Talks about Christian Living

By George Everard, 1881

PREFACE
The following pages are intended to assist Christian people in the life of faith and holiness. They show its essential principle as deriving all strength from union with the Lord Jesus. They point out the difficulties that lie in the way, and also the means by which they may be overcome. They touch on the Christian in the family and in business, and in what spirit he should act so as to glorify God. They refer also to the sorrows we must look for, and the exceeding consolations provided to meet them. The necessity of steadfast continuance, of entire self-surrender, of progress, and of efforts to win the wanderer for God — is also enlarged upon, and the joyful end of a holy and devoted life closes the volume.

May the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus be given to each reader, that the words here written may prove helpful on the way to the kingdom.
George Everard

I Must Use Life well

I must use life well, because every moment of it is so precious. The minutes and hours of life are like the gold-dust which the goldsmith so carefully gathers together that none be lost.

"I have lost a day!" was the sorrowful lament of one who had learned the real value of time. If I waste my life I shall have only to blame myself that I am poor and lost, and undone forever. The laborer works hard early and late in seed-time and in harvest-time — and life is both one and the other.

I may now sow the good seed — the heavenly seed which shall hereafter afford me a rich growth of blessing. If I sow to the Spirit the seed of earnest prayers, holy thoughts, words spoken from the good treasure of a renewed heart, just and loving deeds and actions, efforts to do all the good in my power to all around — then shall I reap according as I have sown. And being saved only by the merit of my Savior, I shall likewise receive through His grace an unfading crown of glory.

But life is also my harvest-time. I may gather in sheaves for the garner of the Great Gardener. I may win souls for Christ, and every soul saved will bring far greater honor than attends any earthly success.

Life is very precious, and I dare not and will not throw any of it away!

I must also use life well because it will soon be over. My days and years will soon be spent, and I cannot recall them. My life is but a shadow — it is but a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. Even if I am spared to the full age of man, compared with the long life awaiting me hereafter, my life here is but as a moment. "You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath." [Psalm 39:5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2039.5)

An old man was traveling some years ago with a young lady in a coach. A word was spoken to him about his past life, and how it seemed to him as he looked back upon it.

With great earnestness he lifted up both hands and exclaimed, "It is as nothing! It is as nothing!" The word touched the heart of his fellow-traveler, and led her to a new view of the importance of life.

Let me endeavor then to remember how soon life will be gone, and be very careful to use well each precious moment.

If I had a little bucket of water, and no more could be obtained — how carefully should I watch that none of it ran to waste. Each drop I would reckon of great value. Such is my life. It is all I have. I must therefore lose none. I must squander none. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

But life is also very uncertain. I may have far less than I think. I may be looking forward to years to come, and yet I may have but a few months or weeks or days to live!

I remember a woman who said that some day she would begin to attend our village church. She was in middle age, and had lived a sadly wicked and abandoned life. She thought that she had time enough and to spare, to think of more serious subjects. She did indeed soon afterwards come to our village church — but how did she come? She was carried on men's shoulders, and then left in the silent grave. Only six weeks had passed since the day she promised that some time she would begin a new life. "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth!" [Proverbs 27:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2027.1)

Let me well consider how I can make the best use of life, and how I can improve it to the greatest advantage.

I must put first, or best, things first. Many people work very hard, and labor early and late, and yet at last they discover that it has been to little profit, because they have neglected the chief thing.

"What shall it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" "One thing is needful." "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." I must therefore first of all make sure of my salvation. I must come to Christ. I must confess the sins of my life past, and seek to be cleansed in His precious blood. I must ask for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to renew me unto holiness. I must watch against my besetting sins, and daily walk before God, and endeavor to do the things that are pleasing in His sight. I must search God's Holy Word continually, and pray for grace day by day to follow in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd. My aim must be that of the apostle, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord."

If I would make the best use of life, I must watch the moments and hours as they fly. I must avoid all sloth or idleness; I must not waste time in overmuch sleep or in profitless mirth. I must do heartily and with all my might, whatever work lies before me. I must cultivate the habit of filling up the niches of time by wholesome reading or by conversation that may edify others. I must take special care to spend well my Sundays and my leisure hours. It shall be my constant effort to get all the good I can, and to do all the good I can. I may be learning something every day that will assist me in the battle I have to fight and in the work I have to do.

And I may be able in some way to assist others. I may relieve some burdened, sorrowful heart by a few kindly words. I may find work in some portion the Lord's vineyard. I may teach the young, or visit the sick, or read to some aged one, the chapter of the Bible or the book that may suit their case. I will do what I can, and I will ask Him whose name is Counselor to show me the work He has for me to do.

So I trust my life will not be a lost one. When I am laid in my last earthly resting place, I trust my spirit will be with Christ in paradise. And though I can do but little compared with many others, I trust He will say to me at last: "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master!" [Matthew 25:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2025.23)

Read and Pray

A few years ago there lived an aged Christian woman, who lived very near to Christ and very closely followed her Lord. Her dress, though plain, was always neat and tidy, and the cottage where she lived alone was a pattern of cleanliness and order. So consistent was she in her life that the more she was known, the more was she valued and beloved by her neighbors. When in health, she was never absent from her place in church, nor from the Lord's Supper, where she rejoiced to meet with Christ's people, and to remember the Savior's dying love, and thus by faith to feed on the bread of life. If from any cause she was prevented being present at the monthly celebration of the communion, she never forgot to lay by her usual gift for the relief of those poorer than herself, and when next she came, she added it to that which she cast into the Lord's treasury.

The word of God was her constant friend and companion, and it cheered and comforted her in many a solitary hour. While she read it, she prayed much for heavenly light, and for the teaching of the Divine Spirit, "O Lord, open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law." "Send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me." Such was continually the burden of her prayer.

And as she had lived — so she died.

One day it was noticed that her shutters had not been opened, and after some delay it was thought advisable to force the door, lest she might be unwell, or some accident might have befallen her. When search was made, she was found in her chamber kneeling by the bedside with her Bible open before her. As the neighbors approached, they found she did not stir; she was stiff and cold, for while thus communing with God over His word, the call had come, and her spirit had taken its flight into the presence of her Lord! Face to face she now beheld Him whose word she had so greatly prized.

The life and death of this Christian woman may remind the reader of the necessity of much prayer in searching the Holy Scriptures. You may read your Bible every day, you may be able to repeat verse after verse, or even chapter after chapter, you may go over it again and again. Yet unless you ask God to teach you, and to write it on your heart by the Holy Spirit — it will profit you little. The prophet Isaiah speaks of those to whom "For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say to him, "Read this, please," he will answer, "I can't; it is sealed." [Isaiah 29:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2029.11)

It is exactly the same with God's word now. To very many, both learned and unlearned, it is like a sealed book. They see the words, but they do not discern the meaning. Or if they understand something of the meaning, they do not feel its mighty power. It does not convince them of their sin, it does not make them to know and love the Savior. And why is this? Because the veil is upon their heart.

I have read of an old Scotchman, "Blind Alic" as he was called, and this man, it was said, could repeat nearly the whole Bible from Genesis to the Revelation, and yet — and this is the sad part of the story — he was as blind in mind as he was as to his bodily eyesight — he continued to his life's end a stranger to the grace of God.

Reader, be sure you never neglect to pray whenever you take the Bible in your hand. It is only in this way that you will find real profit and comfort in reading it. Pray that you may understand whatever you read. If you read there of one who committed sin — then pray that the grace of God may preserve you, that you may never fall into the same snare. If you read of any one who exercised any particular grace, as faith, or repentance, or love, or patience, or obedience — then pray that the Spirit may plant the same grace in your heart. If you read any solemn warning or threatening — then pray that the curse or punishment spoken of may never light on you. If you read any gracious promise — then pray that God may make good the word to you. If you read anything of Christ, as the Good Shepherd, as the High Priest — then turn in prayer to Him, and ask Him to guide and guard you, to make you and keep you as one of His sheep, to bear your name before the Father, and to intercede on your behalf.

There is no part of Scripture that you cannot in some way turn into prayer, and the more you do so, the more you will find it like a well of living water. You will never fail to find help and refreshment from it.

Reader, may you learn to prize God's precious word, and to find it food and drink to your soul, as she did. Do not turn from this simple story with weariness, as if it were the old, old thing about reading the Bible. You know you have a soul to save. Christ is the only Savior of sinners. The Bible is the only book that tells us about the way of salvation. Do not say it is a difficult thing to read and understand that book. True, some things in it are dark and difficult, but the way of salvation is so plain, that the wayfaring man may not err therein. It tells us of Christ and His cross, of the gift of the Holy Spirit, of the new life, and the blessed hope of everlasting life. May it be yours to use the book aright, to meditate therein, and as you read to grow in the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord.

Living By Faith

I well remember the tenants of a humble cottage in a village in one of the eastern counties. The old couple who dwelt there had once known better days. But they were not left altogether without provision. They had an only son, who had risen to a position of competency, and he never neglected his aged parents. Very liberally did he contribute to their support, and spared nothing that would add to their comfort.

By-and-by the old man died, and the widow was left alone. And she had one earthly comfort: she was able to rely with confidence on the kindness and affection of her son. Though she had little means of her own, she never feared that she should lack anything so long as he lived. Shortly after her husband's death, her son wrote her a letter full of filial affection. He told her how deeply he felt for her, and how grieved he was that, in consequence of the great distance, he was unable to come over and spend a few days with her. Then he promised that he would pay the rent of her cottage, and send her amply enough for the supply of her needs. If ever she had any special need or difficulty, he assured her that if she would only write and tell him, he would do all in his power to assist her.

So the old lady lived upon her son, and was without anxiety. She had no care about the future. She had received many tokens of her son's affection, and knew that he loved her. She knew also that his means were sufficient, and that she could trust his promise. So she lived happily and peacefully, relying entirely upon the care which her son had for her.

I have often thought over the life of this aged woman and the conduct of her son. It affords a beautiful example of obedience to the fifth commandment. It were well if all children were in like manner to honor their parents, and to care for them and assist them in old age. Conduct like this brings no small recompense to the child. The reflection that everything has been done to contribute to the comfort of a mother and father will be no small satisfaction when the hour of separation comes.

But the life of this aged woman seemed also to me a sort of parable of the life which a Christian should lead. It seemed to me very clearly to illustrate the words of Paul: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

The Christian, like this woman, has no resources in himself. He has no stock of grace. He has no strength to meet temptation. He has no means of providing the supplies needful for the journey of life. He is poor and needy, frail, weak, and helpless. He has nothing to call his own but sin and misery.

But the Christian has One upon whose faithful love he can ever depend. He can say in his heart, "Christ has given a sure token of His love. He laid down His life for my sake, He gave Himself for me, and shed His precious blood to cleanse me from my guilt. He has brought me back after all my wanderings. He has taught me to love and serve Him. He has heard my prayers and helped me hitherto — and can I doubt that he will help me even to the end?"

But again, the Christian knows that in Christ there is abundance of all that he needs. This woman could rely upon her son's affection, and she knew also that he had the power as well as the will to assist her. The Christian also is persuaded that in Christ are to be found inexhaustible supplies. He has unsearchable riches of mercy, grace, and consolation.

Reader, look unto Christ, and expect from Him all you need. Look unto Him for wisdom to guide and direct you in the difficulties that beset your path.

Look unto Him for righteousness, that, in spite of all your unworthiness and many sins, you may ever have boldness and confidence before God.

Look unto Him for the continual power and grace of His blessed Spirit, the Comforter. You need to mortify sin, and grow in holiness, and this you can only do as the Spirit dwells in you. You need to have a clearer view of His love, and an increase of faith day by day; and this, too, is given you by His Spirit. And be assured there is no gift He more loves to bestow. It is the Spirit who testifies of Him, and who can perfect you in His likeness. And He has promised that the Spirit shall dwell with you and lead you into all truth.

Look unto Christ, to assist you and stand by you in the smallest and in the greatest matters. Everything in earth and in Heaven is in the hand of Christ. He can help us in matters that affect our present comfort. He can help us in the hour of death, when friends and kindred must bid us farewell.

Another point. The One in whom we trust can never die. It is quite possible that the son might have been taken away before the widow of whom I have been speaking, and then her prop and her stay would have been gone. But "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever." He was dead — yet He is alive for evermore.

Though all earthly friends depart, though we be left alone without a human comforter near, yet Christ abides for evermore. If we trust in Him we can never be left desolate.

Strive thus to live by faith on Christ continually. The first step of the Christian life is to believe in Christ for salvation, to come to Him confessing your sin and trusting Him to cleanse you through His precious blood. When you have done this, your chief duty and privilege is to rely upon Him, and receive constantly out of His fullness the grace you need. Give no place to doubt and fear. Rely upon Him, confide in Him, rejoice in Him, and let your happy, trustful spirit commend to others the religion of Christ.

Look not to yourself for anything, it is all found in Christ and in Christ alone. And as you live on Christ, you will live for Christ. You will aim to please Him, and not yourself. You will work for Him, and do your utmost to win souls for His kingdom. You will lay yourself at His feet, and dedicate all you have to His service.

Keep Looking Up

A sailor lad was climbing the mast for the first time. After a while he began to grow dizzy, and feared lest he might fall. "What shall I do?" he anxiously cried out to the captain, who was watching him from below. "Keep looking up, my boy!" was the answer he received. He obeyed, and soon lost his fear, so that he was able steadily to move along the rigging.

In another and a more important sense, this direction is applicable to every Christian. Whatever your position is, whatever are your fears or dangers — keep looking up! Think of God, of your soul and its salvation, of Christ, and of forgiveness through Him. Lift up your eyes to Him who dwells in the heavens. Expect help from above. Your Father is ever ready to support you. Your Almighty Savior is ever pleading your cause. Therefore you can never be disappointed. The look of faith will ever have a response from the heart and hand of God.

Keep looking up! This is what David did. He was surrounded by foes and dangers. He was hated by Saul, who sought him every day to kill him. He was often in the greatest peril, but his spiritual sight was ever heavenward. "I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from whence comes my help. My help comes from the Lord, who has made Heaven and earth." "My eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net." Nor did he look in vain. The Lord delivered him from all his enemies, and set him upon the throne of the kingdom. He was ever with him, and prospered him on every side.

Keep looking up! This is what Jehoshaphat did. He was compassed about by a great host of adversaries. Various powers united together for the destruction of Jerusalem; but Jehoshaphat set himself to seek the Lord. He gathered the people for prayer and supplication; and he kept looking up for help. He said: "O our God, will You not exercise judgment upon them? For we have no might to stand against this great company that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You!" [2 Chronicles 20:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Chron%2020.12). And God regarded him, and sent him deliverance — before a blow was struck, the confederacy was broken up and the army scattered. The people had but to rejoice and praise the Lord.

Keep looking up! Be sure that the Lord cannot disregard the upward glance of the weakest of His children as they turn to Him.

Imagine a little child in fear and trembling. Perhaps the peril is great, and he cannot speak, but he turns a wistful look for help to his father or mother who is near. Would any parent disregard such a look? Would not the father or mother run to support the child who thus appealed to their love? And shall it not be so with our Father in Heaven? Has He not far more than any parent's love? Will He refuse to help and comfort the one who thus relies upon Him?

Keep looking up! Here is a message for the anxious, seeking soul. You desire salvation. You know something of your sin and misery. You feel that you are lost and wretched and undone. But all seems dark and hopeless. But look up.

Look straight up to Jesus! Not to your faith, not to your repentance, not to anything in yourself or anything you can do; looking downwards to these will make you wretched — therefore look up to Jesus only. He died for your sins, and now pleads your cause. He saves to the uttermost, the greatest sinners, and rejects none who trust in Him.

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One,
 There is life at this moment for you!"

Keep looking up! Here is a message for a believer who would hold fast and make progress in grace and holiness. From first to last, the strength is in Jesus, and not in yourself. You have no power to stand for a moment, or to advance one step along the narrow way. But keep looking up, and all will be well.

You will be kept from falling. While Peter looked to Jesus, he was able to walk in safety over the rough and boisterous waves; but when he looked off from Him he began to sink. So fix your eye constantly on the Savior.

He can bring you through a thousand temptations;
He can hold you up and keep you safe;
He can strengthen you with might by His Spirit in the inner man;
He can endue you with wisdom and power for every call of duty;
He can make you, day by day, more holy and more like Himself in all things.

As you keep looking to Him, He will transform you into His lovely image by the renewing of your mind. "We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Keep looking up! Here is a message for the pilgrim who is cast down and sorely tried by the difficulties and sorrows of the way. You are passing through much tribulation. You have to endure days and nights of suffering, or perhaps it may be you have to witness the failing health of one dear to you. Or perhaps your means are very insufficient, and you look in vain for friends to assist you.

But whatever is the trial — look above it. Don't fix your eye on that bitter trial, on that dark providence — but on Him who sits above the water-floods. When you can't see His hand — trust His heart! Be sure that there is a silver lining in the dark cloud, and that redeeming love has appointed all your sorrow. Christ Himself is ever near you. He is by your side, close by you in tender pity and compassion. He will never fail you, nor ever forsake you. He will make all things work together for your good. He will bring you through all your wilderness journeys, to His bright House of Glory. Therefore keep looking up.

Are They Real?

In calling upon a sick parishioner, I had to wait a few minutes in the drawing-room. It was near the close of the year, and I was struck with the apparent beauty of two plants near the window. With their dark olive leaves and bright crimson buds and blossoms, they seemed a special ornament so late in the autumn, and I went nearer, to see if they had any fragrance. Then the question came to me, "Are they real?" They certainly were very like it at a distance; but I soon discovered that I had made a mistake. They were merely imitation. Very cleverly had the artificial flower-maker done his work — but, after all, there was nothing of the beauty of a living plant. There was no fragrance, nor growth, nor life. They remained in their place just the same, month after month, year after year. All my pleasure was gone when I discovered what they truly were.

"Are they real?" The question may well be applied to many who call themselves Christians. They bear the name. They are seldom absent from some Christian assembly, and they profess a warm attachment to the truths of the gospel. Their names are in the subscription lists of various religious societies, their life is such as to ensure a fair name in the world, and you would not doubt that they were true followers of Christ.

But examine more closely. The plants of which I have spoken seemed to be real at a distance; but upon a nearer view, they were discovered to be otherwise. It may be so with such people as I have described. We read of some who have "a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." We read of the church of Sardis that it had a name to live, but it was dead. We read that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." And that "he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh." We must not rest satisfied with the outward appearance. "Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves."

Are they real? Will they bear close inspection? Does the home life manifest the power of faith? Do those who live with them day by day take knowledge of them that they have something of the likeness of Christ? Can they bear the searching eye of God upon them? Can they appeal to Him who knows the secrets of the heart? Can they say with Peter, "Lord, You know all things — You know that I love You?"

Are they real? Is there true life? Is there the quickening power of the Holy Spirit? Is there secret fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ? Is there love to the Lord's people? Is there delight in the Holy Scriptures? Is there an earnest desire for the salvation of others? Is there . . .
habitual submission to the Lord's will,
readiness to obey His commands,
joy in His service?

Are they real? Is there growth? Is there a deepening humility? Is there more simple and entire reliance on the word and work of Christ? Is there more knowledge of God through the teaching of the Spirit? Is there more conformity to His will? Is it their aim to forget the things which are behind, and reach forth to those which are before?

Are they real? Is there the fragrance of true holiness? Is there the sweet savor of meekness, gentleness, goodness, and patience? Is there a conduct and life that commend the gospel, and lead others to see the blessedness of true religion?

These questions are very important. They concern the writer equally with the reader. Let us be honest with ourselves before God. Is there reality of grace in our own souls? Are we Christians in deed and in truth? Are we living, growing believers?

Let us not hide from ourselves our true character. Let us be willing to know the worst.

If we have never been renewed by the Spirit,
if we have never known anything of conviction of sin,
if we have never believed with the heart,
if we have never been more than Christians in name
— it is far better to own it at once — to confess it plainly and without disguise to our Father in Heaven. Let us lay bare to Him the past, whatever it has been. Let us unfold to Him our present condition.

But let us not despair. The remedy is close at hand. God gives grace to the humble. "Blessed are those who mourn — for they shall be comforted." There is life from the dead in the power of the Holy Spirit. There is quickening for the cold, dull, careless heart. There is pardon and salvation, through the blood of Christ, for the sin of a false profession. When Simon Magus was reproved by Peter, and told that he had neither part nor lot in the matter, for his heart was not right in the sight of God, yet he was not left without hope. He was bidden to repent, and pray God that he might be forgiven.

A terrible exposure at the coming of Christ awaits the man that lives and dies in self-deception! Yet the Savior refuses none now who acknowledge their iniquity and take refuge at His cross. He is able to save to the uttermost. He cannot break His promise of welcome to all humble seekers. Therefore turn to Him at once.

"Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens."

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yes, all I need in You to find,
O Lamb of God, I come.

No Toll-gates

A man in Ireland was led to the knowledge of Christ through the instruction received during a long illness. As death approached, his daughter, who was a Roman Catholic, endeavored to persuade him to send for the priest, that he might confess to him his sins, and receive absolution. But the dying man steadfastly refused. He had found pardon in Christ, and he needed no more. It was all in vain to try to turn him. He would not hear of it. He gave a sufficient reason, which he put in a very forcible way. He had found out, he said, that there were "no toll-gates between the sinner and God." Thus he died in perfect peace, rejoicing in hope, and glorying only in the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

"No toll-gates between the sinner and God!" Here is a blessed truth for every anxious soul. Salvation is free. The path is clear. The way is plain. The door is open. No obstacle can hinder our approach. Here is sure confidence.

Just as I am, Your love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Your, yes, Your alone,
O Lamb of God I come.

Once it was otherwise. When our first parents were driven from the garden, a flaming sword turned every way, and prevented all access to the tree of life.

Again, when the law was given on Mount Sinai, the Israelites were forbidden to come near. Bounds were fixed that they must not pass. If so much as an animal touched the mountain, it was to be stoned or thrust through with a spear.

These teachings are plain. In himself sinful, man can have no fellowship with a holy God. With sin came fear and separation, and judgment and death. A holy law condemned the sinner, and a guilty conscience made him afraid.

But in the fullness of time Jesus came as the sinner's Advocate and Friend. He preached glad tidings to the meek, and brought near a message of pardon and salvation. Through the tender love of God, He came to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and to reconcile the world in Himself to the Father. He Himself became "our Peace" by dying on the cross for our sins. The curse of the holy law fell on Him. The sword of Divine justice smote Him. The burden of man's iniquity lay heavy upon Him. Thus He broke down the wall of separation, and removed every barrier in our path.

As the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the way into the holiest of all was then laid open, so is it with the way into God's presence now. Through the Lord Jesus, and trusting in His death alone, the sinner can at once draw near to God. Because Jesus died, and because His blood was shed for our redemption, complete forgiveness is offered to every transgressor. There is peace and reconciliation for those who have been far off from God. If only a man will return to God in the name of His beloved Son, he will receive an immediate welcome, and share all the privileges of the household of faith.

"No toll-gates between the sinner and God!" We are bidden to come directly to the Savior, and by Him to the Father. The words of invitation and promise are distinct, and cannot be mistaken. "Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

"I am the door: by Me if any man enters in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life — no man comes unto the Father, but by Me." "He is able also to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them."

With such encouragements as these, it is plain that we need no other mediator. We have one Advocate, one High Priest, who pleads our cause before the mercy-seat; and this is enough. None who come to Him are ever sent empty away. His promise stands fast, "Him that comes to Me, I will never cast out."

Let us never forget it — we need no human priest, no confessor to stand between us and God.

There are many who insist that every word and act of evil, yes, every sinful thought, must be whispered into the ears of a priest. But there is no warrant in the Word of God for any such teaching. Neither can the absolution pronounced by man bring true peace to the soul. Hear the words of one who had long practiced the system of private confession, and had sought to find rest in the absolution she received: "Never was I so far from my Lord, as when seeking to approach Him through another."

Instead of this, the more directly we come to the Savior, the more exclusively the eye is fixed on Him, and on Him alone — the more we honor Him, and the greater peace and assurance shall we possess. He is ready to forgive sin. He is able to support those who are tempted. He is a merciful and faithful High Priest.

He can sympathize with those that are cast down. He can restore the backslider. He can lift up the fallen. "Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God — let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

"No toll-gates between the sinner and God!" Thank God this is true. The path is open. The highway is prepared. Mercy and grace and salvation are free to the greatest offender.

But are we walking in the way? It is in vain that a road is open, unless a man walks by it to the place he desires to reach. It is vain for us that Christ has opened the new and living way, unless we walk in it by faith.

Have you, reader, learned your exceeding sinfulness, and laid aside every excuse? Have you taken your place as a sinner guilty and condemned before God? Have you come to the Savior, and are you now trusting in Him day by day for pardon and grace?

A rough Suffolk ploughboy once told me the ground of his hope. "I need a Savior," said he, "and I have a Savior, and will make Him my road to Heaven."

Is this your confidence? Remember, nothing else will stand in the day of trial. Through the Spirit you must see your need of Christ, and then you must rely upon Him for righteousness, strength, and grace. You must believe in Him and walk in Him, and abide in Him as the spring of all peace and holiness.

The Wishing Gate

In the valley of Grasmere, in Westmoreland, by the side of the old highway leading to Ambleside, is a gate which, time out of mind, has been called "The Wishing Gate," from a belief that wishes expressed there would some day or other be gratified. Many a mark and notch tell of those who have been at that gate; and not a few, perhaps, may have thought that there was some truth in the vain tradition.

But, as idle as this superstition is, a blessed reality is thus suggested to us. There is a Wishing Gate to which we may go. There is the Gate of Prayer to which we are invited.

Jesus stands by the gate, and hearkens to every petition and every desire. Wherever we may be, whatever we may want, to this gate we may go, and we shall never be sent empty away.

It is written, "Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full."

"Whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."

With the single limitation, that the gift desired shall be for the glory of God and our true welfare — there is nothing too good or too great for God to bestow on His people in answer to their prayers.

Ever remember the plea we are permitted to bring to this Wishing Gate. We know that we are altogether unworthy of God's regard — we know that our sins bear witness against us, and we might therefore well fear that our prayers might be rejected. But we are invited to come in Christ's name.

A friend might say to us, "Go to my house and ask for what you want, and use my name, and tell them that I sent you," and you would obtain what you required, quite irrespectively of your own deserts.

Just so, Christ bids us use His name.
If we are unworthy — He is worthy.
If we are sinful — He is righteous.
If we have no merit or goodness to bring — He has all-sufficient merit and obedience, to obtain every needful good. And He Himself pleads for us, and waits to hear our petition. He is our Advocate, and His plea is never disregarded. He is our High Priest, and bears our names upon His heart. He receives us with tenderest love when we draw near in His name. He assures us of a successful outcome to our prayer. However sinful, however unworthy we may be, if only we draw near, trusting in Christ, relying upon His blood, confiding in His mediation — it is certain that we shall receive an answer of peace.

At this gate of prayer, multitudes in every age have sought the Lord, and have left behind a witness that none have sought His face in vain.

But what desires shall I breathe at this gate? What prayers shall I offer before the Lord?

Nothing is too great — and nothing too small. We are bidden "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to make our requests known unto God."

I will ask, and, having asked, will gladly accept complete forgiveness through the precious blood of Christ.

The waves of the advancing tide come up, and cover all the footsteps made on the shore. So the free mercy of God in Christ covers all our sins. But I must seek this blessing at the mercy-seat. I must confess my sins, and believe that my Father has cast them all behind His back. I must trust in the Savior's death, and rely upon His finished work. And then I may rejoice that my sins though scarlet, are made as white as snow.

I will ask and look for an increase of spiritual life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ has come that we "might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly." And we have but to ask in faith, and we shall receive. So I will go to His footstool, and ask Him to bestow upon me this grace. I will ask Him for stronger faith and more fervent zeal. I will ask Him for a growth in knowledge and in love. I will ask Him that I may be filled with the Holy Spirit — that I may be faithful and bold in witnessing for Him in the world. I will ask Him to beat down under my feet the sins and temptations which beset me, and to keep me blameless to the day of His appearing.

I will put into my Father's hand everything which concerns my present comfort and happiness. I will ask His guidance as to my future course, and to make plain before me the path of duty. I will ask Him to rid me of those things which burden and distress me. I will ask Him to fulfill the long-cherished desires of my heart, if it be His will. I will lay before Him all the matters that I know not how to deal with, and will believe that He will undertake for me, and order my footsteps in the right way.

I will seek likewise my Father's richest blessing for those whom I love. He will hear me on their behalf as well as on my own. He will be ready to touch the hearts of those who have gone astray, and to keep and strengthen those who have begun to fear Him. I will pray for those in trouble and anxiety, that they may be able to cast all their care on Him who cares for them. I will pray for those that are near unto death, that the Lord may support them in the valley by His rod and staff.

And I will not forget to offer my hearty thanks for all the good I have already received. I will open my lips, and praise the goodness and mercy which have followed me hitherto. I will thank Him for days of health and comfort — and no less for the days of trial which in love He has sent me. Thus I will come to His mercy-seat. I will seek Him as long as I live. I will never be weary of asking Him for fresh blessings, or of thanking Him for those already received. And I will look forward to the day when I shall enter by the gate into the city and live evermore in His presence.

On Walking With God

To walk with God is our highest privilege. The very expression reveals it. To walk along our way with the great Jehovah as our Companion, our Friend, our Father — how blessed is this!

Jehovah, the Almighty Creator of Heaven and earth — man, the child of dust, the creature of a day!

Jehovah, the Holy One, the God glorious in holiness — man stained and defiled by evil continually!

Yet it is permitted that repentant man should have fellowship with God. The thought brings us back to Paradise. Before man had sinned, there was close and happy communion between the Creator and the man whom He had formed in His own image. And, in a measure, Paradise is regained, and we enjoy something of Heaven upon earth when the broken link is restored, and man again walks with God.

In walking with God, we have the best company. We are not alone if the Father be with us. The loneliest path has a ray of sunshine upon it, if the God of all comfort be at our side.

In walking with God, we have the best protection. None can harm those who abide in the secret place of the Most High. "If God is for us — then who can be against us?"

In walking with God, we have the surest peace and consolation. There is a calm and quiet rest in the Lord's felt presence which can be found nowhere else. The nearer we keep to God, the closer we walk with our Father — the less shall we be disturbed by the manifold cares and sorrows of life.

I can only give a few plain, practical suggestions on this subject. But they will not be in vain, if each reader will endeavor to carry them out in the daily walk of life.

If you would walk with God, the first step is to be friends with God. It is quite impossible to have a pleasant walk with anyone, if there is unhappy disagreement. The remembrance of past difference, any lack of a cordial understanding, any feeling of a wrong on one side or the other — destroys all the comfort you might have in the society of another person. It is the same in our walk with God. There must be a full and complete reconciliation. Our sins have made a separation and a barrier. We have disobeyed His laws, and have provoked Him to anger. But you must come back to your Father by the open door. You must return by the blood-sprinkled path.

There can be no walking with God, unless you have peace with God. And you cannot have peace with God, unless you trust in the precious blood which has been shed for your salvation. Whatever may have been your sins in the past, God invites you — yes, beseeches you — to be reconciled to Him. He would not have you remain at a distance from Him for a single hour.

David was unwilling to receive back Absalom for three years, and even then for two years more he saw not the king's face. But your Father in Heaven bids you to come home at once. His arms are open to welcome you. He will freely put away all your sins for the sake of Jesus. He will assure you of His complete and everlasting forgiveness.

A second point of great importance is, If we would walk with God we must above all things, keep the heart in tune. We must guard the inner sanctuary. Let the heart be right — and all will be right. Let the heart turn aside — and every step will be in the wrong direction. God looks right down into the depths of the heart, and judges all our words and actions accordingly.

But look at this point in another way. Imagine two people walking together, while their thoughts and feelings and tastes run altogether in different channels. The certain result must be a lack of harmony and mutual sympathy one with the other.

Apply this to our walk with God. God delights in truth, holiness, and love. But if the heart of a man be drawn towards the world, if pride, or selfishness, or envy, or sin in any shape be reigning there — then how can there be any communion and fellowship with God?

So we must seek the constant renewing of the Holy Spirit. We cannot subdue within us one evil thought, or create one holy desire. To create a world were as easy for sinful man — as to create anything of true holiness within the heart. But the Holy Spirit has almighty power. He can cleanse, and sanctify, and purify the heart which without His grace would cleave unto the dust. For this we must pray continually.

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid — cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Again, we must take heed with what friends and companions we associate. If you would walk with God, you cannot walk with those who are at enmity with Him. You must separate from one or the other. I know few things that do more harm to the soul of a young Christian, than the society of one who lives for the world and its pleasures, and who throws a slight on spiritual things. The atmosphere of such a presence is very dangerous. It damps the flame of grace, which needs careful tending. It hinders a bold confession of Christ's name.

Perhaps someone asks, "What am I to do? I have such a friend, and know it is a hindrance in my path, but I cannot see my way to escape from it." I would say — Act courteously, kindly, yet very decidedly. Write a letter, or speak to your friend very plainly, as to your own desire and purpose to serve Christ. Determine never to go half way to the world to please your friend. Seek to win the soul of your friend for the Savior. Take a firm stand on the Lord's side, and this may settle the matter. Perhaps your decision may break the tie, and lead your companion to seek other society; or, it may be, grace may link you both together, and you may henceforth be fellow-helpers in the work of the Lord.

Again, if you would walk with God, you must live in a constant recollection of His loving presence. I say advisedly the loving presence of God. To the unforgiven sinner, the thought of God's presence must ever be a fear and a dread — for guilt on the conscience must make the soul afraid when brought near to God. But the privilege of a believer is to know God at hand as a most loving and gracious Father. If you abide constantly under the shelter of Christ's blood, bringing continually the sin of which the conscience may remind you to the open fountain — then you may rejoice to realize that God is very near to you.

A sense of the Lord's nearness will help you in a life of prayer and communion with God. If you were walking with an earthly friend by the wayside you would not, under ordinary circumstances, be likely to let a quarter of an hour or half an hour pass without a word being spoken. And while you feel that you are keeping in the presence of your best Friend, you will often be drawn to utter a word of prayer, or to praise Him for some blessing He has given you, or to think of some precious promise He speaks to you out of His Word.

Then, too, to realize the Lord's presence will help you more than anything in overcoming wandering thoughts. I suppose this is one of the great difficulties which every Christian mourns over. And the way to meet it is by the exercise of more faith. If by faith I can see Christ very near to me, my thoughts will be more steadily fixed on Him. Our thoughts do not wander, except under very special circumstances, when we are talking to a friend. And as our converse with the Savior is of this character, as if we could see Him by our very side — we shall be less troubled with our thoughts turning aside to the things of earth.

Oh, let us be watchful and trustful that our prayers may be real and frequent, and bring down upon us great blessing. It has been beautifully said that "the walls of the King's palace above are decked with the prayers of earth."

A sense of the Lord's presence will help you also in the conflict with sin. Whatever is the sin that most easily besets you, whether pride, covetousness, or evil temper — to see Christ near at hand will be your strength and your safeguard. The evil will appear in all its magnitude, as seen in the Lord's presence, and but a look to Him, and you will have power through His Spirit to trample it beneath your feet.

Again, under doubts and discouragements of all sorts, let us ever remember that the door of mercy is open still. In numberless ways the souls of God's people are discouraged and driven back, and sometimes even they are at the verge of utter despair. Darkness clouds the sky, and scarcely a ray of light can penetrate. Sometimes it is through bodily infirmity depressing the spirit, and weariness or irritability hindering all sweet and profitable communion with God. Sometimes it is a vivid recollection of old sins, or a sight of the depravity and hardness and coldness of the heart. Sometimes it is the contrast between the progress desired and looked for — and that which has been attained.

But there is at least one remedy. Whatever your case may be, one thing is certain — Christ is still the Savior of sinners, and of all sinners who come to Him. It is still true that if you fear you are not a believer, you may trust Him as a sinner, and that He cannot refuse your plea. Present forgiveness for all that is past, present grace and strength to meet present temptation —  this He is pledged to bestow on all who turn to Him. It may be very humbling, it may be very different to your hopeful expectations, but here is a harbor of rest and salvation to which you may ever flee.

A sinner at first, a sinner right through, and only a saved sinner at last — saved from beginning to end through the free mercy and grace of a faithful and unchangeable Redeemer — this is rest for the soul.

"Ah, wherefore do I ever doubt?
You will in no wise cast me out;
A helpless soul that comes to Thee,
With only sin and misery."

Again, whatever trials and sorrows may be appointed for you, fully recognize in them the hand of God. "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

 [Romans 8:28](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.28)

We are frequently apt to permit the afflictions that come to us, to make a breach between us and our merciful Father in Heaven. Perhaps the trouble comes to us through an unlooked-for channel. We are brought into straits through the misconduct of others. We find neglect and unkind treatment where we had a right to expect the very contrary. Then the trouble or the disappointment occupies all our thoughts, and we have no heart for prayer or praise.

But if we see God's hand in them, we shall find our cares and sorrows give us fresh errands to the throne of grace. We shall see redeeming love in them all. We shall be assured that Divine wisdom has ordered all for good. We shall believe that a Fatherly discipline and a tender regard for our highest welfare, have in some way seen them needful. So we shall trust and not be afraid.

Look at the matter in this way. One day a mother's hand brings to a child a present of a picture or a toy. At another time, the same hand gives the necessary food. At another time, the same kind hand dries the child's tear, and lifts it up when it has fallen. At another time, the mother brings to the child a cup of bitter medicine. All her dealings with the child are ways of showing her love, and perhaps the last in giving the medicine manifests her love the most.

Is it not so with our Father above? With far more than a mother's love, He cares for His children. Sometimes He bestows a temporal gift that greatly adds to our happiness. Sometimes He gives the necessary provision for our life. Sometimes He raises us up when we have fallen, and dries the tear of penitence or sorrow. But it is equal love — yes, perhaps greater love — when He sends to us some distressing providence, or appoints some bitter cup of suffering or bereavement. It is for our highest good. It is the healing medicine which is to overcome some sinful propensity, or to preserve us from some temptation.

Let us believe this, and trust our Father's love. Let us believe that He cares for us, and that He will remove the trial when its work is done. Let us commit our way unto Him, and roll upon Him the burden which oppresses us.

Lastly, in walking with God, let us remember the cheering prospect. Let us look onward to the end. Very much of the attraction of a walk depends upon the place to which it leads. A walk may be through the most lovely scenery, and with a most agreeable companion; but if at the end of it you know your lot will be in a dark and gloomy prison — your walk will not be a pleasant one. And, on the other hand, though the walk may sometimes be wearisome, perhaps through the pelting rain or through the cold and chilly wind — yet if leads to a happy home, with those you love waiting for you — you can easily bear the discomfort of an hour, as you think of the rest you will enjoy when the walk is over. Let us remember what is awaiting us by and by, if we are indeed the people of God.

The favored child of the world may find much that is agreeable in the path along which he walks, and in the society of those among whom he moves; but if he knows nothing of communion and fellowship with God, the end is a prison — yes, the dark prison-house into which no ray of hope can come!

But the child of God will be welcomed to the Father's house. Often faint and weary through the conflict of life, often well near overcome by fierce storms of temptation, or cast down by the sorrows that have come to him by the way — yet there is rest beyond. Every tear is wiped away and days of mourning forgotten in the song of gladness which greets him above. Everlasting joy is upon his head, and sorrow and sighing have fled away forever.

Eternal God, our wondering souls
Admire the matchless grace,
That You will walk, that You will dwell
With Adam's worthless race!

Oh lead me to that happy path
Where I my God may meet;
Though hosts of foes begird it round,
Though briars wound my feet.

Cheered with the converse, I can trace
The desert with delight;
Through all the gloom one smile of Thine,
Can dissipate the night.

Holding Fast

An old man in South India, nearly seventy, was reminded that his death would soon come, and was asked whether he were ready. "Yes," he replied, "I am waiting. I am done with this world. What has it now for me?"

"But are you not afraid that Jesus will not receive you — what then?"

Upon this, the old man, with all the energy of youth, exclaimed, "Won't receive me! But I won't let Jesus go — I'll take hold of Him. If He turns me away, I'll take hold of His feet, and lie there — but I won't let Him go. I'll tell Him, 'Did You not come to save me? Whom am I trusting to but You? Where else can I go? No, blessed Savior, I will not let You go. You must save me.'"

Spent with his exertion and excitement, he then clasped both his arms upon his bosom, and said again, "I'll not let Him go."

Faith like that possessed by this aged Christian is no plant that grows naturally in the human heart. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. This man had learned his own lost estate. He had learned that in Christ alone could salvation be found. He had learned to say with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!" Moreover, he took fast hold of the Savior. He rested on the Lord's purpose in coming into our world, and was persuaded that he would assuredly fulfill it. Full well did he know that as soon might the Son of God vacate His throne at the Father's right hand, as give Satan cause to triumph over a trusting soul that He was unwilling or unable to save.

Such faith as this is ever coupled with the deepest humility. It despairs of finding any ground of confidence in self, while it looks away to Christ as the source of all mercy, grace, and salvation. Such faith as this brings honor to God. This holy boldness, this laying hold of Christ, this determination to cast the soul upon Him at all hazards — is the grace that exalts the Savior more than all besides, and it is that which ever wins the brightest crown.

See the patriarch Jacob wrestling with the angel of the covenant by the brook Jabbok. "He wept, and made supplication unto Him." He wrestled hard with Him until break of day. He said," I will not let You go, unless You bless me." Thus did faith triumph, and the blessing was won. He was named Israel, a prince of God — for as a prince had he power with God and with men, and had prevailed.

See the blind beggar of Jericho sitting by the wayside. He discovers that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. It is the one opportunity of his life; nor shall it be lost. He lifts up his voice and cries, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" But the crowd along the way would silence his urgent cry. They bid him hold his peace. Can the great Prophet stay along His course to attend to such as he? But Bartimaeus will not be silent. He cries the louder, the more vehemently, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then does Jesus call him, and grant to him all his desire. He received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

See, again, the woman of Canaan. She comes to Christ, and beseeches Him to show mercy to her afflicted daughter; but Jesus seems not to regard her request "He answered her not a word." Still she cries after Him, so much so that the disciples would gladly be rid of her importunity. Then in her hearing Jesus says to them, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Again she ventures. She falls at His feet, and cries, "Lord, help me!" Yet still Christ refuses. Never a rougher word fell from His lips — though never did a warmer love beat in the heart of Jesus than at that moment. As Joseph spoke roughly to his brethren — so the Lord seemed to speak to her, "It is not fit to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs." But, oh, wondrous humility, wondrous faith! She will not be repulsed. She is willing to be accounted as a dog, may she but taste the Savior's mercy.

Hall quaintly remarks that she shoots back at Christ the bullets that Christ aims at her. The very argument He employs for the rejection of her suit, is the very one she turns into a reason why it should be granted. "True Lord — yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Then Christ unveils to her all His tender compassion, and opens wide to her the treasures of His bounty. "O woman, great is your faith; be it unto you even as you will."

Reader, what know you of this mighty, victorious faith? It is widely different from the mere acknowledgment of the truth of Holy Scripture, and of the doctrines therein taught.

Saving faith is heart-deep. It brings the sinner face to face with his sin first, and then leads him to go direct to the Savior.

This individual, believing application to Christ is the very hinge upon which your salvation turns. Drawing near to Christ, confiding in His blood and in His faithful promise, cleaving to Him in spite of hindrances, in spite of inward fears and outward opposition; so cleaving to Christ as to delight in Him, to love Him, to do His will, and to follow in His footsteps — here is salvation fully realized. Without at least the beginnings of such a faith as this, you have not Christ; and if you have not Christ, you have no spiritual life. "He who has not the Son of God, has not life."

If you live and die without Christ, you are undone forever — all is lost!

Perhaps, however, you have come to Christ, but your faith, as yet, is very feeble. Still, be not dismayed. Go to Him with a fervent prayer that He would increase your faith, and perfect that which concerns you. He despises not the day of small things. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. If in yourself there is nothing but evil — there is abounding grace in Him. If you are weak — He is strong; and it is His glory to make His strength perfect in our weakness.

Such, too, is the completeness of Christ's work, that He has provided all things pertaining to life and godliness.

Are you weak? He is strong.

Are you guilty? He is the righteous one.

Are you ungodly? He is God's dear Son.

But you may say to yourself, "True, Christ is all I need; but how am I to get Christ? — who will apply His work to my conscience, and how?" This is what I wish to make plain to you in a few words. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and reveal them to you, to lead you into all truth, and to make you willing in the day of God's power. Do not, then, doubt or fear with such an Advocate with the Father as Christ — such an Advocate in us as the Holy Spirit. Only, then, come and do not delay. Remember that all things are now ready, and God can supply all our needs, according to the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus.

Keep To The Right

In one of our large midland towns the eye of the passer-by is arrested by something novel and peculiar in our streets. Small metal plates have been suspended from the ladder-rests of the lamp-posts, painted blue, and in very distinct white letters, the words written, "KEEP TO THE RIGHT." I know not who is the author of this invention, but the value of it is very clear. It is likely to add greatly to the convenience of people walking on the pavements, by preventing them from jostling one against another, and by leading each one to keep their own side of the pavement. The two streams of passengers in opposite directions will be less likely to come in each other's way, and so both parties will be the gainers.

But the motto on the lamp-post may do other service, and teach us one or two practical lessons.

Keep to the right! Let every man keep to his own place, do his own work, and walk peaceably with others. We must be careful to avoid all strife and discord. We must follow peace with all men. We must fill our own niche in the fear and love of God, and exercise a forgiving and forbearing spirit toward others. We must watch against the selfishness and self-will that thrusts itself in the way of our neighbor, and is apt to cause bitter envyings and jealousies. Nay, we must be ready sometimes to yield up what we may consider our just rights, if thereby we may do good, and promote charity and love.

Keep to the right! We may take the words in another way. We must be careful to *walk*in the right path. We are warned in the Book of Proverbs, that "There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." On the other hand, it is written to the praise of Hezekiah, that "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord."

You must *believe*what is right. Keep close to the written Word, and you will be safe. Accept no teaching which may not be plainly proved thereby. However learned, or eloquent, or zealous a man may be — remember that you must only follow his instructions so far as they agree with the testimony of God's truth. And you must heartily receive the truths set forth in the Word. If you would believe what is right, you must acknowledge . . .
your own lost condition,
the corruption of your own heart,
the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and
that salvation is only to be found in Christ by faith alone.

You must trust in Him for pardon and remission of sins.

You must rely upon His faithful promise and His most precious blood.

You must wait upon Him for the bestowal of His grace, and look for the Spirit of God to enlighten and sanctify you.

Faith in a crucified Savior is the only road by which you can reach the heavenly kingdom. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," He has said: "no man comes unto the Father, but by Me." Follow the rule and standard of Holy Scripture, in all matters of doctrine and of duty. It is "given by inspiration of God," and "is able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It is moreover "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

You must *speak*what is right. You must be careful that the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart are right and acceptable before God. Ever speak the truth, and avoid the very shadow of deceit and hypocrisy. Speak words of kindness and gentleness to the little ones about your path. Speak a word of solemn warning to the careless sinner, and a word of help and encouragement to the struggling or sorrowful soul. Put away all evil speaking, murmuring and complaining — and endeavor to speak as well as feel cheerfully and hopefully and thankfully.

A kind word once saved a life and saved a soul. It was but a hearty "Good morning!" but it made an erring, despairing one feel she was not cut off from all sympathy. It turned her from her purpose of self-destruction, and led her to seek the counsel and aid of the servant of God who had thus spoken kindly to her by the way.

You must *practice*what is right. Right faith must lead to right conduct. If you believe in Christ with your heart — you must honor Him with your life. His holy example must be that which you strive to follow. "He who says he abides in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." Set the Lord always before you, and walk in His fear all the day long. Morning, noon, and night, wherever you are, and wherever you go, whatever you do, and in whatever company your lot is cast — act evermore with a longing desire to approve yourself to your Father in Heaven. Let this ever be your one aim," Lord, what will You have me to do?"

But one thought more. You must *keep*to the right. You must believe what is right, speak what is right, practice what is right — and then persevere. Let there be no going back. You must be steadfast to the end. "By patient continuance in well doing," seek for glory and honor and immortality. Keep to the right, whatever may come. Temptation will be sure to come. Evil will appear in the guise of something very attractive and comparatively harmless. The world will draw near with fair speech, and promise you much profit or pleasure. Your own heart will be ready to hearken to the alluring voice. But yield not to the snare. Set your face like a flint. Under all circumstances, keep to the right.

Remember Joseph in Potiphar's house. The trap was cunningly laid. The temptation dogged his steps from day to day. But he stood firm. He had learned to say "No!" He had courage to brave every assault. He kept his integrity, and triumphed in the Lord's name. "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Remember Daniel. He was not ashamed to own the God he loved. He preferred a night with the lions — to a day spent without prayer. So he would not cease making his supplication three times a day, neither would he conceal his allegiance to the God of Israel. He cleave to that which he knew was right, and he found that the Lord maintained his cause.

Be of the same mind. In fair weather and foul, through honor or dishonor — abide in the plain path of duty. By the grace of God, and in His strength, be faithful unto death, and "keep to the right." "Blessed is the man that endures temptation — for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

The Wound Healed

A lady had a young acacia tree in her garden; and from its associations, she had a special interest in its growth. But the storm came, and a rough blast broke the main stem, and the tree was bending low on the ground. Then the question arose, could nothing be done for the favorite tree? Was it destroyed beyond recovery? There certainly seemed but little hope, yet an effort might be made. A part of the bark was still unbroken, so she took the stem and gently lifted it up into its former position. She then carefully bound up the wound, and so fastened the tree that the wind could not again disturb it. Very earnestly did she watch the result; and she soon found that her efforts were not unrewarded. The sap arose and healed the wound, forming gradually a knotted ring around the tree. By-and-by it became firm and strong, and grew and flourished in her garden.

The story reminds us of the grace and mercy of Christ. He is tender and pitiful towards the fallen one. He binds up the bleeding, broken heart. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. When His child cast down — He can lift up. He can strengthen that which is weak, and uphold it with His own right hand.

We may take this in two or three different cases.

The Lord can raise up those that are bowed down by sorrow and affliction. There are some who are utterly crushed and broken. They seem to have a double portion of life's trials. Loss follows loss, and one disappointment comes quickly on the heels of another. Business proves unsuccessful, and means of subsistence are reduced, and it is hard to bear up under the pressure of daily cares.

Or, perhaps, a sudden blow has made life a wilderness. A great sorrow has fallen upon the heart, and all is dark and desolate. But Jesus can heal and restore. He can give peace in the hour of trouble and distress. He can give songs in the night, and lift up the soul that lies prostrate in the dust.

I remember an instance of this. A young woman had suddenly lost her husband in a very painful way. He was everything to her, for she dearly loved him; and it seemed to her that she would never again have a moment's happiness. But she found Jesus in her sorrow. He came near through His Word, and spoke comfortably to her in the gloomy desert through which she was passing. He gave to her a truer, sweeter joy than she had ever known before. "He comes so near to me," she said, "that it seems to me as if He were walking on the stairs by my side as I go to my solitary chamber."

Ah, child of sorrow! do not brood perpetually over this terrible loss, this event that has come upon you. Look up, and see Jesus near. He pardons your sin through His blood, and will comfort you in your sorrow by His presence and His love.

Tried one, wait not in your woe,

But at once to Jesus go;
He the darkest clouds can make
Hues of rainbow-brightness take.

Cast on Him your greatest care,
Utter but one word of prayer;
Tell Him your most hidden grief,
He will run to your relief.

But we may look at the work of Christ in another light. There are some who are bowed down to the earth by remorse for evil they have done. A man has yielded to grievous sin. Through the power of temptation, he has gone step by step deeper into evil. Years have been lost and wasted, which cannot be brought back. Wrong has been committed, which cannot be undone. All seems now past recovery. His own heart whispers that there is neither pardon for the past, nor any possibility of rising again to a holier and better life. But in this case there is help if men will only look for it. There is an outstretched hand ready to restore and save. Christ is mighty to save. He is able to save to the uttermost. We must not limit the Holy One of Israel.

Some years ago a man lost a godly, Christian wife. He had been living a very worldly life, and had sadly ill-treated her because of her faithfulness in serving Christ. But after her death remorse and sorrow filled his heart. It took away his sleep at night, and troubled his mind all the day long. At last it broke down his health, and the once strong man became a wreck. Shattered in constitution, and wretched in mind, he was fast sinking into a hopeless grave. But at eventide there was light. He went one Sunday morning into a church, and heard of the "River of life" which could refresh the weary, thirsty soul. He heard the Savior's gracious call to come and drink freely of the stream of salvation. He heard and he believed. He trusted his soul to Christ, and was at rest. He realized complete forgiveness through the Savior's blood, and he lived for two years to bear witness for Christ to others. Through his fervent prayers and efforts, an aged mother was led to Christ; and he was never weary of using the fragments of life that remained in the service of his gracious Master.

Yes, believe it, Christ has power to reach those who seem most hopeless. He will not upbraid the feeble, erring one. He comes to seek and to save the lost. The wound may be grievous, and the bruise may seem incurable. But there is a Healer, a good Physician, who has a remedy that can meet it. He delights in lifting up. He sends His Holy Spirit to awaken a new desire. He brings home the recollection of some gracious promise. He stirs up the heart to pray. He fulfills the longing of the humble seeker. "He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory."

Therefore, poor fallen one, look unto Jesus, and He will remember you in mercy. He will restore your soul, and cheer your broken, trembling spirit.

O Jesus, full of truth and grace,
More full of grace than I of sin,
Yet once again I seek Your face;
Open Your arms, and take me in
And freely my backslidings heal,
And love the faithless sinner still.

What Is Most To Be Feared?

A young Hindu had been lately converted to Christ. His old friends and associates were very bitter against him, and strove in every way to persuade him to forsake the Savior. On one occasion he was surrounded by several of them, and they brought every argument they could devise to effect their purpose. But it was all in vain. At last they turned to him and said, "You tell us that Christ died to take away all your sins. But do you never commit any sin?" Looking down on the ground for a moment, while he sent forth to his God a prayer for wisdom and grace to answer aright, he then replied, "I dare not say that I never commit any sin. But one thing I can say, which I could not before I knew Christ — there is nothing in all the world which I dread so much as sin."

This incident draws our attention to one important feature in the life of those who are born of God. It is their hatred and fear of sin. Wherever the Holy Spirit dwells, there will be a holy shrinking from all evil. Once, perhaps, they thought but little of it. If they might gain some advantage, if they might enjoy a taste of this world's pleasure, if they might escape some trouble or difficulty — unless the sin were of a very heinous character, they did not hesitate about its commission. But now the fear of God reigns within the heart, and a tender conscience makes them flee from its approach.

When Joseph was placed in a position of peculiar danger, and sin came near to allure him, he shrank back with horror. "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!" was his noble reply to the suggestion of the tempter.

When the penitent malefactor heard the blasphemy of his fellow, he boldly rebuked him. "Do you not fear God seeing you are in the same condemnation?" This dread of sin was a mark of the genuine character of the change which the Spirit was working in him.

We ought to dread sin, because it is such ingratitude against a God of love. The love of God to man shines forth everywhere.

It is seen in every gift of His providence.

It is seen in the beauty of this fair world as it came from His hand.

It is seen in His patience and forbearance towards sinners.

It is seen in every page of His holy Word.

It is seen, above all, in the gift of His Son to be our Savior and our Redeemer.

But every sin is an act of rebellion against God.

It casts contempt upon His law.

It sets up man's will against the will of the Creator.

It tramples upon His mercy and goodness.

It wounds the heart of Him who died for us.

It grieves the Holy Spirit.

Hence we ought to dread sin more than anything else. We ought to be willing to suffer any pain or loss rather than grieve and dishonor God.

We ought to dread sin, moreover, because it is highly infectious. It spreads with such terrible rapidity. It is impossible to estimate the influence for evil of one wicked man, or even of one wicked action. One drunkard or one profligate young man, in the course of a few months or years, may lead hundreds by his example into the same sins. Words of evil are caught up, and pollute the souls of young and old, and, when the original speaker of them is lying in the grave, are still bearing their deadly fruit.

Worldliness, covetousness, indifference to religion, insensibly draw in one after another; and perhaps the man who boasts that "he has never done any harm" has been the instrument of making numbers as careless and ungodly as himself.

Is not this a reason why we should dread sin? Even if it should be that some day you should arise and repent, and your sin should be forgiven — think of all the injury you may have done that you can never undo. It is a fearful thing to put a stumbling-block in the way of others. It were far better for a man that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be cast into the sea, than that he should make others to fall through his sin.

We ought to dread sin also because of the end to which it leads. It brings the man who continues in it to everlasting shame and damnation. "The wages of sin is death." The unsaved sinner will awake on the resurrection morning to shame and everlasting contempt. All the sin of his life will be brought to light, and he must bear the guilt and punishment which belongs to it.

Who can tell how fearful is the woe of the sinner who stands unsaved before the bar of Christ?

Have you ever had a terrible dream, when you thought you were sinking deeper and deeper, and no power could uphold you? What if some day you should experience a reality far more awful than in your dream you can have imagined? Christ loves us too well to deceive us with vain and needless terrors; and He has spoken of the wicked "going into everlasting punishment," of "the worm that never dies,"and of "the fire that is never quenched."

Ah, friend, dread sin. Flee from sin. It is the sting of death. It is the eternal death of the soul. It is the fuel of Hell. It is the undying worm of despair and remorse.

Flee at once to Jesus, that He may cleanse you from its guilt in His blood, and may make you hate it with perfect hatred.

O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free!
A heart that's sprinkled with the blood
So freely shed for me!

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne;
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone.

A humble and believing heart,
Abhorring every sin;
Which neither life nor death can part
From Him who dwells within.

Your nature, gracious Lord, impart,
Come quickly from above;
Write Your new name upon my heart,
Your new, best name of Love.

Such A Temper!

I remember a young person who, some years ago, was led to seek the Savior. She regularly attended the means of grace, and sought the society of those who feared God. But she had a great hindrance. She seemed quite unable to control her temper. It would burst forth sometimes like a volcano. "Ah, she has such a temper," said one who knew her, "that it burns her up body and soul. There is no peace wherever she is!" I greatly fear that this snare proved too strong for her, and that all good impressions faded away through its influence.

I remember another instance of the indulgence of this sin that much grieved me. I was walking along a pleasant country road in a midland county, and finding a laborer walking in the same direction, I entered into conversation with him. He appeared to me to be a truly godly Christian man. I was then but young in the Christian life; and it was a comfort and help to me to hear him talk, and quote many precious promises of the Word. By-and-by we reached his cottage, and he asked me to go in and rest. I gladly consented; but I soon had to form a very much lower opinion of my companion. He had "such a temper." The dinner was not quite ready, and the man began to rage and storm at his poor daughter; and I soon left the house fearing that the man was only another Mr. Talkative, like him in "The Pilgrim's Progress," who had as little true religion as the white of an egg has of savor.

Another example might be added of an unhappy temper. A young man of good position and considerable means had squandered away all his property, and was reduced to great straits. But he soon found an opening by which he could gain a fair competency. He took a situation as clerk in a mercantile establishment, and might have done well. But here comes in the evil of which I am speaking. He had "such a temper!" He could not brook a word of counsel or reproof, so that his employers felt it was impossible to retain him. He lost his situation; and, in a moment of desperation, to obtain money, he committed an act of forgery. Being discovered, he was thrown into prison. He never recovered himself from the fall, and closed his days in deep poverty.

To very many, an unruly temper is the greatest difficulty they have to contend with. It lays the soul open to many dangers. "He who has no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." [Proverbs 25:28](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2025.28). A man who cannot control his temper, becomes the prey of many an evil. He is exposed to the most terrible temptation. He may utter words that will prove like firebrands in the house where he lives. In a moment of anger he may commit some fearful crime. Such an one can have no real peace, and in a moment may cause disquietude and misery to all about him. Could we tell the secrets of home life, we would find that the temper of a wife or husband, of a child, or a brother or sister — has again and again proved a death-blow to all true religion in the house. It has put a hindrance in the way of prayer, by the disturbance which it has brought, and the strife to which it has led. It has quenched many a desire for a better life. It has prevented the instruction or counsel given to a child having its due weight. In many ways it has proved a stumbling-block to the one who has yielded to it, and to those around.

Perhaps a word of advice may be of profit to some reader of these words. Temper maybe your besetting sin, and, it may be, you grieve over it as your greatest hindrance.

If you would overcome this temptation, you must believe in Christ, and rely upon Him for grace and salvation. Apart from Christ you cannot effectually conquer this or any sin. "Without Me," He says," you can do nothing." The very first step on the road to victory is to trust your soul to a mighty and merciful Savior; you must know Him as your Friend and Redeemer. You must have a conscience at rest though the cleansing of His precious blood. You must have the peace of God to rule in your heart.

But, perhaps, you are a follower of Christ, you have believed in Him, and yet you find temper a snare to you. What shall I say to you?

Try constantly to realize the nearness and the presence of your Lord. If there were someone in the room whom you greatly respected, and whom you would be sorry to grieve in any way — would not this prevent your yielding to passion, or your uttering loud, angry words? If he were not present, some slight provocation might put you off your guard — but your friend being near, and able to see you, would lead you to exercise a wise restraint.

Now, will you remember that there is always someone in the room? The unseen Friend, the Lord Jesus, who has loved you with an everlasting love, who gave Himself to die for your sake — He is most truly, though invisibly, present. He is near you in loving-kindness, ready to help you and comfort you at all times. But He marks the clouded brow and angry look. He hears the sullen or hasty word. He sees and hears all, and it grieves Him exceedingly that one naming His name should thus bring dishonor upon it. Therefore cherish continually the sense of His presence. Believe that He is by your very side.

Look for the continual help of the Holy Spirit. He can beat down the unruly spirit, and bestow upon you the grace of meekness and gentleness and patience. He can create in you the mind of Christ. He can enable you to live as a peace-maker, and not a peace-breaker. He can so fill you with charity, that you may at all times adorn the doctrine that you profess.

Keep humble. Bear in mind your proneness to fall, your weakness and your instability. Though pardoned and saved by the mercy of God, you have still an evil nature ready to break out and dishonor God and injure your own peace!

Lastly, Be constant in prayer.

Especially when vexed and irritated — PRAY.

When tempted by your hasty temper — PRAY.

When you think you have reason to be angry — Pray.

Pray evermore, "Lord help me!"

And remember the honor that belongs to those who gain the victory in this warfare. The greatest hero is not he who triumphs in the battlefield of earth — but he who, by the power of Divine grace, subdues his own temper and walks in the footsteps of the Savior, who bore the contradiction of sinners against Himself, and who when He was reviled, reviled not again, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.

Trust In God And Do The Right

Some time ago I had a letter asking for counsel as to the difficulties which young people meet with in carrying out thorough Christian principles. It had special reference to those engaged in various departments of trade. It is often expected of them, so my correspondent wrote, that business should be the first consideration; and, to please a customer, or to effect a sale, statements must be made which are not wholly correct. Under such circumstances, or similar ones, it was represented to me to be a hard struggle for a young person to keep a clear conscience. In fact, it was said to be next to impossible for those who are thus situated always to keep the straight path of Christian obedience, and never to turn to the right hand or to the left.

Thinking over the matter, and considering what advice I ought to give to the inquirer, a few lines of a hymn came to my recollection —
Blessed rule and safest guiding,
Inward peace and inward light,
Star upon our path abiding,
Trust in God, and do the right!

A Christian has no other alternative. There is one plan to adopt — one safe course to follow. Obey God at all hazards. Set your mind against all wrong practices. Whatever others may say or do, whatever reproach or trouble or loss it may bring — walk steadfastly along the highway of truth, justice, and equity. And as you endeavor to do so, be persuaded that God is on your side, that He will stand by you and befriend you, and that for any present sacrifices you may have to make, He will honor you.

"Trust in God, and do the right" — let this ever be the rule you follow. It will save you from many a snare. It will make your course plain and clear.

This was the principle that guided Nehemiah. He was a man of prayer, and trusted God in everything. Moreover, he stood out manfully and boldly against evil. He used his authority against the desecration of the Sabbath. He would permit no buying or selling on the Lord's day. He contended with the people for marrying strange wives, and mingling with the heathen. He would not be bribed by presents of bread and wine and gold and silver, as the former governors had been. He determined to act in everything as before God. Whatever evil others did, he acted in a different spirit. He said, "But I did not do so, because of the fear of God!"

The same principle guided the three Hebrew youths of whom we read in the book of Daniel. They trusted in God, and did the right. Though threatened with a cruel death, they would not flinch. They had God with them, and feared not the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar. They believed that the God whom they served could deliver them, and that He would do it. But whether it were so or not, they would not sin by falling down before the golden image And God stood by them and honored them. They were saved from the burning fiery furnace, and promoted to a higher position by the king whom they had refused to obey. "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king: O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up." [Daniel 3:16-18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%203.16-18)

And you must act in the same way. Gird on your spiritual armor, and be not afraid of the face of man. Be sure that you have full peace of conscience, through faith in Christ's blood; and then, in the might of His Spirit, be ready to take up your cross, to deny yourself and to follow Him. If He gave up His life for your sake — will you refuse to suffer loss or reproach for Him? Remember that He Himself has said, "Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple!" [Luke 14:33](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2014.33). For His sake you must be willing, if need be, to forsake all, and even to yield up life itself, rather than dishonor Him or break His commandments.

Many examples might be given of those who in recent times have had grace given them to act in this spirit. We are told of Sir Maitland, that he gave up a high and profitable position rather than sign an order for the punishment of a soldier who would not fire a salute in honor of an idol.

A young man in straitened circumstances refused tempting offers of money on several occasions when made to him, on condition of his keeping silence as to certain goods which were put up for sale. But his character for straightforward honesty proved in the end far more valuable to him than the money which he refused.

I will mention another instance, more especially as it bears upon the conduct of young people engaged in shops, where the employers are not over-scrupulous in their business dealings.

A young man began to seek the Savior. He wished to be a true Christian, and besought of Christ pardon and the grace of the Spirit. His desire was granted; and, after a period of distressing doubt, he found peace and salvation. But what was to be done? He was in a shop where no one but himself had the least fear of God. His master would have him mix water with the milk, tell the customers falsehoods about the butter and the cheese, and many other similar things. But the young man would not do it. He stood firm as a rock. He would neither speak untruly, nor act dishonestly, nor dishonor the Lord's day. For some months the trial went on.

"I have no fault to find with him, except that he is a great deal too religious," was the master's opinion. By-and-by the door was open for a change. He went to a Christian employer, and stayed with him happily for several years. He received a strong testimony to his faithful service, and God prospered him in his after life.

Be assured that it is the truest wisdom as well as your plain duty to please God rather than man, and in all things to keep, the precepts of His Word.

Trust in God, and do the right!

"For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless!" [Psalm 84:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2084.11)

The Wedding Ring!

About eighty years ago, a lad, on returning from school, found a gold ring. The owner, though diligent inquiry was made, could never be found, and the lad said to his mother, as he committed the ring to her care, that if ever he were married, he would like it to be his wife's wedding ring.

Years passed by, and, in a little village church, his youthful wish was fulfilled. But the ring had a special mission to accomplish. Looking carefully at the ring soon after finding it, the lad had discovered that this motto had engraved on the inside, "God's providence — my inheritance!"

The lad pondered over the words, and thought to himself, how great was the blessing they described. "Yes," said he to himself, "that shall be the motto of my life: God's providence — my inheritance! That means, God's love, God's care, will be my estate, my riches. I shall be rich and happy indeed, if all my life through I have God to love me and provide for me."

In some such way as this he received the message of the ring; and the motto taken for life was marvelously fulfilled. In early struggles as a working-man, in the many cares and anxieties of family life, in the responsibilities of a large business, which he afterwards carried on, he found continually that the Lord was with him to guide and prosper him.

The writer knew him well in the last years of his eventful life. For fifteen years he had been totally blind, but, nevertheless, had gone on his way happily and usefully, enjoying in his heart the peace of God, and striving to do good to young and old. He now rests in Jesus. On his tombstone in Hastings Cemetery is cut out a representation of the ring, with the motto upon it. Beneath his name is inscribed the last text which he was ever able to read, "You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

Perhaps the motto on the ring may be a word of guidance and encouragement to those who are just setting out together as partners for life. We know not how long the time may last. We know not how many may be the years that God may spare you both to share each other's joys and sorrows. We know not how much of the sunshine of prosperity, or of the dark shadow of trial may be appointed for you. But we do know that to have God's providence for your inheritance will bring you unfailing consolation. In bright days or sorrowful ones, you will never be desolate if God's providence is your portion.

If many days of quiet rest and comfort in your home be allotted to you, they will be all the happier for knowing that God is your Father and Friend, and that His love has given you all. If, on the other hand, sickness or poverty, or trouble of any kind, visits your fireside — you will know where to look for help. You will find relief in casting all your care on Him who cares for you.

But how may you enjoy this assurance? How may you be able to rely without doubt on the care and love of our Father in Heaven?

You must trust wholly in His mercy in Christ Jesus. To be able to look up to God in cheerful confidence — your sins must be entirely put away. You must know the cleansing power of Christ's blood. Ah, it is a blessed thing for husband and wife to be united together in the faith and love of Jesus.

On a gravestone in Derbyshire, over the remains of a husband and wife, there is a picture of two hands, a larger and a smaller, grasping each other, with the following words:
One in life, and one in death,
One in Jesus whom they love:
One in joy, and trust, and faith,
One in hope to meet above.

Ah, here is the foundation of a holy, peaceful life, in God's favor and service. You must both seek the Savior, and both rejoice together in the hope of everlasting glory.

But if you would find comfort in the thought of God's providential care, you must honor God in your home. "Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD." [Psalm 128:1-4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20128.1-4)

If you would enjoy the Lord's blessing, which He promises in this Psalm, make it your constant aim to fear and serve Him with your whole heart.

Another point. Seek constantly the Holy Spirit's guidance. Let there be a short time, morning and evening, set apart for united prayer, and the reading of a portion of God's Word. Make the determination which Joshua made with respect to his household: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Be careful also to avoid whatever in your home may dishonor the Lord.

Watch against every sin. Too often some sin creeps in, and by-and-by all the comfort and the peace of the home is at an end. How often the sin of intemperance brings a lifelong misery and desolation to a home which might otherwise have been a very happy one.

Be sure to guard against the rising of any unkind spirit, or of anything that will disturb the affection which ought to exist between you.

Do not judge hastily.

Be forbearing and forgiving one toward the other. Be ready to overlook each other's faults, and to cover them with a mantle of love.

Thus walk on the way to the better country, "as heirs together of the grace of life." Pray one for the other, and help each other to the utmost of your power.

And when the messenger shall come to call one of you to another world, the parting will not be forever. You will meet again in the Father's house! God's providence will have been your inheritance on earth, His kingdom and glory shall be your inheritance above.

Such A Good Wife

It was a bright summer day, and I was sitting on a bench in Hyde Park, resting for a while and noticing the varieties of people passing by. After a time a workingman sat down on the bench beside me. Taking from my pocket a few tracts, I asked him to accept one, which he gladly did. He then told me a little of his wife. When he first married, he put every hindrance in the way of her going to church. He would forbid her to go, and if she went he would swear at her and often ill-treat her. But at last she conquered. She bore it all patiently, and would not give up.

She worked hard, and did her very best in the home. She was careful over his earnings, and never upbraided him when he came home half drunk. "Ah," said the man, "I saw at last that her way was best. She was such a good wife. She kept the house clean and tidy. She always had my meals ready for me. When I was cross with her, she always returned good for evil. So I let her have her own way, and after a time I began to go with her to the house of God."

I know not how deep the man's religion went, but it was plain that his wife had been a blessing to him. He had left off his drinking habits. He had learned to value his own fireside. He had learned to go with her to the sanctuary.

As far as I could judge, the man seemed guided by Christian principle. He took an interest in conversation about religious truth; and whatever change there had been had plainly arisen, under God, from the kindly and consistent conduct of his wife.

The man's story seemed to me a very practical commentary on the words of Peter: "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight." [1 Peter 3:1-4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%203.1-4)

It is a truth not to be forgotten. Many a man has been reached in this way, who could be reached in no other. He has not been accustomed to hear God's Word. Those with whom he works lead him in the wrong direction. Everything around him in the workshop or in the place of business tends to drown all serious impressions of God. But the wife may exercise great power. She may have an influence for good which no one else can wield. She is with him in his quieter moments. She may do much to relieve and cheer him in times of sickness and trouble. She may shed a ray of sunshine over his home which he finds nowhere else. She may drop a word in season at the right moment, and by God's grace may turn his feet into the way of righteousness.

"Such a good wife" as I have spoken of may be God's own instrument of saving the souls both of husband and children. But does any woman ask how this may be? Perhaps you have few comforts and many difficulties and temptations — and yet you would desire to act in this spirit, and bring a blessing to those in your home. How shall you do it? How shall you best prove an instrument of good to your husband and those about you?

Begin with heart faith in the Lord Jesus. Come to His footstool, and trust Him with the salvation of your soul. Take the place of a guilty and lost sinner, and trust Him as your only hope and Savior. You can never do well in your home, unless you have Christian principle, and this you can only gain in nearness to Christ. His Spirit alone can impart it. Therefore begin with coming to Him, and relying upon His mercy and grace. Look for pardon and peace through His sin-atoning blood. Give yourself unreservedly to His service. Yield yourself to His merciful keeping and guidance. Choose the better part, which shall not be taken from you.

Let then be a careful attention to home duties. Home is the great sphere where a Christian woman proves the reality of her faith. It is here that religion should shine the brightest. If you are a true follower of Christ, you must make it manifest in the common duties of every-day life. Be careful to make the most of whatever means you possess. Make good use of your time. Let there be tidiness and cleanliness in your own appearance and in every part of the house. Be punctual in preparing the meals. Do not leave home when there is work you should be doing within doors. Take pains in mending the children's clothes and in sending them regularly to school. In all these matters you cannot be too watchful and circumspect.

Strive hard against a burdened, careworn, unhappy spirit. Remember the harm it does. It brings a cloud over all within the home. It leads to fretfulness and complaining, and often to bad tempers and unpleasant words. It disturbs the comfort of the husband, and perhaps drives him to the tavern. A wife who is often "nagging" at her husband will never do him much good. And this often arises from a secret feeling of depression and anxiety.

Therefore look up in faith, and cast all your care on God. Hope in God, whatever be your lot. In spite of rough winds and dark clouds, in spite of short means and perhaps unkind looks, in spite of wearisome days and many causes for distress — believe that the Savior is with you, and will care for you in all your cares.

A widow was left with nine children, and had hard work to make both ends meet. But she was always happy, and often singing at her work. How was this? she was once asked. With your children and your troubles and anxieties, is there not much to try you? "Yes," she answered; "something comes almost every moment; but I do not keep it long, I cast it all on my Savior."

Act in this spirit, and your trials will not be half so burdensome. You will have peace and quietness of spirit. You will feel that Christ is by your side, and He will sustain and uphold you.

Never forget the power of believing prayer. Whatever you ask in Christ's name and for His glory — He will do it. Everything is possible with God, and believing prayer takes hold of God's power.

You may find it hard to overcome some evil in your own disposition, but Jesus will send you His Spirit and give you the victory. You may strive to bring up your little ones in the fear of God, you may correct them wisely, and teach them the Scriptures, and train them in the right way — and yet be sorely discouraged because they are willful and perverse. But remember that the hearts of all are in the hand of God. Only pray on in faith, and your prayers can never be lost.

Perhaps your husband is yet a stranger to God, and this is your great sorrow. But faith and prayer, with a holy, consistent life, will not fail to bring down a blessing from above. Wait God's time, and expect the blessing in God's own way.

What Will He Become?

One day, I noticed two youths looking very attentively at a pictorial handbill. On this paper was the portrait of a little boy, with the words beneath, "What will he become?" and then two rows of countenances giving signs alike of increasing age, but of very different characters. In the one row we can discern advancing intelligence and respectability — but in the other just the reverse. As years advance the man is sinking deeper and deeper in ignorance, vice, and misery.

The placard gave me a text on which I found it easy to say a few words to the lads who were looking at it; and I tried to point out to them how much of their happiness in the future hung upon their use of present opportunities, and upon their avoiding the temptations which on all sides abound.

But the question is a very profitable and suggestive one for us all, and especially for the consideration of parents.

What will he become? You look at a little child in his innocent mirth and lightheartedness, and you think of him as he will be when ten, twenty, or thirty years have passed over his head. What he will be, if spared to old age? What in death? What in the eternal world beyond the grave? What will he become?

Trace the course of two children.

You take one, perhaps in early days who gave promise of much that is good — yet afterwards was drawn away by wicked companions, yielding to some besetting sin; then became a leader in evil, a drunkard, a mocker, an atheist, spreading all around him a pestilential influence of depravity and vice, and at length falling into a hopeless grave, and passing unprepared into the presence of God!

Then, by the side of one like this, take the opposite case. Trace the upward course of the child who has sincerely received the Word of God into his heart. By the grace of God he sees the deadly character of sin, and flees from it. He turns a deaf ear to those who would lead him astray. He has many temptations, but he rises above them. He grows stronger in well-doing with advancing years. He follows in the steps of the Savior, whom he loves. He stands out to all around an example of the blessedness of God's service. He is a blessing in his home, in society, and in the Church. He is as a bright candle in a dark world — as leaven in the midst of the lump — as a grain of salt in the midst of corruption. He leaves behind a memory fragrant with holy associations, and receives from the Master's hand the unfading crown of glory!

What will he become? What will she become? What will be the life and death of the little one whose course has just begun?

How much will this depend, under God, on the teaching and the training given by the parents?

Two parents were speaking of the way in which they had spent their Sunday evening. "I heard an excellent sermon," said one, "on teaching our children the way to Heaven."

"And I was at home doing it," said the other.

Whatever else you forget, never forget to instruct your children in the way of life.

Teach them the nature of SIN — its ingratitude, its folly, its peril. Talk to them about the ten commandments, and the other precepts of Scripture, in the light of daily experience. Remind them, with all gentleness and affection, that "the wages of sin is death," and that the end of the sinner must be eternal ruin.

Then talk to them of the SAVIOR. Tell them that He is the Friend of sinners. Tell them that He is the gentle Shepherd, who carries the lambs in His bosom, and that He will be to them as the mother bird getting her brood beneath her wings, and protecting them from storm and cold.

Impress upon their memories the gracious, the Divine, the true words of the heavenly Father, "I love those who love Me, and those who seek Me early shall find Me."

But more than this; TRAIN your children as well as teach them. Be firm, and yet be gentle. When you say "No," keep to it. Do not yield to pettishness and self-will. Punish all lying and disobedience — yet be loving and kind. Never punish in a passion. Draw, rather than drive. Never speak harsh and bitter words. Make friends of your children, and let home be a happy place.

Then PRAY for your children. Let your frequent intercessions go up to Heaven on behalf of those committed to your care. Lay up a treasury of prayers for them. Pray that God may pour upon them the grace of His Spirit and make them faithful followers of Christ. Especially, pray with them. Let them know that you bear them on your heart before God.

And let your own EXAMPLE be the great teacher. The life of the father and mother ought to be a daily sermon to the children. Let them ever be learning from that which they witness at home, what should be the conduct of a true Christian. Great is the blessing that comes to parents who lead their children in the way in which they should go. Great too is the sorrow to those who leave them to walk in the way of their own sinful hearts.

The late Richard Knill, a most devoted and useful missionary in Russia, returned home to his native village. It so happened that he slept in the chamber where he had slept as a boy. All night long he lay awake thinking of the mercy and goodness of God to him through life. Early in the morning he looked out of a window, and saw a tree in the garden beneath which his mother had prayed with him forty years before. He went out, and on the same spot knelt down and thanked God for a praying mother. Here was the reward of a mother who trained her children in the way to Heaven.

Oh happy house, where, with the hands of prayer,
Parents commit their children to the Friend
Who, with a more than mother's tender care,
Will watch and keep them safely to the end.

Where they are taught to sit at Jesus' feet,
And listen to the words of life and truth,
And learn to lisp His praise in accents sweet,
From early childhood to advancing youth.

Hold Fast!

A traveler is on a steep and dangerous path. He needs to be careful, for a slip may be fatal. But a faithful and experienced guide is by his side. He takes his hand, and bids him "hold fast." So the traveler goes forward until the danger is past.

A boat is wrecked near the shore. The sea is high, and the danger of the sailors is great. But a rope is thrown out. One of the men seizes it, and those on the shore bid him "hold fast." And so, in spite of stormy wind and raging waves, his life is preserved.

Thus is it needful for you to "hold fast." The path is dangerous by which you must travel, but there is One by your side who will not fail you. He knows every pitfall, and each perilous turning, and He can keep you from the false steps. He holds your hand in His, and He bids you cleave to Him and never let go your hold.

There are waves and storms through which we must battle as we make our way through this troublesome world. Sometimes they seem ready to overwhelm us, and we scarcely know what to do. But the rope is thrown out to us. A free salvation and all needful help is brought near. But we must lay hold and keep hold. By a true and lively faith, we must embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which is given us in our Savior Jesus Christ.

The good Spirit of God has led you, if truly converted, already to hear and believe the message of God's love in Christ. You now desire to love and serve Him all your days. What shall we say to help and strengthen you? How may you "hold fast' the blessed hope of the gospel, so as to attain at length the full reward? We would remind you that all your strength is in Christ. Out of Him you are condemned, lost, blind, helpless, unable to overcome one sin, or to advance one step on your way.

Ever remember this. Take the lowest place, and abide there. Lay aside all self-confidence. Trust only in Jesus from first to last. He is a great Savior. He saves from great sins, great sorrows, and great temptations. He never rejects a sinner when first he comes to Him, nor a backslider when he returns after a fall. He saves eternally all who believe. He never leaves nor forsakes the least or weakest of His people.

Therefore you have the fullest grounds for confidence. Since He is so faithful, so able and willing to save and help you, you must "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

"Hold fast" by the faithful Word. Make the Bible your companion and friend for life. Search day by day into its hidden treasures. Let no one tempt you to doubt its truth. It is the word of Him who cannot lie. It meets every need of the soul. It contains everything necessary for your comfort and salvation. Its promises are all yes and amen in Christ Jesus. Its precepts will guide you in every difficulty. Its bright and blessed hopes will cheer you in every trial. Therefore hide the Word in your heart. Make use of all means that may assist you in the knowledge of it. If you have opportunity, join a Bible class. Study it with others, as well as alone. Think of it as you walk by the way, and as you sit in your home. "Hold fast" by the Word of God.

"Hold fast" your hope in the promise and salvation of Christ. It is everything for you to maintain your own personal grasp of the Savior. You have been led by the Spirit to commit your soul to Him, to save and to keep you to the end. Abide steadfast in this reliance upon Him. You may be a very poor, weak, and faltering Christian — but He is faithful. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. He will work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Though you may lament your coldness and lack of feeling, Christ can remedy this. In His own time, and in His own way, He will perfect that which concerns you. Therefore hope in Him continually. He will keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

"Hold fast" your open confession of His name. Never be ashamed to own Him as your Master. Confess very plainly whose you are, and whom you serve. Forsake not the ordinances of His house. Meet with His people to join in united prayer. Go to the table which He has spread for your refreshment. Reprove sin when it lies in your power to do so. Speak a word for Christ where you can. Strive to help forward a weak disciple, or to awake a careless sinner. Remember Christ is your King, and you are bound to fight manfully under His banner. Those who confess Him before men, He will confess before His Father in Heaven. Those that deny Him on earth, He will deny at the day of His appearing.

"Hold fast" in spite of all that might tempt you to forsake Christ. The world may appear in its most attractive form. It may offer you a career of prosperity and the possession of great wealth. It may allure you by promise of much that is called pleasure. But stand fast, and go not after it. The world is very deceptive. Cast not away the peace which Jesus gives, for anything which the world has to offer.

And be not distressed though you meet with opposition and ridicule. Old friends may look coldly upon you. They may call you hard names, and speak evil of you because you will not live as once you did. Yet be not troubled. You need not fear man's frown nor court his favor, for Christ Himself is on your side. He will ever be to you as a Refuge and a Sanctuary. The joy of the Lord shall be your strength.

It may be, too, that some who set out with you to Zion may turn back. They may forsake Christ, and walk no more with Him. But still abide steadfast. If all others deny Him, hold on your way and never give up. There is no other Savior, no other Friend who can comfort you in trouble, no other Helper to whom you can look. Therefore cleave to Him evermore. He holds out to you a crown of life. In a little while He will come again. Great then will be the reward of those who by His grace have been faithful unto the end. "Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of Heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name!" [Revelation 3:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%203.12)

Follow His Steps

"Leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps." [1 Peter 2:21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%202.21)

A little boy was walking with his father through the deep, newly-fallen snow; but he could scarcely make his way. So his father, shortening his strides, went on before, and told the boy to put his feet in the footprints which he had made. Doing this, he was able to proceed.

So if I belong to Christ, I must tread in His footsteps. I must walk where He walked. I must look to see where He placed His foot, and, by His grace, I must strive to follow after Him. He has said, "If any man serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be." I must make it my constant aim to follow Jesus wherever He goes. Trusting only for salvation in His faithful promise and in His atoning death — I must show that I am His by copying His example, and treading heedfully the path in which He has gone before me.

But where can I trace the footprints of Christ Jesus?

I see them in the Valley of Humility. Though so highly exalted, yet He stooped to take the lowest place. He was meek and lowly in heart. He was born in a stable, and died on a malefactor's cross. He despised none who came to Him. He dwelt among the poor. He probably toiled in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. He took the place of a servant, and washed the feet of the disciples.

If I am Christ's, I too must be of the same spirit. I must lay aside all pride and self-conceit. I must be clothed with humility. I must give way to those around me, when I see that it will be for good. In my words and actions I must often yield to the wish of others, and crucify self-will and self-pleasing. Above all, I must ever keep humble before God.

I see these footprints on the Mount of Prayer. At early dawn, and when wearied with the labors of a busy day, Christ resorted to the mountain-top for communion with His Father in Heaven. At one time we know that He went out and spent the whole night in prayer to God. He thus found rest and refreshment to His spirit. Away from the contradiction of sinners, and from the mistakes of His disciples; away from the sight of evil that oppressed Him, He poured out His soul before His Father, and was thus prepared again to go forth and finish the work given Him to do.

Here, too, I must follow in the same steps. I must live a life of prayer. I must make it my constant delight. I must pray in the morning and in the evening, and often lift up my heart in silent prayer through the day. In prayer I must roll on God the burden that weighs upon me, and must wait on Him that my strength may be renewed.

I see these footprints in the Temple, and in the Synagogue. Christ loved His Father's courts. In His early days He was found by many in the Temple. In His last days He was often walking there, doing His Father's work. At Nazareth, He was accustomed in the synagogue to worship, and to hear or to read the Word of God.

And the Christian will love the house of prayer. It is there, where ever so small a number are met together, that Christ promises to meet those who worship in His name. It is there I may gain help for my pilgrimage. There I hear the message of redeeming love. There I join in singing the songs of Zion. I go there to the Supper which Christ has provided for His people. And shall I not delight to go again and again, whenever the opportunity is given me? Shall I not thus gain fresh blessing to my soul, and openly confess the name of Him I love?

I see these footprints on the Highway of Holiness. Christ was "holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners." Though living for many years in a place like Nazareth — yet no evil thing ever polluted His soul. He was ever mingling with sinners at every turn, sitting down with publicans and outcasts, yet He Himself was ever without blemish and without spot. Like a sunbeam penetrating the darkest abodes of vice and wickedness, yet itself undefiled — so was it with Christ. No man could convict Him of sin. In Him was never found one word spoken amiss, one unholy thought, one selfish or sinful act. His whole life was holiness, and purity, and love.

And on this highway of holiness my footsteps must tread. Though a sinner to the heart's core, yet I must ever be putting off the old man and put on the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness. I must hate and abhor every evil thing. I must yield to no sin. I must mortify the deeds of the body. I must overcome, by the grace of the Spirit, all covetousness, passion, love of the world, murmuring, and whatever is contrary to the mind of Christ. I must aim at the highest standard. I must cultivate the spirit of true love. I must desire to love Christ far above all earthly treasures; and, for His sake, I must cherish a spirit of holy charity towards all men. Thus I must ever be perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and be more and more conformable in all things to His will.

I see these footprints in the abodes of sorrow and desolation. Jesus went once to a marriage feast — but

 many times to the house of mourning. He cheered the hearts of the sisters of Bethany. He dried the tears of the widow at Nain. He entered the house of Jairus, and restored to him his only daughter. So was it wherever He went. He was ever ready to comfort mourners, and relieve the sorrow-stricken, burdened hearts. Five short words sum up the life of Christ. "He went about doing good."

Nor must the disciple shrink from following Christ in this also. It may require self-denial and self-sacrifice, but it is the life to which He calls us, and which brings the richest reward.

To feed the hungry, and comfort the sorrowful;
to sit by the bedside of the sick and the dying, or to whisper words of consolation in the ear of the bereaved;
to lessen the woes which burden our earth;
above all, to rescue the perishing, and bring wanderers back to the footstool of mercy
— all this is blessed work. It is angel's work, and those who engage in it shall be watered themselves as they strive to water others.

Lastly, I see these footprints on the path that leads to Calvary. Christ endured the cross, despising the shame. He was content all through His life to bear reproach, and scorn, and mockery; at last He ended His days by suffering a cruel, agonizing death.

And the Christian must suffer with Christ — if he would reign with Him. I must needs take up the cross, and be willing patiently to bear tribulation for Christ's sake. If I be reproached for His name, it is a glory and an honor; and whatever sorrow or suffering is appointed me, I must accept it as from a Father's hand. "May Your will be done."

Thus shall I be journeying homeward. If I fall, Christ will lift me up. He will forgive my many faults and failings. He will strengthen me by His Spirit, and uphold me with His right hand. So shall I reach the heavenly home, "Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes!" [Revelation 7:16-17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%207.16-17)

The Light-bearers

Not long ago, I spent a few hours in a deep limestone pit in the neighborhood of Wolverhampton. I had the opportunity at the dinner-hour of speaking for a little while to about seventy or eighty of the men working in the mine. I said to them —

"You have taught me a lesson since I came here. When I put my foot out of the lift, you placed a candle in my hand; and I see all of you have a candle beside you, which you carry with you. Now," I added, "this pit seems to me a very dark and gloomy place, but your candles give a little light, and enable you and the others to walk about with safety. Just so, like this pit, the world we live in is in many respects very dark and gloomy; there is much sin and trouble and care and suffering; and it is our duty, each one of us, to carry a light, and to help in dispersing, if it be but a little, the darkness that is around us."

Since then, I have often thought of that day, and I feel more and more persuaded of the importance of the lesson of which it reminded me. We must shine as "lights in the world." The Master has said: "You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven."

A strange and melancholy incident, which may teach a solemn lesson, once occurred in a mine, when several men were killed by an accident; and the survivors had the painful task of bringing to the surface the bodies of those who had been killed. One of these was carrying a dead companion, with his lamp in the other hand. He found he could not, so encumbered, make his way along, so he put the hand of the dead man through the ring of the lamp, and succeeded in reaching the shaft, the dead man the while thus holding the light.

It is not such light-bearers that are needed in the Church of God; but, alas! it may be a true picture notwithstanding. There may be those who profess to hold forth the light — and yet who never themselves behold it. There may be those who, in some sort, are teachers of others — and yet are themselves dead in trespasses and sins.

Reader, come first to Him, the Light, the Joy of all who trust in Him — the Fountain of truth and holiness and wisdom and grace. Come to Jesus, and learn of Him. Sit down at His footstool; look up to Him for the anointing of His Spirit. Believe in the light, and you shall be a child of light. His light shall shine in your heart and along your path.

Never will the writer forget the words of an old Christian who, for more than half a century, had been following Christ. He had been blind for many years, yet had light in his soul.

"My young friends," said he, "you can look up and see the sun shining in the Heaven, and the bright stars shining by night; and I can see none of these. But a brighter light shines here" (pointing to his heart); "even God's love in the face of Jesus!" The countenance of the old man was full of heavenly joy as he spoke these words.

But if you have the light, you are not to hide it. It is given you to use for others, and not selfishly to keep only for yourself.

The captive Israelite maiden could hold out the light that guided her heathen master into the knowledge of the true God.

Aged Simeon could speak of the Savior whom he had found in the Temple.

And the shepherds of Bethlehem could awaken in many a heart a glad surprise and wonder as they told of the Babe and of the heavenly vision.

Andrew could hold out the light to Simon his brother, and Philip to his friend Nathanael.

The woman of Sychar could tell her countrymen of Him who had so unfolded to her the secrets of her past history; and she led many to believe in Him.

Aquila and Priscilla, though but humble Christians, could greatly assist one who was mighty in the Scriptures.

The early Christians, scattered by persecution, could go everywhere preaching the Word.

Lois and Eunice could instruct a lad so that he became a great blessing in Christ's Church, and a strength to the apostle Paul.

Even so may Christians of every rank and degree, and in every age, bear witness for their Master, hold out the light, and, in His strength and the power of His Spirit, bring wanderers to His footstool.

Let us think over a few of the comparisons to which God's people may be likened with reference to this point.

You may be like the bright sun. "Let them that love Him be as the sun when he goes forth in his might."

Or, if not, you may be a fixed, steady light like the star. The angels of the seven churches are spoken of as stars; and many a private Christian, as well as the chief pastors of Christ's flock, may be this.

Or, if you fear you cannot be this, you may be like a lighthouse, giving light across the waves of a stormy sea. The word translated "lights" in [Philippians 2:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%202.15), signifies "light-holders ," "shine as light-holders in the world;" and this is just that which the lighthouse is.

Or, if you cannot be even this, you may be a bright candle or lamp in the house; in your own circle manifesting the power of God's truth in your daily life, and speaking or writing to your own friends and kindred words that may guide and help them.

Nay, if you think, "I cannot be even this; I am too insignificant, I have too little influence;" well, at least you may be the glow-worm — a little ray of light at least you may give; and even that will not be lost, for it will give pleasure to those who behold it.

Think over the matter, and see what you can do. You can give a little to promote Christ's kingdom. A small trifle, given regularly week by week to some home or foreign missionary object, is one effectual means of spreading the light. A ploughboy in Suffolk had but one shilling in the world, and at a missionary meeting he gave it, saying as he put it in the plate, "Lord, bless that one shilling."

Perhaps you can spare an hour or two in the week to visit a few who need instruction, and you might at least read to them a few verses of God's Word. I believe that in many cases much good might be done if godly working-men were to give an alternate Sunday morning to visit and speak to those who neglect public worship, and strive lovingly to win them to God's house. It might be a loss to be absent from the public worship of God's house, but it would be more than repaid in the fulfillment of the promise, "He who waters shall be watered himself."

Another great means of doing good is to assist in selling or giving good books, periodicals, or tracts. There is so much evil in many papers that are sold in large numbers, that it is our duty to scatter about such as may do good.

After all, the best advice I could give you in this matter, is to ask God to show you what you can do. You have your own proper place, and God can show you how to fill it. Often go to Him, and say, "Lord, what will You have me to do?" Watch for opportunities. Deny yourself, that you may be able to give or help more. Mingle much prayer with all you do, and ask especially for the Holy Spirit's guidance.

With one example of light-bearing I will close.

An elderly man in Ceylon, was a very bigoted heathen, and hated the truth. He would spit on the ground in contempt whenever Christ was spoken of. The cholera came, and a niece of this man, a Christian girl, was attacked by it. He came to see her, and began to lament her approaching death.

"Oh, how miserable you are! the cholera has got hold of you!"

"No, uncle," she replied, "I am not miserable: I am going to my Savior, and I am quite happy. Uncle," she said, "bring me my Bible."

She took the book, and turned to the Gospel of [John 3:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.16): "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." When she had read it she added, "I believe this, and I am happy." Then she said to her uncle: "You have spent a great deal of money on your idols — what could they do for you if you were as ill as I am?"

"I fear, very little," was the answer.

Then she said: "Will you kneel down and let me pray for you?"

And so the dying girl prayed for her heathen uncle: and when she was at rest in her Savior's bosom — he cast away his idols, and followed the same Savior.

Christian, carry the light — bear it aloft wherever you can — and you shall receive the fullness of the promise:

"Those who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

Only A Shepherd's Dog

Some years ago a working-man was led to give up his former drinking habits, and to join a number of others in a temperance group. But he did not stop at this. He began earnestly to seek the Lord. At first he was afraid to confess Christ openly; but, by-and-by, he cast away all fear of man. It grieved him at the heart that he should ever have been ashamed of One who had done so much for him. Then he began to work for Christ. Never was there a more zealous or persevering winner of souls. At the same time, he was very humble. He would do what he could, though he thought little of his own efforts. He would say, "I'm only a shepherd's dog. But I will go after the stray ones, and try to bring them back!" And so he did. He would find clothes for those who had none, and often lent them something of his own that they might attend the house of God.

About this time special services were being held in a schoolroom for working-men. The "shepherd's dog" was soon at work. He helped to fill the room, which was crowded night after night. One result of his work was very remarkable. It was the conversion of a prize-fighter. He had done some little act of kindness for this man, and he now persuaded him to come to the services which were being held. The first night this prize-fighter came an address was given from the well-known words: "When the wicked man turns away from his wickedness that he has committed, and does that which is lawful and right — he shall save his soul alive."

The nail was driven right home! The earnestness of the preacher, and the Word of God spoken in faithfulness, reached the heart and touched the conscience of this wicked man. Though previously the slave of drink and almost every evil habit — yet from that night he turned to God with his whole heart. He confessed his sin, he found forgiveness through the blood of Christ; and, through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, he became a new creature. Old things passed away, and all things became new. For more than fifteen years he lived a consistent, godly life. His old companions were given up, and he loved constantly to attend the house of God and every means of grace. When, at length, he became so weak and feeble that he could scarcely walk, he yet slowly made his way to the place where he had so often been refreshed and comforted by the message of God's love.

But his time was nearly over. Shortly before his death, he told his brother to take out of the Savings Bank the few pounds that belonged to him. Part he was to expend in providing what was needful for the funeral; a part he was to give to a hospital where he had once received benefit; the rest he was to spend in the erection of a gravestone on which he desired to have inscribed the passage of Scripture which led to his conversion. So he died in full and blessed hope, rejoicing only in Christ his Savior. In the quiet cemetery in which he was buried, I often read his name and the text on his gravestone: "When the wicked man turns away front his wickedness that he has committed, and does that which is lawful and right — he shall save his soul alive!"

This narrative may teach us the value of earnest, painstaking efforts to bring within the sound of the gospel those who are living without God.

Every man has influence with those around him. And the Christian is bound to use his influence for the recovery and salvation of the lost and perishing. If you love the Savior yourself, show your love to Him by your compassion for those who go astray. Speak a word in season where you can. Give away a suitable tract, and join with it a hearty prayer for the one to whom you give it. Persuade a friend or fellow-workman to go with you to hear the glad tidings of God's love. Search after means for reaching those who are farthest off. Endeavor to reclaim the drunkard and the outcast. Do not regard them as beyond the power and grace of the Good Shepherd. He can restore those who have sunk deepest in the mire of sin, and can teach those who have hitherto known nothing of His love.

Only go forth in His name, and believe in His presence and His help with you, and your efforts cannot be in vain. And if you fear that you cannot do much, yet do what you can. Be willing to take a lesson from "the shepherd's dog." Help those who watch for souls. Strengthen the hands of Christ's ministers. Take any position, however lowly, if only you may win a soul for Christ, and advance His kingdom in the world.

But this narrative may teach us a second lesson. We learn the mighty power of the Word of God. The bold, daring sinner, the drunkard, the prize-fighter, is brought by the power of the gospel preached from that Word humbly and perseveringly to walk in the path of life. Therefore have confidence in the Word. It is the hammer that breaks in pieces the rock, the fire that melts the hard heart, the two-edged sword that pierces to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow. The Word of God, when spoken in the power of the Spirit, convinces of sin, and leads the sinner to the Savior. It converts the soul, and builds up the believer in his most holy faith. Therefore honor the Word in all your efforts for the good of others. Lay before men the plain, necessary truths therein revealed. The value of the soul, the evil of sin, the freeness of salvation, the cleansing efficacy of the blood, the mighty working of the Holy Spirit in the hearty the coming judgment, and the need of immediate decision for Christ — such subjects as God will ever bless when spoken in dependence on His grace. "He who goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Silent Influence

An old man once complained that he feared he had done no good to anyone, though he had for years prayed that God would make him useful. He was assured, however, that such a prayer could not be lost, and that, whether he saw the answer or not, it would be found at last that he had not lived in vain.

One rainy Sunday morning, he was making his way to the house of God. He was very poor, and had no umbrella, but, in spite of the unfavorable weather, he walked two miles, that he might not lose the privilege of meeting with God's people. An ungodly farmer, who never went to church, but spent his Sunday in figuring up his accounts, saw the man on his way, and said to himself that, in such weather, the old man would not come a second time. But he did come a second time, and the farmer happened to see him again on his way. Now, the farmer had known the old man for many years, as a consistent, God-fearing, humble Christian — as one who, though poor in this world, was rich in faith. He had never thought much of this before, but he was led to think about it when, a few days afterwards, the church bell was tolling, and the farmer heard that the old man was dead. It went like an arrow to his heart. He thought of the contrast between his own life and that of the old man. He especially chided himself for his neglect of the Lord's day. "Here have I been wasting Sunday after Sunday, and thinking only of my worldly affairs, while this old man would go through the rain to God's house; and now he has been taken away, and I am left. What if I had been called away? What hope could I have had? Where would I have been? But it shall be so no more. I will begin a different course next Sunday." Somewhat in this way, the man talked with himself, and on the next Sunday he was twice at public worship.

Nor was it only a passing emotion. Sunday after Sunday he was found among those who worshiped God, and he learned to love and follow the Savior. His life was a lasting memorial of the blessed effects of the godly walk of one who feared that he had been unable to do any good.

A story like this, which is strictly true, shows that every Christian may be useful to others. You may have but one talent. You may have but little education, and your means may be very small. You may not see how it is possible for you to do much good. But remember God's ways are not as our ways. By means that seem the most unlikely He brings about the most blessed results. He uses the feeblest instruments to work out His most glorious designs.

The power of silent influence seems the great lesson we may learn from the story of the old man. Every one of us is daily exercising this power. By our ordinary daily walk we are either doing good or doing harm to a very great extent. The earnest devoted Christian, with a heart full of love, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, is scattering on all sides of him seeds of thought which tend to awaken, or elevate, or quicken others. His speech, his life of prayer, his gentle and forbearing spirit, his acts of kindness and thoughtfulness for others — all these are producing a far greater effect than he can estimate. They are telling in all directions. They are adorning the gospel of Christ, and leading others to think. They are quietly checking sin, and strengthening good impressions, and removing stumbling-blocks out of the way, and opening doors of usefulness which the man himself is never aware of.

A young man knelt down in his room to pray. Another sleeping in the same chamber was struck by his earnestness, and no longer strove against the Holy Spirit, but, yielding to His Divine influences, began to seek the Lord. From that time he followed the Savior, and became eventually an eminently laborious and useful preacher of the gospel.

The wife of a working-man loves the house of God, though her husband objects to her going. But the husband without the Word is won by the life of his partner. She is such a good wife. She keeps the house so clean, and is always so kind and forbearing, that at length he can stand out no longer, and goes with her each Sunday to the house of God.

Let every Christian remember this power of silent influence, and take care that nothing is permitted to mar or hinder it. We must watch against every hasty word, or wrong temper, or thoughtless act, that will dim our light. We must seek to be guided by the blessed Spirit of God. We must walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We must look up to Him for help and grace continually. Whenever we fail, we must go to Him for pardon through His blood, and then rise again in His strength to do His will. Thus living and dying, we shall be a blessing to hundreds, it may be to thousands and tens of thousands. We shall not live in vain, but we shall receive at last a crown of unfading glory from the hand of Christ

Fight and Win

Some time ago, when engaged in special efforts to bring the message of the gospel to those living without God, I received from a young friend a letter enclosing a book-marker with the motto "FIGHT AND WIN."

It was a cheering word to me at the time; and, as I thought of it, it seemed to me a rousing call to every faithful servant of Christ. It suggested the inquiry, How can I do this? How can I so maintain the struggle in life's battle-field that I may insure the victory at last?

If I would "fight and win," I must take care that I have the right motive. This is the only way in which we can effectually carry on our Christian warfare. True and faithful service arises from grateful love to the Captain of our salvation. Before we can serve Him aright, we must come to Him to be freely pardoned and washed from every guilty stain in His precious blood; we must look to Him for the grace of His Spirit to quicken us and to renew us in His image; we must have His love shed abroad in the heart by the same blessed Spirit. Then in His name, and in His strength, and clothed with the armor which He supplies, we must go forth manfully to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and strive to set up His kingdom on earth.

But if I would prove a victor in the warfare I have to wage, I must also lean continually on the strength and grace of Christ. I must go forth to my daily conflict depending only on strength from above. I have no might at all in myself against my spiritual foes, and it is only through Christ strengthening me, that I can resist any temptation. So I must lift up my eyes to the hills, whence comes my help.

"O Lord Jesus, make me a good soldier today," must be my prayer in the morning. And in the heat of the toil and burden of each day's struggle, I must be ready again, and again to call on the Strong One for strength. Let it be but a word, a look, a sigh heavenward, my Great Advocate will mark it, and send me fresh help. Then if I have been overcome in any matter by the craft and power of my adversary, when I am foiled and sore wounded, I must not despair and give up all for lost. I must cry for support to Him who is my Healer and Physician as well as my Captain. He will raise me up again; He will bind up my wounds, and pour in the oil and wine of His grace and mercy; He will enable me to go forth again more humble and more watchful than before. So shall I finally be able to tread down all the enemies of my soul.

Again, I must maintain the struggle in all parts of the field. I must resist evil in every department of the Christian life. I must fight the good fight of faith in the secret chamber of my own heart. I must gain the dominion over my secret sins, whatever they may be. I must cast down all pride, vain-glory, and self-exaltation in every shape. I must put aside all covetousness, selfishness, eagerness to get rich, and love of the world's pleasures. I must not give way to any unholy, unchaste, envious, distrustful, or murmuring thoughts. I must strive to keep my heart with all diligence, knowing that out of it are the issues of life.

I must fight against sin in my own home. It is here that I am too often off my guard. But I must beware lest I put a stumbling block in the way of those I love best. I must plainly show that I hate the very shadow of evil. I must avoid all evil-speaking, and whatever will injure children, brother or sister, husband or wife.

Temper must be curbed, and the tongue must be watched, lest an incautious word should mar the profession which I make. I will endeavor, by God's grace, so to adorn the doctrine of Christ by a consistent life, that when I am in my grave those who have known me best may have reason to bless God for my example.

I must also prove myself the true soldier of Christ in business and in society. No shadow of falsehood or fraud must ever be permitted. I must be clear as the day, and sincere and straightforward in every transaction. If it brings me loss, or trouble, or ill-will — Christ will far more than make up for it. He will give me the comfort of a good conscience, and the assurance of His presence. If it pleases Him, He can give me a hundredfold more in this present life; and if not, it is far better for me to lack that which He denies me.

I must also reckon it my daily work to win captives for Christ from the ranks of the enemy.

A young lad who had learned to know Christ as a Friend and Savior was very desirous to win over his elder brother. At last he succeeded. He brought him to his pastor, saying, "We have had a hard fight in our house, but Jesus has won the day, and my brother now wishes to follow Him."

So must I strive to bring one and another to the feet of Jesus. My relatives, my friends, my neighbors, shall be the objects of my earnest prayers and constant efforts. I will not cease my labors for others until Jesus shall call me home, and give me the unfading crown of glory.

Thus shall I fight and win. In Christ, my righteousness and my strength, I will ever rejoice. He will keep me safe in the fiercest assault of the enemy. He will prosper my efforts to win souls for Him. He will receive me at last to His kingdom, where I shall have to fight no more, but where I will cast my trophies at His feet, and bless Him forever that He has made me more than conqueror through His grace.

Yours Alone!

The secret of a holy, happy, and useful Christian life may be expressed in one short rule: "Take all, and give all." First, you must take all. Jesus has bought for you every spiritual blessing by His own precious blood. He now opens wide His hand, and offers, without money and without price, every gift that you need. Stretch out your empty hand. Accept joyfully and thankfully the salvation which it brings. It is all of His own free love, and bestowed as a gift on those who are willing to receive it. The grace of repentance, complete forgiveness, peace with God, sonship in God's family, the help and comfort of His Spirit, eternal life — all is your own when you believe in Christ, and trust Him to bestow them according to His word. Doubt not His readiness to give them to you. However sinful and unworthy you may be, He cannot deny you, for His promise is sure. Thus, take all, and rejoice.

But do not stop here. Think of the wondrous love that has done so much for you. Let that love be a constraining principle in your life. Then, in heartfelt gratitude — give all to Him, who first gave all to you. He gave you Himself to be the sacrifice for your sins. He made Himself poor, that you might be rich. He suffered and agonized, and died upon the cross, that you might live forever. He gives you the mercy and the grace which will make life happy below, and eternity a song of endless joy. What will you not give back to Him for love like this?

Ah, give Him yourself, your all. Yield yourself, body and soul, to live for Him; and, if need be, even to die for Him. Keep back nothing. Make no reserves. Withhold nothing of all you have. Give your time and money and influence, and all else you have, to be employed in His service. Let the hand work or write for Him; the foot run on His errands; the eye look up to Him for direction — and then look around in sympathy on His suffering members; let the ear hearken to His voice, whether speaking in His word, or in the sorrowful cry of the poor and needy; let the lips speak to Him in praise and prayer, or for Him in warning the sinner or comforting the weak believer. Thus, let every member of the body, and so likewise every power of the soul, be gladly surrendered to Him. Lay all at His footstool, with the freewill offering of a heart filled with His love.

Lord Jesus, You have promised
To all who follow Thee,
That where You are in glory,
There shall Your servant be.

Lord Jesus, I have promised
To serve You to the end;
Oh give me grace to follow
My Master and My Friend.

God is calling you to this entire consecration. Perhaps, hitherto, you have thought little of God's love to you — but now you have seen your danger, and fled for refuge alone to Jesus. Or, perhaps, you have been in some measure following Christ before, but you have learned to see more of His grace, and can rejoice more than ever you could previously in His free salvation. In either case, the Lord appeals to you henceforth to live only for Him. He wants your whole heart and your whole life. A divided heart, a divided service — He cannot and will not accept. A life given partly to the world and partly to the Lord — will bring no comfort to yourself, and greatly dishonors Him; while a life wholly devoted to Him, honors Him whom you serve, and cannot fail to bring down fresh blessings on your own soul.

I would beseech you, therefore, to dedicate yourself afresh to the Lord. Let there be a definite act of entire self-surrender and consecration. Go into your chamber, and there, alone with the Savior, give yourself up to Him, to be His, and to serve Him forever. Say to Him something of this kind, "O Lord, I come to give myself to You. I would love You and serve You all my days. I would have no will but Yours. I would choose Your way, and not my own. I would please You in an I do. O Lord, help me, for without You I can do nothing. My hope is in Your grace alone. If You leave me to myself, I cannot remain faithful for a single hour. But I cast myself upon You. Keep me from all sin. Keep me from all self-pleasing. Keep me from the snares of this present evil world. Strengthen me with might by Your Holy Spirit. Help me from this day to live only for Your glory."

Thus to give yourself to the Lord will not be in vain. He will stand by you, and give you daily strength for your daily conflict. He who has given you the will thus to act, will give you power to fulfill the desire which His Spirit has put in your heart.

A faithful servant of Christ, in Suffolk, well known and valued for his consistency of life, and earnest zeal for the salvation of souls, fell asleep in Jesus, deeply regretted by the little flock he had so faithfully nourished in the green pastures of God's word. After his death, two papers were found in his study. One was written twenty years before, when he was a student at Cambridge. It was a solemn statement of his entire dedication to God's service, and how he desired, in the Lord's strength, to live in everything for Him. The other paper was written only a short time before his death. It was an address to his parishioners, urging them to make sure of their saving interest in Christ, and speaking of the Lord's faithfulness to himself through life, and the unspeakable blessedness he had found in serving Him.

Such a testimony may encourage others to devote themselves without reserve to the Lord's service. He is a good Master, and each true-hearted servant shall be honored of God, and at length receive an abundant recompense.

I Have Two Heavens

I was sitting by the couch of an aged Christian. He was a great sufferer, and his disease was such that he could never expect to be free from suffering until death should come and release him. We spoke together of God's love to His people, and the wonderful privileges that belong to them. Suddenly, the old man almost startled me by exclaiming, "I have two heavens! I have two heavens!"

"What do you mean?" I asked him.

"Ah, sir," he replied, "I have Heaven here, for Christ is always by my side — and I have another Heaven awaiting me above."

I have often thought of the old man's remark, and how the Lord can comfort His people when everything seems against them. It shows the mistake of those who imagine that Christ would rob them of any true happiness. Whatever He denies His people, it is only because in the end it would prove injurious to them. And whatever they give up for His sake, He gives a hundredfold more even now, and afterwards a crown of life.

The remark of the old man reminds us of the story which has often been told of Richard Cecil and his mother. She was in constant pain and suffering, and shut out from all the ordinary pleasures of life, while he ran headlong into every excess and self-indulgence. Yet all the while he saw that she had a spring of true joy which he did not possess, and it was this which led him to his knees, that he might know the secret of his mother's happiness.

Nor is this a solitary example. We often find something very similar.

One of the happiest Christians I ever knew was a poor sufferer in a little village near Cambridge. I often went to see her, and always learned something by her sick bed. She was afflicted with a great variety of illnesses, and yet her heart overflowed with joy and love. She was quite blind, she had a spinal disease, a heart disorder, and a fearful tumor in the throat; but nothing seemed to damp her joy, or hinder her from speaking a word to win others for Christ, or to strengthen their faith in Him. Some twenty-seven years did she thus rejoice in tribulation, and give a remarkable evidence of the power of Divine grace.

If examples like these show the comfort which Christ gives in the day of pain and suffering — is it not worth while to consider whether He does not give the only true joy in the day of health and prosperity? And it is a fact that numbers at this day can testify that they never found true happiness in life, until they found it in Christ. A young lady who had found Christ once wrote to a friend that she could lie down at night to rest happier than she had ever been in her life. She was at peace with God, she said; through Christ she was friendly with all, and quite sure that no harm could happen to her, because Jesus was close by.

The Christian has indeed two heavens. He has Heaven upon earth in the knowledge of God's love. All sin and guilt has been completely washed away through the blood of Christ. God is now a Friend, and a reconciled Father. There is no condemnation, no Hell, no ground for fear — because all is peace between God and the soul. There is within the Spirit of adoption, enabling him to go to the Father like a little child, bringing to Him every care and sorrow and fear. The promises, like the stars on a dark night, cheer and comfort him through the various ills of life. Everything is working together to fulfill God's purpose of love in His everlasting salvation. He is never left desolate, for the best Friend is ever by his side, and has promised never to leave him or forsake him.

And then there is another Heaven being prepared for him in the mansions of the blessed. There all tears shall be wiped away, and pain and sorrow and death shall be no more. Everlasting joy shall rest on the head of God's chosen ones, and the days of their mourning shall be ended.

Dear reader, if you have hitherto been a stranger to this blessedness, will you not seek for it now? "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him." Do not listen any longer to the persuasions of Satan. He promises men happiness, but he never gives it. He leads them on by false hopes and expectations — but brings them at last to untold misery. Rather listen to the voice of Jesus. He calls you to Himself. He says, "If any man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." He promises the living water to be in you as a "well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Believe His promise, and ask Him to fulfill it. Go to Him as you are, and ask Him freely to forgive you, and to give you grace and help and comfort. He will not deny you, for He has said, "Him that comes to Me I will never cast out."

But it may be that you have these two heavens, and yet the presence of the one and the prospect of the other may be so beclouded as to yield you small comfort. If so, is there not a cause? I do not ask you what that cause may be; but I entreat you to ask yourself, and perhaps you will find the secret of this unhappiness and uncertainty to be revealed in the solemn exhortation of the apostle, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption."

I Have Eternal Life

Journeying by rail in the west of England, I had a quarter of an hour to wait at a central station; so I took out a few tracts and books, and gave them away to one and another of those waiting on the platform. In one instance I had a response I shall never forget. I offered a book to an elderly gentleman. He readily took it, but, with an earnestness that almost startled me, he added, "I have eternal life!"

"I have eternal life!" Who can tell the unspeakable happiness of those who can truly say this?

The present life is ever changing. It is like a set of dissolving views. One scene quickly follows another. A day of comfort and enjoyment is followed by a dark night of sorrow. Today, a man is strong and hearty; tomorrow, he is laid on a bed of sickness, or without a moment's notice called away to give up his final account. Today, business is prosperous, and all looks bright and fair; tomorrow, a grievous loss or disappointment comes, and a terrible burden of care and anxiety rests upon the heart. But here is a portion that never changes. Here is a hope laid up for us beyond the reach of adversity. Here is a consolation of which none can rob us, and that abides for evermore.

"I have eternal life!" What is this precious blessing — this gift of wondrous love? It is the possession of Christ as our Savior, our Redeemer, our Friend. It is to know Him in His free compassion and His everlasting mercy. It is to be one with Him in the bonds of the covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. It is to be justified in Him from every charge of guilt, and to be a partaker in His perfect righteousness and all-sufficient merit. It is to share the tender love and sure protection of a Father in Heaven, and to be an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. It is to look forward in cheering hope to a joyful resurrection at the day of Christ's appearing, and in that day to receive an unfading, incorruptible, and undefiled inheritance!

But who may claim so great a benefit? How may you enjoy this portion as your own?

You must build on a right foundation. Ever remember that the wages of sin, of your sin — is death. You must take your true position as a sinner, a guilty sinner, a perishing sinner. You must lay aside all vain excuses. You must cast away the very least reliance on your own works or feelings. You must not trust in anything you ever had done or can do. You must put from you the idea of being accepted because you are free from certain gross sins that others commit, or that you have performed certain duties which will make you pleasing in God's sight.

Anything of this kind is utterly deceptive. It will not do to rest upon. It is only a foundation of sand — and the house built on it will surely fall.

Instead of this, you must rest your hope on Christ alone. You must take His work, His death, His merit, His mediation as the sole ground of your acceptance. Remembering that you deserve nothing but death and condemnation, you must plead His name before God, and expect to be saved only for His sake.

I remember a man that had long been seeking after God. He read the Scriptures, he attended the ordinances of religion, he prayed for the Spirit, he went everywhere to hear faithful preachers of the gospel — but still he found no true comfort or peace.

At length he saw his mistake. While studying the Word, the truth flashed across his mind. It seemed to have a new revelation. He said to himself again and again, "It is Christ, and not myself at all. He has done it all. It is Christ instead of me." So he gave up all confidence in

 self and in his own efforts — and rested entirely on Christ and His salvation.

If you would have eternal life, you must follow the same course. You must receive Christ as your all. You must draw all your confidence from what Christ is, from what He has said and what He has done. You must look up and see Him pleading on behalf of all who trust in Him — and thus you will possess a hope that shall never make you ashamed.

And while this is your hope, it is no presumption to be assured of salvation. You may say without a doubt, "I have eternal life!"

While you lean only on Christ, to say this is but the echo of a believing heart to the Savior's promise.

He has said, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, He who believes on Me has everlasting life." It is written again, "He who believes on the Son has everlasting life."

The present possession of eternal life is distinctly promised to every one who believes. Therefore give full credit to the Savior's word. Venture upon Him as He bids you, and doubt not that He will make good that which He has spoken. Rejoice in Him, and look for the grace of His Spirit to seal the truth on your heart. The Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God, and that in Christ you have a present and a full salvation. Only take heed to live worthy of your high calling. Grieve not the Spirit by the least willful inconsistency. Beware of anything that will bring dishonor on the name you love. It is only in the path of holy walking that the believer can possibly enjoy the assurance of life. Therefore live every moment beneath the eye of God, and strive to do everything in the name of Christ. Let His love ever be your motive, His arm your strength, and His glory your aim. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

When I can read my title clear,
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes!

On The Threshold

Never shall I forget the peace and joy of the old man as I entered his room a few days before his death. He wept for very joy as, raising himself upon his bed, he spoke of the hope that filled his soul. "Oh, sir, I am going home, I am going home!" Such was the glad thought that was now uppermost. For years he had borne patiently his heavy cross. Very often, as I sat by his side and heard him tell his sad tale of suffering and need, have I thought of the beggar Lazarus in the parable; for, like him, old Hatchard was compelled to ask of others a gift from their abundance; like him, he was sorely afflicted in the body; like him, too, he was rich in faith and an heir of the everlasting kingdom. The word of God was to him a source of continual delight.

When at home he was mostly to be found with his large-print Bible open before him, and very often open at some favorite Psalm. The eighteenth Psalm was especially dear to him. Speaking of the troubles he had met with, and the grace he had received to pass through them, he would love to point to the twenty-ninth verse: "By You I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall." Through many a troop of spiritual foes had he been safely brought; many a high wall of difficulty and temptation had he been enabled to leave behind him.

Nor had his own sufferings and trials made him unmindful of others. In his own way he tried to do good. Many a one who bestowed upon him some trifling alms, received back that which was far more precious, some suitable word of Holy Scripture, some suggestion, some inquiry, made in all humility, that might remind the passer-by of the love of Christ, or the value of the soul.

His life and his death alike bore witness to the Savior in whom he trusted. Freely forgiven through the atoning blood of the Lamb, strengthened and comforted by the power of the Holy Spirit — to him indeed to live was Christ, and to die was gain. When his days of sorrow and pain were ended, he rejoiced to say "Good-bye" to earth, and to enter the rest prepared for the people of God.

Reader, is this portion yours? Are you like this aged pilgrim? Do you make the Friend of sinners the refuge of your soul? Do you lean upon Him in your day of trouble? Do you rely upon His blood and righteousness as the ground of all your confidence? Then evermore rejoice in Him. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He will guide and keep you every step of your journey. While He chastens with one hand — He will uphold you with the other. He will still be with you when passing through the dark valley. He will meet you on the other side; and then, at length, sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and the days of your mourning shall be ended!