

Our Daily Walk by F B Meyer - Sept

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September 1

SELF-WATCH!

"Keep (guard) thy heart above all that thou guardest: For out of it are the issues of life."--Pr 4:23-see in depth discussion

SAID PETER to our Lord, "Spare Thyself this death of which Thou speakest--this bitter suffering and anguish shall never be Thine!"

These words are continually spoken still, and many are the voices that bid us spare ourselves--the voices of our friends who love us; the voices of prudence and worldly wisdom; the voices of our own wayward hearts.

Do not spare your judgment of yourself. Never permit yourself to do things which you would be the first to condemn in others. Never suppose that there are reasons for you to do a wrong, which, under no circumstances would you tolerate in your neighbor.

Do not spare yourself in confessing your sins and mistakes. Confession is one of the tests of nobility. Not a few are willing to confess to God, who never attempt to confess to men. It is a serious question whether that sorrow for sin is genuine and deep enough which does not lead the offender to ask his fellow-man for pardon, even as he asks his God. Nothing could be clearer than Christ's words, that whenever we remember that our brother has aught against us, we are to leave our gift at the altar, and go first to seek reconciliation with him, before we offer our sacrifice to God.

The supreme test of goodness is not in the greater but in the smaller incidents of our character and practice; not what we are when standing in the searchlight of public scrutiny, but when we reach the firelight flicker of our homes; not what we are when some clarion-call rings through the air, summoning us to fight for life and liberty, but our attitude when we are called to sentry-duty in the grey morning, when the watch-fire is burning low. It is impossible to be our best at the supreme moment if character is corroded and eaten into by daily inconsistency, unfaithfulness, and besetting sin.

You cannot really help people without expending yourself. The only work that tells must cost you something. Gold, silver, and precious stones can never be built into the new Jerusalem unless you are willing to part with them from the stores of your own life.

PRAYER

Most loving Father, may love fill and rule my heart. For then there will spring up and be cherished between Thee and me a likeness of character, and union of will, so that I may choose and refuse what Thou dost. AMEN.

September 2

WATCHING FOR SOULS

"Christ in you, the hope of glory; Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom."--Col 1:27, 28.

"Watch, and remember, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."-- Acts 20:31

THE MINISTRY of warning should be a recognized part of the work of the Church and of each individual member. The foghorn warns the ship from the deadly rocks; the red light warns the train of imminent danger; in the days of the plague people were warned from infected areas: how much more should we, who know the wrath of God which abides on those who refuse Christ, raise our voice in warning. We should do it deliberately, earnestly, patiently, and in reliance upon the Spirit of God to make our words, however much they may be resented, the means of arresting the wicked from the error of his ways, and those who are taking their first steps in forbidden paths from pursuing them (Ezek 33:7, 8, 9).

How wonderful it is that God does not commission angels to carry His warnings and appeals; instead of this, the work that angels might love to do is entrusted to men. It is at our peril that we neglect our opportunities in this direction. If the signalman is placed at a point where many lines of rail cross or diverge, and he sleeps at his post, or neglects his duty, he may be tried for manslaughter; and if we know of people in the immediate circle of our influence who are in danger of ruining their physical, moral, and spiritual well-being, we are bound to raise a warning voice. If we saw, upon the upper reaches of a river, a boat full of people hastening towards the rapids unheeding the danger, surely we might be guilty of being an accessory in their destruction, if we failed to do something to warn them of their peril.

Accompanying our words of warning, there should be the clear reiteration of the Love of God. He does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. It is not enough to try and prevent men from taking the wrong path, we must urge and allure them to take the pleasant ways of righteousness and peace. All are included in the love of God. Even sin cannot turn away His love, which is like that described in the parable of the Prodigal Son, or 1Co 13:1-13.

PRAYER

O God, we have left undone many things that we ought to have done. Hands have been reached out for help which we have not given; hearts have turned to us for sympathy which we have not blessed. Forgive us, we pray Thee, and at whatever cost may we follow Christ in His redemptive purpose. AMEN.

September 3

THE FOLLY OF BEING UNPREPARED

"While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." -- Mt 25:10.

THE FOOLISH virgins made five great mistakes.

(1) They made no provision for the continuance of their light. It is not enough merely to have the lamp; it must be lit and maintained, because there is something for the fire to feed on. How many there are who are on fire and in earnest during the first stage of their religious life, but they have made no provision for maintaining the flame which has been kindled by the grace of God. They have lamps, but have neglected to take oil. The oil stands for fellowship with the Lord Jesus, for the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the daily study of the Bible, for the kindling communion of worship with fellow-Christians.

(2) They slept. There was a difference between the sleep of the foolish and that of the wise. There are two kinds of sleep. The one arises from a sense of security and trust. Every preparation has been made; all has been done that could be done, and we resign ourselves deliberately to the care of God. So Peter slept in the prison, before the angel came to deliver him. But there is another kind of sleep. The sleep of the sentry, when the foe is stealing up the pass; of the pilot, when the ship is making for the serried teeth of the rocks; of the nurse, when the patient's life is quivering in the balance. These foolish ones had no right to sleep, when they were so utterly unready to meet the Bridegroom. We must not take things for granted, or say "Peace, peace, when there is no peace!"

(3) They thought they could procure oil from the wise. But the appeal was in vain. Each must bear his own burden of responsibility in the sight of God. We may "buy without money and without price," but each must appropriate the living grace and power of Jesus for himself.

(4) They thought they could get in; "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But the door was irrevocably closed! "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

(5) They thought that the Bridegroom would recognize them. But He said: "I know you not." Let each ask himself: "Does Jesus know me? Will he recognize me at last?" The only way to be sure, is to kneel at the foot of His Cross until He seals us with the Holy Spirit, and says: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine."

PRAYER

O Lord, we pray that our lives may be lamps to which Thou shalt supply oil. Help us to be burning and shining lights for this dark world. AMEN.

September 4

WHEAT AND TARES

"But while he slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."-- Mt 13:25.

HOW CLEARLY our Lord taught the personality of Satan! In His explanation of this parable, He said distinctly, "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." He knew that in every heart--in the Church as well as in the world--the great enemy of God's Kingdom, and of human happiness, is always at work, sowing tares. The seed may be very small, but in a single night irreparable injury may be wrought.

Notice that we become as the seed we receive--those who receive the wheat-seed become wheat; those who receive the tare-seed become tares. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." How careful we should be over the books we read, the companionship and friendship that we form, the recreations that we take part in. Such are some of the processes by which our characters are being made. If we are thoughtless and careless, we expose ourselves to the reception of tare-seed, which germinates into weeds and rubbish. Of course, if our necessary duties take us into scenes where evil is rife, we may claim the keeping power of Christ, and hide ourselves in Him. As the doctor or nurse will saturate themselves with disinfectant when called to a house where plague or fever is incurred, so the Holy Spirit, in whom we may bathe our souls, will be as the antiseptic, and deliver us from the microbes of temptation (Gal 5:16, 17).

There is not much difference, it is said, between wheat and tares, in the earlier stages of growth; it is only when the harvest comes that the distinction is dearly defined. So in the Church and the world, there are many counterfeits, people who seem to be good and true, but they are not what they seem, and in the day of reckoning they will be rooted up and cast forth as rubbish. The two classes that will be rejected at last are "All that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity" (Mt 13:41, R.V.). It may be that you are not amongst those that do iniquity, in any of its glaring forms, but are you causing others to stumble by your inconsistent behaviour or worldliness? Let each of us carefully examine ourselves, and open our hearts to receive from the hand of the Lord Jesus the incorruptible seed which He waits to implant by His Word.

PRAYER

Give us a pure judgment and a true understanding of Thy Word, O Lord, that we may not be deceived and carried away by any error; but grant that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. AMEN.

September 5

SHINING LIGHTS

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."-- Php 2:15, 16 (R.V.).

THE SPIRIT of man, says the wise man, is the candle of the Lord (Pr 20:27). By nature we are like so many unlit lamps and candles. As the wick is adapted for the flame, but stands dark and cold until it is ignited, so we are unable to shed forth any light until our nature is kindled from the Eternal Nature of Him who "is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all." Has the candle of your life been lit by contact with Christ, the Sun of Righteousness?

Our Lord says: "Let your light shine before men." He shows how absurd it is to light a lamp, and then obscure its rays by placing it under a bushel. The purpose of ignition is frustrated if the light is covered. Ah! how many of us place bushels on the light of our testimony for God--the bushel of uncharitable speech! Of ill-temper! Of a discontented and querulous spirit! These as well as more conspicuous failings will prevent us from shining forth as light in a dark world. It is not for us to ignite the flame or supply the oil. All we have to do is to keep our lamps clean and bright, to guard against anything that may obstruct the out-shining of the Love and Life of God through the soul. If we are careful to see that anything which might hinder the effect of our testimony and mar our influence is put away, Christ will see to it that our light shall effect the full measure of His purpose.

In contrast to the bushel is the stand or candlestick. The Master of the House may place you in a very small dark corner, and on a very humble stand, but some day, as He passes by, you shall light His footsteps as He goes forth to seek and save that which is lost. What is your stand?--your place in society, your position in the home, your situation in some business house, factory, or school--wherever it be, it doesn't matter, so long as your light is shining forth, steady and clear, warning and directing men and

women in the path of life.

PRAYER

O Christ, may the fire of Thy Divine Love burn up our bushels; help us to shine forth as lights in this dark world. AMEN.

September 6

THE CURE FOR SHORT SIGHT

"If these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle or unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near."-- 2Pe 1:8,9 (R.V.).

THE CHRISTIAN graces which we have to supply present themselves to the Apostle's mind as the golden links of a chain or necklace, which begins with Faith, and ends with Love, so that Faith and Love clasp in the centre (2Pe 1:5, 6, 7).

The idea of lavish expenditure is here associated with the word translated "Supply" (2Pe 1:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). Among the ancient customs of Greece, was the expression of goodwill to society on the part of leading citizens by the provision of public entertainments, in honour of benefactors, or generals returning victorious from war. Rich men craved permission to bear the cost, as in modern days men will endow hospitals and libraries.

So the Apostle says, See to it that you spare no cost in the glorious provision of "these things"; spare neither thought nor pains, if only these Christian graces are in you and abound. Then, for you also, there will be a profuse expenditure of Heavenly welcome. You will not enter the Heavenly City unnoticed and alone. A choral and processional greeting will be yours. You will not enter the port like some water-logged vessel, but with colours flying and all sails set! (2Pe 1:11.)

Notice the order of these graces. Each is in the other like those Chinese boxes, each of which contains a number of smaller ones which fit inside. Opening the one marked Faith, manly courage should be discovered; opening courage, knowledge should present itself; from knowledge, we should come on self-control; within self-control should be patience; inside patience we have towards men should be godliness towards God; then we find brotherly love; and finally we come on Love!

The Apostle says that those who lack "these things" are short-sighted--they see only the things of this world, not the real things of eternity. The tenth verse warns us that the careful culture of these things in the heart will prevent stumbling in the outward life (Jude 1:20-24). So many people wait to feel good before they act goodness. The Divine method is to step out on the path of obedience to Christ, believing that He will supply the needed grace.

PRAYER

Accept, O Most Merciful Father, of this renewed dedication which we make of ourselves, our bodies, souls, and spirits unto Thee. Grant that we may be like Jesus, pure and undefiled, meek and gentle, peaceable, patient, contented and thankful. AMEN.

September 7

STAND AT THE BOW!

"Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal."-- Php 3:13, 14

ALWAYS STAND at the bow! Leave the stern with its backward look and make for the bow. To spend time in sad review of past sins and failures is not to put them to the best account. Confess them, and believe that for Christ's dear sake they are absolutely forgiven! Failure often provides the material for success, and our dead selves may become the stepping-stones to better things. Did not our Lord say to His disciples: "Sleep on now and take your rest"--the past is irreparable, but immediately added: "Arise, let us be going!"--the future is available. Therefore, leave the stern with its backward look, and make for the bow.

True, the sky before us may be dark with storm-clouds. The weather-prophets say that the world is shedding its old sanctions without replacing them with better ones; that seven civilizations have already passed, and we are to see the death of the eighth. Be it so, but they forget that God holds the stormy waters in the hollow of His hand; that Jesus walked the threatening billows to succour His friends. They forget that when the earth was without form and void, the Spirit of God brooded in the chaos and darkness, creating the heavens and earth. They cannot detect the voice of the Creator saying, "Behold, I make all things new!" Out of chaos is born the cosmos. Each age ends in travail, out of which a new age is born.

Look out to the vast circle of the horizon, and prepare for the new lands to be explored, the wonderful discoveries that await us, the great missions hidden in the future which are waiting to be fulfilled. Never doubt that the clouds will break. Never dream that wrong will triumph. Never count yourself God-forsaken or forgotten. The Master may seem to be asleep on His pillow, oblivious and

uncaring, but His hand is on the helm. He guides your course. He rules the waves and they obey Him.

PRAYER

He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; So He bringeth them in the haven of their desire. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness! AMEN.

September 8

THE DEVOTIONAL USE OF SCRIPTURE

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." -- Psa 119:105.

IN EACH verse of Ps. 119, the Psalmist mentions the Scriptures, with one exception, and the constant quotation of the Old Testament by our Lord and His Apostles yields abundant evidence of loving and reverent fellowship with the holy men of past ages, who wrote and spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit. It is specially remarkable that the Lord Jesus in His Temptation, in all His teaching, and in the agony of the Cross bore constant witness to the unique authority of the Word of God spoken through the Old Testament saints.

We may know God, says the Psalmist, through a threefold revelation. Though they have no audible voice or language, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament of space, studded with myriads of stars, shows His handiwork. Though speechless, their words witness for Him to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The closing stanza of this great Psalm unfolds God's handiwork in the construction and direction of our moral nature. Between these golden clasps the Psalmist extols the Scriptures under ten striking similitudes, and that disposition must be indeed extraordinary that does not come within the scope of one of them. The soul that needs restoring; the simple who would become wise; the sad heart who would rejoice; the eyes that would be enlightened; the soul that longs for the gold of truth; the desire for sincerity and reality; the search for understanding and righteousness--all such needs and many more are met from a devout reading of Holy Scripture.

All great ministries which have remained fresh and fragrant through long courses of years have proved the wealth of inexhaustible teaching and inspiration which lies hidden in the Bible. Let us each one resolve to soak ourselves in the Scripture before turning to prayer, as water poured in to moisten the sucker will help to draw water up.

PRAYER

Teach us, O Blessed Spirit of Inspiration, so to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest Thy words, that we may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, and be enabled to lead others into a true understanding of and love for its hidden treasures. AMEN.

September 9

BENEDICITE!

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly But his delight is in the law of the Lord."--Ps 1:1, 2.

THE THEME of this first Psalm is the Blessedness of keeping "the Law," which is the transcript, of the mind and will of God. David was never weary in its praise-- How I love Thy law; it is my meditation all the day!"

What we all need to-day is a passionate love for the will and commands of God. Docility to learn, and faith to fulfil are the two qualities by which our heart may be kept pure and childlike, and through which we shall come to understand the Bible, nature, and human life. Well may the Psalter, which enshrines obedience to God's Law, begin with Blessed and end with Hallelujah!

Here are, first, the negations of the loyal and true soul. If we refuse to walk in the counsel of the wicked, we shall never sit in the seat of the scornful. But these negatives are chiefly valuable as contributing to the positive, as the wall protects the plant that grows behind it. Our religious life must be fed from hidden springs, as the rootlets of the tree creep under the soil to drink of the stream (Psa 1:3). Such a life becomes fruitful and beautiful. It is also prosperous, because it abides in the will of God. It cannot be really injured by evil, and in the deepest sense it realizes the purpose for which God commissioned it.

Any life which refuses reverence and obedience to God's will must resemble the rootless, fruitless, and lifeless chaff, which is scattered by the winnowing wind.

Which type does your life resemble? Are you the deeply-rooted tree, yielding beauty and fruit and shelter to many, or is your life being frittered away like the worthless chaff?

PRAYER

Open to me, I pray Thee, O Spirit of Truth, the treasures of Thy Word, that my soul may be continually enriched, and that I may abound in every good word and work, to Thy honour and glory. AMEN.

September 10

THE ATTRACTION OF CHRIST'S HUMANITY

"Great multitudes followed Him."-- Mt 19:2.

"All men seek for Thee!"-- Mk 1:37.

A SENTENCE which was once uttered in a Roman theatre, and welcomed with thunderous plaudits was abundantly true of the Son of Man--"I am a Man, and nothing that touches humanity is foreign to Me." This was true during His earthly life, and it is true always, and of this we have ample illustration in the Gospel story.

Our Lord blesses man and wife as they live in holy wedlock; He takes their children in His arms; inspires young men and women with the loftiest ideals; warns men against the evil use of wealth and power; promises to those who are willing to pass through this life, denying themselves the joys of home-life, parents, and children for His sake, that they shall be infinitely compensated.

There is no phase of human life which Jesus is not willing to share, and through all relationships and circumstances He waits to breathe the fragrance of perfect love. Is not that a boon which we all need, but which so many miss? Why do so many marriages turn out ill? Is it not often because each seeks rather to get than to give, to be ministered to rather than to minister? If each were inspired by a love that made the other the centre of thought and care and tenderness, the wedding-bells would ring on through all the passing years.

Christ's love is so attractive that when He is rightly presented boys and girls will turn to Him as flowers turn to the sun. Alas! that by our evil example and failure we so often forbid them. How poor is our appreciation and response to His love! We are willing to keep the commandments of a moral and respectable life because it suits and pleases us, but when it comes to following Him and renouncing wealth, position, and self-pleasing for His dear sake, we turn back! We admire His ideals and teaching, but so often go sorrowfully away because we really love ourselves more than we love Him!

PRAYER

Higher than the highest heavens,

Deeper than the deepest sea.

Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered;

Grant me now my soul's petition,

None of self, and all of Thee. AMEN.

September 11

THE DIVIDING LINE

"Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?"-- Mt 25:44.

WE CAN no longer serve our Lord as they did in the days of His flesh, when they ministered to Him of their substance. But He has left behind His representatives, and whatever we do for them He takes as to Himself. Therefore we are debtors to all men; to every unit of the human family we must pay back a proportion of our infinite debt to the Son of Man from. Mt 1:14).

The dividing line hereafter will not be a Credal one--not "How much do you believe?" Nor even a Devotional one--"How much did you pray?" But a Practical one--"What did you do?" The Apostle James shows that our faith is evidenced by our works (Jam 2:14-20). It is not enough to say "Lord, Lord!" We must show the same spirit as our Master in love for our fellows, or we shall be rejected at the last.

The Lord's brethren are spread widely through the world. Whenever we meet the hungry and thirsty, the stranger and the homeless, the sick or imprisoned soul, we encounter one whom He calls "Brother" or "Sister," and to help any such is to send a thrill of joy through the soul of our Redeemer. We must have the quick eyes of love to penetrate the many disguises that our Lord

assumes. It is said that when St. Francis was riding across a plain, he saw a leper standing by the roadside, asking for alms. Dismounting, he not only gave to him, but kissed him on the cheek. As he was riding away, he looked back, and saw Christ Himself standing where the beggar had been, and he knew that he had been permitted to kiss his Lord.

Notice that the saints do not generally realize that they have done anything directly for Christ: "Lord, when saw we Thee?" The beauty of goodness is its modesty and unobtrusiveness, as the charm of childhood is its unconsciousness. Notice, also, that in Christ's eyes, it is a crime not to do. Moses says that it is wrong to do wrong; Jesus that it is wrong not to do fight. Some were cast away, as men reject weeds, not because they had violated the Ten Commandments, but because they failed to fulfil the Law of Love.

Let us consecrate ourselves to the service of men, women, and children for the sake of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

PRAYER

Help us, dear Lord, to minister to the needs of others, to care for the poor and needy, the destitute and outcast, to show our love to Thee by our sympathy and help to the least of Thy brethren. AMEN.

September 12

SECRET IDOLS

"Jesus beholding him loved him, and said: One thing thou lackest .. sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor Come, take up thy cross, and follow Me. And he was sad, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."-- Mk 10:21, 22.

HOW MANY there are who know in their hearts what their duty is, but fail to do it because they are hiding some forbidden thing; they refuse to launch on the current sweeping past them, because they are secretly anchored to a sandbank; they go from one teacher to another, with an appearance of earnest inquiry after eternal life, which never comes to anything, because they are unwilling to renounce their secret idol.

In the case of this young man, it was the love of money. "He had great possessions." There is no harm in money. It is one of God's gifts to men, but it is hard to own it without coming to look upon it as one's own, instead of realizing that we are stewards only. It was for this reason that our Lord proposed this supreme test. St. Francis of Assisi thought that these words applied universally, and founded the Order of the Franciscans, pledged to poverty. But it seems more in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel to believe that it was a special test put to this seeker after truth, to reveal him to himself.

The law of love is not negative only but positive. The most essential condition for each of us is to be willing, like another young man who was living at that time, "to count all things but loss, in order to win Christ and to be found in Him" (Php 3:8). If you would follow Christ and are prepared for Love's sake to surrender all, you will probably be entrusted with manifold more, because Christ knows that He can make you His almoner with no fear of gold dust adhering to your palm in its transmission.

Let us guard against the idol of money or possessions. Riches which open most doors, will not furnish a pass-key to Heaven. Let us see to it that we always act as stewards of God's property, but this is not possible unless we are living perpetually in fellowship with our Master, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich, and who says to us also, "Come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

PRAYER

The dearest idol I have known, Whate'er that idol be, Help me to tear it from Thy throne, And worship only Thee. AMEN

September 13

FISHERS OF MEN

"Jesus saw two brethren, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."-- Mt 4:18, 19.

IT IS thus that Christ adapts Himself to the understanding and the heart. He caught these fishermen with bait suited to them. Notice the undoubting certainty of His promise to make these two brothers fishers of men, casting their drag-net not into the waters of the sea of Galilee, but into the great ocean of humanity. How impossible it would have been to convince Peter then that within four years he would make the great haul of three thousand souls (Acts 2:41). He, we never know what awaits us when we leave all to follow in obedience to the Master's Call!

"Follow Me!" Our Lord is always making this challenge (Jn 21:19, 20, 21, 22). It means bearing the cross, but we must be willing to

follow Christ until, like Him, we fall into the ground and die--die to our own ambitions, our love of power and influence, our own strength and gifts, that we may make way for God to work through us. We must learn not to obtrude ourselves, but to lie hidden. The first, the second, and the third condition of successful fishing is to be hidden from sight. The best line and bait for catching men are those where the human element is out of sight, and our one aim is to serve Christ's purpose, and to glorify Him.

There must be a leaving of our nets and boats, and even those who are nearest and dearest (Mt 4:20, 21, 23). It must have been something of a wrench for these brothers to leave their nets and fishing to follow Christ. But the attraction of His Personality prevailed. There is no difficulty in persuading men to surrender the lower and inferior article, if you can unfold to them the immense value of the Pearl of great price. Then they will gladly sell all that they have to buy it.

PRAYER

Jesus calls us: by Thy mercies,
Saviour, make us hear Thy call.
Give our hearts to Thine obedience,
Serve and love Thee best of all. AMEN.

September 14

LOVE'S COMPULSION

"Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."-- Lk 14:23.

WE CAN never estimate the yearning love of God for the souls of men. He sees us absorbed with farming and industry; business and pleasure; with our homes and family-life, and knows that these will all pass away, as a dream before the first touch of eternity. With intense passion He desires that we shall be really satisfied with abiding joys.

The Feast that He spreads is abundant and ready (Isa 25:6; Isa 55:1, 2). A banquet is a happy-making time. As the guests sit together, there is the brilliant flow of conversation, the sparkle of laughter, the enjoyment of the good things provided, the interchange of friendship and fellowship. Everything that a feast stands for God is waiting to give us. "He gives us richly all things to enjoy." How strange it is that men, mocked by the Evil One, are cajoled into forfeiting their places at the banqueting table, which God has spread for them!

The Jewish people were first bidden, but they were too much occupied with material things to respond to the gracious invitation. The excuses offered were shallow and stupid; the real reason lies much deeper, in the disinclination of the soul to arouse itself to lay hold of the life which is life indeed! But God's purpose of Love cannot be defeated (Luk 13:28, 29, 30; Acts 13:45, 46, 47, 48).

"Go out into the highways and hedges." Here is our work as His servants! The high-roads, along which the streams of commerce and pleasure, weddings and funerals, statesmen and business men, young men and women, housewives and children--are constantly passing! The hedgerows are the quiet sequestered lanes of the country-side, now covered with spring flowers, and again with autumn tints. The up-to-date motor car, or the slow-jogging country wagon are symbols of different modes of life, but the souls that use them alike need the message of Good News. Let us go forth and constrain them to come in that our Master's House may be filled!

PRAYER

Blessed Lord, have mercy upon those who reject the invitation of Thy Love! Take from us all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word; and so fetch us home, dear Lord, to Thy flock, that we may be saved, and become one flock under the Great Shepherd of souls. AMEN.

September 15

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY!

"And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling, with his couch, into the midst before Jesus."-- Lk 5:19.

WHAT A lovely human story this is! The crowds that gathered around our Lord, as He taught them, were so great that they filled not only the house where He was staying, with the Pharisees and learned men sitting by, but overflowed into a vast multitude in the fore-court. The Master may have stood on the balcony of a double-storied house, so as to be able to reach the crowds within and without.

As He was teaching, presently four men approached, carrying on a hammock slung between them a paralysed man. We are not told in so many words that they were young men, but their earnestness and ingenuity incline one to this idea. Perhaps they had been school-chums together, and as they grew up they may have entered upon evil ways--"sown their wild oats" together, and one of their number may have been suffering from the consequences, for our Lord very distinctly set the pardon of his sins before the healing of his body. His four companions had probably heard Christ preach and had become His followers, for it was "seeing their faith" that He performed this miracle of salvation and healing. They agreed that by hook or by crook they would bring their friend into Christ's gracious presence. Unable to make their way through the throng, they were not daunted, but climbed up on to the roof, and the record says, "let him down through the tiling." Lowered by strong hands, with its four ropes, the hammock swung to the feet of the Master, and the expectant imploring eyes of this poor fellow could not make a more eloquent appeal for help than did the evident faith of his bearers.

The words with which our Lord saluted him were very tender and gracious: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee!" One of the sure means of physical health is to be assured of spiritual cleansing and forgiveness (Jas 5:14, 15, 16). Would that we were all equally anxious to bring our friends to Christ. If four would agree about a fifth, and never rest until he or she was brought to Jesus, what a revival would break out (Jn 4:28, 29, 30).

PRAYER

Enlarge our souls with a Divine Love, that we may hope all things, endure all things, and become messengers of Thy healing mercy to the grievances and infirmities of men. AMEN.

September 16

LOOKING BACKWARD

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years."-- Dt 8:2.

THE KEYNOTE of this chapter is "Remember!" Faith begins without certain evidence of an external and positive kind, but as life advances, one day after another adds the weight of its indisputable testimony. If we step out on the supposition that there is an eternal and spiritual world enwrapping us on all sides, we shall come to so clear and distinct an assurance of it, that it would be easier to doubt our existence. It is a good thing to look back and see the way; it is as certain as possible that the thread of Divine purpose is stringing together the many-coloured links of our life.

Notice the alliteration of Dt 8:15, Dt 8:16. "Who led thee"; "Who fed thee." Where God leads, He feeds! Look back on the past, and see that just as sure as the guidance of God, has been His care. There is no lack to those who allow Him to lead them in His own paths.

Look back on the past!--Its sins and backslidings--leave them behind for ever, and rise to newness of life. Its discipline--intended to chasten and strengthen us. Its trials--meant to reveal God's power to deliver in the hour of trouble that we may glorify Him. The terrible wilderness of loneliness, the fiery serpents of temptation, the manna which has never failed to fail, the water which the Rock has ever yielded. Dt 8:17,18 teach us the lesson of humility. If, for some reason, you have been put into a position of wealth, honour, or influence, do not be proud, or think that your talents or abilities are to receive the praise. Thank God, and remember that it is He who gives the power to get wealth or honour, and He does it with a very definite purpose! Will you not pledge yourself to serve and worship Him? As you climb the crest of the hill, and begin to descend into the plain, not knowing what lies before, veiled in the mist, fear not, tighten your girdle, put your hand in His, and walk with Him to be His instrument to bless the world of men.

PRAYER

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet;

Lest we forget--lest we forget! AMEN.

September 17

THE ROYAL TRIUMPH

"Behold Thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass. And the multitudes cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!"-- Mt 21:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, cp fulfillment of Messianic prophecy = Zech 9:9.

THE

KING of Glory (Ps 24:7, 8, 9, 10 [note](#)) approached the Holy City, seated not on the richly-draped war-horse, or followed by a

glittering band of soldiers, but riding on a lowly donkey, and attended by a vast crowd of rustic pilgrims! He was welcomed, not by the Governor Pilate, or Caiaphas the High Priest, but by the children, the poorer folk, the blind and the lame whom He had healed. His lodging-place was the bare ground on the mount of Olives, and on one occasion, at least, He was hungry enough to seek fruit from the fig-leaf.

Yet there was a mystic power about Him before which the rabble, that filled the courts of the Temple with noise and filth, were driven forth, and which the chief priests and scribes had to acknowledge when they challenged Him as to His authority (Mt 21:23, cp Mt 7:28, 29-note). His authority was that of Truth and Purity and God. It was a stray beam of His intrinsic Majesty. One who knew Him intimately said: "We beheld His glory, as of the Only-Begotten of the Father (Jn 1:18, 3:16, 18, 1Jn 4:9), full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14, cp Jn 1:16, 2Co 12:9-note, 2Ti 2:1-note, Rev 22:21-note the last verse in the Bible!).

Soul of man, to thee, also, thy King cometh! Let the gates of thy heart lift up their portals and admit Him! At first you may dread the revolution which His coming suggests, but be quick to give to Emmanuel, the Prince, all the keys of Mansoul. Enthrone Him in thine heart! He is the King and Heir, and He will make thee a joint-heir with Himself (Ro 8:17-note). Let the kingdom of your life become the kingdom of God (Jn 3:3) and of His Christ. Let every thought be brought into subjection to Him (2Cor 10:3, 4, 5-note). But if, on the other hand, you are content to build the house of life apart from Him (Mt 7:24, 25-note contrasted with Mt 7:26, 27-note), be very sure that you are rejecting the one Chief Corner-stone (Ps 118:22-note, Isa 8:14, 15, 28:16, Mt 21:42, Ac 4:11, Ep 2:20-note, 1Pe 2:6-note - See study on Christ our Rock), which can alone give the necessary stability and beauty to its structure. To forfeit that will involve the absolute destruction of the edifice on which your whole life-energy may have been expended (Mt 7:27-note). (Some Scriptures added)

PRAYER

But chiefest in our cleansed breast,

Eternal, bid Thy Spirit rest;

And make our secret soul to be

A temple pure and worthy Thee.

Hosanna in the highest! AMEN.

September 18

THE PRACTICE OF GOD'S PRESENCE

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."-- Ps 139:7, 9, 10-note.

THE STORY of the monk who constantly used this phrase is well known to most people. It was in the sixteenth century, one winter's day, as Brother Lawrence was walking in the forest, he found himself standing beneath a tree stripped of its foliage. The thought suddenly flashed on him that before very long that same tree would be covered with the leaves and glory of spring. "Then God must be here," said he to himself, and his whole being became awed and filled with the thought of God. That impression remained with him for the rest of his life, and he said that he was more deeply impressed with the actual sense of God's Presence in the kitchen, when he was preparing the food for his brother monks, than when he was kneeling before the Sacrament.

It is a blessed experience when the soul lives in this awareness of God; when we live, and move, and have our being in Him; whether we take the wings of the morning, and go with the sun in its passage to the western sea, or descend into the valley of the shadow of death. Let us read this Psalm (Ps 139:1-23) again, remembering that our Lord said, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age." (Mt 28:20)

The habit of practicing God's Presence is specially acquired when we accustom ourselves to draw on the Divine resources. We can recall two outstanding illustrations -- one given by Abraham's faithful servant, and the other by Nehemiah. In the one case, the traveler lifted up his heart to God for direction as to the choice of a wife for his master's son; and the other tells us that between the king's question as to the reason for his sadness, and his reply, he flashed a cry to God for a suitable answer, and it was given him. Why do not we, in every moment of uncertainty and perplexity, when the tempter draws near, instantly claim the equivalent of God's gracious help?

PRAYER

Gracious Spirit, wilt Thou so enable us by Thy grace, that we may live in the fear of God all the day long; may the difficulties and

temptations of our daily experience have the effect of leading us to take each step in the consciousness of the Presence of God. AMEN.

September 19

EARTH CRAMMED WITH HEAVEN

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."-- Isa 6:3.

THE PROSPERITY of King Uzziah's reign seems to have weakened the national character; a deep-seated degeneracy was eating out its vitals. The unbroken summer of fifty years of prosperity and wealth had induced a moral decay which filled the heart of the prophet with dismay. It was in this depressed frame of mind that Isaiah entered the Temple, where the ceremonial of the priests and Levites, the offering of the sacrifice, the antiphonal chanting of the choirs, appear to have further moved his spirit.

The Vision (Is 6:1, 2, 3, 4). The limitation of the earthly fabric faded from his sight, and he became aware of the worship of the Seraphim, their faces veiled before the Divine Majesty, their persons clothed with humility, and their remaining wings prepared for immediate obedience. They sang antiphonally, inciting each other to lowlier reverence and more ecstatic praise.

What a lesson is present to ourselves! What a contrast is here to our lethargic worship and often tardy obedience! This great God is our Father through our Lord Jesus Christ but do we blend sufficient reverence with our childlike trust? Are we not too often glib in our prayers? Do we realize the need of pure hearts and clean hands as we kneel before Him?

The Call (Is 6:5, 6, 7, 8). The humble confession of sin must be ours also. The Seraphim knew that there was only one answer. The altar coals had absorbed the blood of the sacrifice and were now glowing with white heat. They would serve for cleansing and inspiration, and when this was completed, there was nothing left to delay the call to service.

The Commission (Is 6:9, 10, 11, 12, 13). The prophet was not to be disappointed. He was to persist in his message, even though there were only gleams of light through the darkness.

PRAYER

Great and Holy God, cleanse us in heart and speech and action, with the Blood shed on Calvary and the Fire of Thy Spirit, that we may be fitted for Thy Holy service. Cleanse, Call, and Commission us! AMEN.

September 20

OUR SHEET ANCHOR!

"That we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things."-- Eph 4:14, 15.

"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."-- 1Jn 3:3.

OUR DESTINY is the highest possible--"We shall be like Him." For this we were created, redeemed, and sanctified, that we should be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the First Born among many brethren (Ro 8:29).

The Apostle says that those who have this Hope will purify themselves. A young friend of mine once asked me if I would try to see her lover, as my train stopped at a wayside station in a far-distant western State. It was a dark night when we arrived, and a hurried conversation took place on the steps of the great Pullman car. I found that amid the many temptations of a rancher's life, this young fellow was holding on to purity and truth. He said that he had very infrequent opportunities of attending any religious services, but that the letters which came from the old country had been his sheet anchor. I understood what he meant. He realized the strong drift of circumstances, but to be loved by a sweet pure girl, who made him the object of her incessant prayer, and to receive her inspiring letters, kept him from yielding to the evil which enveloped him as an atmosphere; the thought that before long he might claim her as his bride helped to purify and steady his life. So the expectation of being with, and like Christ, should be to us as a sheet-anchor, who bear His Name.

To see Christ face to face, to be with Him in unbroken fellowship, and to be like Him--this is the threefold destiny of every Christian soul. But how little can we imagine our future life! We strive to penetrate the dense veil of mist in vain--what the resurrection body will be like; what the converse with holy beings will amount to; what ministry may be assigned to us--we know not what we shall be, but "we know that we shall be like Him"--and it is enough! All that we have ever dreamed and hoped for will find its flower and fruitage in that glad summer time.

PRAYER

O God, it is my earnest desire that I may not only live, but grow: grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May I grow in patience and fortitude of soul, in humility and zeal, in spirituality and a heavenly disposition of mind. AMEN.

September 21

GOD'S RESOURCES

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"--- Ge 18:14.

"He Lord God! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee."-- Jer 32:17.

THERE IS no doubt as to the identification of these three guests that suddenly appeared before the tent-door of Abraham. We are expressly told that "Jehovah appeared unto him." It was thus that our Lord anticipated His Incarnation. He came incognito, and "His delights were with the sons of men" (Pr 8:31). During His earthly life, He loved the homes of men, lodged with Peter and Zacchaeus, and in the dear home where Mary loved and Martha served. After His resurrection, He tarried with two of them in the village inn. So He will come to thy heart and mine. Though He is the High and lofty One, who inhabits Eternity, yet He will plead for admission to sup with us and we with Him (Rev 3:20). But He often comes disguised as a wayfaring man, hungry and athirst. Let us "run to meet Him," remembering Mt 25:40.

God is no man's debtor; He always pays for His lodging, hence His promise to Sarah! She laughed with incredulity, but is anything too hard for the Lord? That is one of God's unanswered questions. It has accosted the human conscience all down the ages. Let us look away from the difficulties imposed by nature, to Him who holds the oceans in the hollow of His Almighty hand. Then we can stand with Him on the mountainside, and plead for Sodom; then God Himself will draw us on to ask for more and yet more, till, when our faith gives out, He will do something far in advance of all that we asked or thought.

PRAYER

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, World without end. AMEN.

September 22

THE GRACE OF CHRISTIAN SPEECH

"He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile."-- 1Pe 3:10.

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." -- Col 4:6.

THE IDEAL of Christian speech is given in the Apostle's words to the Colossians. Our speech should be always gracious; and grace stands for mercifulness, charity, the willingness to put the best constructions upon the words and actions of another. It is a great help in dealing with envy, jealousy, or unkind feeling to compel our lips to speak as Christ would have them. If you are jealous of another, the temptation is to say unkind or depreciating things, but if we live in the power of the Holy Spirit, He will enable us to check such words and replace them by those that suggest kindly consideration on the part of ourselves and others. Endeavour to say all the good that can be said, and none of the evil. It is remarkable that when we make the effort to speak kindly on behalf of those against whom we feel exasperated, the whole inward temper changes and takes on the tone of our voice.

There should be salt in our speech--purity, antiseptic, and sparkling like the Book of Proverbs. A playful wit, a bright repartee, are not inconsistent with the Apostle's standard, but whenever we mix in conversation with people, they should be aware of an element in us which makes it impossible for them to indulge in ill-natured gossip or coarse jokes.

We must continue in prayer that God would open to us doors of utterance, so that we may speak of the hidden beauty and glory of our Saviour. Sometimes, also, when we are hard pressed to know how to answer difficult questions, it is given to us in that same hour how we ought to speak, and we find that the Holy Spirit has found an utterance by our lips (Lk 12:12; 1Pe 3:15).

It is recorded of our Lord that during His trial He spoke not a word to Pilate or Herod, but as soon as He reached the Cross, He poured out His heart as their Intercessor, saying: "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do!" Speak more to God than to men who may be reviling and threatening you. It is blessed to realize that He is able to guard the door of our lips, for probably there is no part of our nature that stands more in need of His keeping power.

PRAYER

Live in us, Blessed Lord, by Thy Holy Spirit, that our lives may be gospels of helpfulness and blessedness. May all foolish talking and covetousness, bitterness, wrath, and anger be put away from us, with all malice. AMEN.

September 23

THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

"Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."-- Mk 6:31.

THERE IS something in our blood which cries out at certain times for rest and change. We may love our home, our work, and chance of doing our share in the toil of this work-a-day world, but when the summer comes we long to escape from the crowded city, the arduous toil, and pine for respite and rest. The love of Nature is a sacred heritage from the love of God, and it is His voice that calls to us: "Come, My children, Be glad with Me, breath the scented air which I have flavoured in its passage through clover-fields, gorse, and heather; rejoice in the woods and flowers, golden sunsets and purple mountains; the glory of the ocean and the sea-shore."

But we must be unselfish, if we would really enjoy our holiday. It is difficult to resist the temptation to obtain the best possible return for our money, and a little over, even at the expense of others. Always think of some one else--the short Zacchaeus who cannot see over your shoulder! The child who loves to look out of the carriage window; the invalid who cannot stand the draught! the tired mother with the restless children! Look out for daily opportunities for showing the gentleness, sweetness, and unselfishness of the Lord Jesus.

Make time to be alone sometimes. It is a mistake always to be in the presence of another. The soul must be still and quiet. There are accents in the voice of God so deep and still, that the breathing of a companion may make them inaudible. But it is delightful to have a choice friend and companion with whom you can hold sweet fellowship, and "there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." He will draw near and walk with you, and as He talks with you by the way, your hearts will bum within you.

Remember those who are in poverty, in sickness, and in need, and amidst your own gladness and joy, send a portion unto them for whom nothing is prepared (Neh 8:10, 11, 12).

PRAYER

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?

I will praise, and bless, and give thee Thanks, all the days of my life. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power. AMEN.

September 24

BREAD WINNING!

"He answered: It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone," "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."-- Mt 4:4; Mt 6:33.

THE QUESTION which Satan put to our Lord, has to be settled in every life. Where does bread and bread-getting come in? Is it to be our first consideration or the last? According to Satan's way of looking at life, the bread question is paramount; according to Christ, secondary. Have you ever seriously considered which policy is yours, and what you would do if you had to choose in any supreme crisis? This temptation which came to our Lord occurs to us all; sooner or later, whether on the lone mountain-side, or in the crowded thoroughfares of life, the Devil comes to us with the suggestion that we must live, and in the last resort we must make or get our bread, leaving considerations of purity, truth, honour of God and Eternity to come in second best!

At every important turning-point in the history of the inner life these two methods are suggested: Satan says: "Make these stones into bread"; Christ says: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the word of God." We must choose between God and mammon. We are liable to attacks of hunger in various parts of our nature--for food, Satan bids us snatch it; for love, we are tempted to gratify it apart from God; for knowledge, we are apt to seek it in ways that are not illumined by the light of eternal truth.

God, who gave us these strong appetites and desires, knows that we need food. The body is more than meat, and if He gave the one, He is responsible for meeting the other. The blessed angels of His help are even now on their way to you, and have been commissioned to bring with them supplies for every need in your life. Do not take your life out of God's hands and act at the dictate of passion! Throw all the responsibility on Him; they cannot be ashamed that wait for Him. Remember the angel that prepared the meal for Elijah in the desert, and the breakfast that our Lord Himself prepared for His tired and hungry friends. If you will dare to trust and wait for Him even though there be but a step between you and death, He will supply all your need, according to His riches

in glory. "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the laud, and verily thou shalt be fed."

PRAYER

Give us grace to seek first Thy kingdom and its righteousness, in the sure and certain faith that all else shall be added unto us. AMEN.

September 25

THE FILE LEADER

"Behold, I have given him for a Witness to the people; a Leader and Commander to the people."--Isa 55:4.

FOUR TIMES in the New Testament our Lord is called Leader or Prince.

Originally the word means the First of a file of men, and therefore their Captain or Commanding Officer (see Acts 3:15; Acts 5:31; Heb 2:10; Heb 12:2).

Christ leads from death into Life. Probably Joshua was the first to pass over the dried bed of the Jordan, as the priests stood by bearing the Ark of the Covenant; but this, at least is true, that our Saviour has preceded us through the waters of death, and will hold them back until each of the ransomed has passed "clean over" (Jos 3:17).

Christ leads His followers into victory. When our Lord was exalted to the right hand of power, He opened up a path to be trodden throughout the ages by a company which no man can number. As He overcame, we may overcome; as He reigns over all principality and power, so we believe that He will bruise Satan under our feet, and make us more than conquerors.

Christ leads those who suffer to perfection. Though He was the Son of God, He learned obedience by the things that He suffered, and transformed suffering, showing that it was an emblem, a purifying furnace, a means of discipline, strength, and ennoblement. If we are thrust into the fiery furnace we shall find the Son of God walking at our side, and shall emerge without our bonds, and with no smell of fire upon us. Jesus is the Leader of a long procession of martyrs and sufferers. He leads through no darker rooms than He went through before; He knows exactly how much we can bear, and will not test us beyond our strength. He is with us "all the days," and will help us to learn obedience, faith, and hope, as we follow in His footsteps.

PRAYER

O Lord, whose way is perfect, help us always to trust in Thy goodness: that walking with Thee and following Thee in all simplicity, we may possess quiet and contented minds; and may cast all our care on Thee, for Thou carest for us. AMEN.

September 26

BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength; put on thy beautiful garments."-- Isa 52:1.

"It is high time to awake out of sleep: let us cast off the works of darkness; let us put on the armour of light."-- Ro 13:11, 12.

PUT ON strength. We have not to purchase it, or generate it by prayers and resolutions, but simply to put it on. As we awake in the early morning hour, and have to pass out into the arena of life, which has so often witnessed failure and defeat, let us put on the strength and might of the living Christ. He waits to strengthen us with all power, according to the riches of His glory (Eph 3:16). Do not simply pray to be kept and helped, but put on the whole armour of God. "*The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?*" (Ps 27:1)

Put on beautiful garments. The emblem of the life of the Christian soul is that of the bridegroom or the bride (Rev 19:7) decked with jewels; or a garden filled with beautiful flowers (Isa 61:10, 11). We are not only to do right things, but we must do them beautifully; not only to speak the truth, but to speak it in love (Eph 4:15); not only to give to those who need our help, but to do it graciously and joyously. We must cultivate the bloom of the soul, which is made up of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, generosity (Col 3:12). The beauty of the Lord our God must be upon us.

We cannot weave these beautiful robes, or fashion them out of our own nature, but they are all prepared for us in **Christ**, who is "made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption." (1Cor 1:30) Let us wake up out of sleep (Eph 5:12), put off the works of darkness (Ro 13:13), and put on the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the armor of Light. (Ro 13:14)

PRAYER

Lord of Power and Love! I come, trusting in Thine almighty strength, and Thine infinite goodness, to beg from Thee what is wanting in myself; even that grace which shall help me such to be, and such to do, as Thou wouldst have me. I will trust Thee, in Whom is everlasting strength. Be Thou my Helper, to carry me on beyond my own strength, and to make all that I think, and speak, and do, acceptable in Thy sight, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

September 27

MODERN MIRACLES

"Many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things John spake of this Man were true. And many believed on Him there."-- Jn 10:41, 42.

THE PEOPLE were inclined to disparage the life of John the Baptist because he performed no miracle. But surely his whole life was a miracle; from first to last it vibrated with Divine power. This is still the mistake of men. They allege that the age of miracles has passed. If they admit that such prodigies may possibly have happened once, they insist that the world has outgrown them, and that in its maturity mankind has put them away as childish things!

No miracles! But last summer God made the handfuls of grain, which the farmers cast on the fields, sufficient to feed all the populations of the world as easily as He made five barley loaves suffice for more than five thousand persons! No miracles! But last autumn He changed the dews of night and the showers of morning into the fruits that rejoice the heart of man, as once in Cana He turned the water drawn from the stone jars into the blushing wine! No miracles! but next spring, from tiny seeds and dead-looking bulbs, He will clothe the world with beauty and colour and perfume.

Many who will read these lines seem powerless to work miracles. For them the monotony of the commonplace, the grey sky of uneventful routine seems the predestined lot. But let all such take heart! The real greatness of life is within their reach, if they will only claim it by the grace of God. Do not try to do a great thing, or you may waste all your life waiting for the opportunity which may never come. But since little things are always claiming your attention, do them as they come from a great motive, for the glory of God and to do good to men. No such action, however trivial, goes without the swift recognition and the ultimate recompense of Christ. All life is so interesting, but we need eyes to see and hearts to understand! Dare to be yourself--a simple, humble, sincere follower of Jesus, and it may be said also of you: "He or she did no miracle, but by life and word spoke true things about Jesus Christ, which we have tested for ourselves. Indeed, they led us to believe in Christ for ourselves."

PRAYER

Teach me, my God and King,

In all things Thee to see,

And what I do in anything,

To do it as for Thee.

A servant with this clause

Makes drudgery divine!

Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,

Makes that and th'action fine. AMEN.

September 28

OBEDIENCE

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness."--Jn 12:46. (cp Ps 119:130, Jn 1:9, 1:4, 3:19, 20, 21, 8:12, 9:5, 2Ti1:10 Isa 9:2, Mal 4:2)

THE LIGHT of Christ is always distinguishable because it means the deepest impression of what is right, the clearest conviction of the will of God. Everywhere men are asking how they may come to know Christ, and there is but one answer: believe that He loves you, that He died on the Cross to save you, that He is prompting you by His Spirit to follow every perception and longing for a better and holier life.

How different is this teaching from that of the world around! There we are bidden to know before we dare entrust our lives to any leader, whatever be his fair speeches and promises; but Christ bids us obey the first glimmer of light breaking on us, and He

undertakes that if we do, we shall not walk in darkness. Disobedience, like scales, veils Christ from us; whilst obedience leads us into His very presence (cp Jn 7:17, 1Sa 15:22, 23). The judgment always becomes just, and the vision clear, when we deny ourselves (Mk 8:34, Lk 9:23 adds "daily"!) to follow whatsoever things are lovely, true, pure, just, and of good report (Php 4:8-note).

It may be that as you read these lines there is some duty you shirk, some cross you refuse to lift, some act from which you flinch. Though you may not have directly associated it with Christ, yet you cannot doubt that it is His will for you, and that in the doing He will be pleased (2Co 5:9-note). It is useless to try to know Him until that nearest act of obedience is wrought. Men can never know what the mighty forces of Nature will do for them until they set themselves to obey, in the minutest detail, its laws. And it is so in relation to Christ and the laws of the spiritual realm. That was a true word which the mother of our Lord spoke to the servants at Cana, when she said: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it!" (Jn 2:5) She had probably learnt that lesson in those long, quiet, blessed years at Nazareth. She knew that there was no such way of understanding Him, as by rendering Him literal obedience, and she passed on the results of her experience to us all.

"Walk while ye have the light," (Jn 12:35) so you will know the Light, and become light in the Lord. (Eph 5:8-note)

PRAYER

My son, forsake thyself, and thou shalt find Me Lord, how often shall I resign myself, and wherein shall I forsake myself? Always, yea, every hour, as well in small things as in great. AMEN.

September 29

THE TALE OF THE YEARS

"For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told."--Ps 90:9.

THIS PSALM ([Ps 90](#)) is almost without parallel for sublimity, a worthy monument of the inspired genius of Moses, "the man of God." It reflects the wanderings and experiences of the wilderness march; the watch in the night against the intrusion of the Bedouin thief, or the prowling of the wild beast; the rush of the flood, caused by torrential rain, but disappearing as quickly as on the sandy soil; the morning grass, scorched by the sirocco; the tales borne by the camp spies so soon ended; the disappointment of the springs of Marah; the inevitable leaving of Elim! the long weary days of marching, the mother and babe, the aged and little children, the weakling on the desert trail; the constant pitching and removal of tents--all these emblems of transitoriness, depicting the hard experiences of life's toil and trial. Secret sins and iniquities; the averted face of God because of transgression; the death of the old at eighty, and of the young child cut down as a frail flower. Yes! But in spite of all this, God as the dwelling-place and home of the individual soul, as of the succeeding generation.

Shall we not make the concluding petitions of this Psalm our own? For we, too, are pilgrims over the desert-waste to the eternal Home. We need to be more careful of our days, watching their decreasing number, with careful anxiety to make the most of those that are left. We need to be satisfied and replenished each morning with God's mercy, that we may have perennial springs of rejoicing and gladness. We long to help in the overthrowing of the power of evil, and as we grow older, we pray that the beauty of the Lord our God may be upon us, and may we feel that He has given permanence to the work of our hands.

PRAYER

HOW shall we thank Thee sufficiently, dear Lord, that Thou hast demolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to light. Give us grace to follow Thee all the days of our life, and when the Call comes to us to pass over may the waters of the River be at the lowest ebb. AMEN.

September 30

THE TALISMAN OF VICTORY

"In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."-- Ro 8:37.

CAN ANYTHING separate me from the love of Christ? was the only question that St. Paul felt worth consideration. In this paragraph he takes the extreme conditions of being, and carefully investigates them, knowing that they include all between. First, he interrogates Existence--"death and life"; next, created Intelligences--"Angels, principalities, and powers"; next, the extremes of Time--"things present, things to come"; next, of Space---"height and depth"; lastly, the created Universe --"any other creature." Each of these extremes is passed in review. He is like a man proving every link of the chain in which he is going to swing out over the abyss. Carefully and fervently he has tested all, and is satisfied that none of them can cut him off from the love of God.

We strangely misjudge and mistrust the Love of God our Father, and think that our distresses and sufferings, our sins and failures, may make Him love us less. But in the home, it is not the troop of sturdy children that engross the mother's care so much as the

puny feeble life, that lies in the cot, unable to help itself and reciprocate her love. And in the world, death and pain, disease and sorrow, sin and failure, so far from separating us from God's love, bind us closer.

Oh blessed Love! that comes down to us from the heart of Jesus, the essence of the eternal love of God--nothing can ever staunch, exhaust, intercept it. It is not our love to Him, but His to us, and since nothing can separate us from the love of God, He will go on loving us for ever, and pouring into us the entire fullness of His life and glory. Whatever our difficulties, whatever our weakness and infirmity, we shall be kept steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; gaining by our losses, succeeding by our failures, triumphing in our defeats, and ever more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

PRAYER

Yea thro' life, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed: Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning, Christ is the beginning, for the end is Christ.