

Help for the Day!

by J.R. Miller

J.R. Miller's sermon encourages believers to live authentically in Christ, embracing struggles as opportunities for growth and reflecting His love in their daily lives.

Scripture: Psalm 90:8, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 10:42, John 13:34-35, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 4:5, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:11-13, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 12:11

Topics: "Christian Living", "Grace and Strength"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of living a life that reflects Christ's love and service, suggesting that we need not keep records of our good deeds, as God will remember them. He warns against the dangers of secret sins that can undermine our spiritual health and encourages believers to embrace their burdens as opportunities for growth. Miller also highlights that true Christian living involves self-denial and the pursuit of holiness in everyday life, ultimately leading to a deeper relationship with God. He reassures that God's grace is sufficient for our needs and that our struggles can lead to spiritual maturity and beauty. The sermon calls for a life of love, service, and reliance on God's strength.

Transcript

We may safely let our life write its own record

"And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is My disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward!" Matthew 10:42

We need not trouble ourselves to keep diaries of our good deeds and sacrifices, or to write autobiographies filled with pages of the good things we have done. We may safely let our life write its own record, and let Jesus be our biographer. He will never forget anything we do -- and the judgment day will reveal everything. The lowliest services and the obscurest deeds, will then be manifested.

"Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God!" 1 Corinthians 4:5

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Some secret sin has long been eating its way to the heart!

"You have placed our iniquities before You -- our secret sins in the light of Your presence!" Psalm 90:8

It does not take a rifle-bullet to destroy a life. Men have died from little scratch-wounds.

Some shepherds once saw an eagle soar out from a crag. It flew majestically far up into the sky, but by and by became unsteady in its motions, and began to waver in its flight. At length one wing drooped and then the other, and the poor bird struggled vainly for a moment, and then fell swiftly to the ground. The shepherds sought the fallen bird, and found that a poisonous little serpent had fastened itself upon it while it rested on the crag. The eagle did not know that the serpent was there. But the reptile gnawed in through the feathers, and while the proud monarch was sweeping through the air, the serpent's fangs were thrust into its flesh, and the eagle came reeling down into the dust!

This illustrates the story of many a human life. For a time they seem quite promising; then suddenly they struggle and fall. Some secret sin has long been eating its way to the heart, and at last the proud life lies soiled and dishonored in the dust!

We need to be ever on our watch against these treacherous and insidious perils, these little, secret sins -- which, unperceived, work death in the soul!

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Black seeds without beauty!

"And 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

God does not send us two classes of providences -- one good, and one evil. All are good.

Affliction is God's goodness in the seed. It takes time for a seed to grow and to develop into fruitfulness. Many of the best things of our lives come to us first as pain, suffering, earthly loss, or disappointment -- black seeds without beauty -- but afterward they grow into the rich fruits of righteousness!

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it!" Hebrews 12:11

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The best thing most of us can do in this world!

There are a few people whom God calls to do great things for Him. The best thing most of us can do in this world, is just to live out a real, simple, consecrated, Christian life in our allotted place. Thus, in our little measure, we shall repeat the life of Christ Himself, showing men some feeble reflection of His sweet and loving face; and doing in our poor way, a few of the beautiful things He would do if He were here Himself.

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength!"
Philippians 4:11-13

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The end of God's goodness?

"The incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:7

"The unsearchable riches of Christ!" Ephesians 3:8

God never gives all He has to give. The time will never come, when He has nothing more to bestow. We never reach the best in Divine blessings: there is always something better yet to come. Every door that opens into His treasury of love -- shows another door into another treasury beyond. The yet unrevealed, is ever better than the already revealed. We need not fear that we shall ever come to the end of God's goodness, or to any experience for which He will have no blessing ready.

"No eye has seen,

no ear has heard, and

no mind has imagined

-- what God has prepared for those who love Him!" 1 Corinthians 2:9

"And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus!" Philippians 4:19

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This burden of ours!

This burden of ours is God's gift to us -- and to lay it down would be to lay down a blessing. Surely it is a wiser love which puts new strength into your heart and arm, so that you can go on with your hard duty, your heavy responsibility, your weight of care, without fainting -- than would be the sentimentality which would take all the load away, and leave you free from any burden.

God's purpose always is to make something of us, to bring out the best that is in us. Hence He does not clear the forest for us, but puts the axe into our own hands, and bids us to cut it down for ourselves. And while we prepare the ground for tillage -- we grow healthy and strong ourselves through the toil. He does not drive out the enemies for us. He puts the sword into our own hands -- and sends us to drive them out. The struggle does us good. The wrestling makes us strong.

"Moreover let us exult in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance develops maturity of character." Romans 5:3-4

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Love's ministry

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good." Acts 10:38

There is need everywhere for love's ministry. The world today needs nothing more than true Christlikeness in those who bear Christ's name and represent Him. Christ went about doing good; He sought to put hope and cheer into all He met.

We should strive to perpetuate this Christ-ministry of love in this world. Hearts are breaking with sorrow, men are bowing under burdens too heavy for them. Duty is too large, the battles are too hard. It is our mission to do for these weary, overwrought, defeated, and despairing ones -- what Christ Himself would do if He were standing where we stand. He wants us to represent Him; and He fills us with His Spirit, that we may be able to scatter the blessings of helpfulness and gladness all about us. Yet one of the saddest things about life is, that, with so much power to help others by kindness of word and kindness of act -- many of us pass through the world in silence or with folded hands.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you -- so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35

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Our weakness

When we are strong, or deem ourselves strong -- we are really weak, since then we trust in ourselves, and do not seek Divine help. But when we are consciously weak, knowing ourselves unequal to our duties and struggles -- we are strong, because then we turn to Christ and get His strength.

Too many people think that their weakness is a barrier to their usefulness, or make it an excuse for doing little with their life. Instead of this, however, if we trust Christ, He will transform our weakness into strength. He says His strength is made perfect in weakness; that is, what is lacking in human strength, He fills and makes up with Divine strength.

Paul had learned this when he said he gloried now in his weaknesses, because on account of them the strength of Christ rested upon him -- so that when he was weak, then he was strong.

"But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong!" 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

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The broken fragments of a life

In Florence, one of the treasures of art admired by thousands of visitors is Michael Angelo's representation in marble of the young David. The shepherd boy stands with firm foothold, the stone grasped tightly in his right hand, ready to be sped on its holy errand. When the statue was unveiled, three hundred and fifty years ago, it caused an unparalleled sensation among all lovers of art. It is, indeed, a marvelous piece of sculpture.

But the strangely winning thing in the story of that statue, is that it was the stone's second chance. A sculptor began work on a noble piece of marble -- but, lacking skill, he only hacked and marred the block. It was then abandoned as spoiled and worthless, and cast aside. For years it lay in a back yard, soiled and blackened, half hidden among the rubbish. At last Angelo saw it, and at once perceived its possibilities. Under his skillful hand, the stone was cut into the lovely and marvelous beauty which appears in the statue of David.

Just so, God can take the broken fragments of a life, shattered by sorrow or by sin -- and out of them make a new life whose music shall thrill many hearts. If one is discouraged, if the life seems to be hopelessly broken -- the gospel of divine love brings encouragement. There are no ruins of life, out of which God cannot build beauty and blessing!

God is infinitely patient with all whose lot is hard. He never exacts more of us than we can do. He is never unreasonable. He knows when the burdens are too heavy for us. Once He, "being wearied with His journey, sat down by the well" in His exhaustion. He sympathizes with those who are weary, and helps them.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are" Hebrews 4:15

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We are not saved by a creed!

That which makes one a Christian is not . . .

the acceptance of Christ's teaching,

the uniting with His church,

the adoption of His morals,

the espousing of His cause --

but the receiving of Him as our personal Savior, the entering into a covenant of eternal friendship with Him as our Lord and Master.

We are not saved by a creed which gathers up the essence of the truth about Christ's person and work, in a few golden sentences. We must have the Christ Himself, whom the creed holds forth, in His radiant beauty and grace.

A good many people think that being a Christian is . . .

to pray a few moments morning and evening,

to read a daily chapter or two in the Bible,

and to attend church on Sundays.

These duties are important as means of grace -- but they are not vital religion.

True religion is living out the principles of Christianity in one's ordinary week-day life. It is getting the Bible and the prayers and the services -- into thought and act and character!

We must not cut our lives in two and call one part secular, governing it by one set of principles -- and regarding the other part as sacred, to be controlled by another set of rules. All of life is to be made religious, in the sense that everything is to be done in such a way as to please God, under the direction of His counsel. We have just as much religion, as we get into our week-your life, and not a whit more!

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An easy, self-indulgent life

"And He was saying to them all: If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." Luke 9:23

We cannot live a life that will please Christ -- without great cost to ourselves. It is never an easy thing, to be a disciple of Christ. An easy, self-indulgent life -- can never be a Christ-like life.

It was not easy for Christ to redeem sinners. From beginning to end of His earthly ministry, He poured out His own precious life. The people thronged about Him with their sins, their sorrows, and their needs -- and virtue went out of Him continually to heal them, to comfort them, to feed their heart-hunger. He utterly forgot Himself -- and gave His life and love without stint to every one who asked. At last He literally gave Himself, emptying out His heart's blood -- to give eternal life to sinful and dead souls.

His sufferings were finished, when He bowed His head on the cross. It is now our privilege to suffer for Him -- to perpetuate the self-sacrificial love of Christ on this earth. Only in so far as we do this, are we living a life that will please Him.

"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death!" Philippians 3:10

"Anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me, is not worthy of Me." Matthew 10:38

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We would be growing into monsters of selfishness!

At every point as we go on into the thickening experiences of life -- the lesson of living with others meets us. It is not always easy to gracefully accept these contacts with others, and to enter into kindly relations with them.

There are some people who seem to be very good alone, while no one comes near them, while no other life touches theirs, when they have to think of no one but themselves -- who make wretched business of living when they come into personal relations with others! Then they are selfish, tyrannical, despotic, willful, and exacting! They will not yield to any other one's desire or needs. They must have their own way; and they drive their life like a rough plow-share right through the comforts, the desires, the feelings, of others!

It seems almost a pity there could not be a few corners fenced off in this great world for such people as these, where they could live altogether alone, with no one ever to interfere with their rights or liberties, or to impinge upon their comfort in any way.

But this is not God's ordinance for human lives. We are to live together in families, in communities, in friendship's circle. Indeed, no worse fate could befall us, than to be doomed to live alone.

We might thus be absolved from the duties of love,

we could then have our own way,

we would not be required to think of anybody but ourselves,

and there would be no call for self-denial or sacrifice.

But meanwhile, we would be growing into monsters of selfishness!

We never can learn love's lessons, except in life's school, where the lessons are set for us in actual human relationships.

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble." 1 Peter 3:8

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One of the finest things in a complete Christian character

One of the finest things in a complete Christian character, is thoughtfulness. It gives a wondrous charm to a life. It makes one a blessing wherever he goes. It tempers all his conduct, softening all natural harshness into gentleness, and giving a spirit of kindness to his every word and act, and to all his bearing.

A thoughtful person does not have to be asked to help others -- he helps, as it were, instinctively. He is ever ready . . .

to do the obliging thing,

to say the encouraging word,

to show an interest in the life of others,

to perform those countless little kindnesses which so brighten the common pathway.

In much home-life, there is a lack of thoughtfulness shown. Not always is the speech gentle -- sometimes it is sharp and bitter, even rude. Without being aware of it, many of us are miserably selfish in our life among others. We practically forget that there are any other people, or that we ought to make any sacrifices, or practice any self-denials, for their sake.

Thoughtfulness will seek always to say kindly words, never words that will give pain -- but ever those that will give pleasure. We have no right, for the sake of saying a bright thing, to let loose a shaft, however polished, that will make a loving heart bleed!

We all know in our own experience, the value of sincere and Christly thoughtfulness. We do not like to come in contact with thoughtless people. We know well how it hurts and how unbeautiful, how unchristian, it seems when we see it in another -- and when our heart is the one that suffers from its harsh, rude impact. We all long for thoughtfulness in others; our hearts hunger and thirst for it. It is bread and wine to us.

What we long for in others in their relation to us -- we should be ready to give to them. What in others hurts us, gives us pain -- we ought to avoid in our contact with others. Thoughtfulness is one of the finest, ripest fruits of Christian love -- and all who would be like the Master must seek to learn this lesson, and wear this grace.

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Take all the tangled threads!

Heavenly Father, we would be strong for this new day, and we wait upon You to renew our strength. We need spiritual strength for the day that is before us. We shall have . . .

burdens to carry,

and battles to fight,

and trials to endure,

and duties to perform,

and temptations to conquer,

and conflicts with the evil world.

We need strength for all these experiences. You alone can give us what we need. You are our refuge and our strength -- a very present help in times of trouble. You have promised to be with us, and to strengthen us. You have said that as our days are -- so shall our strength be; and that Your grace is sufficient for us. We accept these assurances, believing that we shall obtain help from You for every duty and every struggle this day.

We would lean . . .

our weakness -- on Your strength,

our ignorance -- on Your wisdom,

our trembling insecurity -- on Your unchangeableness.

Restrain us . . .

from all excess, of whatever kind,

from all extravagance of speech,

from all foolish vanity,

from inordinate affection and emotion.

Make us thoughtful, serious, solemn, watchful, and prayerful.

May we be . . .

stronger in faith,

more earnest in purpose,

more holy in thought and feeling --

because of our communion with You this day.

We ask You for grace . . .

to perform our allotted tasks with diligence;

to guide our affairs with discretion;

to do all things, whatever we do, in the name of the Lord Jesus;

and in all our ways to acknowledge You.

Order our steps in Your word -- and let not any iniquity have dominion over us.

Take all the tangled threads of our lives into Your own hand, and unravel them, weaving them into a web of beauty.

"Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength! They shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint!" Isaiah 40:31

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A Christian is one who follows Christ

You must receive Christ as your Master and Lord. A Christian is one who follows Christ. This means the surrender of the whole life to Him. The heart must be given up. There can be no Christian life, without love to Jesus. Jesus demands the first place in the affections of His followers. If anyone loves father or mother, brother or sister, wife or child, more than Him -- he is not worthy of Jesus, and cannot be His disciple.

But the most perfect obedience, if the heart is not in it, would not make one a Christian. We might devote our life and strength to Christian work, toiling unweariedly in the service of the church, giving our money lavishly for the advancement of Christianity or for the relief of suffering -- and yet not be Christians. Love for Christ must be the motive at the heart of all our work for Christ. "Do you love Me?" is the test.

But the heart draws the whole life after it. If we truly love Jesus -- we will obey Jesus. "If you love Me -- keep My commandments." "You are My friends -- if you do whatever I command you."

We cannot accept Christ as our Savior -- and not at the same time accept Him as our Lord and Master. We must begin at once to obey Him. Our obedience must be without reserve, without condition, without question. It must also be cheerful and glad-hearted -- not compulsory, reluctant, or constrained.

Christians are soldiers of Christ -- and the soldier's first duty is to obey. Whether the will of Christ is made known to us in His Word, through our own conscience, or in providence -- we should always promptly and cheerfully accept and obey. It may not be always easy -- it may be very hard and costly; but when the will of our Master is made known, if we are His followers -- we can only obey, and our obedience should be sweet with love.

We love Him -- because He first loved us. We know Him -- because He first calls us. Christ is ours -- and we are Christ's. Being a Christian is living out His same life of love, obedience, surrender, and service, through all the days.

As Christians, we are to live out the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

True faith will make us more gentle, more patient, more unselfish. A Christian life is a new Christ-life lived out in this world -- we are to be Christ to others!

The heart of the Christian should be a well of living water, a fount of holy and blessed influences, whose streams flow in all directions -- carrying comfort, cheer, encouragement, help, and gladness to every other life they reach. Mere orthodoxy of belief does not make one a Christian, nor does attention to church rituals and rules. A Christian is one in whom the life of Christ pulses, and the love of Christ glows and burns!

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Some people use pepper instead!

"Out of the overflow of the heart -- the mouth speaks." Matthew 12:34

Hence we must get our heart right -- if we would speak words that are Christlike. A bitter heart cannot give out sweet words -- nor can an impure heart speak wholesome, pure words.

Most people talk too much -- they chatter on forever. Silence is far better than idle, sinful, or foolish speech.

We have suggestions in the New Testament as to the kind of speech that is worthy of a redeemed life. Paul has some very plain words on the subject: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may impart grace to the hearers." Ephesians 4:29. That is, no word should be spoken which does not . . .

help to build up character,

make those who hear it better,

inspire some good thought, some holy feeling, some kindly act,

or put some touch of beauty upon the life.

A Christian's words should "impart grace to the hearers." That is, they should impart blessing in some way. We all know people whose words have this quality. They are not always exhorting, preaching, or talking religiously -- and yet we never speak with them without being the better for it. Their simplest words do us good. They give cheer, courage, and hope. We feel braver and stronger after a little conversation with them, even after a moment's greeting on the street.

In another place Paul says, "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." Colossians 4:6. This means graceful speech, not merely as to its manner -- but also as to its quality. It must be speech such as Christ Himself would use if He were in our place, and we know that every word of His was a holy seed. Our speech is to be "full of grace" -- it is to be true, reverent, helpful, inspiring.

Our speech should be "seasoned with salt," that is, it should be pure and clean. Salt preserves from decay and putridity. The Christian's speech should have in it the divine quality of holiness, and its effect should be cleansing and purifying. Someone speaks of the words of Jesus as a handful of spices cast into this world's bitter waters to sweeten them. Every Christian's words should have like influence in society, wherever they are spoken.

The seasoning is important -- our speech is to be "seasoned with salt." Love is salt. Truth is salt. Our speech should be always kindly. It should be without bitterness, without malice, without unlovingness in any form. The seasoning should be salt. Some people use pepper instead -- and pepper is sharp, biting, pungent. Their speech is full of sarcasm, of censure, of bitterness, of words that hurt and burn. This is not Christlike speech.

We should never be content to talk even five minutes with another, without saying at least a word or two that may do good, that may give a helpful impulse or kindle an upward aspiration.

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John learned his lesson by lying on the bosom of Jesus!

Many Christian people are willing to confess to an ungentle temper. They seem to think it a matter of not very grave importance. Perhaps the very commonness of the infirmity, blinds our eyes to its unbeauty and its sinfulness. We are apt to regard the malady more as a weakness -- than as a sin which makes us guilty before God.

But there is no question that bad temper is unchristlike. We cannot think of Jesus as acrimonious, touchy, irritable, peevish, or vindictive. Love ruled all His dispositions, His words, His feelings. He was put to the sorest tests -- but never failed. He endured all manner of wrongs, insults, and hurts; but, like those flowers which yield their sweetest perfume only when crushed -- His life gave out the more sweetness, the more it was exposed to men's rudeness and unkindness. We are like Christ, only in the measure in which we have the patience, gentleness, and good-temper of Christ.

We all agree that bad temper is very unlovely in other people. We know, too, what discomfort and pain a bad temper causes wherever the person goes. Bad temper is not any more lovely in us, as we appear to others' eyes.

An essential teaching of Christianity, is that marred human nature can be changed. The worst temper can be schooled into the most divine sweetness of spirit. The tongue which no man can tame -- Christ can tame, so that, instead of bitterness, it shall give out only words of love.

Paul was quite an old man when he said he had learned in whatever state he was therein, to be content. His language implies also that it was not easy for him to learn this lesson, and that he had not attained full proficiency in it until he had reached old age.

The lesson of sweet temper is probably quite as hard as that of contentment. It has to be learned, too, for it does not come naturally. This lesson can be learned. We need only to put ourselves into the school of Christ and stay there, accepting His teaching and discipline, and advancing little by little, until at last we can say, "I have learned in whatever circumstances I am, under whatever provocation, irritation, or temptation to anger or impatience -- always to keep sweet-tempered!"

This lesson can be learned. Among Jesus' own disciple family, there was one who at the first was hasty, fiery, and vindictive -- but who at length grew into such sweet beauty of disposition and character -- that he was known as the beloved disciple, the disciple of love. John learned his lesson by lying on the bosom of Jesus. Intimacy with Christ, close, personal friendship with Him, living near His heart of love, will transform the most unloving, selfish nature -- into sweetness of spirit!

Such love within the heart -- will soon get control of all the outer life -- the dispositions, the speech, the manners, and all the expressions of the inner life. Thus bitterness, wrath, clamor, and all evil speaking -- will give place to gentleness, goodness, and grace.

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We would wreck everything!

Not only does God love us and desire our good -- but His wisdom is infinite. He knows what is best for us, what things will do us the good we need. We ourselves do not know. The things we think would bring us blessing -- perhaps would bring us irreparable harm! The things we dread as evil, and shrink from -- perhaps are the bearers to us of divinest good! We would make pitiful work of our lives -- if we had the ordering of our affairs in our own hands. If for but one day we could take matters into our own hands, out of God's hands -- we would wreck everything!

"My times are in Your hands!" Psalm 31:15

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He makes no mistakes!

"He led them forth by the right way" Psalm 107:7

God leads every one of His children by the right way. He knows where and under what influences each particular life will ripen best.

One plant grows best in the sheltered valley, another by the water's edge, another on the bleak mountaintop swept by storms. God puts every tree or plant in the locality where the conditions of its growth exist -- and does God give more thought to trees and plants, than to His own children? He places us amid the circumstances and experiences in which our life will grow and ripen the best!

The peculiar discipline to which we are each subjected, is the discipline we especially need to bring out in us the beauties and graces of true spiritual character. God knows what is best -- He makes no mistakes!

"And 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

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Nevertheless, I want Your will to be done, not mine!

"Father, if You are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Nevertheless, I want Your will to be done, not mine!" Luke 22:42

The best thing possible for us, is always what God wills for us. Sometimes God's will may be pain, or worldly loss, or sore bereavement. Yet His will is always love, and in simple acquiescence to this will, we shall always find our highest good. No prayer, therefore, is pleasing to God which does not end with this refrain of Gethsemane, "Nevertheless, I want Your will to be done, not mine!"

This is also the way to peace. As we yield with love and joy, and merge our own will in our Father's -- the peace of God flows like a river into our souls.

"Let the Lord's will be done." Acts 21:14

"It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him." 1 Samuel 3:18

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Practice-lessons in the application of the theories of Christian life

Every obstacle to holy living should only serve us with fresh determination to succeed. We should use each difficulty and hardship as a leverage to gain some new advantage. We should compel our temptations to minister to us, instead of hindering us. We should regard all our provocations, annoyances, and trials, of whatever sort -- as practice-lessons in the application of the theories of Christian life.

It will be seen in the end, that the hardships and difficulties are by no means the smallest blessings in our lives. Someone compares them to the weights of a clock, without which there could be no steady, orderly life.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything!" James 1:2-4

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:11

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God does not simply remove our ugly character traits!

"Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." Philippians 2:12-13

Each one's battle must be a personal one. No one can reach the summit, without climbing the steep mountain path. We cannot be borne up on another's strong shoulder. No one can carry us up.

God does not simply put beautiful Christian graces into our lives, as the jeweler sets gems in a coronet. God does not simply remove our ugly character traits -- and replace them by lovely ones. Each Christian must persevere through trials, troubles and temptations -- to all noble spiritual attainments. While God works in us -- we are to work out our own salvation.

"To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me!" Colossians 1:29

"He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son!" Revelation 21:7

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The God of the broken-hearted!

"He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds!" Psalm 147:3

The God of the Bible, is the God of the broken-hearted.

The world cares little for broken hearts. Indeed, men often break hearts by their cruelty, their falseness, their injustice, their coldness -- and then move on as heedlessly as if they had trodden only on a worm!

But God cares. The broken-heartedness of His people attracts Him. The lament of grief on earth, draws Him down from Heaven!

"The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18

"He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted" Luke 4:18

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I was almost gone!

"But as for me, I almost lost my footing. My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone!" Psalm 73:2

The God of the Bible, is the God of those who have failed. Wherever there is a weak, stumbling Christian, unable to walk alone -- to him the Divine heart goes out in tender thought and sympathy, and the Divine hand is extended to support him and keep him from falling. Wherever one has fallen, and lies in defeat or failure -- over him bends the Heavenly Father in kindly pity, to raise him up and to help him to begin again.

"Yet I am always with You; You hold me by my right hand. You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me into glory!" Psalm 73:23-24

"My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me!" Psalm 63:8

"Hold me up -- and I shall be safe!" Psalm 119:117

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The countless lowly ministries of the every-days

"She has done what she could!" Mark 14:8

It is in the everyday of life, that nearly all the world's best work is done.

The tall mountain-peaks lift their glittering crests into the clouds, and win attention and admiration. But it is in the great valleys and broad plains, that the harvests grow and the fruits ripen, on which the millions of earth feed their hunger.

In the same way, it is not from the few great and conspicuous deeds of life that the blessings chiefly come which make the world better, sweeter, holier -- but from the countless lowly ministries of the every-days, the little faithfulnesses that fill long years.

"Well done, good servant, because you have been faithful in a very little thing" Luke 19:17

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Following Jesus!

"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me!" Matthew 16:24

"After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. 'Follow Me,' Jesus said to him; and Levi got up, left everything and followed Him." Luke 5:27-28

"We have left everything to follow You!" Mark 10:28

To follow Christ is to go where He leads, without questioning or demurring. It may be to a life of trial, suffering, or sacrifice -- but no matter; we have nothing whatever to do with the kind of life to which our Lord calls us. Our only simple duty is to obey and follow.

We know that Jesus will lead us only in right paths, and that the way He takes slopes upward and ends in eternal glory!

Each new day on which we are about to enter is unopened, and we know not what shall befall us; but if we follow Christ, we need have no fear. So let us leave the old day with gratitude to God for its mercies, with penitence for its failures and sins -- and let us enter the new day with earnest resolve in Christ's name to make it the holiest and most beautiful we have ever lived, as we follow Him.

"My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish -- ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:27-28

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There is a wondrous charm in a gentle spirit

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

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

There is a wondrous charm in a gentle spirit.

For instance, the gentle girl in the home may not be . . .

beautiful, nor

well educated, nor

clever in any way.

But wherever she moves, she leaves a blessing.

Close beside every Christian, stands One who holds all gifts and graces in His hands. Jesus looks into our face and asks what new adornment He shall give us. Let us pray for the spirit of gentleness, for no other gift will make us such a blessing to others.

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

"Let your gentleness be evident to all." Philippians 4:5

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12

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Do we understand what love is?

Do we understand what love is? We like to be loved, that is, to have other people love us, and live for us, and do things for us. We like the gratifications of love. But that is only miserable selfishness, if it goes no further. It is a desecration of the sacred name, to think that love, at its heart, means getting, receiving. Nay, love gives.

That is what God's love does -- it finds its blessedness in giving. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." That is what Christ's love does -- it pours out its very lifeblood, to the last drop!

The essential meaning of loving must always be giving, not receiving.

"Christ loved the church, and gave Himself up for her" Ephesians 5:25

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The Christian's dress all the week

Religion and common life are not two different and distinct things. We may not cut our existence in two parts, and say, "Over this Christ shall rule -- but over that He shall have no control."

True religion knows no difference between Sunday and Monday, so far as the ethics of life are concerned. Each day brings its own specific duties; but there are not moral precepts for the one day which are suspended when its sun sets, that for six days a mitigated or less holy law may prevail. Holiness is to be the Christian's dress all the week through, in every hour's conduct. All pleasures and amusements must be tested by the unvarying rule of right. The standard of perfect purity cannot be lowered.

"You ought to live holy and godly lives" 2 Peter 3:11

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With the fragments of the broken hopes and joys

"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18

It is strange how many of earth's most beautiful lives, have grown up out of what seemed defeat and failure. Indeed, God seems to love to build spiritual loveliness out of the castaway fragments of lives, even out of sin's debris.

In a great cathedral there is said to be a window made by an apprentice out of the bits of stained glass which were thrown away as refuse and worthless, when the other windows were made -- and this is the most beautiful window of all.

In the same way, God can build a noble character for you, in spite of all the hurts and injuries done to you, wittingly or unwittingly, by others -- with the fragments of the broken hopes and joys, and the lost opportunities that lie strewn about your feet. No others by their worst work of hurt or marring, can prevent your building a beautiful character for yourself.

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds!" Psalm 147:3

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Love was the interpreter!

A young lady purchased a book and read a few pages -- but was not interested in it. Some months afterwards she met the author -- and a tender friendship sprang up, ripening into love and marriage. Then the book was dull no longer. Every sentence had a charm for her heart. Love was the interpreter!

In the same way, to those who do not know Christ personally, the Bible seems dry and uninteresting. But when they learn to know Him, and to love Him -- then all is changed! The deeper their love for Him becomes -- the more do the sacred pages glow with beauty and light!

"O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day!" Psalm 119:97

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What the person IS, often mars the value of what he DOES!

A pastor was commending Christ to a boy, expressing the hope that he would trust in Christ in his youth. "Religion is a continual joy," he said. "Look at your sister, Sarah. How much that dear girl enjoys her religion!"

"Yes," drawled the boy, with frank candor, "She may enjoy her religion -- but nobody else in the house enjoys it!"

There are professing Christians of whom it is true that their families do not enjoy their religion. It is not sweet. It is not a comfort to people. It is critical, rasping, censorious, exacting. It was a serious condemnation of this girl's religion, that her family did not enjoy it.

A keen observer has said, "Many a woman spoils her testimony in the church, by her tongue in the kitchen!"

Another has said, "There are people who lead us Heavenward -- but stick pins in us all the way!"

In a conversation overheard on a railway train, one reports catching this fragment of talk: "Yes, I suppose she's a Christian -- but she certainly isn't pleasant to live with!"

A Christian who isn't pleasant to live with, is shameful. We may do all our duties faithfully, conscientiously, bearing our share of the burdens and cares -- and yet, if we are not pleasant to live with, we fail in the most essential quality of love. An unlovely spirit, frowns and chilling looks, sharp impatient words -- overbalance the painstaking Christian service that does so much to help in practical ways. What the person IS, often mars the value of what he DOES!

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12

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He will sustain us so that we may carry it!

"Cast your burden on the LORD -- and He shall sustain you" Psalm 55:22

The promise is not that the Lord will remove the load we cast upon Him, nor that He will carry it for us -- but that He will sustain us so that we may carry it!

He does not free us from duty -- but He strengthens us for it.

He does not deliver us from conflict -- but He enables us to overcome.

He does not withhold or withdraw trial from us -- but He helps us in trial to be submissive and victorious, and makes it a blessing to us.

He does not mitigate the hardness or severity of our circumstances, taking away the difficult elements, removing the thorns, making life easy for us -- but He puts Divine grace into our hearts, so that we can live sweetly in all the hard, adverse circumstances!

"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness!" 2 Corinthians 12:9

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Silently entwining their invisible threads into a cable!

"Abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thessalonians 5:22

We do many things which to our own eyes appear innocent and harmless -- but which have in them a hidden evil we cannot see.

We indulge ourselves in many things which to us do not appear overtly sinful -- but which leave on our soul a touch of blight, a soiling of purity, of which we do not dream.

We permit ourselves many little habits in which we see no danger -- but which are silently entwining their invisible threads into a cable which some day shall bind us hand and foot!

We spare ourselves self-denials and sacrifices, thinking there is no reason why we should make them -- unaware that we are lowering our standard of holy living and permitting the subtle beginnings of self-indulgence to creep into our hearts.

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God!" 1 Corinthians 10:31

[Editor's note: Christians today are in great danger of allowing the world's sinful media and entertainments into our minds and hearts!]

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The sweeping away of our earthly hopes!

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms!" Deuteronomy 33:27

"You are my refuge -- my portion in the land of the living!" Psalm 142:5

Often we do not learn the depth and riches of God's love, and the sweetness of His presence -- until our earthly joys vanish out of our hands, and other beloved presences fade away out of sight.

The loss of temporal things seems often to be necessary to empty our hearts -- that they may receive unseen and eternal realities. The heart's door is never fully opened to Him -- until the soul's worldly joys are removed; then, while it stands open, He enters bearing into it immortal joys!

How often is it true, that the sweeping away of our earthly hopes reveals the glory of our heart's refuge in God! Someone has beautifully said, "Our refuges are like the nests of birds: in summer they are hidden among the green leaves -- but in winter they are seen among the bare branches." Worldly losses but strip off the foliage, and disclose to us our heart's warm nest in the bosom of God!

"The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble!" Psalm 9:9

"God is our refuge and strength -- a very present help in trouble!" Psalm 46:1

"You are my strong refuge!" Psalm 71:7

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How can I avoid the annoyances which continually harass me?

The true victory is not found in escaping or evading trials -- but in rightly meeting and enduring them.

The questions should not be, "How can I get out of these trials? How can I get into a place where there shall be no irritations, nothing to try my temper, or put my patience to the test? How can I avoid the annoyances which continually harass me?"

There is nothing noble in such living. The soldier who flees when he smells the battle is no hero; he is a coward.

The questions should rather be: "How can I pass through these trying experiences -- and not fail as a Christian? How can I endure these struggles -- and not suffer defeat? How can I live amid these provocations, these reproaches and testings of my temper -- and yet live sweetly, not speaking harshly, bearing injuries meekly, returning gentle answers to insulting words?"

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Colossians 3:12-14

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Broken, trampled, torn!

Life may seem a failure here, crushed like a lily under the heel of wrong or sin -- broken, trampled, torn! But it may yet become a glorious success. Many of the truest and best of God's children, know only defeat

in this world. They are ever beaten back and thrust down. The burdens are too heavy for them. They are overmastered by sorrows. The world's enmity treads them in the dust. They are not worldly wise, and, while others march by to great earthly success -- they live obscurely oppressed, cheated, wronged, and lie buried away in the darkness of failure.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal!" 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

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Death to the Christian!

"They are without fault before the throne of God!" Revelation 14:5

Death to the Christian, only . . .

washes out all his sins and stains,

shatters the crust of his mortality,

sweeps away all his moral spots, blots, infirmities, weaknesses, follies, limitations and blemishes --

and then life expands into perfect freedom, fullness, joy, and power.

The translation of a Christian from earth to Heaven, is but like the removal of a tender plant from a frigid northern garden, where it is stunted and dying -- into a tropical field, where it puts out most luxurious growth and covers itself with splendor!

"In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore!" Psalm 16:11

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He always gives sufficient grace

"Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves! About three o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them, walking on the water!" Matthew 14:24-25

God adapts His grace to the peculiarities of each of His children's necessity. For rough, flinty paths -- He provides shoes of iron. He never sends anyone to climb steep, sharp, rugged mountainsides -- wearing silken slippers. He always gives sufficient grace.

As the burdens grow heavier -- His strength increases.

As the difficulties thicken -- He draws closer.

As the trials become sorer -- the trusting heart grows calmer.

Jesus always sees His disciples when they are toiling in the waves, and at the right moment comes to deliver them. The sharper the temptations -- the more of Divine grace is granted. There is, therefore, no

environment of trial or difficulty or hardship -- in which we cannot live beautiful lives of Christian fidelity and holy conduct.

"My grace is sufficient for you!" 2 Corinthians 12:9

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Some day I shall be like that!

"For those whom God foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son!" Romans 8:29

No sooner do we begin to behold the fair face that looks out at us from the gospel chapters, than a great hope springs up in our hearts. We can become like Jesus! Indeed, if we are God's children, we shall become like Him. We are foreordained to be conformed to His image. It matters not how faintly the Divine beauty now glimmers in our soiled and imperfect lives -- some day we shall be like Him!

As we struggle here with our imperfections and infirmities, with scarcely one trace of Christlikeness yet apparent in our life, we still may say, when we catch glimpses of the glorious loveliness of Christ, "Some day I shall be like that!"

"We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is!" 1 John 3:2

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Every word is practical

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

It is necessary to read the Bible, not merely to know the will of God -- but that we may do it. If it is not the guide of our life -- it is nothing to us. Its truths are to be applied.

If we read the Beatitudes, we are to compare ourselves with their Divine requirements -- and seek to be conformed to them.

If we come upon a word that rebukes any habit or attitude of ours -- we are immediately to make the needed amendment.

We are to accept its promises, believe them, and act as believing them.

We are to allow its comforts to enter our hearts and support us in sorrow.

There is nothing written in the Bible merely for ornament or beauty. Every word is practical. There is no truth in it that has not some bearing upon actual living. When we come to it eager to know how to live, and ready to obey its precepts -- we shall find it opening to us its inmost meaning!

"Give me understanding, and I will keep Your law and obey it with all my heart!" Psalm 119:34

"This has been my practice: I obey Your precepts. You are my portion, O LORD; I have promised to obey Your words." Psalm 119:56-57

"I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands." Psalm 119:60

" I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey Your precepts." Psalm 119:100

"Your statutes are wonderful; therefore I obey them!" Psalm 119:129

" I obey your statutes, for I love them greatly!" Psalm 119:167

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We can prevent them building their nests in our hair!

"Do not worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus!" Philippians 4:5-7

Someone may say that it is impossible to avoid worrying. The disturbing experiences will come into our lives, and we cannot shut them out. It is true they will come -- but it is not true that we must admit them and surrender ourselves to their power.

It was a saying of Luther that we cannot prevent the birds flying over our heads -- but we can prevent them building their nests in our hair! In like manner, it is impossible to keep cares from flocking in great swarms around us -- but it is our own fault if they are allowed to make nests in our hearts! We are to hold our hearts' doors and windows shut against them just as resolutely as against the temptations that constantly assail us, craving admission into our lives.

Is not God wise enough to manage the difficulties of our lives, and to bring order and beauty out of them?

Has He not skill enough?

Is He not our heavenly Father?

Will He not always do the very best and wisest thing for us?

Should we not trust Him, and cease to worry about anything that we have committed to Him?

Is not worry doubt -- and is not doubt sin?

We are to commit our way to the Lord, trust Him, and be at peace. The only thing that concerns us is our duty. God will weave the tangled web of our life into patterns of beauty, unless by our follies and sins we mar it. But we must not hurry Him. His plans are sometimes very long, and our impatience may mar them, as well as our sins. The buds of His purposes must not be torn open. We must wait until His fingers unfold them.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry" Luke 12:22

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Is Jesus like anybody I know?

A little child was thinking about the unseen Christ to whom she prayed, and came to her mother with the question, "Is Jesus like anybody I know?"

The question was not an unreasonable one -- it was one to which the child should have received the answer "Yes."

Every true disciple of Christ ought to be an answer -- in some sense, at least -- to the child's inquiry. Every little one ought to see Christ's beauty mirrored in its Christian mother's face. Every Sunday school teacher's character should reflect some tracings of the Eternal Love on which the scholars may gaze.

Whoever looks upon the life of any Christian, should see in it at once the reflection of the beauty of Christ!

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There must be no conditions in the following of Christ

"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me!" Luke 9:23

Christ calls for absolute surrender to Him. He wants us to trust Him, while we obey Him unquestioningly.

The faith in Christ which the gospel requires, is the utter unreserved devotement of the whole life to Him, and the absolute committal to Him for time and for eternity, of every interest and hope.

The question of what He will do with us or for us, or how He will provide for us -- should not for an instant be raised. There must be no conditions in the following of Christ, and the consecration to Him. We may not bargain with Him for an easy time, for "ways of pleasantness," but should simply give ourselves to Him absolutely and forever, to follow where, and to whatever He may lead us.

"Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple!" Luke 14:27

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We could not understand them

"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." John 16:12

There is a very large part of the Bible which can be received by us -- only when we come into the places for which the words were given. We could not understand them. But by and by, when we come into places of need, of sorrow, of weakness, of human failure, of loneliness, of sickness, of old age -- then He will tell us these other things, and they will be full of joy for our hearts.

There are promises for weakness which we can never get -- while we are strong.

There are words for times of danger which we can never know -- while we need no protection.

There are consolations for sickness whose comfort we can never get -- while we are in robust health.

There are promises for times of loneliness, when we walk in solitary ways -- which never can come with real meaning to us while loving companions are by our side.

There are words for old age which we never can appropriate for ourselves along the years of youth -- when the arm is strong, the blood warm, and the heart brave.

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We do not know that it would be best

"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done!" Luke 22:42

When a beloved Christian's life hangs trembling in the balance -- we should not, with all our loving yearning, dare to choose whether it shall be spared to us, or carried to its heavenly home.

When some great hope of our heart is about to be taken from us -- we should not dare settle the question whether we shall lose it or keep it.

We do not know that it would be best.

But we do know that God has a perfect plan for our life, marked out by His infinite wisdom. Surely we should not say that what we, with our limited wisdom, might prefer -- would be better than what He wills for us.

"And 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

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The rough stalk of suffering!

"I have refined you in the furnace of suffering!" Isaiah 48:10

Much of the most beautiful living in this world, comes out of sorrow. As "lovely flowers bloom upon rough stalks," so many of the loveliest flowers of human life grow upon the rough stalk of suffering.

We take our place with the beloved disciple on the other side, and we see that those who in Heaven wear the whitest robes, and sing the loudest songs of victory -- are "the ones who have come out of the great tribulation!" Revelation 7:14

Heaven's highest places are filling, not from earth's homes of glad festivity and tearless joy -- but from . . .

its chambers of pain,

its valleys of struggle where the battle is hard,

its scenes of sorrow, where pale cheeks are wet with tears, and where hearts are broken.

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This lesson makes life easy and simple

"As your days -- so shall your strength be!" Deuteronomy 33:25

Each day is, in a certain sense, a complete life by itself. It has . . .

its own duties,

its own trials,

its own burdens,

and its own needs.

It has enough to fill heart and hands for the one full day. We cannot live its life well, and use any of its strength outside of itself. The very best we can do for any day, for the perfecting of our life as a whole, is to live the one day well. We should put all our thought and energy and skill into the duty of each day, wasting no strength, either in grieving over yesterday's failures -- or in anxiety about tomorrow's responsibilities.

We have nothing to do with life in the aggregate -- that great bulk of duties, responsibilities, struggles, and trials which belong to a course of years. We really have nothing to do even with the nearest of the days before us -- tomorrow.

Our sole business is with the one little day, now passing. Its burdens will not crush us -- we can easily carry them until the sun goes down. We can get along for one short day -- it is the projection of life into the long future that dismays and appalls us. This lesson makes life easy and simple.

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

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The very soul of all true prayer!

"As the deer pants for the water brooks -- so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God!" Psalm 42:1-2

"O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly. My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You in a dry and weary land where there is no water!" Psalm 63:1

Longing is the very soul of all true prayer. Longing is . . .

the empty hand reached out to receive new gifts from God;

the heart's cry which God hears with acceptance, and answers;

the ascending angel that climbs the starry ladder to return on the same radiant stairway with blessings from God's very throne;

the key that unlocks new storehouses of Divine goodness and enrichment!

Indeed, longing is nothing less than the very life of God in the human soul, struggling to grow up in us into the fullness of the stature of Christ!

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Unconscious unpurposed influences

It is not what a man does or says purposely and with direct intention, that leaves the deepest mark in the world and in other lives -- but it is the unconscious unpurposed influences which go out from him like the perfumes from a garden. Character is not necessarily what the man does -- but what the man is!

There are great multitudes of humble Christian lives lived on the earth, which have no name among men, whose work no pen records and no marble immortalizes -- but which are well known and unspeakably dear to God, and whose influence will be seen, in the end, to reach to farthest shores. They make no noise in the world -- but it does not need noise to make a life beautiful and noble.

Many of God's most potent ministries are noiseless.

How silently all day long the sunbeams fall upon the fields and gardens -- and yet what cheer, what inspiration, what life and beauty they diffuse!

How silently the flowers bloom -- and yet what rich blessings of beauty and fragrance do they emit!

How silently the stars move on in their majestic marches around God's throne -- and yet the telescope shows us that they are mighty worlds representing utterly incalculable power!

The silent personal influence of a holy Christian has a healing, life-giving effect wherever it falls. Such a man goes about his daily duty as other men do; but, while he is engaged in common things, he is continually dropping seeds of blessing, which spring up behind him in heavenly beauty and fragrance!

In all true living, while men execute their greater plans -- they are ever unintentionally performing a series of unconscious acts which often yield most beneficent and far-reaching results. There is a wayside ministry, for instance, made up of countless little courtesies, gentle words, mere passing touches on the lives of those we meet casually, impulses given by our salutations, influences flowing indirectly from the things we do and the words we speak -- a ministry undesigned, unplanned, unnoted, merely incidental -- and yet it is impossible to measure the wondrous results of these unconscious acts of usefulness.

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A ruined, worthless human life which has no beauty, no attractiveness

A piece of ca

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