believe that there is much that is attractive in this system of religion, to a certain order of minds, so long as the conscience is not fully enlightened. But when that wonderful part of our constitution called conscience is really awake and alive, I find it hard to believe that a sensuous, ceremonial Christianity will thoroughly satisfy us. A little child is easily quieted and amused with gaudy toys, and dolls, and rattles, so long as it is not hungry; but once let it feel the cravings of nature within, and we know that nothing will satisfy it but food. Just so it is with man in the matter of his soul. Music, and flowers, and candles, and incense, and banners, and processions, and beautiful vestments, and confessionals, and man-made ceremonies of a semi-Romish character, may do well enough for him under certain conditions. But once let him "awake and arise from the dead," and he will not rest content with these things. They will seem to him mere solemn triflings and a waste of time. Once let him see his sin, and he must see his Savior. He feels stricken with a deadly disease, and nothing will satisfy him but the great Physician. He hungers and thirsts, and he must have nothing less than the bread of life. I may seem bold in what I am about to say; but I fearlessly venture the assertion, that four-fifths of the semi-Romanism of the last quarter of a century would never have existed if English people had been taught more fully and clearly the nature, vileness, and sinfulness of sin.

(d) In the next place, a right view of sin is one of the *best antidotes to the overstrained theories of perfection*, of which we

hear so much in these times. I shall say but little about this, and in saying it I trust I shall not give offense. If those who press on us perfection mean nothing more than an all-around consistency, and a careful attention to all the graces that make up the Christian character, reason would say that we should not only bear with them, but agree with them entirely. By all means let us aim high. But if men really mean to tell us that here in this world a believer can attain to entire freedom from sin, live for years in unbroken and uninterrupted communion with God, and feel for the months together not so much as one evil thought, I must honestly say that such an opinion appears to me very unscriptural. I go even further. I say that the opinion is very dangerous to him who holds it, and very likely to depress, discourage, and keep back inquirers after salvation. I cannot find the slightest warrant in God's Word for expecting such perfection as this while we are in the body. I believe the words of our Fifteenth Article are strictly true—that "Christ alone is without sin; and that all we, the rest, though baptized and born again in Christ, offend in many things; and if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." To use the language of our first homily,

There be imperfections in our best works: we do not love God so much as we are bound to do, with all our hearts, mind, and power; we do not fear God so much as we ought to do; we do not pray to God but with many and great imperfections. We give, forgive, believe, live, and hope imperfectly;

we speak, think, and do imperfectly; we fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh imperfectly. Let us, therefore, not be ashamed to confess plainly our state of imperfection.

Once more I repeat what I have said, the best preservative against this temporary delusion about perfection that clouds some minds—for such I hope I may call it—is a clear, full, distinct understanding of the nature, sinfulness, and deceitfulness of sin.

(e) In the last place, a scriptural view of sin will prove an admirable *antidote to the low views of personal holiness*, which are so painfully prevalent in these last days of the church. This is a very painful and delicate subject, I know; but I dare not turn away from it. It has long been my sorrowful conviction that the standard of daily life among professing Christians in this country has been gradually falling. I am afraid that Christlike love, kindness, good-temper, unselfishness, meekness, gentleness, good-nature, self-denial, zeal to do good, and separation from the world are far less appreciated than they ought to be, and than they used to be in the days of our fathers.

Into the causes of this state of things, I cannot pretend to enter fully, and can only suggest conjectures for consideration. It may be that a certain profession of religion has become so fashionable and comparatively easy in the present age, that the streams that were once narrow and deep have become wide and shallow, and what we have gained in outward show we have lost in quality. It may be that the vast increase of wealth in the last

twenty-five years has insensibly introduced a plague of worldliness, and self-indulgence, and love of ease into social life. What were once called luxuries are now comforts and necessities, and self-denial and "enduring hardness" are consequently little known. It may be that the enormous amount of controversy that marks this age has insensibly dried up our spiritual life. We have too often been content with zeal for orthodoxy, and have neglected the sober realities of daily practical godliness. Be the causes what they may, I must declare my own belief that the result remains. There has been of late years a lower standard of personal holiness among believers than there used to be in the days of our fathers. The whole result is that the Spirit is grieved! And the matter calls for much humiliation and searching of heart.

As to the best remedy for the state of things I have mentioned, I shall venture to give an opinion. Other schools of thought in the churches must judge for themselves. The cure for evangelical churchmen, I am convinced, is to be found in a clearer apprehension of the nature and sinfulness of sin. We need not go back to Egypt and borrow semi-Romish practices in order to revive our spiritual life. We need not restore the confessional, or return to monasticism or asceticism. Nothing of the kind! We must simply repent and do our first works. We must return to first principles. We must go back to "the old paths." We must sit down humbly in the presence of God, look the whole subject in the face, examine clearly what the Lord Jesus calls sin, and what the Lord Jesus calls "doing His will." We must then try to realize

that it is terribly possible to live a careless, easy-going, half-worldly life, and yet at the same time to maintain evangelical principles and call ourselves evangelical people! Once let us see that sin is far viler, and far nearer to us, and sticks more closely to us than we supposed, and we shall be led, I trust and believe, to get nearer to Christ. Once drawn nearer to Christ, we shall drink more deeply out of His fullness, and learn more thoroughly to "live the life of faith" in Him, as St. Paul did. Once taught to live the life of faith in Jesus, and abiding in Him, we shall bear more fruit, shall find ourselves more strong for duty, more patient in trial, more watchful over our poor weak hearts, and more like our Master in all our little daily ways. Just in proportion as we realize how much Christ has done for us, shall we labor to do much for Christ. Much forgiven, we shall love much. In short, as the apostle says, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Whatever some may please to think or say, there can be no doubt that an increased feeling about holiness is one of the signs of the times. Conferences for the promotion of "spiritual life" are becoming common in the present day. The subject of "spiritual life" finds a place on congress platforms almost every year. It has awakened an amount of interest and general attention throughout the land, for which we ought to be thankful. Any movement, based on sound principles, which helps to deepen our spiritual life and increase our personal holiness, will be a real blessing to

the Church of England. It will do much to draw us together and heal our unhappy divisions. It may bring down some fresh outpouring of the grace of the Spirit, and be "life from the dead" in these later times. But sure I am, as I said in the beginning of this chapter, we must begin low, if we would build high. I am convinced that the first step toward attaining a higher standard of holiness is to realize more fully the amazing sinfulness of sin.

1. Hooker's "Learned Discourse of Justification."

≡ D. L. MOODY ≡

THE OVERCOMING *LIFE*

FOREWORD BY J. PAUL NYQUIST

M O O D Y C L A S S I C S

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The Overcoming Life



PART I *THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE*

I WOULD LIKE to have you open your Bible at the first epistle of John, fifth chapter, fourth and fifth verses: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

When a battle is fought, all are anxious to know who are the victors. In these verses we are told who is to gain the victory in life. When I was converted I made this mistake: I thought the battle was already mine, the victory already won, the crown already in my grasp. I thought that old things had passed away, that all things had become new; that my old corrupt nature, the Adam life, was gone. But I found out, after serving Christ for a few months, that conversion was only like enlisting in the army, that

there was a battle on hand, and that if I was to get a crown, I had to work for it and fight for it.

Salvation is a gift, as free as the air we breathe. It is to be obtained, like any other gift, without money and without price; there are no other terms. "To him that worketh not, but believeth." But on the other hand, if we are to gain a crown, we must work for it. Let me quote a few verses in 1 Corinthians: "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire: and the fire itself shall prove each man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide, which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire."

We see clearly from this that we may be saved, yet all our works burned up. I may have a wretched, miserable voyage through life, with no victory, and no reward at the end; saved, yet so as by fire, or as Job puts it, "with the skin of my teeth." I believe that a great many men will barely get to heaven as Lot got out of Sodom, burned out, nothing left, works and everything else destroyed.

It is like this: when a man enters the army, he is a member of the army the moment he enlists; he is just as much a member as a man who has been in the army ten or twenty years. But

enlisting is one thing and participating in a battle another. Young converts are like those just enlisted.

It is folly for any man to attempt to fight in his own strength. The world, the flesh, and the devil are too much for any man. But if we are linked to Christ by faith, and He is formed in us the hope of glory, then we shall get the victory over every enemy. It is believers who are the overcomers. "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." Through Him we shall be more than conquerors.

I wouldn't think of talking to unconverted men about overcoming the world, for it is utterly impossible. They might as well try to cut down the American forest with their penknives. But a good many Christian people make this mistake: they think the battle is already fought and won. They have an idea that all they have to do is to put the oars down in the bottom of the boat, and the current will drift them into the ocean of God's eternal love. But we have to cross the current. We have to learn how to watch and fight, and how to overcome. The battle is only just commenced. The Christian life is a conflict and a warfare, and the quicker we find it out the better.

There is not a blessing in this world that God has not linked Himself to. All the great and higher blessings God associates with Himself. When God and man work together, then it is that there is going to be victory. We are coworkers with Him. You might take a mill, and put it forty feet above a river, and there isn't capital enough in the States to make that river turn the mill;

but get it down about forty feet, and away it works. We want to keep in mind that if we are going to overcome the world, we have got to work with God. It is His power that makes all the means of grace effectual.

The story is told that Frederick Douglass, the great slave orator, once said in a mournful speech when things looked dark for his race: "The white man is against us, governments are against us, the spirit of the times is against us. I see no hope for the colored race. I am full of sadness."

Just then a . . . woman rose in the audience and said, "Frederick, is God dead?"

My friend, it makes a difference when you count God in.

Now many a young believer is discouraged and disheartened when he realizes this warfare. He begins to think that God has forsaken him, that Christianity is not all that it professes to be. But he should rather regard it as an encouraging sign. No sooner has a soul escaped from his snare than the great Adversary takes steps to ensnare it again. He puts forth all his power to recapture his lost prey. The fiercest attacks are made on the strongest forts, and the fiercer the battle the young believer is called on to wage, the surer evidence it is of the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart. God will not desert him in his time of need, any more than He deserted His people of old when they were hard pressed by their foes.

The Only Complete Victor

“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.” The only man that ever conquered this world—was complete victor—was Jesus Christ. When He shouted on the cross, “It is finished!” it was the shout of a conqueror. He had overcome every enemy. He had met sin and death. He had met every foe that you and I have got to meet, and had come off victor. Now if I have got the Spirit of Christ, if I have got that same life in me, then it is that I have got a power that is greater than any power in the world, and with that same power I overcome the world.

Notice that everything human in this world fails. Every man, the moment he takes his eye off God, has failed. Every man has been a failure at some period of his life. Abraham failed. Moses failed. Elijah failed. Take the men that have become so famous and that were so mighty—the moment they got their eye off God, they were weak like other men; and it is a very singular thing that those men failed on the strongest point in their character.

I suppose it was because they were not on the watch. Abraham was noted for his faith, and he failed right there—he denied his wife. Moses was noted for his weakness and humility, and he failed right there—he got angry. God kept him out of the Promised Land because he lost his temper. I know he was called “the servant of God,” and that he was a mighty man and that he had power with God, but humanly speaking he failed and was kept out of the Promised Land. Elijah was noted for his power in

prayer and for his courage, yet he became a coward. He was the boldest man of his day and stood before Ahab and the royal court and all the prophets of Baal; yet when he heard that Jezebel had threatened his life, he ran away to the desert and under a juniper tree prayed that he might die. Peter was noted for his boldness, and a little maid scared him nearly out of his wits. As soon as she spoke to him, he began to tremble, and he swore that he didn't know Christ. I have often said to myself that I'd like to have been there the day of Pentecost alongside of that maid when she saw Peter preaching.

"Why," I suppose she said, "what has come over that man? He was afraid of me only a few weeks ago, and now he stands up before all Jerusalem and charges these very Jews with the murder of Jesus."

The moment he got his eye off the Master he failed; and every man, I don't care who he is—even the strongest—every man that hasn't Christ in him, is a failure. John, the beloved disciple, was noted for his meekness; and yet we hear him wanting to call fire down from heaven on a little town because it had refused the common hospitalities.

Triumphs of Faith

Now, how are we to get the victory over all our enemies? Turn to Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me

and gave Himself for me." We live by faith. We get this life by faith and become linked to Immanuel—"God with us." If I have God for me, I am going to overcome. How do we gain this mighty power? By faith.

The next passage I want to call your attention to is Romans 11:20: "Because of unbelief they were broken off; and thou standest by faith." The Jews were cut off on account of their unbelief; we were grafted in on account of our belief. So notice: We live by faith, and we stand by faith.

Next, we walk by faith. Second Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight." The most faulty Christians I know are those who want to walk by sight. They want to see the end—how a thing is going to come out. That isn't walking by faith at all—that is walking by sight.

I think the characters that best represent this difference are Joseph and Jacob. Jacob was a man who walked with God by sight. You remember his vow at Bethel: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God." And you remember how his heart revived when he saw the wagons Joseph sent him from Egypt. He sought after signs. He never could have gone through the temptations and trials that his son Joseph did. Joseph represents a higher type of Christian. He could walk in the dark. He could survive thirteen years of misfortune, in spite of his dreams, and then ascribe it all to the goodness and providence of God.

Lot and Abraham are a good illustration. Lot turned away from Abraham and tented on the plains of Sodom. He got a good stretch of pastureland, but he had bad neighbors. He was a weak character, and he should have kept with Abraham to get strong. A good many men are just like that. As long as their mothers are living, or they are bolstered up by some godly person, they get along very well; but they can't stand alone. Lot walked by sight, but Abraham walked by faith; he went out in the footsteps of God. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And again: We fight by faith. Ephesians, sixth chapter, verse sixteen: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Every dart Satan can fire at us we can quench by faith. By faith we can overcome the Evil One. To fear is to have more faith in your antagonist than in Christ.

Some of the older people can remember when our war broke out. Secretary Seward, who was Lincoln's secretary of state—a long-headed and shrewd politician—prophesied that the war would be over in ninety days; and young men in thousands and hundreds of thousands came forward and volunteered to go down to Dixie and whip the South. They thought they would be back in ninety days; but the war lasted four years, and cost about half a million lives.

What was the matter? Why, the South was a good deal stronger than the North supposed. Its strength was underestimated.

Jesus Christ makes no mistake of that kind. When He enlists a man in His service, He shows him the dark side; He lets him know that he must live a life of self-denial. If a man is not willing to go to heaven by the way of Calvary, he cannot go at all. Many men want a religion in which there is no cross, but they cannot enter heaven that way. If we are to be disciples of Jesus Christ, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him.

So let us sit down and count the cost. Do not think that you will have no battles if you follow the Nazarene, because many battles are before you. Yet if I had ten thousand lives, Jesus Christ should have every one of them. Men do not object to a battle if they are confident that they will have victory, and, thank God, every one of us may have the victory if we will.

The reason so many Christians fail all through life is just this—they underestimate the strength of the enemy. My dear friend, you and I have got a terrible enemy to contend with. Don't let Satan deceive you. Unless you are spiritually dead, it means warfare. Nearly everything around tends to draw us away from God. We do not step clear out of Egypt onto the throne of God. There is the wilderness journey, and there are enemies in the land.

Don't let any man or woman think all he or she has to do is join the church. That will not save you. The question is, Are you

overcoming the world, or is the world overcoming you? Are you more patient than you were five years ago? Are you more amiable? If you are not, the world is overcoming you, even if you are a church member. That epistle that Paul wrote to Titus says that we are to be sound in patience, faith, and charity. We have got Christians, a good many of them, that are good in spots, but mighty poor in other spots. Just a little bit of them seems to be saved, you know. They are not rounded out in their characters. It is just because they haven't been taught that they have a terrible foe to overcome.

If I wanted to find out whether a man was a Christian, I wouldn't go to his minister. I would go and ask his wife. I tell you, we want more home piety just now. If a man doesn't treat his wife right, I don't want to hear him talk about Christianity. What is the use of his talking about salvation for the next life if he has no salvation for this? We want a Christianity that goes into our homes and everyday lives. Some men's religion just repels me. They put on a winning voice and a sort of a religious tone and talk so sanctimoniously on Sunday that you would think they were wonderful saints. But on Monday they are quite different. They put their religion away with their clothes, and you don't see any more of it until the next Sunday. You laugh, but let us look out that we don't belong to that class.

My friends, we have got to have a higher type of Christianity, or the church is gone. It is wrong for men or women to profess what they don't possess. If you are not overcoming temptations,

the world is overcoming you. Just get on your knees and ask God to help you. My friends, let us to go God and ask Him to search us. Let us ask Him to wake us up, and let us not think that just because we are church members we are all right. We are all wrong if we are not getting victory over sin.

PART II
INTERNAL FOES

NOW IF WE ARE GOING to overcome, we must begin inside. God always begins there. An enemy inside the fort is far more dangerous than one outside.

Scripture teaches that in every believer there are two natures warring against each other. Paul says, in his epistle to the Romans, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Again, in the epistle to the Galatians, he says, 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

When we are born of God, we get His nature, but He does not immediately take away all the old nature. Each species of animal and bird is true to its nature. You can tell the nature of the dove or canary bird. The horse is true to his nature, the cow is true to hers. But a man has two natures, and do not let the world or Satan make you think that the old nature is extinct, because it is not. "Reckon ye yourselves dead"; but if you were dead, you wouldn't need to reckon yourselves dead, would you? The dead self would be dropped out of the reckoning. "I keep my body under"; if it were dead, Paul wouldn't have needed to keep it under. I am judicially dead, but the old nature is alive, and therefore if I don't keep my body under and crucify the flesh with its affections, this lower nature will gain the advantage, and I shall be in bondage.

Many men live all their lives in bondage to the old nature, when they might have liberty if they would only live this overcoming life. The old Adam . . . never dies. It remains corrupt. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

A gentleman in India once got a tiger cub and tamed it so that it became a pet. One day when it had grown up, it tasted blood, and the old tiger-nature flashed out, and it had to be killed. So with the old nature in the believer. It never dies, though it is subdued; and unless he is watchful and prayerful, it will gain the upper hand and rush him into sin. Someone has pointed out that

"I" is the center of S-I-N. It is the medium through which Satan acts.

And so the worst enemy you have to overcome, after all, is yourself. At the time Captain T. became converted in London, he was a great society man. After he had been a Christian some months, he was asked, "What have you found to be your greatest enemy since you began to be a Christian?"

After a few minutes of deep thought he said, "Well, I think it is myself."

"Ah," said the lady, "the King has taken you into His presence, for it is only in His presence that we are taught these truths."

I have had more trouble with D. L. Moody than with any other man who has crossed my path. If I can only keep him right, I don't have any trouble with other people. A good many have trouble with servants. Did you ever think that the trouble lies with you instead of the servants? If one member of the family is constantly snapping, he will have the whole family snapping. It is true whether you believe it or not. You speak quickly and snapishly to people and they will do the same to you.

Appetite

Now take *appetite*. That is an enemy inside. How many young men are ruined by the appetite for strong drink! Many a young man has grown up to be a curse to his father and mother instead of a blessing. Not long ago the body of a young suicide

was discovered in one of our large cities. In his pocket was found a paper on which he had written: "I have done this myself. Don't tell anyone. It is all through drink." An intimation of these facts in the public press drew 246 letters from 246 persons, each of whom had a prodigal son who, it was feared, might be the suicide.

Strong drink is an enemy, both to body and soul. It is reported that Sir Andrew Clarke, the celebrated London physician, once made the following statement: "Now let me say that I am speaking solemnly and carefully when I tell you that I am considerably within toe mark in saying that within the rounds of my hospital wards today, seven out of every ten that lie there in their beds owe their ill health to alcohol. I do not say that seventy in every hundred are drunkards; I do not know that one of them is; but they use alcohol. So soon as a man begins to take one drop, then the desire begotten in him becomes a part of his nature, and that nature, formed by his acts, inflicts curses inexpressible when handed down to the generations that aspire to follow him as part and parcel of their being. When I think of this I am disposed to give up my profession—to give up everything—and to go forth upon a holy crusade to preach to all men, 'Beware of this enemy of the race!'"

It is the most destructive agency in the world today. It kills more than the bloodiest wars. It is the fruitful parent of crime and idleness and poverty and disease. It spoils a man for this world and damns him for the next. The Word of God has declared: "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor

adulterers . . . nor drunkards . . . shall inherit the Kingdom of God."

How can we overcome this enemy? Bitter experience proves that man is not powerful enough in his own strength. The only cure for the accursed appetite is regeneration—a new life—the power of the risen Christ within us. Let a man that is given to strong drink look to God for help, and He will give him victory over his appetite. Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, and He will take away that appetite if you will let Him.

Temper

Then there is *temper*. I wouldn't give much for a man that hasn't temper. Steel isn't good for anything if it hasn't got temper. But when temper gets the mastery over me I am its slave, and it is a source of weakness. It may be made a great power for good all through my life and help me; or it may become my greatest enemy from within and rob me of power. The current in some rivers is so strong as to make them useless for navigation.

Someone has said that a preacher will never miss the people when he speaks of temper. It is astonishing how little mastery even professing Christians have over it. A friend of mine in England was out visiting and, while sitting in the parlor, heard an awful noise in the hall. He asked what it meant and was told that it was only the doctor, throwing his boots downstairs because they were not properly blacked. "Many Christians," said an old divine, "who bore the loss of a child or all their property with the

most heroic Christian fortitude, are entirely vanquished by the breaking of a dish or the blunders of a servant."

I have had people say to me, "Mr. Moody, how can I get control of my temper?"

If you really want to get control, I will tell you how, but you won't like the medicine. Treat it as a sin and confess it. People look upon temper as a sort of misfortune, and one lady told me she inherited it from her father and mother. Supposing she did. That is no excuse for her.

When you get angry again and speak unkindly to a person, and when you realize it, go and ask that person to forgive you. You won't get mad with that person for the next twenty-four hours. You might do it in about forty-eight hours, but go the second time; and after you have done it about a half dozen times, you will get out of the business, because it makes the old flesh burn.

A lady said to me once, "I have got so in the habit of exaggerating that my friends accuse me of exaggerating so that they don't understand me." She said, "Can you help me? What can I do to overcome it?"

"Well," I said, "the next time you catch yourself lying, go right to that party and say you have lied, and tell him you are sorry. Say it is a lie; stamp it out, root and branch; that is what you want to do."

"Oh," she said, "I wouldn't like to call it lying." But that is what it was.

Christianity isn't worth a snap of your fingers if it doesn't straighten out your character. I have got tired of all mere gush and sentiment. If people can't tell when you are telling the truth, there is something radically wrong, and you had better straighten it out right away. Now, are you ready to do it? Bring yourself to it whether you want to or not.

Do you find someone who has been offended by something you have done? Go right to him and tell him you are sorry. You say you are not to blame. Never mind, go right to him and tell him you are sorry. I have had to do it a good many times. An impulsive man like myself has to do it often, but I sleep all the sweeter at night when I get things straightened out. Confession never fails to bring a blessing. I have sometimes had to get off the platform and go down and ask a man's forgiveness before I could go on preaching. A Christian man ought to be a gentleman every time; but if he is not, and he finds he has wounded or hurt someone, he ought to go and straighten it out at once. You know there are a great many people who want just enough Christianity to make them respectable. They don't think about this overcoming life that gets the victory all the time. They have their blue days and their cross days, and the children say, "Mother is cross today, and you will have to be careful."

We don't want any of these touchy blue days, these ups and downs. If we are overcoming, that is the effect our life is going to have on others, they will have confidence in our Christianity. The reason that many a man has no power is that there is some

cursed sin covered up. There will not be a drop of dew until that sin is brought to light. Get right inside. Then we can go out like giants and conquer the world if everything is right within.

Paul says that we are to be sound in faith, in patience, and in love. If a man is unsound in his faith, the clergy take the ecclesiastical sword and cut him off at once. But he may be ever so unsound in charity, in patience, and nothing is said about that. We must be sound in faith, in love, and in patience if we are to be true to God.

How delightful it is to meet a man who can control his temper! It is said of Wilberforce that a friend once found him in the greatest agitation, looking for a dispatch he had mislaid, for which one of the royal family was waiting. Just then, as if to make it still more trying, a disturbance was heard in the nursery.

“Now,” thought the friend, “surely his temper will give way.”

The thought had hardly passed through his mind when Wilberforce turned to him and said, “What a blessing it is to hear those dear children! Only think what a relief, among other hurries, to hear their voices and know they are well.”

Covetousness

Take the sin of *covetousness*. There is more said in the Bible against it than against drunkenness. I must get it out of me—destroy it, root and branch—and not let it have dominion over me. We think that a man who gets drunk is a horrid monster, but

a covetous man will often be received into the church and put into office, who is as vile in the sight of God as any drunkard.

The most dangerous thing about this sin is that it is not generally regarded as very heinous. Of course we all have a contempt for misers, but all covetous men are not misers. Another thing to be noted about it is that it may fasten upon the old rather than upon the young. Let us see what the Bible says about covetousness:

“Mortify therefore your members . . . covetousness, which is idolatry.”

“No covetous man hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of God.”

“They that will be [that is, desire to be] rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

“For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many arrows.”

“The wicked blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.”

Covetousness enticed Lot into Sodom. It caused the destruction of Achan and all his house. It was the iniquity of Balaam. It was the sin of Samuel’s sons. It left Gehazi a leper. It sent the rich young ruler away sorrowful. It led Judas to sell his Master and Lord. It brought about the death of Ananias and Sapphira. It was

the blot in the character of Felix. What victims it has had in all ages!

Do you say, "How am I going to check covetousness?"

Well, I don't think there is any difficulty about that. If you find yourself getting very covetous, miserly, wanting to get everything you can into your possession—just begin to scatter. Just say to covetousness that you will strangle it and rid it out of your disposition.

A wealthy farmer in New York state, who had been a noted miser, a very selfish man, was converted. Soon after his conversion a poor man came to him one day to ask for help. He had been burned out and had no provisions. This young convert thought he would be liberal and give him a ham from his smokehouse. He started toward the smokehouse, and on the way the tempter said, "Give him the smallest one you have."

He struggled all the way as to whether he would give a large one or a small one. In order to overcome his selfishness, he took down the biggest ham and gave it to the man.

The tempter said, "You are a fool."

But he replied, "If you don't keep still, I will give him every ham I have in the smokehouse."

If you find that you are selfish, give something. Determine to overcome that spirit of selfishness and to keep your body under, no matter what it may cost.

Mr. Durant told me he was engaged by Goodyear to defend the rubber patent, and he was to have half of the money that

came from the patent, if he succeeded. One day he woke up to find that he was a rich man, and he said that the greatest struggle of his life then took place as to whether he would let the money be his master, or he be the master of money, whether he would be its slave, or make it a slave to him. At last he got the victory, and that is how Wellesley College was built.

Are You Jealous, Envious?

Go and do a good turn for that person of whom you are jealous. That is the way to cure *jealousy*; it will kill it. Jealousy is a devil; it is a horrid monster. The poets imagined that Envy dwelt in a dark cave, being pale and thin, looking asquint, never rejoicing except in the misfortune of others, and hurting himself continually.

There is a fable of an eagle that would outfly another, and the other didn't like it. The latter saw a sportsman one day and said to him, "I wish you would bring down that eagle."

The sportsman replied that he would if he only had some feathers to put into the arrow. So the eagle pulled one out of his wings. The arrow was shot, but didn't quite reach the rival eagle; it was flying too high. The envious eagle pulled out more feathers and kept pulling them out until he lost so many that he couldn't fly. Then the sportsman turned around and killed him. My friend, if you are jealous, the only man you can hurt is yourself.

There were two businessmen—merchants—and there was great rivalry between them, a great deal of bitter feeling. One of

them was converted. He went to his minister and said, "I am still jealous of that man, and I do not know how to overcome it."

"Well," he said, "if a man comes into your store to buy goods, and you cannot supply him, just send him over to your neighbor."

He said he wouldn't like to do that.

"Well," the minister said, "you do it, and you will kill jealousy."

He said that he would, and when customers came into his store for goods which he did not have, he would tell them to go across the street to his neighbor's. By and by the other began to send his customers over to this man's store, and the breach was healed.

Pride

Then there is *pride*. This is another of those sins that the Bible so strongly condemns but the world hardly reckons as a sin at all. "A high look and a proud heart" is sin. "Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished." Christ included pride among those evil things that, proceeding out of the heart of a man, defile him.

People have an idea that it is just the wealthy who are proud. But go down some of the back streets, and you will find that some of the very poorest are as proud as the richest. It is the heart, you know. People that haven't any money are just as proud

as those that have. We have got to crush it out. It is an enemy. You needn't be proud of your face, for there is not one but that after ten days in the grave the worms would be eating your body. There is nothing to be proud of—is there? Let us ask God to deliver us from pride.

You can't fold your arms and say, "Lord, take it out of me"; but just go and work with Him.

Mortify your pride by cultivating humility. "Put on, therefore," says Paul, "as the elect of God, holy and beloved . . . humbleness of mind." "Be clothed with humility," says Peter. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

PART III
EXTERNAL FOES

WHAT ARE OUR ENEMIES WITHOUT? What does James say? “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” And John? “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

Now, people want to know what is *the world*. When you talk with them they say, “Well, when you say ‘the world,’ what do you mean?”

Here we have the answer in the next verse: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

“The world” does not mean nature around us. God nowhere tells us that the material world is an enemy to be overcome. On the contrary, we read: “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament [showeth] His handiwork.”

It means “human life and society as far as alienated from God, through being centered on material aims and objects, and thus opposed to God’s Spirit and kingdom.” Christ said: “If the

world hates you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you . . . the world hath hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Love of the world means the forgetfulness of the eternal future by reason of love of passing things.

How can the world be overcome? Not by education, not by experience; only by faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Worldly Habits and Fashions

For one thing, we must fight *worldly habits and fashions*. We must often go against the customs of the world. I have great respect for a man who can stand up for what he believes is right against all the world. He who can stand alone is a hero.

Suppose it is the custom for young men to do certain things you wouldn't like your mother to know of—things that your mother taught you are wrong. You may have to stand up alone among all your companions.

They will say, "You can't get away from your mother, eh? Tied to your mother's apron strings!"

But you just say: "Yes! I have some respect for my mother. She taught me what is right, and she is the best friend I have. I believe that is wrong, and I am going to stand for the right." If you have to stand alone, stand. Enoch did it, and Joseph, and Elisha, and Paul. God has kept such men in all ages.

Someone says, "I move in society where they have wine parties. I know it is rather a dangerous thing because my son is apt to follow me. But I can stop just where I want to; perhaps my son hasn't got the same power as I have, and he may go over the dam. But it is the custom in the society where I move."

Once I got into a place where I had to get up and leave. I was invited to a home, and they had a late supper, and there were seven kinds of liquor on the table. I am ashamed to say they were Christian people. A deacon urged a young lady to drink until her face was flushed. I rose from the table and went out; I felt that it was no place for me. They considered me very rude. That was going against the custom; that was entering a protest against such an infernal thing. Let us go against custom, when it leads us astray.

I was told that, in a southern college some years ago, no man was considered a first-class gentleman who did not drink. Of course it is not so now.

Pleasure

Another enemy is *worldly pleasure*. A great many people are just drowned in pleasure. They have no time for any meditation at all. Many a man has been lost to society, and lost to his family, by giving himself up to the god of pleasure. God wants His children to be happy, but in a way that will help and not hinder them.

A lady came to me once and said: "Mr. Moody, I wish you would tell me how I can become a Christian." The tears were

rolling down her cheeks, and she was in a very favorable mood. "But," she said, "I don't want to be one of your kind."

"Well," I asked, "have I got any peculiar kind? What is the matter with my Christianity?"

"Well," she said, "my father was a doctor and had a large practice, and he used to get so tired that he used to take us to the theater. There was a large family of girls, and we had tickets for the theaters three or four times a week. I suppose we were there a good deal oftener than we were in church. I am married to a lawyer, and he has a large practice. He gets so tired that he takes us out to the theater . . . I am far better acquainted with the theater and theater people than with the church and church people, and I don't want to give up the theater."

"Well," I said, "did you ever hear me say anything about theaters? There have been reporters here every day for all the different papers, and they are giving my sermons verbatim in one paper. Have you ever seen anything in the sermons against the theaters?"

She said, "No."

"Well," I said, "I have seen you in the audience every afternoon for several weeks and have you heard me say anything against theaters?"

No, she hadn't.

"Well," I said, "what made you bring them up?"

"Why, I supposed you didn't believe in theaters."

"What made you think that?"

"Why," she said, "do you ever go?"

"No."

"Why don't you go?"

"Because I have got something better. I would sooner go out into the street and eat dirt than do some of the things I used to do before I became a Christian."

"Why!" she said, "I don't understand."

"Never mind," I said. "When Jesus Christ has the preeminence, you will understand it all. He didn't come down here and say we shouldn't go here and we shouldn't go there, and lay down a lot of rules; but He laid down great principles. Now, He says if you love Him you will take delight in pleasing Him." And I began to preach Christ to her.

The tears started again. She said, "I tell you, Mr. Moody, that sermon on the indwelling Christ yesterday afternoon just broke my heart. I admire Him, and I want to be a Christian, but I don't want to give up the theaters."

I said, "Please don't mention them again. I don't want to talk about theaters. I want to talk to you about Christ." So I took my Bible and I read to her about Christ.

But she said again, "Mr. Moody, can I go to the theater if I become a Christian?"

"Yes," I said, "you can go to the theater just as much as you like if you are a real, true Christian and can go with His blessing."

"Well," she said, "I am glad you are not so narrow-minded as some."

She felt quite relieved to think that she could go to the theaters and be a Christian.

But I said, "If you can go to the theater for the glory of God, keep on going; only be sure that you go for the glory of God. If you are a Christian you will be glad to do whatever will please Him."

I really think she became a Christian that day. The burden had gone, there was joy; but just as she was leaving me at the door she said, "I am not going to give up the theater."

In a few days she came back to me and said, "Mr. Moody, I understand all about that theater business now. I went the other night. There was a large party at our house, and my husband wanted us to go, and we went; but when the curtain lifted, everything looked so different. I said to my husband, 'This is no place for me; this is horrible. I am not going to stay here. I am going home.' He said, 'Don't make a fool of yourself. Everyone has heard that you have been converted in the Moody meetings—if you go out, it will be all through fashionable society. I beg of you, don't make a fool of yourself by getting up and going out.' But I said, 'I have been making a fool of myself all my life.'"

Now, the theater hadn't changed, but she had got something better, and she was going to overcome the world. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." When Christ has the first place in your heart you are going to get victory. Just do whatever you know will please Him. The great objection I have to these

things is that they get the mastery and become a hindrance to spiritual growth.

Business

It may be that we have got to overcome in *business*. Perhaps it is business morning, noon, and night, and Sundays too. When a man will drive like Jehu all the week and like a snail on Sunday, isn't there something wrong with him?

Now business is legitimate; and a man is not, I think, a good citizen that will not go out and earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; and he ought to be a good businessman and, whatever he does, do thoroughly. At the same time, if he lays his whole heart on his business and makes a god of it, and thinks more of it than anything else, then the world has come in. It may be very legitimate in its place—like fire, which, in its place, is one of the best friends of man; out of place, is one of the worst enemies of man;—like water, which we cannot live without; and yet, when not in place, it becomes an enemy.

So my friends, that is the question for you and me to settle. Now look at yourself. Are you getting the victory? Are you growing more even in your disposition? Are you getting mastery over the world and the flesh?

And bear this in mind: Every temptation you overcome makes you stronger to overcome others, while every temptation that defeats you makes you weaker. You can become weaker and weaker, or you can become stronger and stronger. Sin takes

the pith out of your sinews, but virtue makes you stronger. How many men have been overcome by some little thing! Turn a moment to the Song of Solomon, the second chapter, fifteenth verse: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." A great many people seem to think these little things—getting out of patience, using little deceits, telling white lies (as they call them), and when somebody calls on you, sending word by the servant that you are not at home—[are not important]. Sometimes you can brace yourself up against a great temptation; and almost before you know it you fall before some little thing. A great many men are overcome by a little *persecution*.

Persecution

Do you know, I don't think we have enough persecution nowadays. Some people say we have persecution that is just as hard to bear as in the Dark Ages. Anyway, I think it would be a good thing if we had a little of the old-fashioned kind just now. It would bring out the strongest of characters and make us all healthier. I have heard men get up in prayer meetings, say they were going to make a few remarks, and then keep on till you would think they were going to talk all week. If we had a little persecution, people of that kind wouldn't talk so much. Spurgeon used to say some Christians would make good martyrs; they would burn well, they are so dry. If there were a few stakes for burning Christians, I think it would take all the piety out of some men. I admit they haven't got much; but

then if they are not willing to suffer a little persecution for Christ, they are not fit to be His disciples. We are told: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Make up your mind to this: If the world has nothing to say against you, Jesus Christ will have nothing to say for you.

The most glorious triumphs of the church have been won in times of persecution. The early church was persecuted for about three hundred years after the crucifixion, and they were years of growth and progress. But then, as St. Augustine has said, the cross passed from the scene of public executions to the diadem of the Caesars, and the downgrade movement began. When the church has joined hands with the state, it has invariably retrograded in spirituality and effectiveness; but the opposition of the state has only served to purify it of all dross. It was persecution that gave Scotland to Presbyterianism. It was persecution that gave this country to civil and religious freedom.

How are we to overcome in time of persecution? Hear the words of Christ: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Paul could testify that though persecuted, he was never forsaken; that the Lord stood by him, and strengthened him, and delivered him out of all his persecutions and afflictions.

A great many shrink from the Christian life because they will be sneered at. But then, sometimes when persecution won't bring a man down, *flattery* will. Foolish persons often come up to a man after he has preached and flatter him. Sometimes women

do that. Perhaps they will say to some worker in the church: “You talk a great deal better than so-and-so”; and he becomes proud, and begins to strut around as if he was the most important person in town.

I tell you, we have a wily devil to contend with. If he can't overcome you with opposition, he will try flattery or ambition; and if that doesn't serve his purpose, perhaps there will come some affliction or disappointment, and he will overcome in that way. But remember that anyone that has got Christ to help him can overcome all foes, and overcome them singly or collectively. Let them come. If we have got Christ within us, we will overthrow them all. Remember what Christ is able to do. In all the ages, men have stood in greater temptations than you and I will ever have to meet.

Now, there is one more thing on this line: I have either got to overcome the world, or the world is going to overcome me. I have either got to conquer sin in me—or sin about me—and get it under my feet, or it is going to conquer me. A good many people are satisfied with one or two victories and think that is all. I tell you, my dear friends, we have got to do something more than that. It is a battle all the time. We have this to encourage us: we are assured of victory at the end. We are promised a glorious triumph.

Eight “Overcomes”

Let me give you the eight “overcomes” of Revelation.

The first is: *“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the*

tree of life.” He shall have a right to the tree of life. When Adam fell, he lost that right. God turned him out of Eden lest he should eat of the tree of life and live as he was forever. Perhaps He just took that tree and transplanted it to the Garden above; and through the Second Adam we are to have the right to eat of it.

Second: *“He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”* Death has no terrors for him, it cannot touch him. Why? Because Christ tasted death for every man. Hence he is on resurrection ground. Death may take this body, but that is all. This is only the house I live in. We need have no fear of death if we overcome.

Third: *“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”* If I overcome, God will feed me with bread that the world knows nothing about, and give me a new name.

Fourth: *“He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.”* Think of it! What a thing to have—power over the nations! A man that is able to rule himself is the man that God can trust with power. Only a man who can govern himself is fit to govern other men. I have an idea that we are down here in training, that God is just polishing us for some higher service. I don’t know where the kingdoms are, but if we are to be kings and priests we must have kingdoms to reign over.

Fifth: *“He that overcometh, the same shall he clothed in*

white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” He shall present us to the Father in white garments, without spot or wrinkle. Every fault and stain shall be taken out, and we be made perfect. He that overcomes will not be a stranger in heaven.

Sixth: *“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.”* Think of it! No more backsliding, no more wanderings over the dark mountains of sin, but forever with the King, and He says, “I will write upon him the name of my God.” He is going to put His name upon us. Isn’t it grand? Isn’t it worth fighting for? It is said when [Muhammad] came in sight of Damascus and found that all had left the city, he said: “If they won’t fight for this city what will they fight for?” If men won’t fight here for all this reward, what will they fight for?

Seventh: *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”* My heart has often melted as I have looked at that. The Lord of Glory coming down and saying: “I will grant to you to sit on my throne, even as I sit on my Father’s throne, if you will just overcome.” Isn’t it worth a struggle? How many will fight for a crown that is going to fade away! Yet we are

to be placed above the angels, above the archangels, above the seraphim, above the cherubim, away up, upon the throne with Him, and there we shall be forever with Him.

May God put strength into every one of us to fight the battle of life. When Frederick of Germany was dying, his own son would not have been allowed to sit with him on the throne, nor to have let anyone else sit there with him. Yet we are told that we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ, and that we are to sit with Him in glory!

And now, the last I like best of all: *“He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”* My dear friends, isn’t that a high calling? I used to have my Sabbath school children sing “I want to be an angel”: but I have not done so for years. We shall be above angels: we shall be sons of God. Just see what a kingdom we shall come into: we shall inherit all things! Do you ask me how much I am worth? I don’t know. The Rothschilds cannot compute their wealth. They don’t know how many millions they own. That is my condition—I haven’t the slightest idea how much I am worth. God has no poor children. If we overcome we shall inherit all things.

Oh, my dear friends, what an inheritance! Let us then get the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Master.

— F. B. MEYER —

THE SECRET OF *G*UIDANCE

FOREWORD BY  DALLAS WILLARD

M O O D Y C L A S S I C S

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO



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The Secret of Guidance



MANY CHILDREN OF GOD are so deeply exercised on the matter of guidance that it may be helpful to give a few suggestions as to knowing the way in which our Father would have us walk and the work He would have us do. The importance of the subject cannot be exaggerated; so much of our power and peace consist in knowing where God would have us be and in just being there.

The manna only falls where the cloudy pillar broods, but it is certain to be found on the sands that a few hours ago were glistening in the flashing light of the heavenly fire and that are now shadowed by the fleecy canopy of cloud. If we are precisely where our heavenly Father would have us be, we are perfectly sure that He will provide food and raiment and everything beside. When He sends His servants to Cherith, He will make even the ravens bring them food.

How much of our Christian work has been abortive because we have persisted in initiating it for ourselves, instead of ascertaining what God was doing and where He required our presence!

We dream bright dreams of success. We try to command it. We call to our aid all kinds of expedients, questionable or otherwise. At last we turn back, disheartened and ashamed, like children who are torn and scratched by the brambles and soiled by the quagmire. None of this would have come about if only we had been, from the first, under God's unerring guidance. He might test us, but He would not allow us to fail.

Naturally, the child of God, longing to know his Father's will, turns to the sacred Book and refreshes his confidence by noticing how in all ages God has guided those who dared to trust Him up to the very hilt, but who at the time must have been as perplexed as we often are now. We know how Abraham left kindred and country and started, with no other guide than God, across the trackless desert to a land that he knew not. We know how for forty years the Israelites were led through the peninsula of Sinai, with its labyrinths of red sandstone and its wastes of sand. We know how Joshua, in entering the Land of Promise, was able to cope with the difficulties of an unknown region and to overcome great and warlike nations because he looked to the Captain of the Lord's hosts, who ever leads to victory. We know how, in the early church, the apostles were enabled to thread their way through the most difficult questions and to solve the most perplexing problems, laying down principles that will guide the church to the end of time; and this because it was revealed to them as to what they should do and say, by the Holy Spirit.

***The Promises for Guidance
Are Unmistakable***

Psalm 32:8: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go." This is God's distinct assurance to those whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, and who are more quick to notice the least hint of His will than horse or mule are to feel the bit.

Proverbs 3:6: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct [or make plain] thy paths." This is a sure word on which we may rest, if only we fulfill the previous conditions of trusting with all our heart and of not leaning to our own understanding.

Isaiah 58:11: "The Lord shall guide thee continually." It is impossible to think that He could guide us at all if He did not guide us always. The greatest events of life revolve on the smallest points, like the huge rocking-stones in the west of England. A pebble may alter the flow of a stream. The growth of a grain of mustard seed may determine the rainfall of a continent. Thus we are bidden to look for a guidance that shall embrace the whole of life in all its myriad necessities.

John 8:12: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The reference here seems to be to the wilderness wanderings, and the Master promises to be to all faithful souls, in their pilgrimage to the City of God, what the cloudy pillar was to the children of Israel on their march to the Land of Promise.

These are but samples. The vault of Scripture is inlaid with

thousands such, that glisten in their measure as the stars that guide the wanderer across the deep. Well may the prophet sum up the heritage of the servants of the Lord by saying of the Holy City, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13).

And yet it may appear to some tried and timid hearts as if everyone mentioned in the Word of God was helped, but they are left without help. They seem to have stood before perplexing problems, face to face with life's mysteries, eagerly longing to know what to do, but no angel has come to tell them and no iron gate has opened to them in the prison-house of circumstances.

Some lay the blame on their own stupidity. Their minds are blunt and dull. They cannot catch God's meaning, which would be clear to others. They are so nervous of doing wrong that they cannot learn clearly what is right. "Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?" (Isaiah 42:19). Yet, how do we treat our children? One child is so bright-witted and so keen that a little hint is enough to indicate the way; another was born dull, and he cannot take in your meaning quickly. Do you only let the clever one know what you want? Will you not take the other upon your knee and make clear to him the directions that baffle? Does not the distress of the tiny child, who longs to know that he may immediately obey, weave an almost stronger bond than that which binds you to the rest? Oh, weary, perplexed, and stupid children! Believe in the great love of God, and

cast yourselves upon it, sure that He will come down to your ignorance, and suit Himself to your needs, and will “gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall *gently lead* those that are with young” (Isaiah 40:11).

There are certain practical directions that we must attend to in order that we may be led into the mind of the Lord.

Our Motives Must Be Pure

“When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light” (Luke 11:34). You have been much in darkness lately, and perhaps this passage will point up the reason. Your eye has not been singly focused. There has been some obliquity of vision—a spiritual squint—and this has hindered you from discerning indications of God’s will, which otherwise would have been as clear as noonday.

We must be very careful in judging our motives, searching them as the detectives at the doors of the English House of Commons search each stranger who enters. When by the grace of God we have been delivered from grosser forms of sin, we are still liable to the subtle working of self in our holiest and loveliest hours. It poisons our motives. It breathes decay on our fairest fruit-bearing. It whispers seductive flatteries into our pleased ears. It turns the spirit from its holy purpose as the masses of iron on ocean steamers deflect the needle of the compass from the pole.

So long as there is some thought of personal advantage, some

idea of acquiring the praise and commendation of men, some aim at self-aggrandizement, it will be simply impossible to find out God's purpose concerning us. The door must be resolutely shut against all these if we would hear the still small voice. All cross-lights must be excluded if we would see the Urim and Thummim stones brighten with God's "Yes" or darken with His "No."

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the single eye and to inspire in your heart one aim alone: that which animated our Lord and enabled Him to cry to the Father as He reviewed His life, "I have glorified thee on the earth." Let this be the watchword of our lives, "Glory to God in the highest." Then our "whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, . . . as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light" (Luke 11:36).

Our Will Must Be Surrendered

"My judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). This was the secret that Jesus not only practiced, but taught. In one form or another, He was constantly insisting on a surrendered will as the key to perfect knowledge. "If any man will do his will, he shall know" (John 7:17).

There is all the difference between a will that is extinguished and one that is surrendered. God does not demand that our wills should be crushed, like the sinews of a fakir's unused arms. He only asks that we should say "Yes" to Him. We ought to be as pliant to Him as the willow twig is to the practiced hand.

Many a time, as the steamer has neared the bank, have I watched the little lad take his place beneath the poop, with eye and ear fixed on the captain, waiting to shout each word he utters to the grimy engineers below; and often have I longed that my will should repeat as accurately and as promptly the words and will of God, that all the lower nature might obey.

It is for the lack of this subordination that we so often miss the guidance we seek. There is a secret controversy between our will and God's. And we shall never be right till we have let Him take, and break, and make. Oh! Do seek for that. If you cannot give, let Him take. If you are not willing, confess that you are willing to be made willing. Hand yourself over to Him to work in you, to will and to do of His own good pleasure. We must be as plastic clay, ready to take any shape that the great Potter may choose, so shall we be able to detect His guidance.

We Must Seek Information for Our Mind

This is certainly the next step. God has given us these wonderful faculties of brain-power, and He will not ignore them. In grace He does not cancel the action of any of His marvelous bestowments, but He uses them for the communication of His purposes and thoughts.

It is of the greatest importance, then, that we should feed our minds with facts, with reliable information, with the results of human experience, and (above all) with the teachings of the Word of God. It is a matter for the utmost admiration to notice how full

the Bible is of biography and history, so that there is hardly a single crisis in our lives that may not be matched from those wondrous pages. There is no book like the Bible for casting a light on the dark landing of human life.

We have no need or right to run hither and thither to ask our friends what we ought to do; but there is no harm in our taking pains to gather all reliable information, on which the flame of holy thought and consecrated purpose may feed and grow strong. It is for us ultimately to decide as God shall teach us, but His voice may come to us through the voice of sanctified common sense, acting on the materials we have collected. Of course at times God may bid us act against our reason, but these times are very exceptional; and then our duty will be so clear that there can be no mistake. But for the most part God will speak in the results of deliberate consideration, weighing and balancing the pros and cons.

When Peter was shut up in prison and could not possibly extricate himself, an angel was sent to do for him what he could not do for himself; but when they had passed through a street or two of the city, the angel left him to consider the matter for himself. Thus God treats us still. He will dictate a miraculous course by miraculous methods. But when the ordinary light of reason is adequate to the task, He will leave us to act as occasion may serve.

We Must Be Much in Prayer for Guidance

The Psalms are full of earnest pleading for clear direction: "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies" (Psalm 27:11). It is the law of our Father's house that His children shall ask for what they want. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" (James 1:5).

In a time of change and crisis, we need to be much in prayer, not only on our knees, but in that sweet form of inward prayer, in which the spirit is constantly offering itself up to God, asking to be shown His will; soliciting that His will may be impressed upon the surface of our spirit as the heavenly bodies photograph themselves on prepared paper. Wrapped in prayer like this, the trustful believer may tread the deck of the ocean steamer night after night, sure that He who points the stars in their courses will not fail to direct the soul that has no other aim than to do His will.

One good form of prayer at such a juncture is to ask that doors may be shut, that the way be closed, and that all enterprises that are not according to God's will may be arrested at their very beginning. Put the matter absolutely into God's hands from the outset, and He will not fail to shatter the project and defeat the aim that is not according to His holy will.

***We Must Wait the Gradual
Unfolding of God's Plan in Providence***

God's impressions within and His Word without are always corroborated by His providence around, and we should quietly wait until these three focus into one point.

Sometimes it looks as if we are bound to act. Everyone says we must do something, and, indeed, things seem to have reached so desperate a pitch that we must. Behind are the Egyptians; right and left are inaccessible precipices; before is the sea. It is not easy at such times to stand still and see the salvation of God, but we must. When Saul compelled himself and offered sacrifice because he thought that Samuel was too late in coming, he made the great mistake of his life.

God may delay to come in the guise of His providence. There was delay before Sennacherib's host lay like withered leaves around the Holy City. There was delay before Jesus came walking on the sea in the early dawn or hastened to raise Lazarus. There was delay before the angel sped to Peter's side on the night before his expected martyrdom. God waits long enough to test patience of faith, but not a moment behind the extreme hour of need. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Habakkuk 2:3).

It is remarkable how God guides us by circumstances. At one moment the way may seem utterly blocked, and then shortly afterward some trivial incident occurs, which might not seem

much to others, but which to the keen eye of faith speaks volumes. Sometimes these signs are repeated in different ways in answer to prayer. They are not haphazard results of chance, but the opening up of circumstances in the direction in which we should walk. And they begin to multiply as we advance toward our goal, just as lights do as we near a populous town when darting through the land by night express.

Sometimes men sigh for an angel to come to point them their way; that simply indicates that as yet the time has not come for them to move. If you do not know what you ought to do, stand still until you do. And when the time comes for action, circumstances, like glowworms, will sparkle along your path. You will become so sure that you are right, when God's three witnesses concur, that you could not be surer though an angel beckoned you on.

The circumstances of our daily life are to us an infallible indication of God's will when they concur with the inward promptings of the Spirit and with the Word of God. So long as they are stationary, wait. When you must act, they will open, and a way will be made through oceans and rivers, wastes and rocks.

We often make a great mistake, thinking that God is not guiding us at all, because we cannot see far in front. But this is not His method. He only undertakes that *the steps* of a good man should be ordered by the Lord. Not next year, but tomorrow. Not the next mile, but the next yard. Not the whole pattern, but the next stitch in the canvas. If you expect more than this, you will

be disappointed and get back into the dark. But this will secure for you leading in the right way, as you will acknowledge when you review it from the hilltops of glory.

We cannot ponder too deeply the lessons of the cloud given in the exquisite picture-lesson on guidance (Numbers 9:15–23):

And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that

the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

Let us look high enough for guidance. Let us encourage our soul to wait only upon God till it is given. Let us cultivate that meekness that He will guide in judgment. Let us seek to be of quick understanding, that we may be apt to see the least sign of His will. Let us stand with girded loins and lighted lamps, that we may be prompt to obey. Blessed are those servants. They shall be led by a right way to the golden city of the saints.

Speaking for myself, after months of waiting and prayer, I have become absolutely sure of the guidance of my heavenly Father; and with the emphasis of personal experience, I would encourage each troubled and perplexed soul who may read these lines to wait patiently for the Lord until He clearly indicates His will.

≡≡≡ NATHAN STONE ≡≡≡

NAMES
OF *J*OD

FOREWORD BY *W* ANN SPANGLER

MOODY CLASSICS

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO

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Elohim



THE FIRST QUESTION in some of our catechisms is, “What is the chief end of man?” and the answer is, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” But we will experience God in such fashion—we will glorify Him and enjoy Him—only in proportion as we know Him. The knowledge of God is more essential for the Christian, and indeed for all the world, than the knowledge of anything else—yes, of all things together. The prayer of the Lord Jesus for His disciples in John 17:3 was: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” And speaking of this, Christ, our Jehovah-Jesus, Paul sums up in Philippians 3:10 the great goal of his life: “I want to know Christ.”

“I suppose if sin had not entered the world,” says one writer, “the acquisition of the knowledge of God would have been the high occupation of man forever and ever.” It is for a lack of knowledge of God that the prophet Hosea informs his people they are destroyed. And it is from the lack of knowledge of God that many

are without spiritual power or life. There is little real knowledge in these days of the one, true God.

There are many ways, of course, in which we may study God. The God who of old time spoke, "unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken to us in his Son," the epistle to the Hebrews tells us. And this Son, Jesus Christ, while on earth said in the great discourse and prayer with God: "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word" (John 17:26).

True, it is in the face of Jesus Christ we best see the glory of God; yet while we are in the flesh we can only know in part at most. And it behooves us to know all we can learn of God. All the Scriptures are profitable to us for instruction and edification, but perhaps not very many people know much about the person of God as revealed in His names. Surely a study of these names should be a most profitable way of increasing that knowledge.

When Moses received a commission from God to go to His oppressed people in Egypt and deliver them from bondage, he said: "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" (Exodus 3:13).

Now the word *God* or even *Lord*, as we see it in our English Bibles, conveys little more to us than the designation of the Supreme Being and Sovereign of the universe. It tells little about His character and ways. Indeed we cannot say all that the myste-

rious word *God* means to us until we know more about Him. And we can know little of what the word *God* means until we go to the language from which the word *God* is translated, the language that is the first written record of the revelation of Himself, the language in which He spoke to Moses and the prophets.

Missionaries and translators have always had difficulty in finding a suitable word for the Hebrew word we translate God. Those who have attempted to translate this word into Chinese, for instance, have always been divided and still are as to which word is best. One of the greatest of these translations preferred a word that means "Lord of Heaven."

Now a name in the Old Testament was often an indication of a person's character or of some peculiar quality. But what one name could be adequate to God's greatness? After all, as one writer declares, a name imposes some limitation. It means that an object or person is this and not that, is here and not there. And if the Heaven of heavens cannot contain God, how can a name describe Him? What a request of Moses, then, that was—that the infinite God should reveal Himself to finite man by any one name! We can hardly understand or appreciate Moses himself unless we see him in his many-sided character of learned man and shepherd, leader and legislator, soldier and statesman, impulsive, yet meekest of men. We can know David, too, not only as shepherd, warrior, and king, but also as a prophet, a poet, and musician.

Even so, the Old Testament contains a number of names and compound names for God that reveal Him in some aspect of His

character and dealings with mankind. It is our purpose in this series of studies to examine these names and their meanings, their significance for ourselves as well as for those of old.

As one would expect, the opening statement of the Scriptures contains the name *God*. "In the beginning God"! The Hebrew word from which this word *God* is translated is Elohim. While not the most frequently occurring word for the Deity, it occurs 2,570 times. The one that occurs most frequently is the word translated Lord in the King James Version.

Elohim occurs in the first chapter of Genesis thirty-two times. After that, the name Jehovah appears as well as Elohim; and in many places a combination of the two—Jehovah-Elohim. As far back as the twelfth century, students noticed that these different names were used in the Bible, but thought little of it until about the eighteenth century when a French physician thought he discovered the reason for the use of different names of God. He said that the book of Genesis (especially) was based on two other documents, one written by a man who had apparently known God only as Elohim—this was called the Elohist document—and the other written by a man who had known God only by the name Jehovah—this was called the Jehovistic document.

Scholars pursued this theory until they thought there had originally been five or six documents, and even many fragments of documents all pieced and fitted together by a later editor, and then altered and added to by still later editors so that some of the stories we now read in Genesis and other books were made up of

parts of stories from various documents and fragments. Moses was denied authorship of most of the Pentateuch. The theory was carried to such lengths of absurdity that it was far more difficult to believe than the simple, plain declaration of the Bible itself that Moses wrote these things. And indeed who, of all people, could have been in a better position and better able to write them than he? One can only think of many of these scholars that much learning hath made them mad. The point is that they could see no other basis, no other significance for the use of different names for God in the Old Testament than a literary basis—a literary significance—as though there is no significance at all for the spiritual mind. There is a spiritual significance in the use of these different names. It is much more “rational” to believe that the great and infinite and eternal God has given us these different names to express different aspects of His being and the different relationships He sustains to His creatures.

The Meaning of the Word

In order to gain some idea of the meaning of this name of God, Elohim, we must examine its origin and note how, generally, it is used. There is some difference of opinion as to the root from which Elohim is derived. Some hold to the view that it is derived from the shorter word *El*, which means mighty, strong, prominent. This word *El* itself is translated “God” some 250 times and frequently in circumstances that especially indicate the great power of God. For instance, in Numbers 23:22 God is spoken of

as the El who brought Israel up out of Egypt—"he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn" [wild ox] (KJV). The Scriptures make very much of God's mighty arm in that great deliverance. So in the next verse follows: "it will now be said of Jacob and Israel, 'See what God [El] has done!'"

In Deuteronomy 10:17 (KJV) we read that "Jehovah your [Elohim] is God of gods, and Lord of lords, *the God* (or *El*) who is great, mighty, and dreadful." It is this word *El* that is used in that great name *Almighty God*, the name under which God made great and mighty promises to Abraham and to Jacob (Genesis 17:1; 35:11). It is also one of the names given to that promised Son and Messiah of Isaiah 9:6-7—God, the Mighty.

Thus, from this derivation, Elohim may be said to express the general idea of greatness and glory. In the name *Jehovah*, as we shall see more fully, are represented those high moral attributes of God that are displayed only to rational creatures. The name *Elohim*, however, contains the idea of creative and governing power, of omnipotence and sovereignty. This is clearly indicated by the fact that from Genesis 1:1 to 2:4 the word *Elohim* alone is used, and that thirty-five times. It is the Elohim who by His mighty power creates the vast universe; who says, and it is done; who brings into being what was not; by whose word the worlds were framed so that things that are seen were not made of the things that do appear (Hebrews 11:3). It is this Elohim with whose Greek equivalent Paul confronts the philosophers on Mars' Hill saying that He made the world (cosmos) and all things, and

by this very fact is constituted possessor and ruler of heaven and earth; whose presence cannot be confined by space; whose power doesn't need man's aid, for through His great will and power and agency, all things and nations have their very being.

It is most appropriate that by this name God should reveal Himself—bringing cosmos out of chaos, light out of darkness, habitation out of desolation, and life in His image.

There is another word from which some say Elohim is derived. It is *Alah*, which is said to mean to declare or to swear. Thus it is said to imply a covenant relationship. Before examining this derivation, however, it may be well to say that in either case, whether El or Alah, the idea of omnipotence in God is expressed. To make a covenant implies the power and right to do so, and it establishes the fact of "absolute authority in the Creator and Ruler of the universe." So the Elohim is seen making a covenant with Abraham, and because there is none greater, He swears by Himself. "By myself I have sworn." In Genesis 17 we see perhaps a combination of both of these derivations. In verse 1 we have: "I am God Almighty [El-Shaddai]; walk before me and be blameless"; in verse 7: "I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you," that is, to be with them in covenant relationship.

It is the Elohim who says to Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me." But He cannot completely destroy the work of

His hands concerning which He has made a covenant and so He continues: "But will establish my covenant with you" (Genesis 6:18). "Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth . . . never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life" (Genesis 9:16, 15).

The Elohim remembers Abraham when He destroys the cities of the plain and for His covenant's sake spares Lot. Joseph on his deathbed declares to his brethren: "I am about to die. But [Elohim] will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Genesis 50:24). He is the Elohim who keeps covenant and loving-kindness with His servants who walk before Him with all their heart (1 Kings 8:23).

With regard to Israel, over and over again it is written: "I will be your [Elohim] and you will be my people." The covenant element in this name is clearly seen because of God's covenant relationship to Israel, and this is especially brought out in such passages as Jeremiah 31:33 and 32:40, where the name *Elohim* is used in connection with that new covenant, an everlasting covenant that God will one day make with His people Israel when He will put His law and His fear within their hearts.

To Israel in distress comes the word: "Comfort, comfort my people, says your [Elohim]" (Isaiah 40:1). For the eternal God who covenants for and with them and us will keep His covenant.

The Plural Form

There is one other striking peculiarity in the name *Elohim*. It is in the plural. It has the usual Hebrew ending for all masculine nouns in the plural. A devout saint and Hebrew scholar of two centuries ago, Dr. Parkhurst,¹ defined the word *Elohim* as a name usually given in the Scriptures to the ever blessed Trinity by which they represent themselves as under the obligation of an oath to perform certain conditions. According to this definition the Elohim covenanted not only with the creation but, as the Godhead, within itself, concerning the creation. This is seen from Psalm 110:4, where David says concerning his Lord, the coming anointed One or Messiah: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.'" This is, of course, as the book of Hebrews confirms, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the first and the last, the eternally begotten Son of God, the object of God's love before the foundation of the world (John 17:24); who shared God's glory before the world was (John 17:5). Colossians 1:16 tells us that by Him or in Him were all things created. But creation is the act of the Elohim. Therefore, Christ is in the Elohim or Godhead. Then even in Genesis 1:3 we read that the spirit of the Elohim moved or brooded over the face of the waters. The entire creation, animate and inanimate, was, then, not only the work of the Elohim, but the object of a covenant within the Elohim guaranteeing its redemption and perpetuation. It is quite clear that the Elohim is a plurality in unity.

So, Dr. Parkhurst continues: "Accordingly Jehovah is at the beginning of creation called Elohim, which implies that the divine persons had sworn when they created."²

It is significant that although plural in form it is constantly accompanied by verbs and adjectives in the singular. In the very first verse of Genesis, the verb *create* is singular, and so all through the chapter and indeed through the Bible. In many places (as in Deuteronomy 32:39; Isaiah 45:5, 22, etc.), we find singular pronouns. "I am [Elohim], and there is no [Elohim] other." Other places in the Scriptures (2 Kings 19:4, 16; Psalms 7:9; 57:2, etc.) use adjectives in the singular with Elohim. In contrast with this, when the word *elohim* is used of heathen gods, plural adjectives are used, as in 1 Samuel 4:8, etc. Then again this one Elohim speaks of Himself as *Us*, as in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image"; in Genesis 3:22, which speaks of man becoming "like one of us." In 11:7 God says: "Let us go down and confuse their language." In Genesis 35:7 Jacob builds an altar at Bethel, calling it El Beth-El, the God of the House of God because there the Elohim revealed themselves to him. To the sovereign Lord of the universe, the Jehovah of hosts, whom Isaiah saw exalted high upon a throne, is ascribed the threefold Holy, and that same One from the throne calls to the prophet, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" So instances could be multiplied.

There are some who object to the idea of the Trinity in the word *Elohim*, and it is only fair to say that some conservative scholars as well as liberal and critical would not agree with it,

among them John Calvin. They say that the plural is only a plural of majesty such as used by rulers and kings. But such use of the plural was not known then. We find no king of Israel speaking of himself as “we” and “us.” Besides, the singular pronoun is so often used with Elohim. To be consistent with that view, we should always find not “I am your Elohim,” as we do find, but “*We* are your Elohim.”³

Others call it the plural of intensity and argue that the Hebrews often expressed a word in the plural to give it a stronger meaning—so blood, water, life are expressed in the plural. But as one writer points out,⁴ these arguments only favor the idea of a Trinity in the Elohim. The use of the plural only implies (even in the plural of majesty) “that the word in the singular is not full enough to set forth all that is intended.” With Elohim the plural form teaches us that no finite word can adequately convey the idea of the infinite personality or the unity of persons in the Godhead.

Certainly the use of this word in the plural is wonderfully consistent with that great and precious doctrine of the Trinity, and its use as already shown in the Old Testament surely must confirm that view.

There is blessing and comfort in this great name of God signifying supreme power, sovereignty, and glory on the one hand, for “thine [Elohim] is the power and the kingdom and the glory”; and on the other hand signifying a covenant relationship that He is ever faithful to keep. Thus He says to us, “I will be to you a

God" (Elohim), and we may say, "My [Elohim], in whom I trust" (Psalm 91:2).

Notes

1. Parkhurst, *Hebrew Lexicon* (see Elohim).
2. Ibid.
3. Girdleston, *Old Testament Synonyms*, 39.
4. Ibid.

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PREVAILING
P RAYER

FOREWORD BY ~ ERWIN LUTZER
M O O D Y C L A S S I C S

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CHICAGO

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The Prayers of the Bible



THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT the deepest impression on this sin-cursed earth have been men and women of prayer. You will find that Prayer has been the mighty power that has moved not only God, but man. Abraham was a man of prayer, and angels came down from heaven to converse with him. Jacob's prayer was answered in the wonderful interview at Peniel, that resulted in his having such a mighty blessing, and in softening the heart of his brother Esau; the child Samuel was given in answer to Hannah's prayer; Elijah's prayer closed up the heavens for three years and six months, and he prayed again and the heavens gave rain.

The Apostle James tells us that the prophet Elijah was a man "subject to like passions as we are." I am thankful that those men and women who were so mighty in prayer were just like ourselves. We are apt to think that those prophets and mighty men and women of old time were different from what we are. To be sure they lived in a much darker age, but they were of like passions with ourselves.

We read that on another occasion Elijah brought down fire on Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal cried long and loud, but no answer came. The God of Elijah heard and answered his prayer. Let us remember that the God of Elijah still lives. The prophet was translated and went up to heaven, but his God still lives, and we have the same access to Him that Elijah had. We have the same warrant to go to God and ask the fire from heaven to come down and consume our lusts and passions—to burn up our dross, and let Christ shine through us.

Elisha prayed, and life came back to a dead child. Many of our children are dead in trespasses and sins. Let us do as Elisha did; let us entreat God to raise them up in answer to our prayers.

Manasseh, the king, was a wicked man, and had done everything he could against the God of his father; yet in Babylon, when he cried to God, his cry was heard, and he was taken out of prison and put on the throne at Jerusalem. Surely if God gave heed to the prayer of wicked Manasseh, He will hear ours in the time of our distress. Is not this a time of distress with a great number of our fellowmen? Are there not many among us whose hearts are burdened? As we go to the throne of grace, let us remember that GOD ANSWERS PRAYER.

Look, again, at Samson. He prayed; and his strength came back, so that he slew more at his death than during his life. He was a restored backslider, and he had power with God. If those who have been backsliders will but return to God, they will see how quickly God will answer prayer.

Job prayed, and his captivity was turned. Light came in the place of darkness, and God lifted him up above the height of his former prosperity—in answer to prayer.

Daniel prayed to God, and Gabriel came to tell him that he was a man greatly beloved of God. Three times that message came to him from heaven in answer to prayer. The secrets of heaven were imparted to him, and he was told that God's Son was going to be cut off for the sins of His people. We find also that Cornelius prayed; and Peter was sent to tell him words whereby he and his should be saved. In answer to prayer this great blessing came upon him and his household. Peter had gone up to the housetop to pray in the afternoon, when he had that wonderful vision of the sheet let down from heaven. It was when prayer was made without ceasing unto God for Peter, that the angel was sent to deliver him.

So all through the Scriptures you will find that when believing prayer went up to God, the answer came down. I think it would be a very interesting study to go right through the Bible and see what has happened while God's people have been on their knees calling upon him. Certainly the study would greatly strengthen our faith—showing, as it would, how wonderfully God has heard and delivered, when the cry has gone up to Him for help.

Look at Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi. As they prayed and sang praises, the place was shaken, and the jailer was converted. Probably that one conversion has done more than any

other recorded in the Bible to bring people into the Kingdom of God. How many have been blessed in seeking to answer the question—"What must I do to be saved?" It was the prayer of those two godly men that brought the jailer to his knees, and that brought blessing to him and his family.

You remember how Stephen, as he prayed and looked up, saw the heavens opened, and the Son of Man at the right hand of God; the light of heaven fell on his face so that it shone. Remember, too, how the face of Moses shone as he came down from the Mount; he had been in communion with God. So when we get really into communion with God, He lifts up His countenance upon us; and instead of our having gloomy looks, our faces will shine, because God has heard and answered our prayers.

Jesus, as a Man of Prayer

I want to call special attention to Christ as an example for us in all things; in nothing more than in prayer. We read that Christ prayed to His Father for everything. Every great crisis in His life was preceded by prayer. Let me quote a few passages. I never noticed till a few years ago that Christ was praying at His baptism. As He prayed, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended on Him. Another great event in His life was His Transfiguration. "As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening" (Luke 9:29).

Luke 6:12 reads, "It came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to

God." This is the only place where it is recorded that the Saviour spent a whole night in prayer. What was about to take place? When He came down from the mountain He gathered His disciples around Him, and preached that great discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount—the most wonderful sermon that has ever been preached to mortal men. Probably no sermon has done so much good, and it was preceded by a night of prayer. If our sermons are going to reach the hearts and consciences of the people, we must be much in prayer to God, that there may be power with the Word.

In the Gospel of John we read that Jesus at the grave of Lazarus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me" (11:41–42). Before He spoke the dead to life He spoke to His Father. If our spiritually dead ones are to be raised, we must first get power with God. The reason we so often fail in moving our fellowmen is that we try to win them without first getting power with God. Jesus was in communion with His Father, and so He could be assured that His prayers were heard.

We read also in John 12:27–28 that our Lord prayed to the Father. I think this is one of the saddest chapters in the whole Bible. He was about to leave the Jewish nation and to make atonement for the sin of the world. Hear what He says: "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this

hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." He was almost under the shadow of the Cross; the iniquities of mankind were about to be laid upon Him; one of His twelve disciples was going to deny Him and swear he never knew Him; another was to sell Him for thirty pieces of silver; all were to forsake Him and flee. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, and He prays; when His soul was troubled, God spoke to Him. Then in the Garden of Gethsemane, while He prayed, an angel appeared to strengthen Him. In answer to His cry, "Father, glorify thy name," He hears a voice coming down from the glory—"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:28).

Another memorable prayer of our Lord was in the Garden of Gethsemane: "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed" (Luke 22:41). I would draw your attention to the fact that four times the answer came right down from heaven while the Saviour prayed to God. The first time was at His baptism, when the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon Him in answer to His prayer. Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration, God appeared and spoke to Him. Then when the Greeks came desiring to see Him, the voice of God was heard responding to His call; and again, when He cried to the Father in the midst of His agony, a direct response was given. These things are recorded, I doubt not, that we may be encouraged to pray.

We read that His disciples came to Him, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." It is not recorded that He taught them how to

preach. I have often said that I would rather know how to pray like Daniel than to preach like Gabriel. If you get love into your soul, so that the grace of God may come down in answer to prayer, there will be no trouble about reaching the people. It is not by eloquent sermons that perishing souls are going to be reached; we need the power of God in order that the blessing may come down.

The prayer our Lord taught His disciples is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. I think that the Lord's Prayer, more properly, is the one in chapter 17 of John. That is the longest prayer on record that Jesus made. You can read it slowly and carefully in about four or five minutes. I think we may learn a lesson here. Our Master's prayers were short when offered in public; when He was alone with God that was a different thing, and He could spend the whole night in communion with His Father. My experience is that those who pray most in their closets generally make short prayers in public. Long prayers are too often not prayers at all, and they weary the people. How short the publican's prayer was: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" The Syrophenician woman's was shorter still: "Lord, help me!" She went right to the mark, and she got what she wanted. The prayer of the thief on the cross was a short one: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom!" Peter's prayer was, "Lord, save me, or I perish!" So, if you go through the Scriptures, you will find that the prayers that brought immediate answers were generally brief. Let our prayers be to the point, just telling God what we want.

In the prayer of our Lord, in John 17, we find that He made seven requests—one for Himself, four for His disciples around Him, and two for the disciples of succeeding ages. Six times in that one prayer He repeats that God had sent Him. The world looked upon Him as an imposter; and He wanted them to know that He was heaven-sent. He speaks of the world nine times, and makes mention of His disciples and those who believe on Him fifty times.

Christ's last prayer on the Cross was a short one: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." I believe that prayer was answered. We find that right there in front of the Cross, a Roman centurion was converted. It was probably in answer to the Saviour's prayer. The conversion of the thief, believe, was in answer to that prayer of our blessed Lord. Saul of Tarsus may have heard it, and the words may have followed him as he traveled to Damascus; so that when the Lord spoke to him on the way, he may have recognized the voice. One thing we do know; that on the day of Pentecost some of the enemies of the Lord were converted. Surely that was in answer to the prayer, "Father, forgive them!"

Men of God Are Men of Prayer

Hence we see that prayer holds a high place among the exercises of a spiritual life. All God's people have been praying people. Look, for instance, at Baxter! He stained his study walls with praying breath; and after he was anointed with the unction of the

Holy Ghost, sent a river of living water over Kidderminster, and converted hundreds. Luther and his companions were men of such mighty pleading with God, that they broke the spell of ages, and laid nations subdued at the foot of the Cross. John Knox grasped all Scotland in his strong arms of faith; his prayers terrified tyrants. Whitefield, after much holy, faithful closetpleading, went to the devil's fair, and took more than a thousand souls out of the paw of the lion in one day. See a praying Wesley turn more than ten thousand souls to the Lord! Look at the praying Finney, whose prayers, faith, sermons and writings, have shaken this whole country, and sent a wave of blessing through the churches on both sides of the sea.

Dr. Guthrie thus speaks of prayer and its necessity: "The first true sign of spiritual life, prayer, is also the means of maintaining it. Man can as well live physically without breathing, as spiritually without praying. There is a class of animals—the cetaceous, neither fish nor seafowl—that inhabits the deep. It is their home, they never leave it for the shore; yet, though swimming beneath its waves, and sounding its darkest depths, they have ever and anon to rise to the surface that they may breathe the air. Without that, these monarchs of the deep could not exist in the dense element in which they live, and move, and have their being. And something like what is imposed on them by a physical necessity, the Christian has to do by a spiritual one. It is by ever and anon ascending up to God, by rising through prayer into a loftier, purer region for supplies of Divine grace, that he

maintains his spiritual life. Prevent these animals from rising to the surface, and they die for want of breath; prevent the Christian from rising to God, and he dies for want of prayer. 'Give me children,' cried Rachel, 'or else I die;' 'Let me breathe,' says a man gasping, 'or else I die;' 'Let me pray,' says the Christian, 'or else I die.'"

"Since I began," said Dr. Payson when a student, "to beg God's blessing on my studies, I have done more in one week than in the whole year before." Luther, when most pressed with work, said, "I have so much to do that I cannot get on without three hours a day praying." And not only do theologians think and speak highly of prayer; men of all ranks and positions in life have felt the same. General Havelock rose at four o'clock, if the hour for marching was six, rather than lose the precious privilege of communion with God before setting out. Sir Matthew Hale says: "If I omit praying and reading God's Word in the morning, nothing goes well all day."

"A great part of my time," said McCheyne, "is spent in getting my heart in tune for prayer. It is the link that connects earth with heaven."

A comprehensive view of the subject will show that there are nine elements which are essential to true prayer. The first is Adoration; we cannot meet God on a level at the start. We must approach Him as One far beyond our reach or sight. The next is Confession; sin must be put out of the way. We cannot have any communion with God while there is any transgression between

us. If there stands some wrong you have done a man, you cannot expect that man's favor until you go to him and confess the fault. Restitution is another; we have to make good the wrong, wherever possible. Thanksgiving is the next; we must be thankful for what God has done for us already. Then comes Forgiveness, and then Unity; and then for prayer, such as these things produce, there must be Faith. Thus influenced, we shall be ready to offer direct Petition. We hear a good deal of praying that is just exhorting, and if you did not see the man's eyes closed, you would suppose he was preaching. Then, much that is called prayer is simply finding fault. There needs to be more petition in our prayers. After all these, there must come Submission. While praying, we must be ready to accept the will of God. We shall consider these nine elements in detail, closing our inquiries by giving incidents illustrative of the certainty of our receiving, under such conditions, answers to prayer.

The Hour of Prayer

Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take;
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower.

We kneel—and all around us seems to lower,
We rise—and all, the distant and the near.
Stands forth in sunny outline brave and clear;
We kneel: how weak!—we rise: how full of power!

Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong?
That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, while with us is prayer,
And joy, and strength, and courage, are with Thee?

R. TRENCH