Our Daily Walk by F B Meyer - Nov

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by F B Meyer

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November 1

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."-- Gal 5:16.

WHEN WE walk in the spirit we shall be led by Him (Gal 5:18+, Ro 8:14+). In the early stages of life we are apt to be headstrong and impulsive, as Moses when he felled the Egyptian. But as we grow in Christian experience (2 Peter 3:18), we wait for the leadings of the Spirit, moving us by His suggestion, impressing on us His will, working within us (Php 2:13+) what afterwards we work out in character and deed (Php 2:12+, Php 2:14+). We do not go in front, but follow behind. We are led by the Spirit.

The man or woman who walks in the Spirit has no desire to fulfill the lust of the flesh (Ed: Not exactly true! The desire is still there. The fulfilling of the desire is not.). The desire for the gratification of natural appetite will be latent in the soul, and may flash through the thoughts, but he does not fulfill it. The desire cannot be prevented (Gal 5:17+), but its fulfillment can certainly be withheld.

When we walk in the Spirit He produces in us the fruit of a holy character (Gal 5:22-23). The contrast between the works of the fleshly--i.e., the selfish life (Gal 5:19-21).--and the fruit of the Spirit, which is the (super) natural product of His influence, is very marked. In works there is effort, the clatter of machinery, the deafening noise of the factory. But fruit is found in the calm, still, regular process of Nature, which is ever producing in her secret laboratory the kindly fruits of the earth. How quiet it all is! There is no voice nor language. It is almost impossible to realize what is being effected by a long summer day of sunshine. The growing of autumn arrives with noiseless footsteps. So it is with the soul that daily walks in the Spirit. There are probably no startling experiences, no marked transitions, nothing special to record in the diary, but every year those who live in close proximity witness a ripening wealth of fruit in the manifestation of love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.

PRAYER

Gracious Lord! May Thy Holy Spirit keep me ever walking in the light of Thy countenance for the glory of Thy Son. May He fill my heart with the sense of Thy nearness and loving fellowship with Jesus. Order my steps in Thy way, and walk with me, that I may do the thing that pleases Thee. In Jesus' Name. AMEN.

November 2

THE MESSAGE OF PENTECOST

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit."-- Acts 2:4; Eph 5:18.

IT IS good to know that there is just as much of the Holy Spirit's presence to-day, wherever two or three are gathered in Christ's Name, as there was in the upper room at Jerusalem. The difference is that we have not the same receptive attitude. We cannot say of God, who is infinite, that there is more of Him in this place than in that, or at one moment more than another. He is always equally everywhere. But where hearts are prepared, as were those of the disciples, can there be other than Pentecost! We may have the counterpart of all these wonderful experiences that came to them. The Spirit of God may inspire us, the fire of Divine love may kindle in our hearts, and we may obtain a new and marvellous power in speaking to men of the wonderful works of God.

They were all filled with the Spirit, and this is the command laid on us also. Let us ask whether this is our abiding experience, which is not intended for apostles and prophets only, but for the mother with her children, the business-man in his store, the young men and women in office or shop.

The result of this baptism of spiritual power was very remarkable. Thousands were converted and baptized, and they continued stedfastly. Such converts are a gain to any church, and it becomes invested with a Divine attractiveness and adhesiveness.

The teaching of doctrine, breaking of bread, and fellowship in prayer were the beginning of Our Church-ordinances. When young converts are given to any Church, provision should be made for services in which they may take part. The principle of having all things in common seems to have been abandoned by mutual consent. It seemed necessary at the outset that the new converts might be trained in Christian living, but it was evidently liable to abuse, and might have allured into the ranks of the Church lazy and undesirable impostors. It is probably a much wiser principle to administer our property for God than to give it away. (See Mt 25:20, 21; Lk 12:42, 43, 44.)

Notice their exuberant joy (Acts 2:46, 47). It is characteristic of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life, and the result is love, joy, peace, etc., which is wonderfully attractive.

PRAYER

We ask of Thee, Heavenly Father, and claim of Thee by faith, this best of all good gifts, Thy Holy Spirit, that He may abide with us for ever, and that the fruits of the Spirit may abound in us. AMEN.

November 3

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever."-- Jn 14:16.

THE GIFT of the Holy Spirit was due to the intercession of our Lord, and St. Peter refers to it when he says: "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:33). In 1Jo 2:1 (R.V.) marg. the word Comforter is translated Advocate--"One who makes us strong by His presence, as Helper, Guide, and Instructor." Think what this means, to have always beside us, not a vague influence, but a Divine Person, who waits to be our strength in weakness, our peace in trouble, our wisdom in perplexity, our conqueror in temptations, our consoler in sorrow. The Lord meant that the Holy Spirit should be to us all that He Himself had been. This is the meaning of Another. There are two Advocates, or two Paracletes. When the One ascended to the glory, the Other descended into the hearts of His disciples. "He abideth with you, and shall be in you."

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Christ had been speaking of sending Another; now He says, I am coming Myself, so that we learn that He is so indissoluble One with the Holy Spirit, Whom He sends, that the coming of the Spirit is His own coming. Do not look for the Spirit apart from Jesus. As the sun comes in the light, so does Jesus come in the Spirit. When we are filled with the Spirit, we shall not think of Him, but of Jesus to whom He bears witness, and when our hearts are taken up with the Lord, we may know that we have received Him, who is the Gift of gifts.

Open your whole nature to the entrance of the Holy Spirit. Unlock every door, uncurtain every window, that entering He may fill you with the glorious indwelling of the Father and the Son. "I will prepare a "mansion," Jesus said; and, "We will make the holy soul Our Mansion."

"'He shall teach you all things." His lesson-book is the life and words of our blessed Lord. We may think that we are fully informed of all that He has said, but as we study the Bible, the Holy Spirit brings us back to them again and again, always revealing new light, and undreamt of depths. Never let a day pass without reading some of the words of Jesus under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER

Thou hast not left us comfortless, O God. May life be renewed in its springs, by the gracious operation of Thy Holy Spirit dwelling within us, and leading us from grace to grace. AMEN.

November 4

THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT

"Teach me to do Thy Will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."-- Ps 143:10.

TEACH ME to do Thy Will, i.e. throw the responsibility of your life back on God. The one important thing for you to be absolutely sure about is that you desire, at all costs, to do God's Will. If you do not so desire, at least you must be willing to be made willing. Cast on God this burden of making you willing, and believe that He undertakes it. His people shall be made willing in the day of His power. When this point is settled, then God by His Holy Spirit will sooner or later teach you what He wants to be done, and enable you to do it. Like Samuel, if you say: Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth, you will hear the Voice behind you saying, This is the way, walk in it; this must be said, say it; this needs to be done, do it; and as you endeavour to obey the gentle promptings of the Spirit, you will discover that adequate strength and grace are being poured into your soul.

"Thy Spirit is good." There is our only hope. If it were not for the infinite goodness, the patient gentleness, the loving forbearance of the Holy Spirit, we could have no chance, for nothing but infinite Goodness could bear with our frailties and backslidings, our lapses into coldness and indifference, our perverseness and obstinacy. But because God's Spirit is good, we may reckon on Him pervading us with His holy influence till our evil nature is overcome by His goodness, and we also in our measure become good. It is said of Barnabas that he was a "good man," because he was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.

"Lead me." The Psalmist's prayer is--Teach me, lead me, quicken me. Let us make this prayer our own. What better guarantee of being led aright than for us to yield ourselves to our gentle gracious Guide. We are like little children that require to be led, as the mother or nurse takes the child by the hand and leads him to the school-house, and fetches him again. Some of us are blind, and need a kindly hand to guide us as we grope in the dark. Let us walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, and be very sensitive to the Spirit. Then we shall instinctively know God's Will, and do it.

PRAYER

I need a hand to lead me through the darkness,

For I am weak and helpless as a child;

And if alone I have to take my journey,

My feet will stumble on the mountains wild.

AMEN.

November 5

WITNESS-BEARING FOR CHRIST

"Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."-- Acts 1:8.

ALL MACHINERY needs driving-power. A motor-car may be bright and new, the wheels tired with rubber, and it may contain the latest contrivances for speed and comfort, but it will not move an inch until the driving-power is applied. So it is with the Gospel message. Christ died and rose again, and the work of redemption was finished. His disciples were appointed to carry the tidings of salvation to the world of men, but they could do nothing until they received the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a serious question for each of us--Have I received the Holy Spirit, to be in me the source of power? (Acts 19:2). If not, is it to be wondered at that we are weak, and our testimony for Christ faltering?

Notice the circles of our life: witnesses in Jerusalem, our home; in Judea--the society in which we mingle and work; in Samaria--the city or town or village in which we live; the uttermost part of the earth, which represents the claim of the heathen world upon us all. For each of these we have some responsibility. Let us begin at Jerusalem, in our home, and God will lead us on step by step to the great world beyond. Alas, there are many who are eager enough for the "uttermost parts," while they neglect Jerusalem, and ignore the claims of Judaea!

God wants witnesses. A witness is not expected to reason or argue, but simply to state what he saw or heard, and to give facts. We are required to tell people what we have found Jesus to be to ourselves--to say what we have known and tasted and handled of the Word of Life (1Jn 1:1, 2, 3). Our witness-box may be the shop in which we are employed, or the position in life where we are daily called to rub shoulders with those who know not Christ. Men cannot see Him, unless they see Him in us. As the moon reflects the sun during the dark hours of the night, so the Church of Christ bears witness to her unseen Lord. In every emergency, let us lift our hearts to Christ, and ask that His Holy Spirit may enable us to be true witnesses for His glory.

PRAYER

My gracious Master and my God,

Assist me to proclaim

And spread through all the earth abroad

The honours of Thy Name. AMEN.

November 6

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--LOVE!

"But now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three, and the greatest of these is Love."--1Co 13:13.

LET US lay the emphasis on the word fruit, as contrasted with the works of the law. In work there is effort, strain, the sweat of the brow, and straining of the muscles; but fruit comes easily and naturally by the overflow of the sap rising from the root to bough and bud'. So our Christian life should be the exuberance of the heart in which Christ dwells. The Apostle Paul prayed that Christ might dwell in the heart of his converts, that they might be rooted and grounded in love. It is only when the Holy Spirit fills us to the overflow that we shall abound in love to all men.

We must distinguish between love and the emotion of love. The former is always possible, though not always and immediately the latter. Our Lord repeating the ancient words of the Pentateuch, taught us that we may love God with our mind and strength, as well as with our hearts. We all know that the mind and strength are governed not by our emotions, but by our wills. We can love, therefore, by determining to put our thought and energies at the service of another for the sake of God; and we shall find our emotions kindle into a sacred glow of conscious affection.

In the chapter from which our text is taken, St. Paul distinguishes between the Gifts of the Church and Love. After passing them in review he comes to the conclusion that all of them, without Love as their heart and inspiration, are worth nothing.

The greatest word in the world is the unfathomable phrase, "God is Love." You can no more define the essence of love than you can define the essence of God, but you can describe its effects and fruits. I give Dr. Weymouth's translation: "Love is patient and kind, knows neither envy nor jealousy; is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent; she is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance."

We ought to take each of these clauses, and ponder whether our lives are realizing these high ideals. God send us a baptism of such love!

PRAYER

O Lord, my love is like some feebly glimmering spark; I would that it were as a hot flame. Kindle it by the breath of Thy Holy Spirit, till Thy love constraineth me. AMEN.

November 7

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--JOY

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be fulfilled."-- Jn 15:11.

JOY IS a spontaneous thing. The joy of a little child, like the carol of the lark, arises naturally and easily when certain conditions are fulfilled, so if we would experience the joy of Christ we must realize the conditions He lays down. If we are grafted into the true Vine, there is nothing to check the inflow of His love to us, if we do as He tells us, and forbear doing what He forbids--then Joy will come to us as a flood.

"'**Abide in Me**"--it is inferred, of course, that we are in Christ. It was not always so. Once we were outside, separate from Christ, "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Ep 2:19-note) We were shoots in the wild vine, partaking of its nature, involved in its curse, threatened by the axe which lay at its roots. But all this is altered now. The Father, who is the Husbandman, of His abundant grace and mercy, has taken us out of the wild vine, and grafted us into the true, and we have become one with Christ. When, therefore, we are told to **abide** or **remain**, it is only necessary that we should stay where He placed us. You are in a lift until you step out of it; you are on a certain road until you take a turning to the right or left, although you may be too engrossed in converse with a friend to think of the road; so amid the pressure of duties and care, you remain in Christ unless you consciously, by sin or unbelief, thrust yourself away from the light of His face into the darkness. (see in Christ or in Christ Jesus or in Christ) When, therefore, the temptation arises to leave the words of Christ for the maxims of the world, resist it and you will still remain in Him. Whenever you are tempted to leave the narrow way of His commandments to follow the desires of your own heart, reckon yourself dead to them (Ro 6:11-note), and you will remain; whenever you are tempted to forsake Christ's love for jealousy, envy, hatred, resist these impulses and say, "I elect to remain in the love of God."

Thus abiding in Him you will learn to know His mind, and will naturally ask those things which His love is only too willing to grant. "Ye shall ask what ye will." (Jn 15:7) We must remove any hindrances from the indwelling of Christ (He 12:1-note), then His love will break out into song, and we shall share in His joy. It will remain in us, and our capacity for joy will be fulfilled (Jn 16:24, 17:13).

PRAYER

O Thou who art the True Vine, I desire to abide in Thee, that I may bear abundant fruit for Thy glory, and my life be full of Thy joy. AMEN.

November 8

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT PEACE

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful."-- Jn 14:27.

BEING JUSTIFIED by faith in His blood we have peace! what peace can there be so long as our guilty conscience dreads each footstep, lest it be for its arrest. Though some rich evil-doer is surrounded by the trappings of wealth and state, what is their value, when at any moment he fears that the story of his crime may get out. The first condition of peace is to see your sin borne by Christ in His own Body-on the Cross.

The second condition is to keep His words, His commandments. See in every pressing duty your Master's call. Do everything in His name and for His glory. This is the way that Jesus lived. He came down, not to do His own will, but the Father's; and in every incident, as it offered, He felt that God's bell was ringing to some new opportunity of service. Sometimes you must just bear His will, at others you must fulfil it. Say to Him each day: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." The rule of duty is changed into the service of love, that counts no sacrifice too great, no alabaster box too costly.

Peace for the troubled heart! Jesus is not unmindful of your human affections and anxieties. Does He expect you to be absorbed with His interests, and will He not look after yours? He knows where your loved ones are, their names, their needs, their sorrows. He will do exceeding abundantly for them. Did not David have the lame Mephibosheth to his table, because he was Jonathan's son; did not the Lord heal Peter's wife's mother out of love for Peter? Hand over to Christ all that makes you anxious, both for yourself and others. Transmit and commit! Hand over, and then hands off! Let the peace of Christ keep heart and mind as a sentry, and rule within as the sole judge and arbiter of thought and action. if any thought would intrude, which would break in upon our peace, let it be arrested on the threshold; if any passion would arise that threatens the harmony of our inner household, let the solution be the Peace of Christ. "My peace," He said, i.e., the peace that kept and ruled Him. He calls us to share it, not hereafter only, but here and now. It is His legacy guaranteed to us, by His blood, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER

O Lord, may I not be satisfied with refraining from sin; but as I abide in Thee, may I bear the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, and peace, to Thy honour and glory. AMEN.

November 9

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--LONGSUFFERING

"If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name. Insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, Rejoice!"-- 1Pe 4:13, 14, 15, 16.

THE LONG-SUFFERING silence of our Lord was the marvel of His foes.

"As a lamb that is led to the slaughter and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb," He opened not His mouth. Before the high priests, He held His peace. To Pilate He gave no answer. Amid the challenge and reproach of the Cross, He answered nothing, save in benediction and prayer. "When He was reviled He did not answer with reviling; when He suffered, He uttered no threats, but left His wrongs in the hands of the righteous Judge."

Surely this has been His habit through the centuries. In every child suffering through drunken parents, in every martyr burnt at the stake, in every innocent sufferer before high-handed oppression, He has been led as a lamb to the slaughter, but how silent He is! Man may murder His servants and blaspheme His name, but He says never a word! This is the purport of one of those strange announcements which make the Book of Revelation so remarkable. "When He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half-an-hour." The songs of heaven are hushed; the multitude which cannot be numbered listens to the groans and appeals of their unhelped brethren; the angels stay their anthems, and seem intent on the tragedies about to be described (Rev 8:1). But there does not appear to be any help.

But remember that silence does not imply indifference. At the very time that our Lord was silent before His judges, He was bearing the sin of the world. When the silence is proclaimed in Heaven, we find that the prayers of the saints are being presented on the throne---prayers of intercession, mingled with much incense of Christ's merit.

It is in this spirit that we are to suffer. We are to conceal our anguish as stoics. No suffering rightly borne is in vain, but in some little way, which you may not understand, you are helping Christ in His redemptive work. Be calm, and quiet, and glad! Pray for those who despitefully use you, and ask that your sufferings, rightly borne, may lead to their conversion, as Stephen's did in the case of Saul.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, of Thine infinite mercy, give me such assurance of Thy protection amid the troubles and tumults of this mortal life, that I may be preserved in quietness of spirit and in inward peace. AMEN.

November 10

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--GENTLENESS

"The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all... forbearing."-- 2Ti 2:24.

IT IS not easy to cultivate this fruit of the Spirit because it has many counterfeits. Some people are naturally easy-going, devoid of energy and ambition, at heart cowardly, or in spirit mean. Many of us are characterized by a moral weakness and decrepitude that make it easy for us to yield rather than contest in the physical or intellectual arena.

But in gentleness there must be the consciousness of a considerable reserve of force. The gentleness of God is combined with omnipotence. The movements of creation, in which there is neither voice nor language, prove the infinite forces which are at work. When a boy is trying to lift or carry a heavy beam, as likely as not there will be a great crash when he reaches the end of his task, and puts it on the ground. His strength is so nearly exhausted that he is only too glad to get rid of his burden, anyhow, and at any cost. But if a strong man shoulders the same burden, and carries it for the same distance, he puts it down gently, because he has not taxed his strength and has plenty left.

It is the prerogative of great strength to be gentle. Always remember that you are linked with the Infinite God, and that all things are possible to you. There must also be infinite pity. We must be tolerant and pitiful to those who abuse us, or have been embittered by disappointment, or have been ill-used. It must be our aim to make allowances for such, and always to be sweetly reasonable towards any brusqueness, rudeness and bad manners of their behaviour. Let us be willing to admit that much is due to congenital moroseness. Therefore, we bear gently with the erring, and with those who are out of the way, because we also are encompassed with infirmity.

It is necessary also that there should be a deep humility. Thomas a Kempis says: "If thou wilt be borne with, bear also with another. Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, what sort soever they be: for that thyself also hast many failings which must be borne by others." Our resentment against others should be always tempered by our remembrance of our own sins. So shall we be God's own gentlefolk.

PRAYER

O God, our behaviour has not manifested all the fruits of the Spirit, or been full of the graciousness and gentleness of Christ. Forgive us, and enable us so to live that His beauty may be on our faces, the tone of His voice in our speech, the gentleness of His tread in our steps, the unselfishness of His deeds in our hands. AMEN.

November 11

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--GOODNESS

"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith."-- Acts 11:24.

GOODNESS IS the radiance or out-shining of a pure and happy Christian soul. It is quick to see and magnify whatever is good in others, as Barnabas was: It is incapable of jealousy or envy, else he would never have gone to Tarsus to seek Saul. The goodness of this man was evinced in his generous donation of the proceeds of his patrimony, and in the ministry of consolation which he exercised among the disciples.

Such goodness is not natural to us. It is the fruit of our union with the true Vine, whose sap may be compared to the Holy Spirit. Before we can be the good man, for whom some would even dare to die, we must become grafted into Christ, that His goodness may make its way through our sour dispositions.

The most difficult thing of all is to continue to manifest this goodness when our lives are united, as Abigail's was, to that of a churl (1Sa 25:3). She was a beautiful woman, of good understanding, and full of tact. Her speech, which arrested David when about to avenge himself on Nabal, is a model of good sense. He heartily thanked her for it, as having saved him from a hasty deed, which would have filled his after-life with regret. Nabal was a churl, evil in his doings, and as his servants said, "'such a son of Belial, that none could speak to him"--a man who did not know what it was to be merry. Nabal was his name and his nature! What a constant pain it must have been to this noble woman to be united to such a churl! That is a test of real goodness; it is a triumph of God's grace.

Guard against stinginess and niggardliness. Give liberally and generously to every good cause. Be very careful of going back on your first intentions, which in the matter of giving are probably more trustworthy than the proverbial after-thoughts. Be always careful to dwell on and extol whatever you find admirable and noble in the character of others.

It was said of Charles Kingsley:

> "No fatigue was too great to make him forget the courtesy of less wearied moments, no business too engrossing to deprive him of his readiness to show kindness and sympathy. To school himself to this code of unfaltering high and noble living was truly one of the great works of his life."

PRAYER

Teach us to exert a wholesome gracious influence on those with whom we come in contact, diffusing in every look and gesture the sweet savour of Christ, and shedding in every act the genial light caught from His face. May the world be really better because we are living in it to-day. AMEN.

November 12

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--FAITH

"Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised."-- Heb 10:23.

FAITH IS an attribute of the heart, rather than of the head. It is largely intuitive in its first promptings. It is impossible to argue men into faith. Do not think, discuss, or reason too much about Faith, or you will miss it. It is like Love in this, that when you turn the dissecting knife on it for the purpose of analysis, its spirit and life vanish, leaving only the faded relics of what was once a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. If, however, turning from Faith to any object which is worthy of it, you concentrate heart and mind there, almost unconsciously Faith will have arisen and thriven to maturity.

Faith has two kinds of objective, first a person, and secondly a statement. When we are drawn powerfully towards a person, so as to feel able to entrust our soul, our destiny, our most precious possessions to His care, with an inward feeling of tranquillity and certainty that all is safe with Him, and that He will do better for us than we could do for ourselves, that is faith.

We may be attracted by a statement, which appeals to our moral sense; it is consistent with the decisions of our conscience; or perhaps, as the utterance of One in whom we repose utter confidence, it commends itself to us for His sake. We accept that statement; we rest on it. We believe that what it attests as fact either did happen or will happen. We are as sure of it as though we have been able to attest it by our senses of sight, hearing, or touch. That also is faith.

> "Faith is a well grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of the unseen" (Heb 11:1. Weymouth).

We must indicate a difference between this faith and "the faith once delivered to the saints." The former is the heart that accepts, and the hand that reaches out to obtain; the latter is the body of Truth to be accepted.

Out of faith comes faithfulness. Faith is your trust in another; faithfulness is your worthiness to be trusted. A faithful soul, one that can be absolutely relied upon, is of great price. Nothing so quickens our faith as to meditate on God's absolute trustworthiness. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

PRAYER

Give us faith in Thy love that never wearies or faints. Whatever else we doubt, may we never question the perfectness of Thy lovingkindness. Fulfil in US the good pleasure of Thy will, and the work o f faith with power. AMEN.

November 13

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--MEEKNESS

"Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love."-- Eph 4:1, 2.

THE MEEK man, according to Luther, is the sweet-tempered man.

Meekness and lowliness are the two aspects of the same disposition, the one toward man, the other toward God. "Blessed are the meek," said our Lord, "for they shall inherit the earth." It is profoundly true, because to the meek and chastened, the sweet and tender spirit, there is an unfolding of the hidden beauty of the world which is withheld from the arrogant and proud. Here is a millionaire who has just purchased a beautiful and valuable picture, which he exhibits to all his friends, taking great care to tell them the price he has paid. To him it is written all over the canvas, "This picture cost me ten thousand pounds!" Does he really possess or inherit its beauty? In his employ is a girl with culture and keen artistic sense. Whenever she gets the chance she enters the room in order to absorb the inspiration of the picture into her soul. Does not she really own it? So it is that the meek inherit all that is good and beautiful. All is theirs, since they are God's.

One of the most exquisite gems in the Psalter is that beginning "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty" (Ps 131:1). The writer describes himself as a weaned child, which at first works itself into a passion because of the change in its diet; but afterwards becomes soothed and quieted. This is the symbol of the meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great Price.

To acquire this meekness of spirit, ask the Holy Spirit that He would keep your proud and vainglorious nature nailed to the Cross. Next, we must believe that the meek and lowly Jesus is in our hearts, and we must ask Him to live, think, and speak through us. Lastly, look to the Holy Spirit for His sacred fire to bum out all that is covetous, envious, proud, angry and malicious within our hearts, for these are the five elements of hell. Let us always take the low seat, confessing that we are not worthy to loose the shoe-latchet of our brethren.

PRAYER

Enable us, we beseech Thee, O God, to walk as Thy dear children. May all uncleanness, foolish talking, covetousness, bitterness, wrath and anger be put away from us, with all malice Make us meek, as our Saviour was. Deliver us from the spirit of retaliation. May we make peace, healing the strife and allaying the irritation of men, for Thy Name's sake. AMEN.

November 14

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT--SELF-CONTROL

"Every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.-- 1Co 9:25.

IN HIS early life Paul must have been keen on sport! He uses the phrases for the gymnast, the boxer, and the racer. He had probably stood, many times, watching the great games, which were held in various parts of the Greek-speaking world. He knew the long and arduous training through which competitors had to pass.

Paul was running a race for an imperishable wreath. He had no doubt as to his goal, and therefore did not run uncertainly. He went straight as an arrow to its mark, and his mark was to win souls for Christ. To gain some, to save some, was his passion (1Co 9:22). He needed to discipline himself, putting aside much that was innocent in itself, and which others could enjoy without reproach (Ro 14:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21). The Apostle was also engaged in a boxing-match, his own body being the antagonist. He knew that spiritual power existed for his appropriation in Christ, but to have it he must be a spiritual man, and to be that necessitated the subdual of his fleshly appetites.

We must exercise "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control." It is best to hand over the whole of our nature to the Master, and ask Him to direct, control, suggest each day whatever we think, or do, or say. It is infinitely happier to be Christ-controlled than self-controlled. Happy are they who from the earliest are able to subordinate the delights of sense, however innocent, to some high quest of the spirit. The soldier has to forfeit many things which are legitimate for the civilian, because he must be able to march rapidly from place to place. He has to forego the use of many comforts, but he is compensated if his name is placed on the honours list. The husbandman has to submit to hardships of weather, and to encounter difficulties and discomforts which do not occur in the lives of others; but there is no other way if he is to procure the fruits of his toil. These deny themselves for lower considerations, but we have an infinitely higher object in view; but by so much the more should we lay aside every weight. Never forget Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, your great Exemplar and Life-giver--the source of all spiritual power.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, engraft Thy Son, Jesus Christ my Lord, inwardly in my heart, that I may bring forth the fruit of holy living, to the honour and praise of Thy Name. AMEN.

November 15

JESUS, THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

"The first Adam became a living soul; the last Adam became a Life-Giving Spirit."-- 1Co 15:45.

ARE YOU, my friend, in the first Adam or the second? It is a vital question, and it would well repay you to put aside all else in order to give a considered answer to this question. You ask for the fundamental difference between the first Adam and the second. The Apostle states it clearly in this chapter from which our text is taken. The contrast between the two is the soul-life of the first and the Spirit-life of the second. This is the distinction which Jesus made at the beginning of His ministry, and it pervades the New Testament. The sphere of Christianity is the realm of the spirit. Its object is to lift man from the soul-level to the spirit-level.

The soul is the centre of our personality. It is you, or I, or any other person! From it we look on two worlds. To the material world we are related by the organs of touch, sight, smell, taste and hearing. To the eternal world we are related by the organs of the spirit, which are probably identical with the lower. We have the option of descending by the spiral staircase downward to materialism, or of ascending upward to fellowship with God. Alas, that too often we descend to the lure of the savoury pottage, instead of climbing the ladder which reaches to Heaven.

It is clear that we must die to the self-life, to the promptings, suggestions and solicitations of the ego, which is entrenched in the soul. Self is the root of our alienation from the Life of God. All the evils of fallen angels and man have their birth in the pride of self. On the other hand, all the blessedness of the heavenly life is within our reach, when the self-life is nailed to the Cross of Jesus.

How is this self-life to be brought to death? Only by our identification with the Cross on which Jesus died. We were nailed there in the purpose of God, and we must accept that position and extract its help by a living faith. It was by the Eternal Spirit that Jesus offered Himself unto God, and it is by that same Spirit that we, too, may say: "I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There must be an exchange of lives, from the self-life to the life of the Crucified and Ascended Saviour, communicated by the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER

Behold, O Lord, I am Thy servant, prepared for all things; for I desire not to live unto myself, but unto Thee; and Oh, that I could do it worthily and perfectly! AMEN.

November 16

1

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Who shall deliver me...? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."-- Ro 7:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

THIS SEVENTH chapter of Romans reflects, as in a mirror, the inward conflict of the Christian soul, who has not yet learned to appropriate the full power of the Holy Spirit. It will be noticed that the personal pronoun "I" occurs frequently, while there is no word of the Holy Spirit who lusts or strives against the flesh. It is the endeavour of a man to keep pure and holy in the energy of his own resolutions, and by the putting forth of his own power and will. But as Satan cannot cast out Satan, so the will of man is unable to exercise its own evil.

We turn, thankfully, therefore to the eighth chapter, which is as full of the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome evil, as the seventh is full of human endeavour. It is only when we learn to hand over our inner self to the Spirit of God that we can become more than conquerors through Him that loved us. As long as the conflict is in our own strength, there is nothing for it but to experience the up and down, fickle and faulty rife, which the Apostle describes so graphically.

How is it that the soul of man is so full of evil, and that it is unable to deliver itself by its resolutions which lack the necessary dynamic force, we cannot tell. But we find this "law of sin and death warring in our members and bringing us into captivity." It is a wretched experience, indeed, when we find the current running so swiftly against us, and carrying us down in spite of our strenuous desire to stem and conquer it. Who has not, again and again, experienced failure after the most earnest desire to do right? The bitterness of our origin overcomes the better choice, of which in our noblest moments we are conscious.

It is a great comfort to know that the Spirit of God is prepared to renew our inward man day by day (2Co 4:16), and to make us free from the law of sin and death. It is the daily renewal that we need. Day by day, and hour by hour, it is necessary to seek by faith a fresh infusion of the power of the Holy Spirit, that we may be overcomers.

PRAYER

O God, may we live very near to Thee to-day, not in the energy of our own resolution, but by the anointing and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who shall teach us to abide in Christ. If our wayward hearts tend to stray, recall us before we have gone too far. AMEN.

November 17

THE SECRET OF THE INNER WAY

"Walk, in the Way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous."-- Pr 2:20.

THIS CHAPTER abounds in references to the Way and Path. Walk occurs three times, paths seven, and ways five. Here we read of the way or path by which good and righteous men have preceded us. The old Christian mystics were fond of talking of the inward way and its various stages. They said that God was alone the centre and satisfaction of the human soul, that we must advance along the pathway traversed by holy souls before us until we have realised the motto of Monica: "Life in God and union there."

True knowledge of God and union with Him are only to be attained by those who will not shrink before the perils and steepness of the strait gate and narrow way. It is not necessary to leave the body to reach the inner secret of God. The path may be trodden on this side of the grave. Stony and steep it may be, but when it climbs the crest, and the whole glory of the heavens is in view, the soul is satisfied. In the attainment of true wisdom God is willing, yea, eager to give, but we must be sincere and earnest in our desire to obtain (Pr 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). Notice the many words that are employed to stir up our search. Receive! Hide! Incline the ear and apply the heart! The treasures of God, like those of the mine, do not lie on the surface, but no labour is more profitable. Our Heavenly Father not only gives good things to them that ask Him, but He becomes our Shield and Buckler, our Protector and Guide (Pr 2:7, 8).

These are the stages of the inner Way, which the saints have trodden before us: Detachment from the ambitions, passions and sins of nature; Attachment, i.e., the attitude of fellowship with Christ; Illumination, which reveals to the soul its unworthiness; Union with God. This is the experience of few, but they who have described it remind us that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, what God's Spirit reveals to those who love and wait for Him. But you must be prepared to sacrifice all. He who seeks diamonds, or gold, will face hardships and relinquish much that other men hold dear, that he may prosecute his quest. Not otherwise must it be with those who would understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

PRAYER

Make us more conscious, O Lord, we beseech Thee, of the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit: may He witness within us that in spite of our sin we are still Thy children: may He enable us to mortify the deeds of the body, and to reckon ourselves dead to the solicitations of the flesh. AMEN.

November 18

ABOUNDING IN THIS GRACE ALSO

"If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."-- 2Co 8:12.

IF ST. PAUL were living to-day he would surely be in great request to preach the special sermons for the gathering of funds to maintain religious and charitable work. Judging by this chapter, he must have been inimitable in extracting gifts for all purposes from God's people. He stirs the Corinthians up by reminding them of the liberality of the churches in Macedonia, notwithstanding their deep poverty. He reminds them that as they abound in so many gifts and graces, they must see to it that they are not lacking "in this grace also" (2Co 8:7). He quotes the example of our blessed Lord, and reminds them that they owe everything to His condescension. He suggests that the one thing God wants is willingness to give, and that He accepts the desire of the poor man to give all with as much delight as the vast possessions of the millionaire (Mk 12:41, 42, 43, 44).

What a wonderful text is the ninth verse! George Herbert, in one of his poems, depicts our Lord stripping Himself as He descended from the Throne to the manger-bed of Bethlehem. He put off His tiara, and its jewels became the milky way; He laid aside His sceptre, and it became the lightning flash; He put off His girdle, and it became the rainbow; He doffed the robes of His royalty, and they became the sunset clouds! But how wonderful it is to think that the Lord of Glory became so poor that He had no where to lay His head, that He was often without food and always dependent upon charity.

But because He was poor, we are made rich; because He was homeless He has opened to us the "many mansions"; because He was stripped of all we may wear the white robes, and sit with Him in heavenly places. He calls to each one of us to minister to Himself in caring for the least of His brethren. We can only really help people when we impoverish ourselves, but in the end we are not losers. God will be in no man's debt. What we keep we lose; what we give is like scattered seed that comes back in bountiful harvests. Lay your heart against the heart of Christ, until you become filled with His love and spirit, and are content to call nothing your own. Be the steward of everything you possess for His glory and the help of others.

PRAYER

O God, we have nothing worth our giving, or Thy receiving; our best was given to us by Thee. Graciously accept us and all that we have. Whatever Thou hast given, enable us to count it a stewardship for others. AMEN.

November 19

BEARING THE CROSS

"He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."-- Mat 10:38.

HOW WONDERFUL it is that in the thirty-seventh verse of this chapter, our Lord faces the whole race of men, and claims their supreme love, asking that they should love Him more than their dearest from whom they have derived, or to whom they have given life. He does not attempt to justify His demand, and the only consideration that makes His claim reasonable is that He is the Son of God, who died for us on the Cross, and that each one of us has a separate place in His Divine-human love. What a rebuke lies in the word: "is not worthy of Me." Surely in this sense there is no one of us worthy of our Divine Lord.

Christ asks for the surrender not of the heart only, but of the life. Self-denial for His sake is the badge of the disciple. It is a strange procession of cross-hearers, following the Crucified. Each man has his own special form of serf-denial, which is required of him, and it must be undertaken willingly.

Of course, it must be understood that the confession to which Christ summons us does not consist in a single utterance of the lips; it is the constant acknowledgment of Him by voice and life, maintained to the end, and the context makes it clear that this will have to be maintained in the face of opposition, and that often in its bitterest form--the opposition of the home. Many of us would find it easier to face outward persecution and the tyrant's frown, than to stand against the light banter, the sneers and suspicions, the cruel words of those who live within the home. In every age there have been those who have had to stand absolutely alone for Christ, not hating their dear ones, but being hated by them because of their allegiance to Christ, and destined to find the most dutiful love and care repaid by stony indifference or active persecution. Nothing is harder to bear, and there is no other course for us but to silence the enemy and the avenger by patient continuance in well-doing, always believing that God is faithful, and that He will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able to bear.

PRAYER

Be the corrective, the complement, of every trouble and need through which we may be called to pass; if we suffer for Christ, may we not threaten; if we are spoken against, may we answer with blessing; if we are tried by the fiery trial, may we rejoice; if we are lonely and desolate, may the Holy Spirit make Jesus real to us. AMEN.

November 20

STILLING LIFE'S STORMS

"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waters thereof are still. Then they are glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven."-- Ps 107:29, 30.

THIS PSALM contains five wonderful pictures of life.

First, we see the travelers who have lost their way (Ps 107:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9); next, prisoners and captives who sit in darkness (Ps 107:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16); then we see a sick-room (Ps 107:17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22); next, a terrific storm at sea (Ps 107:23-32); and finally, the lovely picture of a desert land being turned into a fertile landscape (Ps 107:33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38).

The refrain, calling upon men to praise the Lord for His goodness, is repeated four times, and the Psalm closes with the fervent thought that all who are wise will give heed to the various dealings of God, as shown in these Acts of His loving-kindness.

In all lives there are periods of tumult and storm. We are whirled about by angry billows, and it seems as though we shall never reach the harbour of peace and rest. Some give themselves up to such experiences as a fate which they cannot avoid, or attempt to drown their fears and dull their senses to suffering and danger. But faith cleaves its way through the murky mists and driving cloud-wrack, and establishes a sure connection with the throne of the Eternal Father. This is what the New Testament calls the anchorage of the soul, and however severe the storm that sweeps over the earth, the soul that shelters there is safe. "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses."

At this moment you may be passing through a storm of outward trouble. Wave after wave beats upon you, as one calamity is followed by another, until it seems as though the tittle (a very small part of a) barque (boat, small sailing vessel) of your life must he overwhelmed. Look up to God and cry to Him. He sees you, and will not allow you to be engulfed.

Or you may be experiencing inward sorrow. Your affections have been misplaced; the one you love has deceived and failed you, and the sky is now dark and stormy. The one resort of the soul when it is hard driven, is to look up to Him who holds the winds in His fist, the waters in the hollow of His hand, and who cannot forget or forsake those who cry to Him.

PRAYER

O God, we will praise Thy Name for Thy goodness to us, and for Thy wonderful works to the children of men. May Thy gentle voice hush our fears, and still life's storms into a great calm. AMEN.

November 21

RABBONI--MY MASTER

"But Mary stood without at the tomb weeping Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master."-- Jn 20:11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

WHEN THE disciples had returned to their home, Mary stood at the door of the sepulchre, weeping. Then she took one more look at the place where He had lain. Thus still we look down into the grave of ordinances, of past emotions, of old and sacred memories, seeking for the Redeemer. The angel-guards sought in vain to comfort her; but what could they do for her, who longed to hear His Voice only?

The sense of a Presence behind, or perhaps, as St. Chrysostom finely suggests, because of an expression of love and awe that passed over the angels' faces--led her to turn herself, and she saw One standing there whom she supposed to be the gardener. Then He called her by the old familiar name, with the same intonation of voice, and she knew that it was her Lord. The knowledge that He was there, to Whom she owed all, thrilled her and she answered in the country tongue they both knew so well, "Rabboni!"

Does not this suggest that in that new life, which lies beyond, we shall hear again the voices speak with which we have been familiar? "'As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, and shall have fellowship again with those whom we have lost awhile."

"Rabboni" is "my Master." We must take the Risen Lord not only as our Saviour, but our Master. Too many look to Him only for what He shall do for them in the way of salvation and deliverance from sin, but we shall never realise the fullness of either until we fall at His feet and own Him Master and Lord.

It must be a personal act--"My Master." It is not enough that He should be Lord of others, or of His Church. He must be thine. Give your all for His all. Begin to live as if there were none but He and you in this world. He is ever appealing to us: "Son! Daughter! Give Me thine heart, thy love."

When He is Master, we obey His bidding. It is useless to call Him "Lord, Lord," and not do the things which He says. Ours must be the alert ear, the swift foot. "Go, tell!" So He speaks still.

PRAYER

Open our eyes to see the Face of Christ looking down upon as amid household duty or daily business. Give us a quick ear for Thy Voice, and may we go on doing good, as Thou shalt give us opportunity. AMEN.

November 22

THE GOD OF PATIENCE AND COMFORT

"Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Jesus Christ."--Ro 15:5.

WE ALL need Patience and Comfort, especially in times of stress and difficulty. Patience under long-drawn-out trial; Comfort, when the heart is at breaking-point; and God is the source of each! The God of Patience! "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry." The God of Comfort! "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Let us hush all other voices of consolation, that we may listen to the still small voice of the Comforter, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

But notice that He speaks through the patience and comfort of Holy Scripture. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope." What the Bible has been to the martyrs, to the sufferers on the rack, and to the harried Covenanters of the Scottish moors; to the myriads of unknown souls who have been persecuted, to lonely exiles and bereaved hearts, can never be told.

If we were condemned to banishment, and could take only one Book of the Bible with us to Patmos, or to prison, we should find it extremely difficult which to choose. Some would select the Psalter, some the Fourth Gospel, some would probably decide on that wonderful anonymous writing, the Epistle to the Hebrews. And in each they would have matter enough to explore for a lifetime. Always His Spirit will be teaching and enabling us. Always His Shepherd rod and staff will lead us to living fountains of water. He is always realising more deeply in us the Divine ideal, and increasing our capacity for God.

Is not this comforting! The minister, to whom you owe your conversion, or who has helped your Christian growth, may die or be removed; the friend on whom you depended for help and guidance may have to leave you, but our Saviour will continue His care of us, His nurture of our growth. His unfailing intercession, when the sun has ceased to shine, and the universe is wrapped up as a worn-out garment. His ministry is unchangeable. The God of Patience and Comfort will never fail us!

PRAYER

Comforter of the comfortless, bind my soul with Thine in intercession! Wherever there are broken hearts, bind them: captives, release them. Bless especially my loved ones. Visit us with Thy salvation, and suit Thy gifts to our several needs. AMEN.

November 23

THE GOD OF HOPE

"Now the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost."-- Ro 15:13.

WE ALL need to abound in Hope. Hope is the artist of the soul.

Faith fills us with joy and peace, which brim over in Hope. When Faith brings from God's Word the materials of anticipation and expectation, Hope transfers the fair colours to her palette, and with a few deft dashes of her brush delineates the soul's immortal and unfading hope. Faith thus excites Hope to do her fairest work, until presently the wails of our soul become radiant with frescoes. Our faith rests on God's Word, and hope rests on faith, and such hope cannot be ashamed. It is the anchor of the soul, which enters that which is within the veil, and links us to the shores of eternity (Heb 6:18-19).

Faith rests on the promises of God. She does not calculate on **feeling**, is indifferent to **emotion**, but with both hands clings to some word of promise, and looking into God's face, says; "Thou canst not be unfaithful." When God has promised aught to thee, it is as certain as if thou had it in hand. Faith not only takes the Word of God, and rests her weight on it, but often when hard-pressed goes beyond the Bible back to God Himself, and argues that God is faithful and cannot deny Himself. Because God is God, He must ever act worthily of Himself.

It was thus that Moses argued, when he was with Him in the Holy Mount, that to do thus (not keep His oath - see Nu 14:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20), would not be worthy of Himself!. We may be assailed with a hundred questions of doubt in the day, but must no more notice them than a barking cur. A business man once said that when he is convinced of the rightness of a certain course, he is sometimes assailed by doubts which arise like the cloud-mist of the valley, or the marsh gas from the swamp; but when thus tempted, he turns to the promises of God, often reading three or four chapters of the Old Testament. This brings him in touch with the eternal world, filling him with joy and peace and abounding hope in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost (Ro 15:4). They shall not be ashamed that hope in Him! (cp Ps 119:116)

PRAYER

Make me, O Lord, to know the Hope of Thy calling, the riches of the glory of Thine inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of Thy power towards them that believe (Ep 1:18, 19). Above all, grant me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Thyself (Ep 1:17) AMEN.

November 24

THE GOD OF PEACE

"Now the God of Peace be with you all."-- Rom 15:33.

"Having made peace through the blood of His Cross."-- Col 1:20.

WE ALL need Peace! There are sources of Peace which are common to all men. The peace of a happy home; of an increasing business and enlarging influence; of the respect and love of our fellows. As a man is conscious of these, he is inclined to say with Job, "I shall die in my nest." We can all understand a peace like that; but there is a "peace that passeth understanding." It is too deep for words. It is like the pillowed depths of the ocean, which are undisturbed by the passing storm. Here is a sufferer, almost always in acute pain, and needing constant attention, and yet so happy. Joy and Peace, like guardian angels, sit by that bedside; and Hope, not blindfolded, touches all the strings of the lyre, and sheds sunshine,--how do you account for it? Let the skeptic and the scoffer answer! Here is a peace that passes understanding which comes from the God of Peace.

For the Christian soul there is a silver lining in every cloud; a blue patch in the darkest sky; a turn in the longest lane; a mountain view which shall compensate the steepest ascent. Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land. The thing impossible shall be; because all things are possible to God.

The peace of God is the peace of the Divine Nature---the very tranquillity which prevails in the heart of the God of Peace. It was of this that Jesus spoke when He said, "My peace I give unto you"; for His own being was filled and blessed with it during His earthly career. "The Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always."

There are three things against which we must ever be on our guard lest they rob us of our peace. First, unconfessed sin; second, worry; third, the permission of an unrebuked selfish principle. The Apostle says, "Let the Peace of God rule in your hearts." The Greek word means arbitrate. Let God's Peace act as umpire.

We shall not escape life's discipline. We may expect to abound here, and to be abased there. But amid all, God's Peace, like a white-winged sentinel angel, shall come down to garrison our heart with its affections, and our mind with its thoughts.

PRAYER

I humbly ask, O God, that Thy Peace may be the garrison of my heart and mind; that it may ever rule within me, asserting itself over the tumultuous passions that arise within. And out of this Peace may I arise to serve Thee. AMEN.

November 25

HOW THE SONG OF THE LORD BEGAN

"When the burnt offering began, the Song of the Lord began."-- 2Chr 29:27.

"They sing as it were a new Song before the Throne." -- Rev 14:3.

HEZEKIAH, AT the age of twenty-five, came to the throne, and set himself to reverse his father's evil policy. The doors of the Temple were re-opened, and under his direction the Levites were commissioned to cleanse the desecrated courts of the rubbish and filth that had been allowed to accumulate. After eight days of strenuous labour, they were able to report that their work was successfully accomplished; that the altar of burnt-offering and the table of shewbread were ready for the renewal of their wonted service. It was good news, and in the early morning of a memorable day, the king, accompanied by his princes and officers of state, took part in a solemn service of re-dedication. Amid the tense expectancy of the vast congregation which had assembled, Hezekiah commanded that the burnt sacrifice should be offered; and "when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also."

These ancient sacrifices have passed for ever. "Sacrifice and offering Thou dost not desire; mine ears hast Thou pierced (nailing me to Thy Cross); burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come, I delight to do Thy will, O my God!" To yield up one's life to the Saviour, to surrender our lives for others for His sake, to maintain the steadfast resolve of self-sacrifice,--this surely fulfils the conception of the burnt-offering, which the king ordered that morning as the symbol of national devotion to the Will of God. Can we wonder that the Song of the Lord began also? Does not that same Song arise in every heart when the sacrifice of love and obedience begins?

It is the self-contained life that has made itself snug within its four walls, sound-proof, sorrow-proof, as it thinks, and love-proof, which is song-less and pitiable.

Our Lord said: "'Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." That finding is the correlative and source of the "Song of the Lord.'" Unite thyself with Jesus on the Cross, and one day thou wilt find thyself sharing with Him the New Song of accomplished Redemption!

PRAYER

Give us loving and thankful hearts. May Thy mercies bind us like cords to the horns of the Altar. Let our whole nature be consecrated for Thine indwelling, and as the burnt-offering begins, may the Song of the Lord begin also in our hearts. AMEN.

November 26

THE GRACE OF GRATITUDE

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"-- Psa 116:12.

GOD'S BENEFITS are here compared to a cup or chalice brimming with salvation. It seems natural to speak of man's lot, either of sorrow or joy, as the cup of which he drinks. The cup or lot of our life brims with instances of God's saving help---"my cup runneth over," and we ask, how may we thank Him enough? What shall we render unto Him, for all His gracious help?

There are many answers, and the first is, that we will Take. In other words, as one has truly said, Taking from God is the best giving to God, for God loves to give. St. James says: "He is the giving God, who gives not only liberally, but with no thought of personal advantage, and for the mere joy of giving?' What, then, will gratify Him more than to be trusted, to find recipients for His gifts, to know that we are prepared to be His poor debtors, owing Him ten thousand talents, with nothing to pay, but still receiving and receiving from His great heart of Love. Nothing hurts God more than that we should not take what He offers--"God so loved that He gave," and when we refuse to appropriate His greatest gift, we inflict the deepest indignity and dishonour of which we are capable.

Then, we must call upon His Name (Ps 116:13, 14, 15, 16, 17). Take the Name of the Lord as a test. Friendships, plans, profits, amusements, studies---all these cups should be tested by this one mighty Talisman.

We must be sure to pay our vows (Ps 116:14, 15, 16, 17, 18; Eccl 5:4, 5). We make vows in our trouble, which we sometimes forget when it is past. Surely, it is the height of ingratitude not to redeem our promissory notes. All devoted things, which are laid on God's altar, are absolutely His, and the giver forfeits all rights to their disposal.

Our gratitude demands the gift of ourselves (Ps 116:16). When Robinson Crusoe freed the poor captive, the man knelt before his deliverer, and put his foot upon his neck, in token of his desire to be his slave, and the love of Christ, who loosed us from our bonds, constrains us to live not to ourselves but unto Him (Re 1:5). Loosed from the cords of sin, we become bound to the service of love.

PRAYER

Father, we would thank Thee for all the benefits that we have received from Thy goodness. The best thanksgiving we can offer to Thee is to live according to Thy holy will; grant us every day to offer it more perfectly, and to grow in the knowledge of Thy will and the love thereof AMEN.

November 27

THE GARDEN OF OUR SOUL

"A pleasant vineyard, sing ye of it. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."-- Isa 27:2, 3, (See R.V. marg.).

THE VINEYARD and its Divine Keeper. God's redeemed children are here compared to a Vineyard. We remember also our Lord's references to the Vineyard in Mt 21:33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 and John 15. God our Father is the Husbandman or Keeper, watching, watering, and guarding always. There is no anger in His heart against us, but against our sins, and He is ever battling with these, as the gardener digs up the weeds and burns them in the bonfire.

God's moment-by-moment care of us is our one hope. The dry winds of this world are always parching the tender verdure of our inner life making the soil hard and impenetrable. We shrivel and wither beneath the sun of prosperity, but God is ever seeking to water us with His grace.

Sometimes it is by the mist--"There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground" (Ge 2:6). Thus it was in Eden, and so it is in our experience. The mystery of life, its uncertainty, our sense of impotence and ignorance, the withdrawal of our beloved ones within the envelopment of the unseen, the strange sense of incomprehensible enigma--these are some of the mists that help to soften our character.

Sometimes by the dew--"I will be as the dew unto Israel." On clear nights the air deposits its moisture in dewdrops. How beautiful it is in the spring morning! In the tropics it is profuse, so that Gideon was able to wring a bowlful of water from the fleece which he had spread out! Yet how gently it distils, not a flower stalk, however fragile, is broken. So the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit gather on our souls and refresh us. We know not whence or how, but we are sweeter, gentler, tenderer for His beneficent care. The sun does not scorch us, the heat does not exhaust.

Let us enter into a holy fellowship with God in His antagonism to whatever is unworthy and evil in our lives, taking hold of His strength, and being at peace with Him, Then shall we be blossom and bud, and become His pleasant vineyard; and fill the world with refreshing fruit. "Thou shalt be like a watered garden." "By their fruits ye shall know them."

PRAYER

Forbid, O Heavenly Father, that we should lose the freshness, fertility and beauty which Thou canst maintain in hearts which are open to Thee. May we be like a watered garden. AMEN.

November 28

SPIRITUAL FOOD

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable. ... That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."-- 2Ti 3:16, 17.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."-- Jn 6:51.

IT IS the artifice of many advertisers of the present day to secure customers for patent foods by associating the figure of some person in perfect health and strength with the article of diet they desire to recommend. It is certain that spiritual health and power can only be produced when the spirit is dieted on the Word of God.

From his earliest boyhood, the young Timothy had been instructed in the Holy Scriptures. When the Apostle first met him there was a rich subsoil of knowledge of the Old Testament, in which the seed of the Gospel message readily germinated. Perhaps the reason for the instability of some of our young people is that Eunice and Lois in our Christian homes fail to do for the children what mothers and grandmothers did for previous generations.

It is not necessary to discuss all that is involved in Inspiration, as the Apostle uses that term; nor is it necessary to be profoundly familiar with books of theology before we are able to pronounce on it. Inspiration is a quality which is apprehended by the spiritual taste, just as the tongue can detect sweetness or briny saltness of flavour. The Bible is the Word of God, and the whole of it is profitable for one of the four uses mentioned in 2Ti 3:16.

We should read the Bible daily, and it is helpful to use the references and discover the parallel passages. It is good sometimes to kneel down and turn what we read into prayer. We must get beyond the outside husk to the inner kernel, as we "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest." Ask the Spirit of God to give you some message directly for yourself.

There are some kinds of food which are destitute of the properties that sustain life. But Christ is all we want, and every faculty of our nature can be satisfied in Him. He is the Living Bread, on Whom we must feed if we would have eternal life. It is not the Bible only, but the Christ of whom it speaks who is the true spiritual food of the soul. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

PRAYER

O Lord, open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. AMEN.

November 29

THE MESSAGE OF THE SERAPHIM

"Then flew one of the Seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand.., and said, lo this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."-- lsa 6:6, 7.

EACH SERAPH had six wings. "With twain he covered his face." Here was Reverence, which is one of the noblest traits in character, whether angelic or human. The statesman who beneath human movements set himself to understand the Divine purpose. The artist, whether in music, poetry or painting, who discovers a Presence which fills him with elevated and pure ideals. The scientist who compares himself to a child gathering pebbles on the shores of a boundless ocean. These resemble the Seraphim with their veiled faces.

"With twain they covered their feet"--Self-effacement and Humility. If we begin to think and talk of ourselves, we prove that we are second-rate. We may be attractive and useful, but we have not attained the first and best. The angels forgot themselves in their absorbing love for God. When shall we forget ourselves in His constraining love, so as not to live to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again!

"With twain they did fly"--Obedient Service. The third part of our energy should be spent thus. Two-thirds of communion and worship must work themselves out in service, else we become dreamy mystics. Such life becomes contagious--"One cried to another." There is always a cry going forth from the eager soul which is right with God, and this awakens response in others and stirs them to service. One bird in the woodlands singing at dawn will wake the whole forest-glade to music. The Seraphim declared that the whole earth was full of God's glory!

The prophet saw his need of cleansing: "Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips." We do not need to agonize with God for cleansing, but to open our hearts in confession. Immediately one of the Seraphim will fly to meet our need. Nay, the Lord Himself--Lo, this live coal, saturated with blood and steeped in flame, which combines Calvary and Pentecost, hath cleansed our iniquity and purged our sin! Then we shall cry: "Here am I; send me." Redeemed, forgiven, and cleansed sinners make the best evangelists!

PRAYER

Give us, O Lord, more than an angel's love, for Thou hast redeemed us. Give us the swiftness of an angel's obedience; may we do Thy commandments, and hearken to the voice of Thy word. Cleanse us from all iniquity and purge us from sin, and use us in Thy service. AMEN.

November 30

OUR HERITAGE AND OUR GOAL

"Ye are come unto the City of the living God ... to God the Judge o fall, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant."-- Heb 12:22, 23, 24.

WE ARE far from being perfect. When in our deepest moments, we ascend into the Holiest, on the wings of faith and prayer, we pass through a vast host of sympathetic spirits, all of whom are devoted to the same Lord and Master, and are joining in the same act of worship. Many of them have known and helped us in our earthly life, and they have been sent forth to minister to us, and to help us on our way. "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect." (He 12:23)

We are also come unto God, the Judge of all. When Moses stood before God on the Mount, he said: "I exceedingly fear and quake." But we may come with boldness to the footstool of the Eternal Throne, though our God is a consuming fire, for in Christ Jesus we stand accepted. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, and His Blood speaks better things than that of Abel. That blood cried against Cain. But the Blood of Jesus cries on our behalf; it has opened the way into the Holiest; has cleansed us from our sins; has ratified the New Covenant, and is the Pledge of our redemption.

Therefore, although we realize our sinfulness and imperfection, let us arise into the unseen, and join with the One Church of the Redeemed in heaven and on earth. We are come to it in the purpose of God, and by the all-sufficing work of Christ our Lord, but let us see to it that we come also in our spiritual realization, communion, and fellowship.

We are members of the Church Universal, citizens of the Heavenly City. Heirs of that precious Redemption, which has severed us from things that are seen, and made us part of that blessed throng that no man can number--"the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven." Neither life, nor death, nor rite, nor church-order, can divide those who are for ever one with each other because they are one with Christ. Nothing but sin and obtuseness of soul can exclude us from living fellowship with saints of all communions and sects, denominations and ages.

PRAYER

Accept our thanks, O God, for this foretaste of the bliss of Paradise. To Thee we would pour forth our tribute of adoring love, and join with angels and the spirits of the Redeemed in worship. Unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, be blessing and honour, glory and dominion, for ever. AMEN.