**Christ is Ever with You!**

Octavius Winslow, 1863

*"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!"*Matthew 28:20

***~~Chapter 1. The FAREWELLS~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

There were *two farewells of our Lord* on earth, and they formed two of the most touching and instructive epochs of His history. As the sun, setting amid a flood of liquid gold, invests the whole heavens with variegated tints of beauty long after the majestic orb has run its race, so there clustered around the two earthly sunsets of Christ — the most divine *assurances*, the most precious *promises*, the most brilliant *hopes*that ever shed their light and glory upon the pathway of the Christian Church; and which will linger upon its spiritual sky in deathless splendor until He comes again in His glory to set no more forever.

The **first farewell**of Christ, was when He parted from His disciples on His return to heaven. To them, it was a time of inexpressible grief. To part with Christ was to part with their *all*. Yet He would not leave them comfortless; nor will He, beloved, ever so leave you. Blended with His departure was the most precious promise and the most costly gift Heaven could bestow or the Church receive — the promise and gift of the Holy Spirit, as the Comforter, Teacher, and Indweller of the Church: *"If I depart — I will send the Comforter."*What an hour of *blessing*was this! What a glorious *setting*of the Sun of righteousness! What spiritual benedictions, what resplendent hopes gather, like a glowing halo, around the sinking of this Divine Orb!

And still the glow lingers. And still the setting rays tinge with unfading light and glory, the gloomy clouds which often drape in woe earth's pilgrimage. We have abiding with, and dwelling in, us the Holy Spirit the Comforter, sent of Christ — to *lead*us to Christ, to *testify*of Christ, to *assimilate*us to Christ, and to *sanctify*us to dwell with Christ forever! Oh, could the personal departure of our Lord have been blessed and graced with an assurance more transcendently great, precious, and glorious than this?

Our Lord's **second farewell**was when He closed the sacred canon of Scripture, fencing it with the most solemn warning, and sealing it with the most illustrious promise. And, as the threatening of woe to those who should either take from, or add to, the perfect Word of God, resounded solemnly on the ear, it was succeeded and softened by words which will live and linger in the sweetest cadence until the promise they contain shall be fulfilled: *"Behold, I come quickly!"*

Then all that is dark in providence and grace, shall be lucid; and all that is discrepant, shall be harmonized; the bliss of the saints will be complete, the mystery of God will be finished, and God will be all in all. O believer in Jesus! long for that day that shall bring the Beloved of your soul arrayed in all His Father's and His own glory. He will come quickly, suddenly, unexpectedly — His advent surprising both the *Church*and the *world* — the one slumbering in the *light*, and the other in the *dark*. But let us who are of the day be sober, watchful, hastening unto His coming, prepared as a bride for her husband — loving and desiring Him with a single, ardent, wakeful affection. "Come, Lord, Jesus, come quickly!"

But it was in connection with His first farewell that Christ spoke the memorable and precious words,*"Surely, I am with you always!"*It is not to a *future* — but to an*ever-present Christ*with His saints, that these pages will direct your thoughts.

What the Lord has laid up for us, by what *road*He will lead us, what *lessons*He will teach us, by what *discipline*of trial He will mature us for present service and prepare us for future rest — we will not be too curious to search out. It is enough, that it is all in the covenant, and in His hands who administers the covenant.

And whatever new lights and shadows may be penciled upon life's picture, though our song is of both *mercy*and of *judgment* — we will patiently wait and calmly trust its gradual and timely unfolding, assured that all our *trials*will be *shrouded blessings*, and all those blessings will be bright stepping-stones, aiding our progress in the divine life, our nearness to God, and our fitness for heaven.

Embarking upon a new stage of your pilgrimage, I propose placing the pilgrim's true Staff in your hands, upon which, if you lean in childlike faith, you will be firmly upheld, safely led, securely kept, divinely strengthened, cheered, and comforted every step of your journey. It was left by our Lord for the use of His whole Church when He exchanged the scene of His humiliation, for the throne of His glory. He Himself placed it in the hands of His apostles, who, now that their pilgrimage is closed, have transmitted it to us. In the name of Christ, I now put this divine Staff in your hand, and bid you firmly grasp it and set out anew for heaven. *"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!"*

Let me for a moment concentrate your thoughts upon Him whose promise is thus pledged: "**I** am with you." Were you assured of the personal presence, ever attending, ever clinging, ever abiding — of a beloved friend selected from a wide and choice circle; and were that one friend the most wise, the most powerful, the most true, the most loving, confiding, and sympathizing — would you not be content to dwell with him through all your future lot — to make him the confidant of your bosom, the partaker of your every joy, the sharer of your every sorrow?

That Friend is Christ! He occupies the preeminent position of being ever near to His people! Everywhere, and at the same moment — His presence is . . .
the atmosphere that enfolds them,
the shield that encircles them,
the sun that guides and cheers their path to the celestial city, where His glorified presence fills . . .
each soul with ineffable happiness,
heaven with its sweetest song, and
eternity with its transcendent splendor!

When Jesus left our earth, He entwined the personal interests of His people around His heart, and bore them with Him to heaven; leaving the gracious promise, that, though personally and visibly withdrawn from the scene of their journeyings, trials, and conflicts — His spiritual presence should ever and everywhere encircle them, until like Himself, they should exchange earth for heaven.

"Lo! Mark! Behold! **I**the Incarnate God, I who opened my bleeding heart for your redemption on Calvary, I who am your dearest Friend, your Elder Brother — I am with you always, in all places, and at all times, unto the end of the world!"

Saint of God! This is the *promise*of promises, the richest pearl of all the promises, exceeding in its mightiness and preciousness; while it is the substance, sweetness, and pledge of all the rest! Christ is ever with you, and were this the one and only assurance of the Word of God upon which He had caused your soul to hope, you may gratefully and truthfully exclaim, "Lord! it is enough! with this Staff I will travel onward; and if through fire and through water, You are leading me. Upheld by Your power, and soothed by Your sympathy — I will press forward until You shall bring me into a wealthy place!"

Christ's presence with His people was once, though not now, *physical*. He was *bodily*in the midst of His Church. Oh, it is a marvelous truth, the belief of which imparts a conviction of verity to the whole Gospel, that, eighteen hundred years ago, the incarnate God actually tabernacled upon this earth, trod its soil, sailed upon its lakes, drank of its springs, admired its flowers, bedewed it with tears, and consecrated it with blood. That *babe of Bethlehem*smiling in its mother's arms — that carpenter of Nazareth shoving the plane and plying the saw — that young man, pale and thoughtful, standing at Pilate's bar — that *victim of woe*impaled upon the central cross — listen, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth — was "the fullness of the Godhead bodily!"

It is written by the pen of the Holy Spirit, and let no profane hand dare attempt its erasure, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Yes! your flesh, O believer! laden with infirmity, sorrow, and woe. And He wears it still in a spiritual and glorified form, and is with you in suffering and weakness and infirmity — ever sympathizing, ever sustaining. Try your spirit, whether it be Christ-taught, Christ-loving, Christ-trustful — by its firm, realizing faith in this cardinal and precious truth, for, "every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."

In addition to this, there is Christ's *representative*presence with His people in the embassy, fullness, and *preaching of the Gospel*. The Gospel is glad tidings of Christ, it is the message of His grace, the proclamation of His love to lost sinners. The Gospel is Christ first, Christ last, Christ midst, Christ without end.

Christ is the *prophet*of the Gospel — teaching His people His doctrines.

Christ is the *priest*of the Gospel — bearing and making atonement for their sins.

Christ is the *king*of the Gospel — reigning in the hearts of loyal and loving disciples.

Thus, Christ is present wherever and whenever the good tidings of that Gospel are preached, to "bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, to give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, to comfort all that mourn." Remember, O you neglectful, unbelieving hearer of Christ's Gospel, that it is not the *minister*you slight nor the message you scorn — it is *Christ Himself*. "We beseech you In Christ's stead" — as though Christ Himself were pleading with tears and blood, "be reconciled to God." O blessed, yet solemn thought, that, whenever my ears are saluted with the joyful sound, infinitely sweeter than angels' chimes — it is Christ's *voice*I hear, it is Christ's *presence*I feel, it is Christ's *love*that thrills and warms my soul, it is Christ's *invitation*

to my weary spirit, Christ's *words*of sympathy to my sorrowful heart, Christ's *promises*of grace and strength and hope to my depressed and desponding mind. Oh, welcome, you divine and precious Gospel! bringing with you Christ's presence with a realizing power so personal, so conscious, and so soothing to the soul. We can bid farewell to things most near and dear to us, for the sake of Christ.

***~~Chapter 2. Christ's PRESENCE~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

But it is the *spiritual*presence of Christ thus promised and pledged to His people: "Surely, I am with you always." This promise of Jesus, as precious as it is marvelous, is predicated upon His essential Deity. Were He, as some represent, only human and not absolutely divine — what confidence could we have in this promise? What *comfort*would it impart, what *hope*would it inspire, what *protection*would it afford? Where is the created being, be he man or angel, who could in truth speak in language so lofty and sublime as this? "Surely, I am with you always — even to the end of the world!" Would it not be the utterance of the boldest blasphemy in him thus to speak, and would it not be the truest delusion in us thus to believe?

But because our Lord Jesus was God, He spoke with authority, Godlike and divine. "I am with you always!" Oh, sublime thought! there is not a world, a being, a spot in the universe, however remote, insignificant, or obscure — there beams not a *star*, there flames not a sun, there breathes not a *spirit*, there exists not an *empire* — where Christ's *government*does not rule, Christ's *power*is not felt, Christ's *glory*is not displayed. Could the believer take the wings of the dawn, and fly to the most distant planet, or touch the utmost limit of space — there the smile of Christ's *love*would illumine him, the accents of Christ's *voice*would cheer him, the atmosphere of Christ's *presence*would encircle him, the power of Christ's *omnipotence*would uphold him — he would feel the right hand of Christ gently laid upon his spirit; and in the solemn stillness and fathomless depth of that profound solitude, he would exclaim, "you are near, O Lord!"

We repeat the inquiry for the purpose of pursuing it more fully: *Whose*presence is thus promised and pledged? It is the presence of *Christ!* The Christ who is God. "Immanuel, God with us." The Christ who made all worlds, created all beings, governs all empires, controls all events. The Christ who replenishes earth with beauty, heaven with glory, eternity with song. The Christ before whom angels and archangels, principalities and powers bend, and at whose name every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The Christ whose glory is divine, whose beauty is peerless, whose wealth is boundless, whose love is as infinite as His being. The Christ who took your human nature — that same infirm, suffering nature which now wearily you wear — and in that nature bore and put away forever your sins, uplifted and forever removed your curse, paid all your great debt to Divine justice, sorrowed for you in the garden, suffered and expired in your stead on the cross, rose from the grave, irradiating it with the hope of the "first resurrection," ascended up to heaven, lives and intercedes for you, representing your person and presenting your prayers and praises with ineffable acceptance and delight to His Father and your Father, to His God and your God.

The Christ who loves you with an affection whose depth no line can sound, whose constancy no change can chill, whose care of, whose sympathy for, whose watchfulness over you — is the warmest, tenderest love that ever pulsated in a human breast. The Christ who acknowledges Himself your *Brother*, has proved Himself your *Friend*, and who assures you that as the head is in union with the body, and the vine is one with the branch — is ever with, ever one with, ever close to you in an invisible, yet real and conscious presence; from which neither *life*with all its changes, nor *death*with all its solemnities, shall be able to sever you! Such, child of God, is the Being who breathes these gentle, assuring words into your ear, "I am with you always!"

O honored saint of God! You have . . .
the *Divinest*in the universe to love you,
the *Mightiest*in the universe to shield you,
the *Loveliest*in the universe to delight you,
the *Dearest*in the universe to soothe, cheer, and gladden you!
O favored disciple of Jesus — you have such a one ever at your side! Tell me, if, of all whom you have ever loved, or all who have loved you — the one who was given to your youth to love you more tenderly than all; yes, the being who loved you yet more deeply, tenderly, and unchangeably still — who loved you as a *mother*only could — is there one of all these whose presence ever with you, you would prefer to Christ's love?

The question grieves you, you shrink from the comparison, and with uplifted eye, moistened with tears, yet beaming with affection — you exclaim, from the profoundest depths of your soul, "Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You!"

But we must remind you, before we proceed further, that the presence of Christ with His people involves equally the presence of the *First*and *Third*Persons of the ever-blessed and glorious Trinity. It is a *triple staff*we place in your hand, in grasping which, your faith leans upon infinity in its threefold manifestation. We can have nothing to do truly, spiritually, and savingly with *one*Person of the Godhead — without an equal faith in, and love to, the others. When Christ pledges His presence with you, He unites with it the Fatherhood of God, its boundless sources of love, wisdom, and strength.

Christ came to make known the ***Father's***mind, to reveal the Father's love, to bring home to heaven the Father's family, predestined to the adoption of children. "No man knows the Father — but he to whom the Son will reveal him." "He who has seen Me — has seen the Father." That great God, that eternal Father, who thus spoke to His Church, speaks equally to you: "Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand!" "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!"

Oh, seek to realize this precious truth in all your journeying: the *presence*of Christ — is the assurance that your Heavenly Father is with you. Christ's *voice*speaking to you in love — is the echo of the Father's voice. Christ's *smile*of delight beaming upon you — is the brightness of the Father's smile. Christ's precious *promises*sustaining and soothing you — are the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God, which are "all yes and amen in Christ Jesus, unto the glory of God the Father."

It is a truth, equally as revealed and equally as precious, that the presence of Christ with His people involves also the presence of the ***Holy Spirit***. Oh that we had a more spiritual, vivid, grateful apprehension of the Divinity, personality, and gracious work of the Spirit — our Spiritual Quickener, our Divine Comforter, our Indwelling Sanctifier, our Infallible Teacher.*"I believe in the Holy Spirit,"*is one of the vital articles of our Creed. Is it equally the deep, experimental, sanctifying sentiment of our heart? Do I firmly, practically believe in the Divine personality of the Holy Spirit, in His official relation to my salvation, in His absolute necessity in regeneration, in His tender, changeless love as my *Comforter*, in His indispensable necessity as my *Teacher*, and in His gracious, sanctifying power, as ever abiding with, and dwelling in me? Such is the magnitude and extent of the promise of Christ, "I am with you!" We repeat, it involves the love of the *Father*who adopted you, the grace of the *Son*who died for you, the power of the *Spirit*who quickened you, the Triune-Jehovah!

Before I refer to the *circumstances*in which you may anticipate a full realization of this precious promise, let me remind you of the offices of Christ it involves, the materials of this triple Staff which Jesus places in your hand.

***~~Chapter 3. Christ a GUIDE~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is with us, as our *guide*. How deep our need of Him as such, and how endeared does it make Him! So blind are we, so dark is our future, so perplexing is our present path — that the very next step might be a false one — taking us into a wrong direction, entailing untold anxieties and sorrows, or hurling us from a precipice into total ruin! Yes, we need just such a guide as Christ!

What Alpine traveler would attempt the ascent of a steep glacier, or cross the dangerous pass — unattended by an experienced guide — one who knew the route, whose skillful eye could detect the treacherous crevice, and whose strong arm could fence the narrow, winding way?

Our path to eternity demands just such a guide as the prophet foretold Christ would be. "I have given Him," says God, "for a Leader and Commander to the people." His own gracious words corroborate this statement when speaking of Himself as the Shepherd of His flock, who "Goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice."

Oh, what a privilege — in every path of doubt, in every circumstance of danger, where human judgment is either warped or beclouded, and your own mind hesitates and falters — to have such a wonderful Counselor, such a divine Guide as Christ at your side! As such — He is ever with you!

He will guide you . . .
with His eye of providence,
and with His hand of power,
and with His heart of love!

He knows the way that you take — for He has ordained it.

He knows every crook in your lot — for He has appointed it.

He will . . .
roll away the stone of difficulty,
level mountains,
fill up valleys,
make the crooked path straight,
and the rough place smooth; this will He do unto you, and not forsake you.

Oh, be honest and upright with Him! Go to Him first, consult Him first, acknowledge Him in all your ways — before you consult any human guide. May Christ, in all the minute details of your life, have the pre-eminence. Learn to lay your own desires and thoughts at His feet.

"He guides the humble in what is right — and teaches them His way!" Psalm 25:9. Not our way — but "His way." We must first surrender our way and will — before He will teach us His. He guides the "humble" — the childlike, trustful, unquestioning disciple, who humbly locks his hand in Christ's and says, "Lord, lead me and guide me, not in my own way — but in Yours!"

Oh, take a firm grasp of this unfailing Guide, and you shall travel safely and surely, through all your unknown future. Be honest and sincere only to know and to walk in the Lord's way, the way in which He would have you to go; and then will He fulfill His most gracious promise, "Surely, I am with you always" — in the midst of the utmost peril and dangers!

***~~Chapter 4. Christ a SHIELD~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is ever with His people — as a *shield*and *deliverer*. Our estimation of this truth, will be proportioned to our intelligent apprehension of the number and potency of our enemies — and the costliness and preciousness of the treasure thus divinely protected.

With what unslumbering vigilance,
with what divine power,
with what changeless love —
does the Lord Jesus shield the work of grace in the soul of His people!

Who keeps that spark alive — in the midst of the ocean?

Who guards this vineyard night and day — lest any hurt it?

Who preserves . . .
*faith* from faltering,
*love* from chilling,
*hope* from dying?

Who . . .
strengthens the 'work of grace' when it is feeble,
raises it when it droops,
restores it when it relapses,
keeps it in the cold of winter and the drought of summer;
and, when the frosts and winds of autumn would nip and scatter its foliage — clothes it with the freshness and bloom of spring?

Oh, it is Jesus, encircling with His all-protecting shield — the work of grace which His death has accomplished, and which His Spirit wrought!

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge! He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!" Psalm 18:2

Trembling believer! The work of grace in your heart shall never die! The kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in your soul — is indestructible! "They shall *never*perish!" is the declaration of the Shepherd who bought you with His blood! You are watched over by Christ — and kept by the power of God. And although the tide of spiritual affection may ebb, and the shadows of twilight fall thickly upon your soul, and you are ready to regard your conversion a mistake, your religion a delusion, and your hope a fallacy — thus casting away your confidence; yet there is One who knows His own work, recognizes His own image, reads His Spirit's writing in the soul, and must Himself cease to be — before He allows those *living embers*of love He has enkindled upon the altar of your renewed heart, to die. The rain may descend, the winds may blow, the flood may surge — "But the inextinguishable flame burns on, and shall forever burn!"

There are *assaults*from which alone Christ can shield us!

Innumerable and invisible,
sleepless and restless,
working with an almost almighty power,
everywhere with an almost omnipresent existence,
ever plotting our ruin —
are the *spiritual enemies* of our soul, and the sworn*foes of our faith!*

The *world* and its fascinations,
*Satan* and his devices,
the *flesh* and its tendencies,
*error* and its disguises —
are all confederate against the child of God, opposing his every advance in holiness!

But Christ is our ever-present shield, near at the moment of assault, and skillful to deflect and disarm it! "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield!" are words addressed to all who have like precious faith with him.

Listen to Paul when defending Christianity before Nero: "At my first answer no man stood with me — but all men forsook me. . . . Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." Severed from the protection and sympathy of *man* — he was all the more conscious of the presence and love of *God*. This is the manner of the Lord with us. The stage shall be swept of the *human —*to give place to the *Divine*. When the last *human prop*bends, and the last spark of *creature-hope*expires — hail it as the harbinger of Christ's nearness, that the more signal may appear His loving deliverance, and the more complete and undivided His glory.

Oh yes! the Lord encompasses you! Encircled by danger — you are also encircled by Christ! When you embark in His cause on foreign service, enter the carriage of a railway, launch upon the treacherous sea, bend your steps of mercy to the bedside of the sick, travel the lone and dreary road — be your experience what it may, let your mind be kept in perfect peace, trusting in this truth: *the ever-present protection of Jesus*. The unhealthy climate shall be harmless, the sickening malaria shall be innocuous, the perilous transit shall be safe — curtained within the pavilion of your Savior's love. Swelling above the tempest, louder than the voice of many waters, or whispered in the still solitude — shall be heard the words of Jesus, ""So do not fear — for I am with you! Do not be dismayed — for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand!" Isaiah 41:10. Lord, it is enough! My heart trusts in You, and I am helped!

Christ is with His people as the ***Head***and ***Depository***of all their spiritual supplies. The *resources*of the believer, although not from himself, and often, like Hagar's well, veiled from the eye — are yet, like that well-spring of water, flowing at the very *side*of the needy saint.

Destitution may reign far and wide, and the plaintive cry ascend from many a famished lip*, "Who will show us any good?"*Yet the Christian's soul, fed with the hidden manna and quenched from the river, the streams of which make glad the city of God — is kept alive in famine and in draught, and is like "a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not."

And what explains this mystery? The nearness at his side of a full Christ, overflowing with a redundancy of grace, love, and sympathy — suiting every circumstance, answering every call, supplying every demand.

New *exigencies*may occur in his daily history,
new *demands*made upon his mental and physical powers, *trials*of a new form may transpire,
new *infirmities*may strike, *sorrows*hitherto untasted, *temptations*before unknown —
all marking a new epoch in his history, a new phase of Christian experience — and all clamorous for the *grace*that is to sustain, the *sympathy*that is to soothe, the *wisdom*that is to guide. And shall they ask in vain? Never! Christ is with us — furnished, given, and pledged to supply amply and fully — all the necessities of His people.

"And of His fullness — we have all we received grace upon grace!" John 1:16. That is, grace following grace; grace answering every call for grace; more grace, grace out-measuring all past supply, all present need, "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." O blessed truth!

In the world's *insolvency* — the believer has a safe bank!

In the world's *famine* — he has a full granary!

In the world's *drought* — he has springs of water!

In the world's *heat* — he has his pleasant and grateful shade!

And all this is *concentrated*in Christ; for Christ is all. O favored saint! to have a full, overflowing, excess supply, so near; exiled from all other resources, other supports failing, other springs drying, other shadows vanishing as in a night — and he, perchance, sitting him down to die in hopeless grief, lo! words fall upon his ear softer, sweeter than angels' chimes, "I am with you always; with you in this lonely place and at this trying moment — to unseal your eye to the boundless fullness, that it pleased the Father would dwell in Me for you, the Father's child."

"Hold me up — and I shall be safe!"

***~~Chapter 5. Christ a TEACHER~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is with His people — as a *Teacher*. There exists no office of Christ that is not openly impugned and denied in the present day — and not one more so than His *prophetic*office. False teaching everywhere and alarmingly abounds. The teaching of *men*is exalted above the teaching of Christ, and, as a consequence, *Infidelity*and *Popery*are rife, and the people are following after the false prophet and the beast. This is a day in which the Lord's true people must exhibit their loyalty to Christ in His *prophetic*office — as the sole, divine, authorised Teacher of the Church. To Him, as our Teacher — must we only look; and His teaching — must we only follow. There is no safety but at Christ's feet! We must accept no *doctrine,*and observe no *practice* — but what comports with the teaching, example, and simplicity of His Word. If true and faithful disciples — to Christ we must closely and exclusively adhere. We have but one master, Christ; to Him we stand or fall.

Beware, in religious sentiments, of the fascination and influence of ecclesiastical authority, cultivated intellect, and polished teachers: all this is of man, and partakes of the errors and sinfulness of man. Untaught by the Holy Spirit, and unsanctified by God's grace — we have seen the most brilliant and eminent gifts prove but as decoy lights — glimmering along the bleak, fatal shores of *Infidelity*and *Romanism* — alluring, and then wrecking, upon the rocks, quicksands, and shoals — the too confiding, unsuspecting mind, "handling the word of God deceitfully."

Oh, be Christ's true disciple — loyal to His person, and faithful to His truth! It is the Word of Christ which quickens you, sanctifies you, comforts you. Nor can you part with one doctrine of Christ, without inflicting the most serious injury upon your soul, and shading His glory. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." The more *experimentally*you *know*of Christ's truth, and the more simply you *walk*in Christ's truth — the holier and the happier will you be. Oh, how increasingly glorious to your eye and precious to your heart, will Christ become! You will more and more clearly see, that all truth centers in Christ, and that Christ is the substance of all truth; that to know Christ — is to know the truth; and to know the truth — is to be freed from the blinding influence, erroneous teaching, and boasted authority of man. Blessed Jesus! O Divine Prophet of Your Church! "Happy are Your men, happy are these Your servants, who stand continually before You, and that hear Your wisdom."

Christ must our wisdom in the midst of ignorance. He must be our Teacher, for He can teach without any man at all. "Who is a teacher like Him!" Job 36:22

***~~Chapter 6. Christ a SAVIOR~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name *Jesus* — because He will *save*His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

Christ is ever with us — as a *Savior*. Oh, how the heart thrills, and the eye beams at the mention of the name of *Jesus!*What we chiefly need is — not *wisdom*to guide, or power to shield, or *sympathy*to soothe, or *might*to strengthen; it is *Salvation* — the soul saved — a Savior to save us to the uttermost! We need guilt-atoning blood, soul-justifying righteousness, sin-subduing grace! We need a Savior who has done all, suffered all, paid all, and leaves us nothing to do but, believe and be saved. This is Jesus!

My reader, salvation is the finished work of Christ, and the free gift of God; and nothing less and nothing more is required of you than that, with a penitent and believing heart — you trust in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. God has laid all your *sins*, all your *curse*, and all your *condemnation —*upon Christ! And all that He asks of you in return is, a believing, loving, obedient reception of His Son. Oh, then, grieve not; dishonor not the Savior by doubting His *willingness*or *ability*to save you!

Christ is the all-sufficient and only Savior and Redeemer for all those who will truly put their trust in Him. He saves to the uttermost all who come to God by Him.

***~~Chapter 7. Christ in SERVICE~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is ever with you — in *service*. The religion of Jesus is an active, self-denying religion. The Divine Master has left the scene of His own toil — but He has given to every disciple, his work. Each has his *mission* — something to do for souls, something to accomplish for the Savior, some glory to bring to God. Realizing in some degree what a *debtor*to the Lord he is; what he owes to the *love*that chose him, to the *blood*that ransomed him, to the *grace*that called him, to the *Savior*that gave Himself a sacrifice — the believer exclaims from the depth of his grateful heart, "Lord, what will you have me to do?" And now, to labor for Christ is his highest desire and ambition; be the service home or foreign, pleasant or self-denying, distinguished or obscure, to rule an empire or to sweep a crossing.

In this *service*for Christ — Christ is ever with you. Unseen and unheard, He is close at your side — guiding your *judgment*, strengthening your *faith*, nerving your *heart*, sustaining and cheering your *spirit*, honoring, blessing, and rewarding your *labor*. Oh, think not that Christ can leave you for a moment, while you are active and toiling for Him. He knows all your *difficulties*, marks your *discouragements*, is cognisant of your *infirmities*, sees your *faintings*and *deficiencies*, and how burdensome, delicate, and humbling the task. Do you think, while engaged in a service of love for His name, the sweat upon your brow, the pressure of your mind, anxiety and exhaustion absorbing life itself, foes threatening, friends chiding, your own heart often misgiving — that Christ will leave you? Oh, never! "Lo I am with you always" — all days — are the words with which He seeks to strengthen and cheer you on in your work of faith and labor of love which you show for His dear name.

Christ must ever be with us in all the duties of life. We must have His presence as a power in our hearts. "I am with you always," has cheered thousands of hearts in the midst of arduous labors in His service.

***~~Chapter 8. Christ in SUFFERING~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is ever with you — in *suffering*. He Himself was a sufferer. Oh, suffering never looked so lovely, martyrdom never wore a crown so resplendent — as when the Son of God bowed His head and drank the *cup of woe*for us! Himself a sufferer — is there a being in the universe who could take His place at your side in all the scenes of mental, spiritual, and bodily suffering through which your Heavenly Father leads you, comparable to Christ? What are your sufferings — contrasted with His? And what was there in the unparalleled greatness and intensity of His sufferings — to disqualify Him from entering with the warmest love and deepest sympathy into yours?

Suffering for His sake, or suffering His will — He is with you to sustain, to mitigate, to sanctify. It is *given*to you not only to believe — but also to *suffer*for Christ. Removed from the active sphere of your Christianity — the sphere and the service which, perhaps, you too fondly idolized — He has placed you in the *school of passive endurance* — a position the most irksome and trying to you. Look into the burning, fiery furnace of the three children of Israel: "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed — and the fourth looks like the Son of God!" (Daniel 3:25) So is Christ with you in suffering. You shall pass through the *furnace* — the *flames*only destroying your bonds and setting you free from some dominant sin, some potent spell, some slavish fear — bringing you more fully into the happy, holy, realization of your adoption, pardon, and acceptance of God. Treading that furnace at your side, controlling its flames, tempering its heat — is the same Son of God who trod it with them, and who says to you, "Surely, I am with you always!"

The blessed Savior is never more with His people than in suffering. He himself has been a sufferer, and He knows how to pity His people when they suffer; and if best for them — He can send them quick relief.

***~~Chapter 9. Christ in RETIREMENT~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is ever with you — in *retirement*and *solitude*. It was in this path of *loneliness*, consecrated to contemplation and prayer — that our blessed Lord was the most effectually trained and girded for His mission of love. He frequently and habitually sought retirement. Sequestered from the world, withdrawn from His disciples — He would thread the mountain crags and seek in its deep ravines and hidden recesses — the solitary place for prayer. Entering that lonely garden "over the brook Kedron," amidst its hallowed shades, its leafy grottoes, and its solemn stillness — He spent the night preceding his crucifixion in agonizing prayer, imploring strength from His Father for the morrow.

How simple and concise, yet how pregnant with meaning, is the narrative of Christ's habits of solitude: "And in the morning, rising up a great while lefore day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." How holy and instructive, and how melting — the pathos of this spectacle! Child of solitude! whose social position, or whose mental idiosyncrasy, or whose refined and sensitive nature, or whose bodily infirmities — separate you from your fellows, cloister you from the world — oh, your path was trodden by your Lord! He walked it before you, and He will delight to come, and by the soothing of His love, and the succourings of His grace, and the manifestations of His glory — re-tread again, those footprints He has left upon your shaded way, cheering and comforting you with His presence.

Oh, you cannot be alone! You are alone *with Christ!*Blessed *loneliness*, hallowed *solitude* — shared and sweetened and sanctified by Jesus! Around that sleepless pillow, by that couch of pain, in that room of stillness — Christ's presence hovers. Holy are the *lessons*which He will now teach you; sweet are the *truths*which He will now unfold to you; soothing are the *words*which He will now speak to you; unutterable the blessings, into the experience of which He will now bring your soul.

It has pleased Him, perhaps, to deny you home and friends and means of grace — thus severing and separating you from all, but Himself. Be it so — He still is yours. In *separation*and *solitude —*He will unfold to you the secret of His covenant, the secret of His love. And now your soul, unclasping her pinions, rises nearer to heaven, nearer to God. Disengaged from the world, severed from the creature, cut off from resources — Christ will have more of your heart, and you will have more of His, than ever. Solitude shared with His presence and sunned with His smile; supplies more immediately traced to His hand — will increase your knowledge of God, strengthen your drooping faith, deepen your personal holiness, and give development, symmetry, and perfection to your entire Christian character. And when you emerge from it, thus trained and disciplined — you will go forth to active duty, "as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race."

***~~Chapter 10. Christ in BEREAVEMENT~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is ever with you — in the hour of

 *bereavement*. He, too, drank of this *bitter cup*. He does not offer you a heart unacquainted with your grief. He had much to do with death when on earth. He sympathized with its sorrow, awoke its slumbers, robbed it of its prey, became its Victim, and then its Victor! He has permitted this bereavement to visit you. Not without His will and His purpose of love — has He smitten you with this woe, visited you with this loss. Has your Heavenly Father written you a *widow*, an *orphan*, childless, friendless? Has He removed the *joy*of your heart, the *light*of your home, the *hope*of your family, the strong and beautiful *staff*upon which you leaned for support? Is your door darkened with the funeral that bears from its threshold, all that was so fondly loved and precious?

Oh, deem not yourself forsaken, desolate, and bereft! Christ was never *nearer*to you, than now. The Christ who bedewed the turf of Lazarus's grave with tears of bereaved affection for the dead, and of sacred sympathy with the living — is spiritually at this moment, by your side! He offers you a *heart*touched with your grief, throbbing with a love that more than compensates for the beloved one now cold in death! He offers you an *arm*that shall be equal in its strength and support to your emergency! He offers you a *shield*that will encircle your person, your position, and your interests — infinitely more potent and safe than that which at one fell stroke God has laid low. Christ is sensibly, and manifestly with you now — ah wish not to displace Him by recalling the *treasure*from which you have parted.

It is recorded of the amiable and pious Fenelon, that in the eulogy he pronounced over the Dauphin, his illustrious pupil and friend, as the corpse shrouded with the pall was placed in the church before the pulpit, where, "Lovely in death, the beauteous ruin lay!" he uttered these words; "There lies the hope of his father! the delight of his court! the object of the nation's joyful anticipation! But so convinced am I of his happy state, that, if the turning of a straw would bring him back, I would not turn that straw."

Weeping mourner! bereaved Christian! in the bright sunshine of hope which bathes the coffined remains of "one so dear," read this holy lesson of *cheerful acquiescence*with the will of your Father, and express your perfect satisfaction in the eternal happiness of the departed one now sweetly sleeping in Jesus. If the turning of a straw would recall him from the realms of glory — would you be willing to turn that straw? This new, deeper, and darker sorrow — shall bring Jesus with it.

Its *anguish*will be solaced by His love,
its *loneliness*will be shared by His presence,
its *gloom*will be brightened with His smile,
its *calamity*will be sanctified by His grace, and

all its new-born exigencies will be met by His boundless resources of wisdom, power, and love. "Surely, I am with you always!"

Christ is specially with His people in bereavement. In the sad hour when the heart is full of desolation, His voice is heard saying, "Let not your heart be troubled." We may be despoiled of the heart's richest treasures — and yet Jesus may fill it with His richest consolations.

***~~Chapter 11. Christ in SICKNESS~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is ever with you — in *sickness*. There are some trials which in an especial manner bring Christ near to us. There is a *secret*in all sorrow — there is a deep secret in sickness. To whom can the sufferer confide it? The disease, perhaps, perplexes the judgment or baffles the skill of the physician. The nervous irritability, the mental sensitiveness, the extreme weakness, the acute agony which renders the sound of the gentlest footfall too powerful for the frame — may be but little understood by the most considerate, tender watchers at your side. They, perhaps — but little know what heroic fortitude, what patient endurance of spirit — lie concealed beneath all this uncomplaining suffering, what an incessant conflict is waging, and by what a superhuman struggle — the mastery is obtained of the mind over the body, and of God's grace over both.

How difficult it is to suppress irritation, and how hard to express gratitude, when even the *smile of love*and the *tear of compassion*can awaken no responsive feeling — where all is pain, uneasiness, and despondency!

But Christ is ever with you in your sickness! You may not always be sensible of it. Your physical infirmities may absorb all thought and consciousness, but that of suffering and languor, depriving you of the sensible enjoyment of the Lords presence. Notwithstanding, He is at your side, watching you with sleepless love, supporting with His own grace — the spiritual depression of your sou; and mitigating with His own power — the anguish of your bodily sufferings.

Think of the human and tender considerateness of Christ! He knows your frame, and remembers that you are dust, and does not exact and expect from you, more than you are capable of experiencing. Blessed sickness — that leads the mind more fully into the conscious presence of Christ — that pillows the restless head upon His changeless love — that realizes the encircling of His omnipotent arm beneath the sinking frame — that attunes the discordant will into sweeter and more perfect harmony with His — that gently molds the soul to His own meek and patient spirit! Oh, holy lessons, precious truths, costly blessings — learned and experienced on a bed of sickness and of suffering! And were this the only blessing — the clinging, soothing, sustaining presence of Christ with the sick one He loves, it were enough.

***~~Chapter 12. Christ in TEMPTATION~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is ever with you — in *temptation*. The hour of temptation in the believer's experience, is one in which he may especially and safely rely upon the nearness to him of the Lord. Tried Himself in this crucible, as none ever were — He is prepared by all the workings of His power, all the restraints of His grace, and all the sympathy of His love — to support and deliver those who are tempted. Tempted in all points as you are — He knows how to foil the adversary, to quench the fiery dart, and to enable you, the solitary and the weak one — to put to flight ten thousand foes.

Tempted believer! your faith in the *truth*of the Bible, your confidence in the *God*of the Bible, your loyalty to the *Savior*of the Bible, your acceptance of the *salvation*of the Bible, your comfort from the *promises*of the Bible, your enjoyment of the *hope*of the Bible — assailed and tampered with by Satan — fear not! Greater is He who is with you — than those who are against you. "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation." Take heart, then, tempted believer! you shall come forth from the fiery furnace, from this painful discipline, of which all the saints of God are partakers — with your *faith*more firmly grounded, your *love*more deeply rooted, your *heart*more thoroughly purified, and your *hope*of glory more unclouded.

All the more precious to your heart, will be that Divine Intercessor for His tempted ones, who says, "Satan has desired to have you that he might sift you as wheat — but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." O you Satan-tempted soul, "Surely, I am with you always!"

***~~Chapter 13 Christ in ADVERSITIES~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

In the temporal calamities and adversities of this life, in the vicissitudes of commerce, in the pressure of poverty — it is equally our privilege to plead in prayer and faith, this appropriate and precious promise of the Savior, and invoke His interposition, support, and aid.

Our Lord, when on earth, never showed Himself indifferent to the temporal necessities of man. We read that He had *compassion*on the multitude, because they had nothing to eat; and in the exercise of His sympathy, and in the interposition of His power — fed thousands with bread. He is still the same today.

Have your commercial transactions met with a reverse? Are you actually under the pressure of poverty — your wife and your little ones crying for bread? Go in prayer, my brother, and plead in childlike faith this gracious promise of Jesus, "Surely, I am with you always," and you shall not plead in vain.

Ah, yes! He has sent, He has permitted this calamity but to show you how near He is to you, how He will, as of old, tenderly compassionate your need, and then, in the boundlessness of His divine resources, abundantly supply it. See Christ, and Christ alone — in your present distress. Bow uncomplainingly, cheerfully, to His will. Lean confidingly, unwaveringly upon His arm. Trust His goodness, faithfulness, and power. And, oh, if this temporal calamity, this worldly sorrow — but draws your soul to Christ; if now you are aroused to prayer, and are led to turn to God, to seek spiritual blessing, the "bread of life," without which you perish, the "true riches" of grace on earth and of glory in heaven — then through eternity you will praise the Savior for the overwhelming calamity which saved your soul, as by fire.

Turn now, amid crushed hopes, wrecked fortune, the biting and the cries of poverty — to Him whose providence can cause the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil not utterly to fail, and whose grace can so sanctify your affliction and chasten your sorrow — as to make this present adversity the sweetest, holiest, costliest blessing of your life.

Yes! Christ is with you always — all your days! He is with you in the inexperience and temptations of your *youth* — to counsel and keep you! He is with you in the cares and anxieties of *manhood* — to sustain and soothe you! He is with you the feebleness, infirmity, and loneliness of *old age* — to be your staff and comfort. Christ is ever with you in *widowhood* — to vindicate your nights and cheer your desolation! He is with you in your lonely orphanage — to be to you as a father and a friend! He is with you in all the

 *adversities*and *vicissitudes*of life, its changing scenes and dying friends!

In the total absence of the kind *sympathy*for which you yearn, the *affection*for which you pant, the *counsel*and protection which you need — Christ will in your experience make good to the letter, His precious promise, "Surely, I am with you always!" Oh! to have His presence with you in these circumstances, you can well afford to part with all others.

You are perhaps anticipating a trial, and, like the disciples in the transfiguration — you fear as you enter into the cloud, the portentous shadow of which is darkening and closing around you. But how groundless were their fears! and equally so are yours. Christ was with them in the cloud, and a Father's voice issued from its bosom. Never were they more honored, or more safe. The same Christ, the same almighty, loving Friend — is with you in the *cloud*which now you so much dread. Oh, trust your trembling soul to Him!

Is it the *heart's wrench*you fear? Is it *mental despondency*you dread? Is it *bodily suffering*from which you shrink? Is it *temporal loss*you anticipate? "I am with you always!" is the soothing, assuring promise with which Jesus would have you meet it. He will strengthen, sustain, soothe, and comfort you — with His blissful presence at the moment of the trial. Trust Him now! He never yet belied Himself, never broke this precious promise in a solitary instance.

"As your day — so shall your strength be." "As your day!" His *presence*will dissipate the gloom, quell the fear, hush the murmur, deaden the suffering; and, thus encircled by His arms — He will bear you through it, to the eternal praise and glory of His name!

In all our distresses and adversities — Christ is ever with us. Friend of sinners! Lord of saints! my trembling spirit shrinks; I fear as I enter into this cloud! Be sensibly near me. Let me feel Your hand, hear Your voice, realize Your presence — then shall I fear no evil, for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff will support and comfort me. "Surely, I am with you; I will be with you. Fear not." Enough, my gracious Lord! I will now enter into the cloud; I will gird me for the trial, and, supported by Your grace and soothed by Your love — will glorify You in the fire!

***~~Chapter 14. Christ in DEATH~~***

"Surely, I am with you always — even unto the end of the world!" Matthew 28:20

Christ is with you — in the hour and article of *death*. Never did a believer in Jesus die alone! Alone he may be as to all human aid and Christian sympathy. But he cannot be really and actually alone; for, if ever Christ fulfils this exceeding great and precious promise, "I am with you always" — it is when His blood-bought, ransomed saint enters and passes through the shaded valley. He is with you to speak the promises, to mete out the grace, to stifle fear, to repel the tempter, to apply the blood, to strengthen faith, and to waken the echoes of the silent valley with the music of His voice: "I am with you."

Amid the prostration of earthly hopes, when unable to glance one thought on a dark future, when the stricken spirit, like a wounded bird, lies struggling in the dust, with broken wing and wailing cry, longing for pinions to fly away from a weary world, to the rest and quiet of the grave; in that hour of earthly dissolution, He who has the keys of death at His belt, nay, who has tasted death Himself, and better still, who has conquered it — draws near in touching tenderness, saying: "Surely, I am with you! I am with you to cheer you, to comfort you, to support and sustain you! I, who once wept at a grave, am here to weep with you! I will be at your side in all that trying future; I will make my grace sufficient for you, and my promises precious to you, and my love better than all earthly affection. I am the strength of your heart and your portion forever!"

In summary, Oh! seek much, living and dying — of the *sensible presence*of Christ! Let this be the grand, essential character of your religion: a religion, the essence, the sunshine of which is the ever conscious presence of Jesus. Walk daily at His side. Cultivate confidential transactions with Him. Allow no sin to grieve Him, no distrust to wound Him, no coldness, shyness, or distance of fellowship to lessen one throb, to suppress one desire, to congeal one current, or to prevent one act of your love. As his disciple and follower, separate yourself from the world, and bear His cross after Him boldly and uncompromisingly, yet meekly and heroically. Be happy in all His dealings with you; all that He sends or withholds, gives or removes — for He has said, "I will never leave you, nor ever forsake you!" No! He will be with you until He brings you home to glory! Precious presence of Christ on earth! it is the dawn of glory, the pledge of heaven, the foretaste of celestial bliss, the first-fruits of the golden harvest of eternity!