**Counsel and Help**

J. R. Miller, 1907

CHOICE EXCERPTS

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**A living, loving, personal Savior**

We are in the habit of saying that Christ saved
us by dying for us on the Cross. In an important
sense this is true. We never could have been
saved, if He had not died for us.

But we are actually saved by our relationship to  **a living, loving, personal Savior**—into whose
hands we commit all the interests of our lives;
and who becomes our friend, our helper, our
keeper, our burden bearer—our all in all.

Christian faith is not merely laying our *sins* on
the Lamb of God and trusting to His one great
sacrifice; it is the laying of *ourselves* on the living,
loving heart of one whose friendship becomes
thenceforward the sweetest joy of our lives!

"The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith
 in the Son of God, who loved me and gave
 Himself for me!" Galatians 2:20

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**Inspirations to beautiful living**

The beauty of Christ in a human life—is not merely
a *heavenly yearning*. It is intensely practical. It is . . .
  more than *religious sentimentality*,
  more than *devout feeling*,
  more than *holy aspiration*.

*True spiritual longing* draws the whole life upward
with it. True holiness does not unfit people for living
well in this world. It has its visions of Christ—but it
brings them down to brighten its daily path and to
become **inspirations to beautiful living**. It has its
joyful emotions—but they become impulses to s*elf
denial* and *patient work* for the Master.

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**The divine philosophy for peaceful living**

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Genesis 18:14

"I know that You can do all things; no plan of
 Yours can be thwarted!" Job 42:2

Everything which threatens to give us anxiety—is to be
taken at once to God. Nothing is too **great**to carry to
Him. Does not He bear up all worlds? Does not He rule
over all the affairs of the universe? Is there any matter
in our life, however great it may seem to *us*—too hard
for *Him* to manage? Is any perplexity too difficult for
Him to resolve? Is any human despair too dark for Him
to illumine with hope? Is there any tangle or confusion
out of which He cannot extricate us?

Nothing is too **small**to carry to Him. Is He not our
Father, and is He not sincerely interested in whatever
concerns us? There is not one of the countless things
which fly like specks of dust all through our daily life,
tending to vex and fret us—that we may not take to God.

The Scriptures prescribe a *cure for anxious care*. **The
divine philosophy for peaceful living** says: "Do not
be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer
and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests
to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all
understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds
in Christ Jesus!" Philippians 4:6-7

Refer every disturbing thing to Him—that He may bear
the burden of it. "Cast your burden on the Lord, and
He will support you!" Psalms 55:22. "Casting all your
care upon Him; for He cares for you!" 1 Peter 5:7

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**Life is hard for most people**

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient,
 bearing with one another in love." Ephesians 4:2

We should train ourselves to such regard, to such
respect for others, that we shall never hurt the heart
of one of God's creatures, even by a disdainful look!
Our love ought also to be patient. Our neighbor may
have his faults. But we are taught to bear with one
another's infirmities. If we knew the story of men's
lives, the hidden loads and burdens which they are
often carrying, the unhealed sore in their heart—we
would have most gentle patience with them. **Life is
hard for most people**; certainly hard enough without
our adding to its burdens by our censoriousness, our
uncharity, our jeering and contempt. "Therefore, as
God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe
yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility,
gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12

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**You will have many trials and sorrows**

"You may have peace in Me. Here on earth **you will
 have many trials and sorrows**." John 16:33

There is no life into which do not come many things
calculated to cause anxiety and disturbance of mind:
there are great sorrows;
there are perplexities as to duty;
there are disappointments and losses;
there are annoyances and hindrances;
there are chafings and irritations in ordinary life;
there are countless petty cares and frets.

All of these tend to break the hearts' peace and to
disturb its quiet. Yet there is no lesson which is urged
more continuously or more earnestly in the Scriptures,
than that a Christian should never worry, or let anxious
care oppress his heart. He is to live without disturbance
and with unbroken peace—even in the midst of the most
trying experiences. "The peace of God, which transcends
all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds
in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7. "Let the peace of Christ
rule in your hearts." Colossians 3:15.

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 ***Blue* glasses**

One way to train ourselves to true and cheerful views
of life, is resolutely to refuse to be frightened at *shadows*,
or to see *trouble* where there is none. Half or more of the
things which most worry us have no existence, except in
a disordered imagination. Many things which in the dim
distance look like *shapes of peril*, when we draw near to
them, melt into *harmless shadows*, or even change into
forms of friendliness!

Much of the gloomy tinge which many people see on
everything, is caused by the color of the glasses through
which they look. We put on our ***blue* glasses**, and then
wonder what makes everything ***blue*** and dismal. The
greater part of our discontent is caused by some imaginary
trouble, which never really comes. "Fix your thoughts on
what is true and honorable and right. Think about things
that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things
that are excellent and worthy of praise." Philippians 4:8

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**His treasured possession!**

"I am the Good Shepherd; I know My sheep." John 10:14

When we think of the millions who are in Christ's flock,
it seems strange to us that He knows and calls each one
by name. Yet the truth is made very clear in Scripture.

Every mother knows her own children by name, and it
is as easy for the Good Shepherd to know each of His
millions by name, as for any human mother to know
each of her little children.

There is comfort in this teaching. We are not lost in
the crowd. Each one of of God's children, is the special
object of His *love* and *thought* and *care!*

"Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have
 called you by name; you are Mine!" Isaiah 43:1

"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God.
 The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the
 peoples on the face of the earth to be His people,
 **His treasured possession!**" Deuteronomy 7:6

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**Truly beautiful and truly happy**

Only Christ can make any life, young or old—**truly
beautiful and truly happy**. Only He can cure the
heart's restless fever and give quietness and calmness.
Only He can purify that sinful fountain within us—our
corrupt nature, and make us holy. To have a peaceful
and blessed ending to life—we must live it with Christ.
Such a life grows brighter even to its close. Its last
days are the sunniest and the sweetest. The more
earth's joys fail—the nearer and the more satisfying
do the spiritual comforts become.

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***Christian peace***

"The *peace of God*, which transcends all understanding,
 will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
 Philippians 4:7

***Christian peace*** is the calm of the heart which is not
dependent on any external circumstances—and which
no circumstances, however full of danger or alarm, can
break. Its secret is—perfect trust in God. The lesson of
peace, is one that has to be learned in the school of life.

***Christian peace*** is not gotten by the changing of life's
conditions, so as to hide one away beyond the reach of
storm. Nor is it gained through the deadening of the
feelings and sensibilities—so that life's pains and trials
will no longer hurt the heart. Christian peace is a fruit
of the Holy Spirit.

"You may have *peace in Me*. Here on earth you will
 have many trials and sorrows." John 16:33

"Let the *peace of Christ* rule in your hearts." Col. 3:15

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**God often seems to be destroying His children**

"We also *rejoice in our sufferings*." Romans 5:3

We may learn to *bear* troubles submissively—but to
*rejoice* in them is something which to many seems
impossible. But the grace of Christ is equal even to this
strange task—enabling us to rejoice in our tribulations.
Thousands of Christians have done it.

The secret of rejoicing in suffering—is perfect trust
in the will and love of God. None can rejoice in pain
or loss, who have not a settled confidence in the
rightness of God's ways.

Someone tells how a *flute* is made. Here is a piece
of wood. It is solid and hard, and makes no sound.
Then a craftsman takes it and cuts holes in it and
makes a rift through it. It is by thus cutting as if
destroying it, that it is made into a flute which
gives forth sweet music.

Just so, **God often seems to be destroying His
children** by tribulations—but He is really preparing
them to give forth sweet music.

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**The tongue's power**

"The tongue has the power of life and death!"
     Proverbs 18:21

**The tongue's power** to do good is simply incalculable.
It can impart valuable knowledge; it can speak words
which will shine like lamps in darkened hearts; it can
pronounce kind sentences which will comfort sorrow,
or cheer despondency; it can breathe thoughts which
will arouse, inspire, and quicken heedless souls, and
even whisper the divine secret of the life-giving Gospel,
to those who are dead. What good we could do with our
tongues, if we would use them to the full limit of their
power for good, no one can compute!

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**How to wear chains for Christ**

"I am in chains for Christ." Philippians 1:13

Paul teaches us by example—**how to wear
chains for Christ**. He counted it a glory. It
was that *chained hand* which wrote the Epistle
to the Philippians—the most *cheerful* and *joyous*
of the Apostle's letters. Paul's *sweetest* songs
came from his *prison!*

We shall not likely have the privilege of wearing
literal chains for Christ—but there are many
*hindrances* and *limitations* and *hardships* in every
Christian life, which are really chains upon us:
  *Sickness* sometimes shuts us in.
*Poverty* binds the hands of many.
*Household cares* keep many a woman in chains.

Few Christians are absolutely free to do what
their hearts prompt them to do for Christ. We
should study Paul, and gather the lessons . . .
  of rejoicing,
  of cheerfulness,
  of contentment,
  of usefulness.
Paul's *prison* life was not idle. He continually
sent out blessings, from his place of captivity.
The influence poured out into all the world.
"I want you to know, brothers, that what has
happened to me has actually resulted in the
advancement of the gospel!" Philippians 1:12

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**Love, the Sweetener**

Love walks along life's ways with gentle step. Fragrant
flowers grow in its path, and the air is always sweeter
when it has passed by. Love is kindly, thoughtful, full
of pity, and compassionate. It has patience with human
faults, and looks with an eye of tender love on those
who have fallen. It is tolerant of others who, through
weakness, err or turn aside. It is forbearing and long
suffering. It meekly endures injury and wrong, giving
sweet love in return for the hurts of unkindness. It sees
eagerly and joyfully the good things in others, and has
a wide cloak of charity for their failings and sins. It is
merciful, forgiving not seven times only—but seventy
times seven. Conscious of its own faults and evils, it
is lenient toward the blemishes it sees in others.

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**You say you want to be like Christ**

**You say you want to be like Christ**. You pray
to Him to imprint His own image on your heart.

The monks *thought* that they were like Christ,
when they went into the wilderness, away from
men, to live in cold cells or caves.

But "to serve"—that is *the Christ-like thing*.
Instead of fleeing away from men—we are to
live among men, to serve them, to live for them,
or seek to bless them, to do good, to give our
lives. "The Son of Man did not come to be served,
but **to serve**, and to give His life a ransom for
many." Matthew 20:28

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 **Choosing Amusements**

Christ does not frown upon pure and innocent pleasures.
He Himself went, when He was on the earth—to places of
enjoyment and festivity. He attended a marriage feast,
and contributed to the gladness of the guests. He accepted
invitations to family feasts. There is not a trace of asceticism
in all the story of His life. And He would do the same if He
were here now. Pleasures which are pure, innocent, and
helpful, or which contribute to the joy and good of others
—He would enjoy. And what He would do if He were in our
place—we, as His followers, may do.

But there are amusements in which we may be sure He
would not indulge. A tender spiritual instinct will readily
discriminate between those in which He would engage—
and those in which He would not engage. This seems a
reasonable and legitimate test for us, His followers— *What Would Jesus Do?*

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**Love doing little things**

"Love is kind." 1 Corinthians 13:4

Kindness is **love doing little things**, things that
seem scarcely worth doing, and yet which mean
much to those for whom they are wrought.

Kindness lends a hand when another is burdened.
Kindness  speaks the cheerful word when a heart
is discouraged. Kindness gives a cup of cold water
when one is thirsty. It is always doing good to
somebody. Kindness goes about performing almost
unconsciously its loving ministries, with a touch of
blessing for everybody. It scatters its small nameless
favors everywhere. Few qualities do more to make
a life bright and beautiful. "Be kind and compassionate
to one another." Ephesians 4:32

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**His love alone; His hand alone**

"The Father of compassion and the God
 of all comfort." 2 Corinthians 1:3

If we creep into God's bosom, and nestle there
like a tired child in the mother's arms, and let
God's love enfold and embrace us, and flow into
our heart—however deep the sorrow may be—we
shall be comforted and satisfied. Even if every
source of human joy has been cut off, and we
are left utterly bereft, we can still find in God,
that which will suffice. **His love alone**—is great
enough to fill our heart, and **His hand alone**—
has skill to bind up our wounds.

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**The best use we can make of our life**,
is to live so that we shall be a blessing to
everyone we meet.

"In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha,
 who was always *doing good* and helping the
 poor." Acts 9:36

"Jesus went around *doing good*." Acts 10:38

"Let us not become weary in *doing good*, for at
 the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do
 not give up." Galatians 6:9

"For it is God's will that by *doing good* you
 should silence the ignorant talk of foolish
 men." 1 Peter 2:15

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**The arms of God**

Wherever we see Christ in Scripture, He is imparting
blessing as the sun imparts light and warmth. While
He was here on the earth, He was always reaching
out His hand to give a blessing to some life that sorely
needed it. Now it was on the children's heads, now on
the leper, now on the blind eyes, now on the sick, now
on the dead—that He laid those gracious hands, and
always He left some rich gift of blessing.

We remember that one day when those gentle hands
were drawn out by cruel enemies, and with iron nails
fastened to the Cross; yet even then it was in blessing
that they were extended, for it was for our sins they
were transfixed on the cruel cross. As we see them
thus stretched out as wide as they could reach—the
posture suggests *the wideness of the divine mercy*.
Thus, **the arms of God** are open to the utmost to
receive all who will come to seek refuge. There is
room for the worst sinners.

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**True self-denial**

**True self-denial** is the renouncing of self and the
yielding of the whole life to the will of Christ. It
is self coming down from the life's throne, laying
crown and scepter at the Master's feet and thence
forth submitting the whole life to His sway. It is
living all the while, not to please ourselves, not to
advance our own personal interests—but to please
our Lord and do His work. It is denying to ourselves
anything that is sinful in His sight. It is the glad
making of any sacrifice that loyalty to Him requires.
It is the giving up of any pleasure or comfort for
the good of others, which Christ may demand. The
essential thing is that SELF gives way altogether
to Christ, as the motive of life.

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**Other people have feelings**

Our neighbors are about us all the time, needing
our love. Indeed, they touch our lives so continually,
that we must guard our every look, word, and act—
lest we hurt some sensitive spirit. Some people seem
to forget that **other people have feelings**. They
are constantly saying words and doing things which
give pain.

True love is thoughtful. We ought to train our hearts
to the most delicate sense of kindness, that we may
never even in jest give pain to any other human being.
Our neighbors have hearts, and we owe to everyone of
them—the beggar we meet on the street, the poor
wretch we find crawling in the mire of sin's debasement,
and the enemy who flings his insults in our face—to
everyone we owe the love that is thoughtful, gentle,
and gives no hurt.

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**If earthly homes were perfect**

One reason, no doubt, why our lives are so full
of experiences of need, is that we may learn to
walk with Christ. If earth's human companionships
satisfied us, and if we never lost them, we might
not care for Christ's. **If earthly homes were
perfect**, and if they never crumbled, we might
not grow homesick for heaven.

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**The school of adversity and hardship**

The tree which grows where tempests toss its boughs
and bend its trunk, often almost to breaking—is more
firmly rooted than the tree which grows in sequestered
valley where no storm ever brings stress or strain.

The same is true in life. The grandest character is grown
in hardship. Softness springs out of luxury. The best men
the world ever reared have been brought up in **the school
of adversity and hardship**. Besides, it is no heroism to
live patiently where there is no provocation, bravely where
there is no danger, calmly where there is nothing to
perturb. Not the hermit's cave—but the heart of busy life,
*tests* character, as well as *makes* character. If we can live
patiently, lovingly, and cheerfully amid all our frets and
irritations day after day, year after year, that is grander
heroism than the farthest famed military exploits, for he
who rules his own spirit is better than he who takes a city!

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**The secret of happiness**

Why should I hide my one talent in the earth,
because it is not ten? Why should I make my
life a failure in the place allotted to me, while
I sit down and dream over unattainable things?
Why should I miss my one golden opportunity,
however small—while I envy some other person,
what seems his greater opportunity?

Countless people make themselves wretched—by
vainly trying to grasp *far away joys*; while they
leave untouched and despised—the numberless
little joys and bright bits of happiness which lie
close to their hand. As one has written:
"Stretching out his hand to catch the *stars* above
—man forgets the *flowers* at his feet, so beautiful,
so fragrant, and so multitudinous and so various."

**The secret of happiness** lies in extracting pleasure
from the things we have—while we enter no mad,
vain chase after impossible dreams.

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**Wrought only in tears and suffering**

Nothing beautiful or worthy in any department of
life, was ever achieved or attained without toil.
"Wherever a great is done, there also has been
Gethsemane." The lovely works of human creation
which people linger before with admiring wonder,
have all cost a great price. Someone's heart's blood
has gone into every great picture, into every stanza
of sweet song, into every paragraph which inspires
men. It has been noted that the root of the word
bless, is the word for blood. We can bless another in
deep and true ways—only by giving of our life-blood.
Anything which will do real good, can be **wrought
only in tears and suffering**.

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**Getting alone with God**

There are some people who claim that they can pray
and commune with God just as well in one, place as
in another. They do their praying while they walk about
and while they work. They see no use in **getting alone
with God**, to pray. Surely, if anyone could pray well in
a crowd, or while engaged in work—Jesus could.

No doubt He did hold communion with His Father even
 in His busiest hours—but this did not meet all the needs
and longings of His soul. He left the crowd, left even His
own disciples, and retired into places where no eye but
God's could see Him, where no human footfall or voice
could interrupt the quiet of His soul, and where He would
be absolutely alone. Surely if Jesus required such conditions
in praying—we do too. We need to find a place for prayer,
in which nothing can intrude to break the continuity of
though or devotion. "But **when you pray**, go into your
private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father
 who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret
will reward you." Matthew 6:6

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**See Christ in each event**

We ought to learn that Jesus is in every providence
which comes to us. He does not come in the **sunshine**
only. Quite as frequently it is in the **storm** that He draws
near. It is our duty as Christians to train ourselves to **see
Christ in each event**. Then whether it is *sorrow* or *joy*
which knocks at our door—we shall give it like loving
welcome, knowing that Jesus Himself is veiled in whatever
form it is, which enters. Then we shall find that when we
welcome Him in the somber garments of pain—He has
always a rich blessing for our lives!

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**Another's heart is breaking**

Sometimes it is poverty which stands begging at our
gate—and financial help is needed. But a thousand
times more frequently, it is not money—but something
else more precious, which we must give. It may be
loving sympathy.

Sorrow is before us. **Another's heart is breaking**.
Money would be of no use; it would be only a bitter
mockery. But we can hold to the sufferer's lips a cup
filled out of our own heart, which will give new strength.

Or it is the anguish of a life struggle, a human
Gethsemane, beside which we are called to watch.
We can give no actual aid—the soul must fight its
battles alone; but we can be as the angel who
ministered in our Lord's Gethsemane—imparting
strength and helping the weary struggler to win
the victory.

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**Sacred duties**

It is possible to live a very laborious life filled
with intense activities—and yet never, from
youth to old age, do one deed which Christ
accepts as service. It is possible even to live
a life of what is called *religious service*, full of
what are regarded as **sacred duties**, and yet
never in one thing, truly serve Christ.

The *heart* may never have been given to Him at
all. Or the *motives* may have been wrong. That
which makes any act *distinctively* a Christian act
—is that it is done in the name of Christ, and to
please Him!

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**The impression of a holy and separate life**

"I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer
 your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to
 God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not
 conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but
 be transformed by the renewing of your mind."
    Romans 12:1-2

If we are Christians, we are not of this world—we
belong to the kingdom of heaven. It is very easy for
us, being **in** the world, to become **of** it—to let our
lives grow like the world. But this is not the way to
make ourselves a living sacrifice to God. "It is not
conformity that we need," says Bushnell; "it is not
being able to beat the world in its own way; but it
is to stand *apart* and *above* it, and to produce **the
impression of a holy and separate life**. This
alone is safety and success."

Instead, then, of conforming to the world, taking the
world's color—our duty is to seek to be transformed
into the heavenly life. The word "transformed" means
to be transfigured, that is, to become bright and shining
in our life. The secret of it is given in the words, "the
renewing of your minds." The candle is to be lighted
within our hearts and minds—that its beams may shine
out through our life, making it glow!

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**The joy which the Holy Spirit gives**

"The fruit of the Spirit is . . . **joy**"  Galatians 5:22

Joyfulness is everywhere commanded as a Christian
duty. *Discontent* is a most detestable fault. *Morbidness*
is a sin. *Fretfulness* grieves God. It tells of unbelief
within the heart. It destroys the soul's peace. It
disfigures the beauty of Christian character. It not
only makes us soured and unhappy in our own hearts
—but its influence on others is harmful. We have no
right to project the gloom of our discontent over any
other life. Our ministry is to be ever toward joy. There
is nothing so depressing in its effect upon others, as
morbidness. Hence, for the sake of those among whom
we live, and upon whose lives we are forever unconsciously
either casting shadows or pouring sunshine, we should
seek to learn this Christian art of contentment.

Joy brightens a life. It shines in the face like sunlight.
It makes the eyes sparkle.

But what is this joy—which is a fruit of the Spirit?
Anybody can be joyous when all things go well,
when health is good, and business is prosperous,
and the cup of love runs over, and the circle of
friends is unbroken. **The joy which the Holy
Spirit gives**, lives on in the heart when all earthly
sources of gladness have failed. It hides like a
*rainbow* in the midst of the darkest *cloud*.

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 **Happiness or wretchedness?**

Everyone carries in himself, the sources of his own  **happiness or wretchedness**. Circumstances have
really very little to do with our felicity. It matters little
in the determination of one's degree of enjoyment,
whether he lives in a cottage or a palace. It is the
state of the heart, after all, which in largest measure
gives the color to our skies, and the tone to the music
we hear.

A **happy** heart sees rainbows and brilliance everywhere,
even in darkest clouds, and hears sweet strains of song
even amid the loudest wailing of the storm. But a **sad**
heart, unhappy and discontented, sees spots in the
brightest day, specks in the rarest fruits, and hears
discords and jarring notes in the heavenliest music,
and something with which to find fault in the most
perfect of God's works.

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**The meekness and gentleness of Christ**
(J. R. Miller, "A Gentle Heart" 1896)

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart." Matthew 11:29

"By **the meekness and gentleness of Christ**." 2 Corinthians 10:1

For thirty-three years Jesus went about among men—doing kindly things. He had a gentle *heart*, and gentleness flowed out in his *speech*. He spoke words which throbbed with tenderness. There was never any uncertainty about the heart-beat in the words which fell from the lips of Jesus. They throbbed with sympathy and tenderness.

The people knew always, that Jesus was their friend. His life was full of rich helpfulness. No wrong or cruelty ever made him ungentle. He scattered kindness wherever he moved.

One day they nailed those gentle hands to a cross! It was a sore loss to the poor and the sad, and there must have been grief in many a household. But while the personal ministry of Jesus was ended by his death, the influence of his life went on. He had set the world a new example of love. He had taught lessons of patience and meekness which no other teacher had ever given. He had imparted new meaning to human affection. He had made love the law of his kingdom. These teachings of Jesus fell into the world’s unloving, unkindly life, and at once began to change it into gentleness. Wherever the gospel has gone, these saying of the great Teacher have been carried, and have fallen into people’s hearts, leaving there their blessings of gentleness.

The influence of the death of Jesus on this world's life is immeasurable. The cross is like **a great heart of love beating at the center of the world**, sending its pulsings of tenderness into all lands. The life of Christ beats in the hearts of his followers, and all who love him have something of his gentleness. The love of Jesus, kindles love in every believing heart. That is the lesson set for all of us in the New Testament. We are taught that we should love as Jesus loved, that we should be kind as he was kind, that his meekness, patience, thoughtfulness, selflessness, should be reproduced in us.

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**A little like heaven!**(J. R. Miller, "A Gentle Heart" 1896)

There is need for the lesson of gentleness in homes. There love's sweetest flowers should bloom. There we should always carry our purest and best affections. No matter how heavy the burdens of the day have been, when we gather home at nightfall we should bring only cheer and gentleness. No one has any right to be ungentle in his own home. If he finds himself in such a mood, he should go to his room—until it has vanished.

We should all try to learn the lesson of gentleness in our homes. It is the lesson that is needed to make the home-happiness **a little like heaven!** Home is meant to be a place to grow in. It is a school in which we should learn love in all its branches. It is not a place for selfishness or for self indulgence. It should never be a place where a man can work off his annoyances, after trying to keep polite and courteous to others, all the day. It is not a place for the opening of doors of heart and lips to let ugly tempers fly out at will. It is not a place where people can act as they feel, however unchristian their feelings may be, withdrawing the guards of self control, relaxing all restraints, and letting their worse tempers have sway.

We should be gentle above all—to those we love the best. There is an inner circle of affection to which each heart has a right, without robbing others. While we are to be gentle unto all men—never ungentle to any—there are those to whom we owe special tenderness. Those within our own home belong to this sacred inner circle.

We must make sure that **our home piety** is true and real, that it is of the spirit and life, and not merely in form. It must be love—love wrought out in thought, in word, in disposition, in act. It must show itself not only in patience, forbearance, and self control, and in sweetness under provocation; but also in all gentle thoughtfulness, and in little tender ways in all the family interactions.

No amount of good religious teaching will ever make up for the lack of affectionateness in parents toward children. A gentleman said the other day, "My mother was a good woman. She insisted on her boys going to church and Sunday-school, and taught us to pray. But I do not remember that she ever kissed me. She was a woman of lofty principles—but cold and reserved—lacking in tenderness."

It does not matter how much Bible reading, and prayer, and catechism-saying, and godly teaching, there may be in a home. If gentleness is lacking, that is lacking which most of all, the children need in the life of their home. A child must have love. Love is to its life, what sunshine is to plants and flowers. No young life can ever grow to its best—in a home without gentleness.

"So Abraham called that place *Jehovah-Jireh*— **The Lord Will Provide!**" Genesis 22:14

Write deep in your heart this New Year’s day, this word
of sublime confidence, *Jehovah-Jireh*. It tells you that
you can trust God always; that no promise of His ever
fails; that He does all things well; that out of all seeming
loss and destruction of human hopes, He brings blessing.

"You have never traveled this way before." Joshua 3:4.
There will be sorrows and joys, failures and successes,
this year, just as there were last year. You cannot forecast
individual experiences. You cannot see a step before your
feet! Yet *Jehovah-Jireh* calls you to enter the new year
with calm trust. It bids you put away all anxieties and
forebodings—"The Lord will provide!"