

# Living Through Christ

Lessons Developed from the Writings of  
George D. Watson

by  
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In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. (1 John 4:9)

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## Preface

George D. Watson was one of the most influential preachers of the late Nineteenth Century holiness movement. In a publisher's preface it was said of him: "In each generation God raises some few saints who discern truth more deeply than their fellows; rare spirits to whom He opens truths long hidden from the world, and such as are specially needed for the generation." George Watson was one of these men. And while he lived in a past generation, he still has much to say to the church today.

Material from nine of his books has been used in developing this devotional study. Each section is headed by the book title and chapter title he used. This is the only reference. Some may prefer to read his books. We have used his insight in this single volume to help earnest souls make progress in their Christian walk.

Prayer and meditation will be needed to benefit from these lessons. We are too often content with the mere hearing of truth. Christ is the light of truth. We must go to Him in dependent prayer for the true revelation. As He has said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6) If His truth is to become an innate part of our life, then we will need Him to reveal Himself within our inner being. It is as we look to Christ's Spirit to make His divine life known within our heart that His truth becomes a part of our very nature.

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth... He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine {by taking from the divine life} and making it known to you. (John 16:12-14 NIV)

His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness {the light of truth}, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue...that through these {promises} you may be partakers of the divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:3-4)

We should also note that these teachings will only be understood by those who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14) And yet our heavenly Father wants everyone to understand His ways. He has therefore promised to give the Holy Spirit to everyone who will yield their heart to Him and ask for this wonderful gift. (Luke 11:13)

We are dependent upon the Spirit to both reveal the light of truth and to supply sufficient power to follow in the ways of our Lord. Working as the "Comforter," He provides spiritual support while bringing the yielded heart into harmony with the revealed Word. While being separated from the flesh-life will involve some suffering, those who continue to follow His leading will be taken into the life of promise where it is possible to walk as Jesus did in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14:17) The Spirit comes in His fullness to enable us to walk in harmony with our Lord with a deep sense of peace and joy within our heart.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time... But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (1 Pet. 5:5, 10)

Unless otherwise noted, the verses quoted are from the New King James version of the Bible. Some of the words in the Scriptures are italicized for emphasis. Bracketed comments have also been inserted on occasions.

## **The Molting of the Eagles**

## **From “God’s Eagles”**

In the fortieth chapter of Isaiah we find a contrast between the natural life and the spiritual life. We are told that in the natural life even the vibrant youth faint and become weary. The strongest of young men who live in their own strength continue to find their spiritual life collapsing. In contrast, those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their spiritual strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. (Isa. 40:31)

The word “renew” in this passage would more properly be expressed by the word *change*. It implies that those who wait on the Lord shall change the source of their spiritual strength. That is, their strength is changed from the natural to the spiritual, from the human to the Divine. These children of faith learn to live through God’s divine life.

The life that Jesus revealed through His mortal body is a pure example of *the way of life* that we are to share with Him. On numerous occasions He said, “My time has not yet come.” He lived on a Divine time schedule. As He walked by the Spirit, all His words and actions were timed by the Father’s will. The Father was able to reveal Himself through the Son because Jesus was willing to wait to be moved by the Spirit.

Jesus did not live “out from” Himself. He said, “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear {from the Father through the Spirit}, I judge {make decisions and respond}; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” (John 5:30) Jesus literally became an expression of the life of His Father. He said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9)

Christ now asks us to follow Him by walking as He did. We are to live as a vessel. The life we are expected to manifest does not have its source in the vessel. We are to learn to wait on the movements of the Spirit and walk in harmony with Him so that Christ may reveal His “light of life” through our body. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4) This is how we are to “change” the old self-originated form of life for the divine life that comes from God.

Jesus was called the Second or Last Adam because He lived as the first Adam was originally designed to live. He now wants to lead us into this same way of life—the form of life that God originally planned for all of His children.

We were created to live as vessels that God could use to display His life and glory. In the same way He was able to light up the world by commanding light to shine out of darkness, He is able to command the light of Christ's life to shine out from our mortal bodies. Even though the vessel is weak in itself, God, through His creative power, is able to fill it with His glory and display His image.

For it is God who commanded light {the Son's light of life} to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face {in the spiritual image} of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels {weak mortal bodies}, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us...that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4:7, 10)

There is a vast amount of human religion which does not reveal the life of Christ. The presence and the power of His Spirit are not being displayed. Even after being born of the Spirit we find that our religious life has remained mixed with human strength. We unwittingly go on depending on our own abilities and will-power to make ourselves more like Christ. Not fully realizing that the life needs to be received from Christ by faith, we wear out our strength and find ourselves spiritually drained.

Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? (Gal. 3:3 NIV)

But 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. (Isa. 40:31)

It takes time to learn to wait on the Lord and live through His Spirit. But if we will learn to wait on Him and respond to the leading of His Spirit, our spiritual life will be renewed and strengthened. It will be changed from the natural to the divine.

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while {in losing hope in your own strength}, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (1 Pet. 5:10)

While it will entail some suffering as we go through the process of dying out to the old self-originated form of life, there comes "a day" when Christ manifests His heavenly life within our soul so we may share with Him in His victorious life. (John 14:20-21) His overcoming life is even more powerful than the fallen life we received from Adam.

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one {spiritual powerlessness reigned through Adam}, *much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.* (Rom. 5:17)

The new birth does result in a new form of life, making all things new. But each child of God reaches a stage when it is necessary to molt or put off our original covering. As an eagle molts its feathers, we are to molt the form righteousness that came mostly from our own strength. We begin to realize that the strength of the flesh does not have sufficient power to purify the heart and produce the kind of heavenly righteousness that is required of God's children. And so we abandon ourselves to the Lord at a deeper level so we may receive the "much more" of Christ's reigning life. And then, as we learn to wait on Him and receive our life from Him alone, we are lifted by the power of His Spirit into a much higher spiritual life than we had ever known before.

The apostle Paul had once lived for God in his own strength. He was trained in the best school of his day to live by the Scriptures. He rose to the top of his class and became one of the most zealous of God's servants. In fact, concerning "the righteousness which is in the law," he referred to himself as "blameless." (Phil. 3:3-6) But there came a day when he recognized how much he needed the reigning life of Christ filling his soul. In order to come to "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" he had to count everything "as loss" from his old self-originated form of life. Only then could He live through Christ's heavenly life. He exchanged the strength and zeal he had once used to make himself righteous for "the righteousness that comes from God by faith."

I also count all things loss {everything from the self-originated form of life} *for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things...that I may gain Christ...not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, *the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection...* (Phil. 3:8-10)

God's children need to be built up in their faith so they will turn to Christ for life from above. They need to change the source of their strength. The soul, like the eagle, needs to be clothed with a new set of feathers by receiving "the righteousness which is from God by faith."

By learning to live through Christ in this way of dependent faith our life is taken up in the power of His Spirit. His resurrection power draws the soul upward into the heavenly realms as if gravity was changed to another world. This new form of spiritual life is gloriously lifted above the darkness and spiritual oppression that surrounds this fallen world and has weighed down and depressed so many souls.

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saint, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him...in the heavenly realms... (Eph. 1:18-20 NIV)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is... For you died {to the strength of the flesh}, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit {live through the Spirit}, rejoice in Christ Jesus {for what He is doing}, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

All the changes that are needed to produce this new source of strength within the soul are reached by waiting on the Lord. By successive steps in meeting the Divine conditions and in receiving the fulfillment of God's promises, the power of Christ's endless life enters into the soul. It is then that we are enabled to fulfill by nature, as Jesus did, all the righteous requirements of the law. (Rom. 8:3-4)

There arises another Priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but *according to the power of an endless life...* (Heb. 7:15-16)

To walk slowly with God requires more grace and maturity of thought and habit than to run in our Christian service. Young Christians naturally start out running for the Lord. These earnest souls also tend to become impatient with the quietness and the apparent slowness of spiritual Christians. Those who are still living in their own strength think they can accomplish more with a rush of speed. But these works do very little to further the Kingdom-life that comes down from heaven. To go slow with God in order to walk in the power of His Spirit is one of the most important lessons to learn in the Christian life.

Many of us have studied the life of Jesus over and over in the Gospels in order to become more like Him. But it does little good until we begin to see how He lived by the Spirit. He did not walk in His own power or direct His own steps. Everything He did had its source in the Father. He lived as a mere vessel, continuously giving way to the movements of the Spirit, so that His Father could manifest the eternal life through Him.

The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. (1 John 1:2)

I do nothing of Myself... And He who sent Me is with Me. *The Father has not left Me alone*, for I always do those things that please Him. (John 8:28-29)

This walk in the Spirit resulted in a life of deep calmness, tranquility, quietness and assurance. Like the movement of the sun, it was a life in which everything was measured by a Divine regularity. There was never any haste. He never did or said anything ahead of time or behind time. None of His actions were out of harmony with the divine life of His Father. He consistently moved in the river of eternal life with a deep sense of smoothness, calmness and victory. As He lived by the Spirit, the heavenly life of the Father Himself was being unfolded before the eyes of the world through His humanity.



We never read of Christ running. He probably started out in His youth trying to run in the ways of His Father. But He too had to learn obedience by what He suffered. (Heb. 5:8) Everyone learns to walk slowly with God through the suffering that increases patience and faith. And so, when He finally begins His ministry at the age of thirty, we find Him always walking in an unhurried pace. But He was always on time, He never lacked anything, and nothing was ever over-due.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work {as you learn to live by the Spirit alone}, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (Jam. 1:2)

It is into this same Divine life that we are to enter and learn to move by walking in His Spirit. There needs to be a real death to the old self-originated form of life that comes from the flesh. We are to walk in Christ, and with Christ, and for Christ.

This steady, quiet, slow, mature walk with Christ in the Spirit is the condition that leads to the deepest and most heavenly knowledge of Divine things. This is the state where the graces all ripen into a heavenly fruit, and where the soul begins to share with God in His eternal life.

And this is the promise that he has promised us—eternal life. (1 John 2:25)

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called... (1 Tim. 6:12)

It is a long way from the fallen Adam to Jesus, from self to God, from the earthly to the heavenly. But the length of the journey does not depend on years as counted by men. It depends on the receptivity of the soul and how quickly we respond in a yielded faith to the ways of God. Waiting seems to be a slow thing, and yet it is by waiting on the Lord, in a true yieldedness to His Spirit, that the soul meets the condition that enables it to change its strength. Those who are responsive to God find their spirit being lifted by His power into ever-higher levels of divine spiritual life. Their spirit rises up into the heavenly realms where it becomes “one spirit” with the Son.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is... For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17)  
According to your faith will it be done to you. (Matt. 9:29 NIV)

## The Forms of Divine Life

## From “Soul Food”

The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. (1 John 1:2)

God’s eternal life was formed and expressed through the mortal body of Jesus when He walked in this world. While the infinite life and glory of the Father could not be contained in His mortal body, Jesus did reveal the essence of the divine nature. He came to both display the eternal life from heaven and to be the source of this divine life to everyone who believes in Him.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, *full of grace and truth*... And of His fullness we have all received {we all have access by faith to the life and glory revealed through Him}, and grace for grace. For the law {which requires living by our own strength} was given through Moses, but *grace and truth* {divine life} *came through Jesus Christ*. (John 1:14, 16-17)

The same grace and truth that was revealed through Jesus can now be revealed through every believer who will consciously choose to follow Him in His way of the cross. (Matt. 16:23-24) Jesus can now fill the vessel of our body with the glory that His Father revealed through Him. By living through Him we are enabled to share with Him in His life and reveal His image of holy love in this world. (1 John 4:17)

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one...that the love with which You loved Me {perfect love} may be in them, and I in them... (John 17:22-23)

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Eph. 1:4)

God did not plan from the beginning that some would spend eternity in hell and some would spend eternity in heaven. He planned from the beginning that we would live through the life of the Son. God never intended for us to have life in ourselves. He chose for us to live through the Son so that we would always be like Him in holy love.

While the first Adam chose to live by self-will and lost the life of God from his soul, the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, came into the world to reverse this loss. He destroyed this work that the devil had fostered on the world by choosing to live through the Father. (Luke 22:42; 1 John 3:8) By walking in the Spirit in complete harmony with His Father’s will, the Father was able to continue to “dwell in” Him and “walk in” Him. He lived as a temple of the living God and thereby restored the way of life that Adam lost.

For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I WILL DWELL IN THEM, AND WALK IN THEM... (2 Cor. 6:16 Emphasis added)

After paying the penalty for man's sin through His death, the Son became the Federal Head of a new lineage of people who would begin to walk as He did. By choosing to walk by the Spirit of God, God could dwell in them and walk in them. This would enable each of God's children to become a vessel of His heavenly life.

That divine life of spotless, lowly, gentle, holy love, as it was expressed through Jesus, is seeking vessels in which to shape and spread itself abroad in the world today. This is His promise: "He who follows Me {in the way of the cross} *shall...have the light of life.*" (John 8:12)

When Adam turned from the eternal life of God to live by his own will and develop a self-originated form of life, the Presence of God departed from his eternal soul. Everyone is now born into this world without the satisfying Presence of God's Spirit filling their inner being. It has resulted in a sin nature that has led man to live by his own independence and self-sufficiency as he looks for life from this world. This is the fallen form of life that needs to be taken to the cross and lost before it is possible to find the eternal life that is now available from Jesus Christ. "For...whoever loses his life {the self-originated form of life} will find it." (Matt. 16:24-25)

Full salvation entails returning to that childlike faith that Adam gave up to direct his own steps. Those who learn to depend upon God for everything, which includes permitting Him to direct all their steps, will be lifted by the power of His Spirit into His heavenly Kingdom-life.

I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. (Jer. 10:23 NIV)

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as {dependent} little children {who do not direct their own steps in life}, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:3)

Salvation is intended to turn man back to God in a form of holiness that looks to Him alone for both guidance and spiritual life. Christ has come to be the one Source of "life and godliness." (2 Pet. 1:3) The "light of life" must be received from the Son through a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by a yielded and dependent faith. It is by choosing to die to our old self-originated form of life that we enter the kind of depend faith that enables us to receive the Son's heavenly life. It is a supernatural life that He supplies to everyone who learns to walk as He did by the Spirit.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death {to the self-originated form of life that comes from self-will}, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection... He died to sin {self-will} once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God {through the eternal Spirit}. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God *in Christ...* (Rom. 6:5, 10-11)

My sheep hear My voice...and they follow Me {in this way of the cross}. And I give them eternal life... (John 10:27-28)

Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. (John 4:14 NIV)

Our life is to become hidden within Christ's life. "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col. 3:1) Once we have stopped being an expression of our own life, and yield ourselves to be an expression of Christ's life (as He expressed the Father's life), we come to that place of death where God is able to lift us spiritually into the heavenly realms. And it is when our life is truly "hidden with Christ in God" that we begin sharing with Him in the spiritual blessing contained in His eternal life.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

Jesus did not live to express a personal life for His own glory. He lived for the sole purpose of expressing His Father's life. Again, He could say in all honesty, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:9) We follow Him in His way of the cross by choosing not to be an expression of our own personal life. We were created to be vessels that God could use to display His life and glory. That is why it is so necessary to die to the old self-originated form of life. This is what enables us to share with Him in the same eternal Kingdom-life that He shares with His Father. (Rom. 6:5; John 17:22-23, 26)

*At that day* you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. (John 14:20)

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels." When God fills the mortal body with His eternal life it becomes plain how "the excellence of the power" is "of God and not of us." In God's eternal world He receives all the glory because He is the source of everything. We enter into this eternal state when we die to our own glory and permit Him to express His life and glory through everything we do.

But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God. (John 3:21)

Think of this great honor that has been given to us. We have the opportunity to give individual form and expression to God's life of holy love. "And the glory {the heavenly life} which You gave Me I have given them." Each one of us has access to this divine life through faith. When we are willing to exchange our strength by dying to the flesh-life and begin waiting on the Lord in dependent faith it becomes possible for our spirit to begin rising up as on eagle's wings into this spiritual life in the heavenly realms.

The Holy Spirit will not undo our God-given personalities. He will, however, purge away everything from the self-life that conflicts with the Christ-life. And then, working

through each of our diverse and individual lives, He will express the Son's life in a way that becomes visible to the world.

For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face {in the spiritual image} of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us...that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor 4:6-10)

## **Channels of the Spirit**

## **From "Our Own God"**

Among Christ's most wonderful statements concerning the Holy Spirit are the words found in John 7:38, where He said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." The central thought is that each child of God is to become a channel used by the Spirit to pour out ever-flowing rivers of the Son's heavenly life.

The Son calls each one of us, regardless of what others may do, to yield ourselves entirely to Him so He may use the vessel to display Himself. His death, resurrection and glorification have made it possible for each of His true followers to begin enjoying the sweetest and most intimate union with His heavenly life.

He {the Spirit} will bring glory to me {the Son} by taking from what is mine {the heavenly life} and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:14-15 NIV)

When the need for being cleansed of all impurity is strong enough to draw the soul into a state of unlimited abandonment to Jesus, the spiritual thirst is met and satisfied with an ever-flowing supply of the Lord's Living Water. "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst." (John 4:14) This endless river of divine life, which is now flowing from under the Son's throne—the throne that can now be established within the heart, is to pour out from our inner being as water out of a fountain. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. 22:1)

Many Christians have not yet gained access to the fullness of this pure river of life now flowing out of Christ. They still have a mixed life. They are looking to the temporal realm to some degree for their spiritual sustenance. It is the reason they keep finding their soul running spiritually dry. They have not yet turned fully from the world so that Christ may establish His undivided throne within their heart and begin supplying the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal" from under the throne. Consequently, they have not yet become channels for the outflow of His endless rivers of Living Water—the eternal life.

“But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; Be very desolate,” says the Lord. “For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water. (Jer. 2:11-13)

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters... Why do you spend...your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me...and let your soul delight itself in abundance. (Isa. 55:1-2)

But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. (John 4:14 NIV)

After the first gushes of this divine life of heavenly love have leveled out into a steady flow, and the sanctified state is being tried, the illuminated believer begins to realize how much he needs an ever-increasing flow of this divine life from God. As he turns more and more to Christ alone for his strength, a more complete and powerful union of the human spirit with the very nature of the Godhead takes place. It is this complete change in the source of our spiritual life that makes it possible to remain filled to overflowing with the heavenly life of God.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being {as you learn to live through Him}, so that Christ {in His heavenly life} may dwell in your hearts through faith...that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:16-17, 19 NIV)

The filled vessel can also be enlarged as it remains yielded to all increasing light. The eternal soul has endless room for expansion as it becomes filled with more and more of the life and glory of God. Thus, the glory that Adam lost can be regained so that we may express God’s spiritual image in this world.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)

Love has been perfected among us in this...because as he is, so are we in this world. (1 John 4:17)

When one cries out with Moses, “I beseech thee, O Lord, show me Thy glory,” the need is met by life from the Trinity, revealed and imparted by the Holy Spirit. We then receive Him, drink of His Living Water and rest our all in Him.

Those who have begun to share with Christ in His spiritual life are very conscious about walking in a way that pleases the Spirit. It is as we remain fully yielded to Him that we are continually filled with His “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

(Rom. 14:17) When this heavenly Presence is withdrawn we naturally seek out the reason. Even though we have not consciously sinned against Him, we begin to sense how we have stepped out in our own strength in some way. There is something we have begun to do “out from” ourselves. The Spirit, in withdrawing His divine Presence, is always leading us to become more like Christ so we may continually say with Him, “I do nothing of Myself... The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.” (John 8:28-29) With Jesus, our great desire is to keep His Presence filling our soul.

All sanctified persons do not receive exactly the same measure of God’s eternal life. After sanctification there are many degrees of receiving Christ in His person, character, attributes and glory. As we continue to count “all things as loss” from our self-originated form of life and press forward in our dependent faith, we are enabled to enjoy an ever-greater outflow of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit continues to take from Christ’s life and reveal within our inner being “the righteousness which is from God by faith.” (Phil. 3:8-10) He reveals this heavenly life as we yield to His every movement. “He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”

It is only as we become more and more conformed to Christ crucified—the life that does not seek to express itself—that His resurrection life can freely flow through our eternal souls. Let us therefore count everything as loss and surrender more fully to the nature and the work of our Lord so that we may become a better channel for the display of His heavenly life.

“He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” Once we have changed the source of our life, Christ will become like a Divine Fountain producing endless rivers of spiritual life from within our inner being. If this life is not flowing as He has promised, we need to begin examining ourselves for the source of the trouble. The defect is not in the Fountain.

Here is where there is need for careful self-examination. Have we truly died to the self-expression that leads to our own glory? As Jesus has said, “He who *speaks from himself* seeks his own glory.” (John 7:18) Paul chose to follow the instructions of his Lord by choosing not to live as an expression of himself. He counted it “as loss” so that he could “know Christ.” It is only after we have died to our self-life for the purpose of becoming a vessel of Christ’s life and glory that He will reveal Himself within our inner being “in the power of an endless life.” (Heb. 7:16).

If anyone desires to come after Me {into the heavenly realms}, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me {the One who did not do anything “out from” Himself}. For...whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. (Matt. 16:24-25)

I have been crucified with Christ; *it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.* (Gal. 2:20)

By recognizing how this heavenly “life”—the life that needs to be possessed today—has its source in Jesus Christ, it becomes easier to sense our utter weakness, helplessness

and nothingness. This is what prepares us to “sell all” from the self-life in order to buy the heavenly “Pearl”—the life that comes from above. We now have access to the firstfruits of the Kingdom-life that is to be shared with Christ throughout eternity—a place where everyone lives through the life of God and becomes an expression of His glory alone.

By emptying ourselves of our own glory and dying to our self-life we will be in a position to be raised by the power of God into Christ’s heavenly life. But if we are unwilling to take this course where we permit God to receive all the glory today, we cannot expect to share with Him in His glory in the future. Today is the day of full salvation when the everlasting life is to begin flowing through our eternal souls. It is a life that begins today and goes on forever.

Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. (John 4:14 NIV)

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, *went and sold all that he had and bought it.* (Matt. 13:45)

## **How We Belong to Jesus**

## **From “Our Own God”**

“You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.” (John 17:2) Here we see that the Father gave us to His Son, that He might share His eternal life with us. This revealing of His life within our inner being is the fundamental blessing of the kingdom of God.

I do not pray for these {the apostles} alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You...that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me...” (John 17:20-23)

It takes a heart of great faith to have this glorious possibility opened to the mind. Only think of all the ways and degrees in which Christ is one with the Father: one in nature, one in purpose, one in motive and intention; one in character, one in taste and affinity; one in government, one in life and action. And yet, the Son’s infallible prayer is that we, as poor and shortsighted as we have been, are to be so melted into Divine love that we begin to live in the same kind of harmony that He shares with the Father.

We need to recognize the impossibility of living as an expression of Christ’s heavenly life while we are still attempting to be an expression of our own life. Jesus could only be an expression of His Father’s life by emptying Himself of His own glory. He chose to become nothing in Himself so that His Father could be all in all. Similarly, by choosing to die to our self-originated form of life so we may live by His Spirit and express His life and glory,



He will reveal Himself through our mortal body. He assures us that everyone who loses their self-life will find His life. (Matt. 16:25) The promise is sure!

The Son is now looking for vessels He can use to express His life. He has given every believer access to the glory He received from the Father. (John 17:22) But we must choose to follow Him in His way of life before He will fill the temple with His glory.

God has placed us in weak mortal bodies to keep us aware of our dependence upon Him. The vessels was not to have anything coming “out from” itself. We were created in a way that permitted God to be the source of all goodness as we yielded the vessel to Him for His use.

Many insist they do not have the power to walk as Jesus did and reveal His light of life. And they are quite correct. But this fact is not a factor in God’s plan for revealing His life. He never intended for His human children to be the source of His eternal life. In fact, He insists that we die to everything that is self-originated—the form of life that Satan fostered on the world through Adam. We find the Pearl of Great Price—our Lord’s heavenly Kingdom-life—by selling all from the self-life. (Matt. 13:45-46)

It is as we die a deeper death to our own sufficiency and learn to wait on the Lord that we find life and strength from above. God planned from the beginning that we would live through the Son and reveal His image. (Eph. 1:4)

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8:29)

### **Three Kingdom Stages**

### **From “Spiritual Feasts”**

A perfect kingdom will need to have subjects who serve the king out of personal love. If the kingdom is to be perfect, each member will need to have the mind of the king and the principles of his life so inwrought within their own nature that there is no need for either the outward machinery of government or the coercion that is typically needed to produce obedience. These loyal members will be in such harmony with the king that his reign becomes the brightest jewel of their existence. Their every affection and choice is in union with him because they have his mind. There is no need for intermediate officers since the people are governed directly through their heart by the king’s own spirit.

This ideal king would also carry all the members of his kingdom within his own heart. Again, if the kingdom is to be perfect, he would need to love each of the members in a way that leads him to spontaneously live for their good.

We are speaking of a kingdom where the government is personal and the king remains in close and intimate contact with each individual subject. The lines of communication and the messages of the king are never corrupted by others.

No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. (Jer. 31:34)

A search of the Scriptures will reveal how this ideal King and kingdom is now in place. We can now become "one spirit with Him." (1 Cor. 6:17) This heavenly harmony takes place when we permit the King to establish His undivided kingdom within our heart. When we can truly say with Paul, "I no longer live," we will have "the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 2:16) The Messiah has come to reveal His heavenly Kingdom-life within our heart so He may make Himself known through our lives.

Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15)

The kingdom of God does not come with {outward} observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the kingdom of God is {to be fully established} within you. (Luke 17:20-21)

The kingdom of God is a heavenly way of life that needs to be established within the control center of our eternal soul. When the old life dies and He has complete freedom to express Himself, His Kingdom-life begins to spread itself outward from the heart into the mental faculties and the outward life of the senses, the emotions and the expressions of the body. It is a heavenly life that enables each of the members of His kingdom to joyously walk in His ways. "For the kingdom of God is...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14:17)

We must not fail to recognize this inward kingdom "in the Holy Spirit." It is in connection with this hidden stage of the kingdom that Jesus provides a marvelous statement in the fourteenth chapter of John. He speaks about the indwelling of the three Divine persons of the Godhead.

He first says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper." (v. 15 and 16) The Helper is also referred to as the Comforter. He both helps and comforts the soul through the difficulties we face in this fallen world. This is the level of spiritual life that most Christians now possess. They receive the gift of the Spirit when they are born again.

A few verses later, however, Jesus promises a higher state of grace to those who continue to obey Him. He says, "I will love him, and manifest Myself to him." (v. 21) This is a reference to the day when He reveals His Kingdom-life within our inner being. "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." (v. 20) He comes to enable us to live for Him with joy in our heart.

He then goes on to promise something even greater to those who continue to press forward in their *obedient faith*. He says, "My Father will love him, and we {Father and Son} will come to him and make our home with him." (v. 23) This greater manifestation is

received by those who have gone on to conquer the fullness of the land of promise. These are the overcoming saints who have fully exchanged their source of life and have entered into the heavenly Presence of God in a way that many sanctified Christians have never even envisioned.

To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. (Rev. 2:7)

These advancing promises are given to those who continue to respond to Christ's teachings to the fullest extent. He says that if we love God (which He connects to ongoing obedience) we are to receive the abiding presence of the Comforter—the Holy Spirit. Next, if we will continue to yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the Son will reveal Himself within our inner being. And finally, if we will keep pressing forward in our faith, we will enter into an enjoyment of the eternal life that was in the beginning.

I have written to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. (1 John 2:12)

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong {you know the Son's overcoming life}, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one. (1 John 2:14)

I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him {the eternal life} who is from the beginning. (1 John 2:14)

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called... (1 Tim. 6:12)

These matchless promises are to be fulfilled in this current age of fulfillment. Christian biography throughout the centuries has provided some clear examples of men and women who have pressed forward in their faith until they have entered into the highest of these promises. They have testified to the fact that they had come to a personal knowledge of God's life of heavenly love.

And the glory which You {the Father} gave Me {the Son} I have given them...that the love with which You loved Me {perfect love} may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:22, 26)

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder...and also a {current} partaker of the glory that will be revealed. (1 Pet. 5:1)

Christ wants us to become partakers with Him in His glory today. It is a terrible perversion of Scripture to say that this greater manifestation of Christ's life within the sanctified heart is the Second coming. Yes, He will come again in His full glory to the whole world. But it is during this current age of fulfillment that we must become a part of His heavenly kingdom by permitting Him to establish the glory of His eternal Kingdom-life within our heart.

Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste {physical} death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. {He came to reveal His Kingdom-life within His first disciples before they physically died.} (Matt. 16:28)

I will come to you. A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live {in the eternal Kingdom-life}, you will live also {in the same life}. (John 14:18-19)

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 1:10-11)

## **Desires For God**

## **From “Our Own God”**

The believer who has been filled with Christ’s Spirit will continue to have a desire for more of the infinite life of God. It is this willingness to count “all things” as loss in order to know more of Him that becomes the one sure sign we are currently filled with His Spirit.

The soul continues to experience a sweet and deep inward rest during this stage of growth. The lines that had once bound the heart to shore have been cut. It is then that we find ourselves consistently moving forward into the fathomless and boundless ocean of God’s heavenly life.

There are people who profess full salvation who do not show this same desire. They seem to be content where they are. Even though every true Christian has the Spirit within them, and the Spirit will cause them to sense the need to become more like Christ, this desire has not taken full possession of their heart. There needs to be a “filling” with the Spirit before there can be continuous desire to count everything as loss to know more of Christ’s resurrection life and power. If this desire was once possessed and has been lost, it implies there has been a giving way to the devil’s temptations to use some of the temporal things of this world to feed the spiritual life.

Do not love the world or the things in the world... For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:15-16)

Again, this deep desire for God Himself weans the soul from everything on earth more perfectly and more sweetly than anything else can do. It burns out attachments to property, earthly standing and even old friendships. It turns us away from the world and its things without putting any sourness or melancholy into the fountains of the heart.

The most effective means for leading Christians out from the world is by revealing to them the Pearl of Great Price. They need to see what Christ has promised to give. Only

then will someone be willing to sell everything from their self-originated form of life in order to buy it.

Christ has come as the Messiah to reveal His heavenly life through His disciples to prove to the world He is the one true Savior. He comes to make us perfect in one “that the world may know” that He was sent by the Father to establish His heavenly kingdom. (John 17:23) Let us therefore press into all the fullness of this life of promise. It is when we are all sharing with Him in His life of divine love and living in a heavenly harmony with each other that the world will know that He is the true Savior. (John 17:22-23)

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. And they shall neither hunger anymore or thirst anymore...for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters... (Rev. 7:15-17)

Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. (John 4:14 NIV)

## **Divine Recollection**

## **From “Heavenly Life”**

When the believer is first sanctified there is a wonderful transformation that takes place within the soul. There is a tendency to assume that this sudden lifting of the spirit into a much deeper level of spiritual life has resulted in an “arrival” where there is little need to move further along. But those who cease to progress will soon lose what they once possessed.

Christ will only reveal Himself to those who continue to respond to all increasing light. Because God’s light of life is infinite, this progression can never end. As He draws us into deeper levels of His life we must go forward or turn back.

There is also a tendency to consider “spiritual life” as periodic outbursts of emotion. But this emotion seldom has anything to do with an increasing measure of His “light of life.” People who live by their emotions experience an unstable spiritual life because they rely too much on the temporal realm for their spiritual support. It is as we continue to count all things from the temporal realm as loss in order to know more of Christ that we will continue to receive more and more of His heavenly life. “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died {to the flesh-life}, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:2-3) Those who are sharing with Him in His spiritual life do not fluctuate as conditions change in this world.

Salvation starts in the emotions. It is during the desert-testing period that God supplies His wells of refreshment through the emotions to encourage His children to move further along in their walk of faith. And part of this forward movement entails making an effort to enter into spiritual thinking. It will require reading the Bible and other Christian classics, along with surrendering to prayer and sacrificial service, to prevent these blessings of grace from passing away like the evaporation of morning dew. Here is where thousands who were once shouting happy in the Lord have failed. They have neglected to make Christ-likeness—His life of divine love—the business of their lives.

In very wet seasons farmers cannot plow, and the rain seems to monopolize the work. But once the water has run off the ground, unless there is diligence in preparing the land with plows, the ground will bake hard and strangle the crop. There is something just like this in the spiritual life. When the freshets of grace are pouring down on the soul, they seem to supercede any necessity for a close study of God's Word, or plodding perseverance in self-denial, or habits of deliberate recollection, or patient prayer. But when these sweet floods have run their legitimate course, unless the soul applies itself to diligence in tilling the soil and training the vines, the heart will soon pack hard, the mind will run to weeds and the tongue will begin to spew out the noxious pollens of the self-life. Consequently, those great floods of grace that were initially poured into the soul will not yield the fruit of a divine life.

The blessed habit of Divine recollection {deep communion with God} is acquired by degrees. Some persons are more receptive to God and acquire it more quickly than others. Those troubles that mortify the independent and self-sufficient spirit also serve to facilitate a deeper communion with God. For whatever it is that most thoroughly tears us away from the world, or knocks the earthly props from under us, or detaches us from our dependence upon the human, and drives us most profoundly into the bosom of God, will serve to spiritualize the mind, and assist in forming habits of ceaseless prayer.

One of our biggest steps into this heavenly communion with God takes place by learning to be silent before God. Another step is taken by learning to test the spirits. This includes checking ourselves when we are about to speak to see if what we are saying has its source in the Holy Spirit and needs to be heard. There is a great difference between speaking the words of the Spirit and merely speaking as an impulse to express ourselves for our own glory. "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory." (John 7:18) Many speak merely to be recognized. And God will not permit anyone to live in His heavenly presence while they are seeking their own glory.

Christ never spoke out from Himself because He wanted to reveal His Father's life. It is in this sense that Jesus will only manifest the fullness of His life through the temple of our body when we have stopped trying to make ourselves known. He specifically stated that we would find His life by denying ourselves. He is referring to the self-originated form of life. It includes denying the opportunity to express ourselves in a way that promotes our own honor and glory.

Another step to deep communion with God is to check all eagerness to hear the latest news. Those who depend on the world for the support of their spiritual life will naturally

seek to know the details of what is going on around them. They know their happiness is directly linked to the things that are taking place in the temporal realm. In contrast, those who receive their spiritual life directly from God do not worry about their changing circumstances.

The limited news that is needed to see how God is currently working, and how it relates to our assigned work, can be learned very quickly. There is no need to waste time filling our minds with the world and its thought processes when we could be communing with our everlasting God and receiving life and direction from Him moment by moment.

Another step to walking with God is to avoid showing off our religion. We have been called to a life of simplicity that does not seek to make itself known. We do not find God making a great display of Himself. While He does show Himself on occasions in very significant ways, most of His work is carried out in His hidden state. Jesus would often reveal light and then disappear from the scene. He was always telling people not to make a loud broadcast of what He had done. While we are to display a life of holy and joyous love that reveals God's glory, we are not to seek to draw attention to ourselves. We are afraid there are many who have lost much of their spiritual life because they wanted to show off their "spirituality" before others. Nothing would be a greater crucifixion to some Christians than to refrain from ever making a display of their religion.

At the same time, we are to testify about the God who supplies life to our soul from above. As people become more acquainted with our lives, and are drawn to the light of this heavenly life, as the rich young ruler was drawn to discover how to find the eternal life he observed in Jesus, they will begin to ask questions. We are to always be prepared to give an answer to those who are seeking truth.

We should never do anything that implies we are holier than others. The Holy Jesus mixed with the worst of sinners without revealing a holier than thou attitude. However, He did remain different from the people of the world and reveal the eternal life that comes down from heaven. We are to live in modesty and sweetness of spirit as we reveal the same life of heavenly love.

A deep and inward sharing with God in His heavenly life will shut off wildness, foolishness, levity, and talkativeness. It also keeps the mental faculties rejoicing in God, well balanced, and in harmony with the self-emptying life of Jesus.

## **Steps to Holiness**

## **From "Heavenly Life"**

It is difficult to understand and classify what is taking place at the time we are passing through any phase of Christian experience. But after entering into a higher spiritual state it is easier to look back and see what has occurred. It is then possible to recognize and identify certain truths that can be used to help others going through the same territory. With this thought in mind, we will describe what typically occurs along the way to full salvation.

1.) After receiving the initial gift of the Holy Spirit at conversion, the new believer has a general desire to grow in grace. His forward view of what is needed, however, is still quite vague. There is something like a silver mist hanging over the distant horizon. He catches only faint glimpses of the far off mountains that must be scaled by the grace of God. He still does not see the hindrances that exist within his own nature, nor does he apprehend in any definite way the Scriptural promises of the fullness of salvation. But there is an abiding desire and purpose in his heart to improve. He senses a need to become stronger and more useful in the service of his new Master. But most of his thoughts and feelings remain characterized by indistinctness.

2.) In time the earnest soul will become aware of a special need for some grace or virtue that seems to be lacking. Amid the daily ups and downs of his spiritual life, and especially in times of severe trials, annoyances and temptations, he is made to feel that he needs a form of grace that would provide greater victory in his life. Even after gaining victory over the outward sins that he once committed while living for himself, he still senses something wrong. Sometimes he may sense the need to have a more forgiving spirit, or of being more humble, or of being less dictatorial, or of being more patient, or of having more faith, or love, or calmness of spirit. Each individual will feel the need of more grace in some specific area. He will begin to sense that some particular part of the fruit of Christ's Spirit should be more plentiful in his life.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23)

3.) The soul, as it is taken through periods of deep testing by the Spirit, will eventually discover the great under-world of the latent carnal mind. Those who truly desires to progress spiritually will eventually discover how there is something within the heart that blocks its progress. Something keeps strangling its peace, or joy, or liberty. If at first he was told there was an evil presence still lurking within his heart, a corruption that would prevent him from making very much spiritual progress, he would not have believed it. But failures in his daily tests will cause him to begin a deep searching of the foundations of his heart.

4.) This inward search for what prevents him from walking in the light of Christlike love will begin to break down his old sense of strength and independence. Instead of finding some specific defect that might be corrected with a little more effort, he begins to discover an inner corruption that is far beyond his power to overcome. Those outcroppings of one or two selfish propensities, which at first attracted his attention, were only like the mineral veins of a mine. Every vein is found to sink down into the dark region of a self-centered nature—a nature that continues to war against Christ-like love.

The very fact that he is born of God and wants to walk in Christlike love, but finds himself in conflict with Christ's nature, begins to cause a deep inward sorrow. He begins to see how many of his good deeds, and how much of his Christian work, has been tinged with selfishness and self-exaltation. He sees how he has really been living for his own good and his own honor rather than for the good and honor of his Lord. This deep sorrow



brings about what has been called “the repentance of believers.” It prepares the heart for a deeper death to the old self-centered, self-exalting and self-sufficient form of life.

5.) The light of the Spirit is now widening on the horizon, and he sees that he needs something far more than to be sanctified in spots. His vision takes in the length and breadth of his whole nature and he sees how much he needs the Son’s life of divine love filling his soul. And because the life of God can only be revealed through a pure heart, he begins to see how this is the key to “seeing” the life of Christ as an indwelling Presence. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8)

6.) Those who fully surrender to live for Christ’s purposes alone will be acknowledged by God. While God first tests our willingness to become like Jesus in all truth before He fills the temple with His glory, we can depend on Him to do what He has promised. This crown of life that He wants to share with us throughout eternity can now be revealed within our inner being in its firstfruits. This blessing comes from Him through our faith.

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (Jam. 1:12 NIV)

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. (John 14:21)

Christ reveals Himself to those who have made a very profound and interior surrender to the unlimited will of God. It is an itemized giving up that takes place point by point. There must be a letting go of things in both the past and the future, including turning over all circumstances and plans and hopes to Him. Everything is surrendered and put on the altar of sacrifice. The Son will reveal Himself within the vessel when it has been fully consecrated to the exclusive purpose of expressing the life and will of God.

Since God knows the heart, He knows when some part of our self-life is being held back. The individual does not always recognize this inner reserve at first. It is in this sense that this full surrender generally does not take place until there has been some severe tests and the exposure that comes from the searching illumination of the Holy Spirit. It is a thousand miles beyond human logic, or the mere utterance of words. It will entail coming to God for both a revelation of the hindrances within the heart and an enablement through grace to surrender whatever He requires. God insists upon a complete abandonment to Him so He may become all in all.

7.) Perfect faith and trust reveals itself at the point we are prepared to live forever through Christ. It expects God to do what He has promised. We step out in faith and look to the Lord to be our “righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’ ” (1 Cor. 1:30)

This full measure of faith has no struggle in it. It is a sweet, quiet rest in Jesus. Like a sleeping infant dropping its toy on the floor, the soul has quietly relaxed, and released

everybody and everything, and peacefully rests in God alone. This faith relies on Jesus to manifest His sanctified life of true righteousness and holiness as an indwelling Presence.

Hence, the highest type of faith is not something we strain to exercise, but rather a supernatural rest in God. For example, it was not until Abraham was “as good as dead,” and had lost all hope in himself, that he could actually receive the promised son. We simply entrust our entire being over to Him and let Him do the work that He has promised to do through the power of His Spirit. Any form of anxiety is a sign of unbelief, and this lack of trusting faith will prevent God from doing what He has promised to do.

8.) After getting beyond the initial euphoria of being filled with Christ’s Spirit, it will be necessary to learn how to enter into an ever-increasing measure of the life of heaven. The life we are to reveal comes from Christ alone. Not everyone, however, learns to live through Jesus. Many end up going back to live by their own strength. There is also the temptation to take some things off the altar and mix them back into our life. Everyone eventually experiences their defeat at Ai after entering into the land of promise. And unless the heart is once again fully consecrated to the Lord, it will lead to spiritual death.

For they have even taken some of the accursed things {the treasures that were once fully surrendered to God}... They have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies. {The overcoming life of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit is lost.}... Neither will I be with you anymore {with the Divine Presence}, until you destroy the accursed from among you. (Josh. 7:10-11)

It is not unusual to see Christians who have consecrated everything to the work of the Lord beginning to use the things for their personal pleasures. And sadly, most of them never recover from the loss of spiritual life that occurs. They are unwilling to search out those things in their life that have come into conflict with Christ’s way of the cross.

## **The Sweetness of Love**

## **From “White Robes”**

Even after being “rooted and grounded in love” through the new birth (Eph. 3:17), it is not unusual to find within the heart such things as a desire for pre-eminence, a desire for human praise and honor, or a desire to lay up treasures on earth. These desires for something more for self are constantly coming into conflict with the Son’s nature of love. And because there is always something or someone interfering with the fulfillment of these desires, this fallen nature leads to murmuring and resentment and restlessness. While the child of God will want to become more like Jesus, these traits from the old nature will continue to muddy the stream. It prevents the pure love of God from being consistently revealed.

God is not fully satisfied with His children when they are merely “rooted and grounded in love.” God wants children who have been empowered to express His image of love in everything they do. He wants you to “know the love of Christ which passes knowledge;

that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (v. 19) God’s divine love is a boundless monopolist, and it cannot settle itself down into a homelike rest and fixed tranquility until every impure and unloving temper is purged away.

God’s work of entire sanctification supplies an overcoming life that makes it possible to live for God alone. But the devil can still tempt the believer to return to a self-seeking and self-directed way of life. Since Satan was able to draw the holy Adam away from the eternal life and even tempt the Son of God to become worldly-minded, we can know he will use everything within his power to turn us back to the world. He knows the Word of God as well as anyone. He therefore know precisely what is needed to separate people from the eternal kingdom of God.

No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62)

No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and mammon. (Matt. 6:24)

God created man to serve Him alone. Jesus therefore knew how to respond to the devil when He was tempted to the self-seeking and self-exalting ways of the world. He said, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and *Him only you shall serve.*’ ” (Matt. 4:10) We will all need to recognize this unbreakable law if we hope to survive Satan’s temptations. God will not permit anyone to serve themselves.

After purifying the heart, God works to enlarge the vessel by revealing more light. He begins to show us more and more what Jesus was like. Increasing light always leads to a deeper sacrificing of self for the purpose of revealing more of the Christ-life. If the individual begins to resist this light and give way to the devil’s temptation to live for self or to exalt self, a crack will develop, permitting darkness to seep back into the once pure and holy heart. It is not difficult to find Christians who were once fully sanctified now living by their own will in a self-seeking and self-exalting way of life.

At this point it may be helpful to introduce some thoughts from J. M. Hames. In his book *Deeper Things*, he says, “It is not enough to be saved from sin or merely to be [fully] sanctified. There are degrees far deeper than a clean heart. God wishes to beautify and polish and so refine saints that they will be attractive. We are to ‘Put on the new man.’ This means the very image of Christ, which takes the place of the old man... Let us notice some of the garments that are to be put on. ‘Bowels of mercy’—which means softness and tenderness of heart... As flowers and plants grow more rapidly in tender, mellow soil, so the graces and fruits of the Spirit flourish in a tender heart... ‘Longsuffering’... means that one bears all that men or devils may put on him with a sweet, Christlike spirit, without complaining or grumbling. The beauty of perfect love is that it can suffer long and still be kind. Some can suffer, but after awhile their patience gives out.”

Hames goes on to say, “A [fully] sanctified spirit is a gentle spirit—one that is saved from harshness and roughness... A gentle spirit is a conquered, melted and subdued spirit.

It has been bathed in a heavenly sea of tenderness... There is a great deal of mental and logical sanctification nowadays which consists in saying that the altar sanctifies the gift, and in putting one's self on the altar and saying, 'I am sanctified.' But such a one knows nothing about the heartthrobs of Gethsemane or death to the 'old man.'... There is nothing more beautiful in the Christian experience than a real, humble, Christlike spirit, where all the self-life and religious human strut and blustering have been burned out."

Andrew Murray has described the kind of humility that must be permitted to possess the soul. He says, "Humility is perfect quietness of heart... It is never fretted, vexed, irritated, sore or disappointed... It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, when I am blamed or when I am despised. When the soul enters [entire] sanctification it is just the beginning of this spirit, which is to spread, intensify and brighten..."

There are many who will never go beyond simply taking a positive step toward the life of Jesus. There are also some who press after some of the more useful gifts. But only the few are ever willing to pay any price to reach the most excellent way. These are the crown jewels of time and heaven. It is in this sense that "one star differeth from another star in glory."

Have you fallen in love with the overflowing idea of perfect love? Are your dreams, thoughts, prayers and studies all centered on being lost in God's divine life of love? Do you pant and thirst to have your whole being so deeply immersed into this heavenly love that you would gladly yield up all other gifts and talents in order to reach such a consummation? Well, Jesus has given everyone access to this glory from God. (John 17:22-23) The same life of love that was revealed through His mortal body is now available to everyone who will truly follow Him in His way of the cross.

He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me {through the cross}; and where I am {in the heavenly realms}, there My servant will be also. (John 12:25-26)

What is the sweetness of love? It is a love that fills and enlarges and overflows the breast with peace and joy while living sacrificially for the kingdom of God and His glory. It is love transforming the tongue, selecting the fittest words and sweetening the voice. It is love that can toil hard all day without the need for appreciation or reward, except to sleep at the Savior's feet at night. It is love that can receive injustice, neglect, or sarcasm and remain content in heart. It is love that can sow its sacrificial seed amid pains and persecutions, and willingly permit others to reap the harvest and receive all the praise. Finally, it is love that studiously seeks to conceal itself so others may see Jesus.

## **The Growth Previous to Sanctification**

## **From "White Robes"**

The growth that takes place prior to being fully sanctified is not growth into holiness, but a growth in preparation for holiness. Christians typically set out to overcome and

remove the ill tempers and corrupt tendencies in their nature. But when they are pinned down to the naked facts, even after many years in the faith, by asking if they are more tender, patient, gentle, trustful, meek, peaceful and loving than in the first years after becoming new creatures in Christ, most of them will say, no! The fact is, rather than adding to it, the great majority will tend to lose something of their first love.

There can be considerable growth in many areas of the Christian walk that is not growth in the spiritual life of God. Men may grow in Hebrew and Greek scholarship, and yet lose grace; men may learn how to work up Church enterprises and run ecclesiastical machinery, may learn how to fill various offices in the Church, may learn to do many so-called great religious works, and yet be drifting away from sacrificial love all the time. A preacher may grow in eloquence, in learning, in fame, in skill, in authority and yet not grow in the divine life of Jesus Christ.

There are many so-called “great big preachers” who have grown and grown, but are not half as humble, and gentle, and simple, and affectionate and self-sacrificing as they were while still plain country boys in their first love. They have actually become less Christlike over the years.

We will agree that there is much head growth in the Church today. We can also find many Christians becoming involved in numerous activities to improve the church. But in spite of everything being done to promote the kingdom of God—the heavenly life of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit—the true kingdom is not advancing very rapidly.

## **The Banquet at Bethany**

## **From “Pure Gold”**

Martha, Lazarus and Mary represent three stages of Christian experience. Their lives help reveal the progressive steps that lead to a full revelation of Christ’s resurrection life. We will find that Martha served, Lazarus sat quietly and Mary poured out the anointing. (John 12:1-10)

Those born of the Spirit will begin their spiritual journey in the Martha life of diligent outward service. In this beginning stage we strive in earnestness to serve our Lord. But it is not without some self-centeredness. In these early stages of our Christian service we naturally compare ourselves with what others are doing. We also expect some form of reward for our service. While it may not be expressed, there will need to be some kind of recognition, or praise, or honor to keep us motivated.

The Lazarus stage takes us through an inward sickness, a death, a burial and into resurrection life. This death and resurrection occurs after we have lost all hope in our own strength. It is then that we are prepared to sit quietly at the table with Jesus and learn how to live through Him.

Those who have truly learned to live through the life of Jesus will eventually enter into the Mary state where His love overflows into a display of sacrificial devotion. These are

the saints who gladly and joyously break the most costly alabaster boxes for Christ's sake and the good of His eternal kingdom.

The fullest enjoyment of this heavenly banquet feast with Jesus is found by passing forward into the Mary stage of spiritual life. Earnest souls will be helped by examining these truths and using them to search their heart.

1.) *Martha served.* Her outward service typifies a born again child of God. Service lies at the foundation of a real Christian experience. Unless these outward acts of service are entered upon, with the distinct determination of persevering along all lines of known duty, it is not possible to progress into a deeper life in Christ.

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another  
and to all...*so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness...* (1  
Thess. 3:12-13)

The Holy Spirit will be revealing needs all around us. He will also be testing our obedience by how we respond to these needs. It is in this sense that Jesus has only promised to manifest His Kingdom-life of holy love to those who obey the leadings of His Spirit. (John 14:21) We shall never reach the higher spiritual life typified by Martha's brother and sister until we have chosen to serve the Lord with our current understanding.

And let us not grow weary while doing good, *for in due season we shall  
reap if we do not lose heart.* Therefore, as we have the opportunity, let us  
do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Gal.  
6:9-10)

Martha remained "worried and troubled about many things." (Luke 10:41) Those who are attempting to do the Lord's work in their own strength will have many things to be worried and troubled about. They will naturally become disturbed when others are doing things that are contrary to their own will. This inner turmoil, which often leads to upset feelings, will cause them at times to react in ways that are not Christlike.

It is this inward unrest and upset feelings that will eventually lead earnest souls to begin a more thorough search of the Scriptures to discover why they are not living in the fullness of life that has been promised in the Scriptures. They begin to see how there is a Sabbath-rest where God intended for each of His children to share with Him in His own righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This is what prepares them to move forward into the next stage of Christian life.

2.) *Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus.* Lazarus presents us with a form of experience that is representative of death and resurrection. It is brought about when the believer has become very sick of his spiritual state. He begins to acknowledge his inability to consistently reveal Christ's nature of love in the many difficult tests he faces. This is what prepares him to die. He sees how there needs to be a death, burial and resurrection before there can be a true participation with Christ in His heavenly life. "For if we have been

united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Rom. 6:5)

The death that Lazarus passed through made him a quiet and reserved man. Dying to the self-life always takes away the need for outward display and showiness. He also reveals how resurrection life results in a real freedom from worry, suspicion or hastiness. Those who live in the heavenly realms are no longer controlled by their circumstances.

Not one word from Lazarus is recorded. The old Adam is self-centered and self-exalting, and so it loves to hear itself talk. “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory.” (John 7:18) But this self-exalting spirit dies when the old Adam-life dies a full death. It silences the tongue. While it is willing to be pleasant and fellowship with others, there is no longer a desire to talk about self.

Those who have entered this Lazarus stage where there is a real participation with Christ in His risen life readily admit how little they know. They can begin to recognize how there is much to be learned as they see the infinite “light of life” stretching out before them. While there is a real enjoyment of a new heavenly life, they are not yet fully prepared to communicate to others what they have come to experientially know.

This is when the believer learns to live in harmony with God. He learns to listen to the Spirit and respond to every sway of God’s providences. He knows that all true life comes from above while walking in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:25)

God’s dealing with Lazarus, in allowing him to die, to be buried, to be raised to life, to be untrammelled from the grave clothes, and then to sit at the table with Jesus, is all representative of everyone who has entered into this second stage of the Christian life. After becoming sick to death of himself, he passed through the valley of the shadow of death where the world and the ways of human wisdom faded away from his vision. It was then that he could begin seeing things from God’s eternal perspective. This death and resurrection is what makes it possible to begin sharing with Christ in the spiritual blessings that are found in His heavenly life. “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:3)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.  
(Eph. 1:3)

God gives His Spirit to His children to prepare them to be taken through this death and resurrection. We all need to be prepared to add to our Martha service a death to the old self-sufficient, self-exalting and self-directed form of life. And we should not expect to be raised up until this old life has begun to rot in the grave. He never raises us up hastily. All hope in the old Adam-life needs to be completely lost. He permits this death process to run its full course in spite of all the pleas to have Him come quickly to provide help.

Lament and mourn and weep! Let your {carnal} laughter be turned to mourning and your {worldly} joy to gloom. Humble yourselves {sink down

into the grave} in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (Jam. 4:9-10)

Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. (John 16:22)

When the Lord finally came to raise Lazarus, Martha thought the decay of the body would render it too offensive to have the door removed from the sepulcher. That lovely brother who was once so full of worldly life had become painfully offensive in the grave. Similarly, in a very significant manner, when we yield ourselves to be utterly crucified to the self-seeking and self-exalting ways of this world, this mark of death will become a fowl odor to the people who still depend on the world for their spiritual support. In fact, this way of dying to self to find life from above becomes so distasteful to worldly-minded people that even our loved ones will often keep their distance to protect themselves from the offensive aroma.

For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one {to those who do not know the ways of the Spirit} we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other {to the Spirit-led children of God} the aroma of life leading to life. (2 Cor 2:15-16)

Lazarus spent four ecstatic days in the third heaven. Anyone who comes through this kind of death and resurrection experience will find very little attraction to the things of this world. This is what brought him into that deep, unruffled stillness of soul with his reserved speech. Those who have had a taste of life in the heavenly realms find little interest in the typical conversations that take place in this world.

The act of quietly sitting with Christ at the table reveals great calmness and restfulness of spirit. Lazarus had gotten through the old wrestlings with self and human nature. Death and the grave had thoroughly conquered him. The old forms of self-righteousness, self-exaltation, self-seeking, self-expression, self-resentment and self-agitation were left in the grave. He was being turned into a deep, quiet, loving channel for the outflow of our Lord's heavenly life.

In one sense our Lord's banquet feast is now ready. The heavenly food is now ready to eat. Those who will follow Christ through this death and into resurrection life will know experientially what it means to sit at supper with Him. There is a heavenly spiritual food now being served that truly satisfies the soul.

This is the bread which came down from heaven... He who eats this bread will live forever. (John 6:58)

Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!... Come, for all things are now ready. (Luke 14:15-17)



If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, *I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.* (Rev. 3:20)

Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. (Isa. 55:2 NIV)

We are told that many of the Jews believed on Jesus because Lazarus was raised from the dead. Similarly, many today will begin to believe in the Christ who has come to establish His eternal Kingdom-life within the hearts of God's children when they begin to see this resurrection life revealed before their eyes. The Christian who has been thoroughly crucified with Jesus and raised into this heavenly life will leave a deep and lasting impression on everyone who takes time to examine this miracle.

3.) *Mary poured out her life.* "Mary took a pound of very costly ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." This outward display of self-sacrificing love presents a still higher form of the eternal life of God. It represents a service of love that begins to overflow with extravagant giving. It is the result of the "rivers" of Living Water from Christ's life of holy love fully satisfying the soul and then pouring out of the heart. "As the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38) It never considers the cost when it breaks the most expensive alabaster boxes.

Mary was the fitting character for this type of service. Her heart was utterly abandoned to Jesus. She was not concerned about what others thought of her or said of her. She seemed to be blind to all other things in comparison to her fixed vision on Him.

Mary did not reserve anything for herself. In fact, Mark tells us that Mary broke the alabaster box containing the sweet perfume to prevent it from ever being used for any other purpose. She had gotten beyond the Old Testament law of tithing. She did not need law to teach her to give. In contrast, Mary represents the life of a believer that has passed through death and into the fullness of Christ's Kingdom-life of perfect love. It is an outpoured life that takes every resource and dedicates it to the service of God's eternal kingdom so that nothing will be wasted on the personal kingdoms of this world. It is a life that is fully expended in the service of God—a service that never has reservations.

Those who plan to enter into this highest stage of spiritual life in this current age of the kingdom will need to be prepared to break every box that still holds personal treasures. Only then can we enter into the stage of holy love that was displayed by Mary. Sometimes it is a box that holds an almost hidden reserve in the will. It can be found in a half timid, half fearful holding back in some line of suffering, or from some lonely and strange-looking path. Even in sanctified people you will sometimes find this scarcely perceived reservation that holds them back from entering into the Mary stage of Christian experience. Something in this world still has a grip on their heart. It is preventing them from making a complete abandonment of everything to God and the work of His kingdom. This is a box that must be broken before the fragrance of Christ's heavenly life can be displayed through a mortal body in this world.

There are many who are still holding onto their social box. It is the box that gives us concern about what other people think of us. Every saint who ascends the spicy mountains of burning love and enters into holy unity with God will find at every epoch in their experience the necessity of snapping another social cord. God must become our All in All. Over and over again there will be this breaking of some beautiful white alabaster encasement of human esteem. It will be necessary to accept the critical judgment of dear friends and loved ones if we are to ever be in a position to love them through God's life of heavenly love.

Mary lived to see that her alabaster box was a fitting type of the spotless body of Jesus, which was utterly broken. The spikenard of His life was poured out to the last drop for her redemption. It is an axiom that the very life of the infinite Christ is poured through us in the same proportion that we are broken and are willing to suffer for His purposes. We are "always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." (2 Cor. 4:10)

We find that the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. In like manner, when Christ broke His alabaster-like body, the whole earth and all of heaven was filled with the perfume of His lamb-like spirit of self-sacrificing love. Similarly, as we break the boxes that contain the reserve for self, there is liberated from us the very odor of Christ's heavenly nature.

Those who have gone to the greatest extent to count everything from this world as loss become the most fragrant of Christian characters. But see, in wiping His feet with her hair the perfume came back upon her own head. What a world of truth is revealed here. Those who give all receive the most. What we pour out will eventually settle back as a sweet odor upon our own heads. The eternal soul receives its hundredfold return from the life of God in both this age and in the age to come. The way that God compensates His children with His spiritual life from heaven is minute in its detail, and as far-reaching as the white, shining years of eternity.

The last feature we note about Mary's life is how it utterly shocked the conservative and calculating spirit of Christ's pre-Pentecostal disciples. They began to find fault with Mary's excess. Everyone who presses into this Mary stage of Christian experience and comes to know this heavenly love will find himself or herself being criticized by the colder members of the Church. Most Christians simply cannot understand the seeming waste that occurs when there is such an extravagant breaking of such precious and valuable things. And yet, this form of outpoured life on all lines for Jesus, just as He did for us, ends up being the very wisdom of God. It is the true discretion of Heaven. And as Jesus has indicated, it will be recognized and retold as the sign of full salvation wherever the real Gospel message is preached. (Matt. 26:13) This is the last and sweetest stage of the Christ-life in this age on the earth.

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. (2 Cor. 5:14-15)

## **Divine Manifestations of the Heart**

## **From “Our Own God”**

It will take time, and prayer, and spiritual meditation, along with some difficult trials and testings, before the fully sanctified soul comes into a solid understanding of the glorious riches that are now available through faith. More especially is this principle true when applied to the manifestations of the three Divine Persons of the Godhead. Only a few have ever yielded to the truth in a way that brings about this deeper and sweeter communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. (John 14:23)

With the manifestation of the Father there comes a warm melting of all the affections into a tender, boundless ocean of charity and gentleness. The believer enters into a more secret, and quiet, and deeper communion with God.

Less mature saints still live by their own strength and wisdom. Either their emotions or their natural logic moves them more than the Spirit. They are often impulsive or fussy. In contrast, those who have gone on to know the fullness of the Father’s life of holy love have learned to walk softly and quietly with God.

Christian biography furnishes us with hundreds of instances in which established saints, having been fully sanctified and seeking after all the fullness of God, later entered into a deeper union with His life of heavenly love. Saints like Lopez, DeRenty, Guyon, Fenelon, Faber, Fletcher, Bramwell, Rodgers, Maxwell, Summerfield, Rutherford and many others have experienced within their inner being a heavenly burning that consumed everything that did not have its source in God.

God has created a kingdom where everyone has the same opportunity to become great. In the world only the most gifted and self-assertive make it to the top. But in God’s kingdom it is within the grasp of everyone to become “little” and the “least.” Those who sink down to become nothing in themselves so that God may be all in all, with the purpose of becoming a vessel of His life and works, can depend on Him to use His power to lift them spiritually into the highest forms of His heavenly life.

So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen. (Matt. 20:16)

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (1 Pet. 5:6-7)

## **Divine Grafting**

## **From “Our Own God”**

It is likely that even in our most spiritual contemplation we have hardly yet caught a glimpse of all the possibilities of becoming “one” with the life of God. The highest

example we have in all the universe of grafting Divine things with the human and the natural can be found in the mystery of the Son's incarnation. This grafting of the Divine and human in Jesus is the pattern and sample of all Divine grafting.

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one {in life and nature}: I in them, and You in Me... (1 John 17:22-23)

The heart and life can be so infused by Christ's Spirit that the eternal Word becomes completely mixed in with our nature. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them." (Ezk. 36:27) The Lord writes His statutes in our heart as an innate part of our nature when He comes to establish His Kingdom-life within our inner being. It is in this sense that it is no longer necessary for every man to teach his neighbor to memorize the Scriptures so they may conform to His way of life, for each one shall know the eternal life of God.

No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. (Jer. 31:34)

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3)

In the same way that Jesus manifested the Living Word through a mortal body by living through the Father's eternal life, we are to become "one spirit with Him." (1 Cor. 6:17) This thorough mixing might be compared with how the ocean holds salt in solution.

The Holy Spirit has the power to supply this inward knowledge of the glory of God. God has the power to make light shine out of darkness by simply saying, "Let it be." With these words He is able to display His image through each of His Children in this world. He simply waits for the consecration of the vessel to be complete.

He {the Spirit} will bring glory to me {the Son} by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. (John 16:14 NIV)

For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our heart *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God* in the face {the image} of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4:6)

## **Loaded Words**

## **From "Soul Food"**

The condition of a person's heart will be revealed by his words. All words are loaded with a quality of the inward life. Those who speak or write by the Spirit will have words that are loaded with light. They will not be spoken for the purpose of being noticed, or for effect, or in guile, or in resentment, or with double meaning, but rather with an openness, simplicity and goodness that reveals Christ and His way of life.

Many sermons and religious books, instead of revealing the truth in its simplest understanding, are presented in a way that is intended to impress the hearer. But it only obscures the message. In fact, God Himself must resist the individual who tries to exalt himself in the eyes of the people. But He will carry the words of the humble person who uses pure and simple words that are intended to help others understand Jesus.

We often find people trying to put pathos or unction into their prayers or sermons or conversation. But the words that come from these human efforts remain powerless. It is a false fire that leaves everything dead. They may work up the emotions of the people, but the results will be short-lived.

The words that truly become effective always point people to Christ. They reveal to the hearer where all real hope rests. Rather than coming with words of human wisdom that show people how to develop their own life, the objective is to help them see the necessity of turning to God and depending on Him to do what He has promised.

My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:4-5)

We will need to remain in harmony with the Holy Spirit if we want our words to produce everlasting fruit. Some people try very hard to speak wise and appropriate words. But you cannot speak loaded words by trying to, or for the occasion. We must first have the very fountains of our being filled and made one with the Holy Spirit. Then, without any premeditation or set purpose, our ordinary conversation will be just as marked by the Spirit as our prayers and sermons.

Again, our life and our teachings must remain in harmony if we are to be effective in drawing others into the Kingdom-life of our Lord. A trifling preacher during the week cannot speak weighty words on Sunday. Let us in secret prayer bathe ourselves so long in the bright and warm presence of Jesus that when we go forth we shall unconsciously carry in our manners and words that inimitable quality of life that can be clearly seen as coming from the Eternal One.

But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God. (John 3:21)

Some of us will notice how our words have been lacking in Christ's Divine aroma of grace. Let us therefore go to the fountain and, by persevering prayer, get into such an abiding relationship with the real Source of all holiness and love as to make our every word a conductor of heavenly electricity. Our infinite, loving God will gladly utilize every humble soul on this earth as a channel to express His words if they will utterly yield themselves to His will so they may become a life-current of the Holy Spirit.

## The Love Slave

## From “Coals of Fire”

God’s work of delivering His people from Egypt for the purpose of taking them into His life of promise provides an overview of His plan of salvation. The wilderness represents an interim period that God uses to prepare His called-out people to fully devote their lives to Him.

God never asks anyone to surrender more than their faith has enabled them to bear. He therefore permitted the people to leave Egypt with some of their old things. But as the fiery trials deepen they either let go and keep moving forward or they fall away. He does not permit anyone to come into His heavenly Presence until they are fully consecrated to Him.

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (1 Pet. 4:12-13)

Therefore, “Come out from among them and be separate says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean {the things not wholly devoted to God}, and I will receive you. (2 Cor. 6:17)

Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. (John 16:22)

Every child of God is eventually brought to a point where he is compelled to choose between continuing to live partly for himself or living wholly for God. The Word of the Lord reveals to them how they must deny themselves and lose their flesh-life before they can find His heavenly life. (Matt. 16:24-25) While many start out well, very few finish what was started.

Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away {from the way of the cross}. (Luke 8:13)

This man began to build and was not able to finish... So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:30, 33)

Difficult is the way which leads to life {the heavenly Kingdom-life}, and there are few who find it. (Matt. 7:14)

Jesus established this path of self-sacrifice and then asked His disciples to follow Him. Those who desire to be “pierced” and “marked” as bondservants by His divine life—the mark of the sacrificial Lamb—must give themselves entirely to their loving Master.

Mr. Wesley in his sermon on “the more excellent way,” which was written in his old age after many years of poured out service to his Master, said, “From long experience and observation I am inclined to think that whoever is justified, has then the choice of walking in the higher or lower path. I believe the Holy Spirit at that time sets before him the more excellent way and incites him to walk therein, to choose the narrowest path in the narrow way; to aspire after the heights and depths of holiness—after the entire image of God. But if he does not accept this offer, he insensibly declines into the lower order of Christians.”

Many Christians, because they are still so deeply linked to the principles of this world, cannot understand how it is possible to have an enjoyable spiritual life after turning from the self-pleasing ways of this world. They cannot grasp the possibility of having a much more enjoyable spiritual life when they are living for God alone.

Perhaps millions of Christians have come to this jubilee crisis in their walk with God without comprehending what it involves; that is, without estimating the profit and loss of their decision. If they turn away from the Kingdom-life—the Pearl of Great Price—they inevitably begin to lose from that day what they had previously gained. Their spiritual life and gifts begin to fade away. The grace that was once working in their life begins to dry up. They are reduced to poverty in spiritual matters.

“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.” Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:66-68)

Christ has always had His faithful few in every generation who have consistently counted the cost. They are always pressing forward to know more of Him and the power of His resurrection. They will not accept anything into their life, no matter how innocent it may be, that separates them from Christ’s indwelling Presence. Not because they are afraid of going to hell, not because they want to merely retain the gifts of Christ, but their personal knowledge of Him has made them willing to do anything, to be anything and to suffer anything, that they might continue to be lifted higher and higher into His glorious life in the heavenly realms.

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them rubbish, that I may gain Christ...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection... (Phil. 3:8-10)

Everyone is brought to this jubilee crisis where they have an opportunity to have their freedom. And only the few ever choose to become true bondservants in their jubilee year. Truly blessed is the soul that will not dare to trust in itself and choose to “go out free” to live by its own plans. The love slave that God has revealed in the Bible knows that his best interests will be met by abandoning himself forever to the supervision of his Master. And the Word of God assures us that there are many great and wondrous spiritual blessings in store for the soul that dares to enter into the will of his Master.

For the true love slave, all partial measures, all questionings of authority, all mental reservations as to the extent of sacrifice, all spirit of human policy, is forever left behind. He launches upon a boundless sea of service, never knowing the details of the demands that will be made upon him. But trusting completely to the care of his Master, he agrees to serve Him without reservation, without specified pay or honor, through thick or thin, through time and eternity.

These are the servants of Christ who know what it means to live in the eternal kingdom of God. They ask no higher honor than that of wearing the mark of having their flesh-life pierced in crucifixion, which is the “mark” they have received from their Master through an inward impartation of His life of holy love.

## **The Heavenly Life**

## **From “Heavenly Life”**

God said to His people when they were about to enter into Canaan that it would be “like the days of heaven upon earth” if they fully submitted to His way of life. (Deut. 11:21) The true Canaan-life—the life of promise—is available to every believer in this age of fulfillment.

The land of Canaan represents the Kingdom-life that must come down from heaven and be established within the heart. In this heavenly life we begin to receive all our spiritual sustenance from God. “This is the bread which came down from heaven...He who eats this bread will live forever.” (John 7:58) This food from heaven continues to satisfy our soul as we live for God’s will alone.

My food {the true source of spiritual sustenance} is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. (John 4:34)

Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore... (Rev. 7:15-16)

I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me {in the heavenly realms} shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

We are in the age of fulfillment when Christ’s Kingdom-life can be fully established within our heart. “Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.” (Ezk. 36:23 NIV) He comes to enable us to do His will here on earth with the same submissive nature that it is done in heaven. (Matt 6:10) When this Kingdom-life of “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” has been fully established, it becomes “like the days of heaven upon the earth.”



There will someday be “a new heaven and a new earth” where everyone lives in “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” But it is not necessary to wait for the Lord to return in His full glory to begin enjoying His heavenly life. He has been coming to individual believers and increasing the number of people who have entered into His eternal Kingdom-life for the last two thousand years. This is the true message of the Gospel. Jesus came “preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’” (Mark 1:14-15)

Man lost the spiritual life of heaven when Adam turned to his own will. Self-will brought self-centeredness into the world and darkness prevailed. But this work of the devil has been destroyed. Those who want complete freedom from self-will can be delivered. The Messiah was sent to restore His heavenly life of holy love within the hearts of men and women in this world.

The Scriptures speak of Christ establishing His throne on Mount Zion in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is figurative of the Kingdom-life that He establishes within the heart. The life needs to come down out of heaven and dwell within each of our hearts so we may share with the Son in the heavenly life that will go on forever within His kingdom.

But you have come {present tense} to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven...to the spirits of just men made perfect... (Heb. 12:22-23)

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with {and in} them...” (Rev. 21:2-3)

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them...” Therefore, “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:16)

The life of heaven is available in its firstfruits to everyone who will come out from the ways of this world. We can now come into the presence of the Lord and consistently enjoy His Kingdom-life within our eternal soul. He establishes His eternal throne in the heart of the believer who has truly died to the self-seeking and self-exalting ways of this world. His “rivers” of Living Water will then begin flowing from under the throne and manifest itself in the eternal life.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Rev. 22:1)

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38)

Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. (John 4:14 NIV)

There is a passage in Col. 3:1-4 that contains a wonderful setting forth of the heavenly life. There are three significant aspects that should be understood about this life.

*It is a supernatural life.* “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:1-2)

Here is the key to enjoying the heavenly life. Christ is now living in the heavenly realms. We are expected to receive everything from Him through dependent faith. “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.” (John 3:27) Those who keep their mind on the things pertaining to our Lord’s heavenly kingdom can expect God to supply both their physical and spiritual needs. As He sits on His throne and uses His infinite power and authority to accomplish His purposes, He supplies everything that is needed.

Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For all these things the Gentiles seek {because they do not have faith in God}.... But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness {seek out the fullness of His Kingdom-life}, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matt. 6:31-33)

We find our Lord’s Kingdom-life and His righteousness by choosing to live through Him. We become joined to His spiritual life by keeping our mind on things above. “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” (1 Cor. 6:17) Because “we have the mind of Christ,” we enjoy living according to His ways. (1 Cor. 1:15) It becomes like the days of heaven on earth.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

Many of God’s called-out people have separated themselves from the life of Christ because they have kept their minds on the things of this world. They have continued to resist His way of the cross. It has prevented them from finding His eternal Kingdom-life. (Matt. 16:24-25) Not only does it separate them from His life today, but keeping the mind on earthly things will result in an eternal separation.

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ {His way of dying to self-will}: whose end is destruction...*who set their minds on earthly things. For our citizenship* {our place of life} *is in heaven...* (Phil. 3:18-20)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is {in His Kingdom-life}... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Col. 3:1-2)

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... (Matt. 6:19-20)

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have {the treasures you have stored on earth} and give alms {give to others in need so you may express God's life of love}; provide money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:32-34)

*It is a hidden life.* "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3)

The word "dead" here does not refer to physical death. We die to the flesh-life so we may hide ourselves in Christ and receive everything from Him. We die to self-expression so that we may express His life in the same way that He expressed His Father's life. It completely sets us free from the trappings of this world.

The Lord must be permitted to fill all things, including the vessel of our body, so that God may be the source of everything that takes place in His universe. There is no room for the self-directed, self-sufficient and self-exalting people in his eternal kingdom. This is the life that needs to die so we may become "hidden with Christ in God."

He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. (Eph. 4:10)

Those who learn to live through Christ's heavenly life begin to walk in this present age as princes in disguise. They become like aliens in a foreign world. While they live and work in the world, they remain in constant communion with God through their prayer-life. They receive their instructions from Him, do what He wants them to do, and use His power to carry out what He has planned to accomplish through their lives. Their minds are always fixed on the work and progress of His eternal kingdom. They reveal the Kingdom-life that both Daniel and Jesus have said shall one day reduce the kingdoms of this present world to dust.

The true saints are said to be "the hidden ones." They do not live to express themselves. They live to be an expression of God alone.

God also says to them, "Call unto me, and I will show you great and hidden things." Because they choose to walk by the Spirit without pomp and display, God is willing to work through them with His divine power. While much of their work remains hidden from the people of this world, as God's spiritual work is generally hidden from the view of many, a spiritual work is always taking place. And there will be a day when everything that is hidden will be revealed. "For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known." (Matt. 10:26)

In contrast, the uncrucified life is not hidden, but showy. It loves to express itself so it may be known for its works. It looks to do things that can be seen. It focuses on appearances. Since God never permits anyone to glory in His Presence, it prevents these people from enjoying His heavenly Presence within their soul. Every work that leads to self-exaltation will be destroyed by the testing fires of judgment. “If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” (1 Cor. 3:15)

*The heavenly life is to be revealed.* “When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” (Col. 3:4)

There will be a day when the reality of true glory is revealed to the world. God has been working behind the scenes throughout the centuries preparing for the revelation of His heavenly kingdom. At some point in the future, that kingdom, like the King, will be revealed in a way that enables everyone to know the reality of His life of “grace and truth.” At that point the body of Christ (those who are living in grace and truth through Him) will displace, according to Daniel, every other kingdom on earth, and occupy the territory. It is then that this self-emptying life that comes from the Son will be recognized by everyone as the one way to share with God in His glory.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Matt. 5:5)

And of His fullness we have all received {we all have access to His glory}, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but *grace and truth* came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:14, 16-17)

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am...also a {current} partaker of the glory that will be revealed... (1 Pet. 5:1)

While, in one sense, the heavenly kingdom, the New Jerusalem, needs to come down out of heaven and enter the hearts of God’s people today so we may be filled with grace and truth, this is only a precursor to the glory that will follow. But let us ask ourselves this question: Have we permitted Him to fill the temple of our body with His glory today? We will not be in a place to stand before the Lord with boldness on the Day of Judgment if we have not permitted Him to establish His Kingdom-life of perfect love within our hearts in this world. (1 John 4:17)

The saints are now living in their period of suffering for Christ’s sake. We are “joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (Rom. 8:17) Because these true saints have chosen not to express themselves, they will generally look insignificant and deformed and uninteresting to worldly-minded people. But when Jesus, who has become their life, comes forth in His full glory, He will also bring forth the immortal spring morning. At that point the hidden life in His saints will bloom forth in such a display of glory and honor and princely authority and fragrant love that the very angels will shout for joy.

So the last will be first, and the first last. (Matt 20:16)

For he who is least among you all will be great. (Luke 9:48)

## **The Unmixed Garment**

## **From “White Robes”**

It requires the spiritual light provided through the New Testament to pierce the numerous veils of the Old Testament and discover not only a wondrous beauty, but a forceful application of its truths. Even the things connected with the ceremonial laws of the Jews, which appear to have no connection with Christian life, have in reality a more powerful spiritual application to us today than to the Jews of old. That which applied so strictly to a Jew’s outward life applies with superior strictness to a Christian’s inner spiritual life. For example, Christians today are to have the inner circumcision of the heart, the cutting off of the flesh-life (the carnal mind), which was only an outward ceremony in the Old Testament.

We will now look at another Old Testament type that provides further insight into God and His ways. The lesson is taught in the Jewish ceremonial law. God would not permit the mixing of wool and linen in the garments. (Deut. 22:11) Such a commandment may seem very strange to us. But it reveals the infinite care that God has over the smallest details in the lives of His people. It also helps us to see how specific He can be in establishing a certain order to things.

It is first necessary to understand how wool is an animal product and linen is a plant product. They come from two separate kingdoms in the world of nature. God does not permit a mixing of life from two different kingdoms. In other words, the carnal ways of this world cannot be mixed with life in His heavenly kingdom. He therefore does not want us trying to mix the wool of carnality with the pure linen of spiritual life in His kingdom.

It is granted that the great majority of believers are sadly mixed in their religious character and experience. In fact, every Christian is mixed—partly spiritual and partly carnal—in the first stage of grace. It is this carnality that has prevented the Lord from manifesting His heavenly Kingdom-life within the heart.

A universal standard that God has always insisted upon, and is taught throughout His Word, is purity of heart. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8) He will only manifest His life within the heart when it is fully consecrated to Him. Although the Spirit is given to the believer to war against the inward enemy, the Lord must wait until there can be a holy Zion within the heart to reveal Himself.

The old antinomian idea that insists we must drag around two conflicting moral natures all through life is shown to be in error in this teaching. We are not to weave our religion from products of separate kingdoms—as the “double-nature” teachers would have us believe. In our prayers, affections, motives, faith and good works, we are not to be partly selfish and partly Christlike; we are not to be part earthly and part heavenly. The wool and linen natures are not to be tangled and mixed in the same soul-life. “You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together.” The whole inner life is to be unmixed, pure and holy.

“And it shall be, whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, that they shall put on linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister within the gates of the inner court...” (Ezk. 44:17) In this verse the principle of an unmixed state is taken even further. In the first passage we see no prohibition of woolen garments, but only that the wool and linen must not be mingled in the same garment. (see also Lev. 19:19) But in this passage we see that those who plan to minister to the Lord in His Presence are not permitted to enter the inner court while wearing any woolen garments. They must be clothed with unmixed linen before they can approach God.

We cannot expect to enter the “inner court” of deep union with God until this old prophetic condition has been met. All woolen, carnal vestiges will need to be put off. God will not receive us into His heavenly presence while we are still touching anything that is not fully devoted to Him.

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them...” Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. *Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you...*”

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 6:16-7:1)

## **The Two Crossings**

## **From “White Robes”**

We learn in First Corinthians 10 how the crossing of the Red Sea is representative of entering into the privileges of God’s Church. In contrast, the crossing of the Jordan River into the life of promise is described in Hebrews 4 as an entrance into the “rest of faith.” The writer exhorts imperfect believers to be diligent to enter into this full salvation.

With these New Testament torchlights in our hands, let us go back to the Old Testament records of these two great crossings and examine the contrasts between them. It will help us to see some of the differences between entering into a justified state and entering into heart purity.

While the Israelites came out of Egypt in ranks of five, representing a work of God’s grace, they were moved by fear. It is in this sense that every individual, through a work of God’s unmerited favor, is driven out from the old life of sin in fear. John Wesley referred to these believers—the ones who have looked to the blood in Egypt and have received their Passover—as servants. They flee from the sinful ways of the world with the prospect of death, of judgment and hell hanging over their heads. These solemn realities drive them up against the Red Sea where a deeper step of faith is required if they are to ever find power over sin.

The crossing of the Red Sea is represented by the baptism described in Romans six. This is the place where the believer is prepared to go down into the watery grave for the

purpose of dying to self-will and entering into a Spirit-directed way of life. It is an act of faith that looks to God for the gift of His Spirit. The indwelling Spirit then provides a new hunger and thirst after true righteousness. He supplies power over sin so the believer may truly walk in newness of life.

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. (Rom. 8:15-16)

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:9)

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh {after receiving the Spirit} you will die {spiritually}; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. {You will be taken into the heavenly life of promise.} (Rom. 8:12-13)

Even though this great deliverance from the Egyptians is a glorious event that leads God’s people to sing praises to the Lord {some even think they have entered the life of promise at that point}, it is not long before they realize that they are in a desert wilderness and not in the fruitful land flowing with milk and honey. It is a place where people still experience considerable “thirst” between the “times of refreshing.” (Acts 3:19)

The Israelites were not driven by fear, but drawn to Canaan. They grew weary of their desert experiences, their wilderness food and their returning thirst. They continued to hunger and thirst after something more. Those who find the life of promise today “never thirst” because they begin drinking of Christ’s Living Water.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Matt. 5:6)

But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. (John 4:14)

The epistle to the Hebrews was written to Christians for the purpose of pressing God’s called-out people into this life of promise. The writer continually points us to the Christ who has come to reveal the Presence of His life of holy love within the temple of our body.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection... Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises... This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil. (Heb. 6:1, 12, 19)

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: “For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry.” {He comes to reveal His Kingdom-life within the heart.}... But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Heb. 10:35-39)

God is the One who miraculously provided the dry pathway that enabled His people to cross both the Red Sea and the Jordan River. But there were two characteristic differences in these miracles. Those who are seeking to enter into the life of promise will need to understand the difference.

In Exodus 14:16 we read, “But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.” Here the rod was stretched out and the waters divided before the people took their first step. The road was opened before their eyes and made plain to their senses to encourage them in their infant faith to go forward.

In contrast, we read in Joshua 3:13, “And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord {representing Christians who have already received the gift of the indwelling Spirit through a genuine new birth}...shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap.” Here we see that the opening did not appear until after there was an actual stepping out in faith to cross the flooded river.

Many fully sanctified Christians will confess that this subject caused considerable confusion when they tried to understand it before the miracle had taken place. And there is a natural tendency to wait for a better understanding of the theology before stepping forward in faith. But nothing will clear up the mind more rapidly than a simple and daring step of faith into the swelling flood.

We should note how there have been believers who have taken this step of total abandonment to God without any previous knowledge of the theology. They were taken into the life of promise without knowing how to define it. God looks into the heart and He knows when a person has cast off everything from this world in order to follow Him wherever He leads.

In this second crossing, there is no elder man to stretch forth the rod of faith to prepare the way. There is not even a word that can be uttered to make the river open up. It was the stepping out in faith that activated this miraculous work of God.

God specifically brought the people up to the river at flood stage, making it two or three times deeper than usual. There would be no possibility of crossing over in their own strength. It would require a miracle from God.



No one should ever think they can work their way over into the life of promise by trying to improve their life. This crossing generally occurs when the difficulties seem to be at a maximum {helplessness being fully acknowledged} and the only choice is to step out in faith. “Arise, go over this Jordan, and it shall come to pass.”

In seeking to be fully sanctified, you need not try to sing or shout, or work yourself up to the faith point, for you cannot do it. You must lay aside all signs or sights or aids to faith and then calmly, firmly make up your mind to leave this world and its ways behind and simply step out on the promise. It is this choosing to die to the old self-directed and self-sufficient ways of the world that will miraculously separate the river.

We should also note that God backed up the Jordan all the way to “Adam.” It implies a complete healing of the fallen nature that everyone receives from Adam. (Josh. 3:16) God’s image of holy love is restored when the vessel becomes filled with His Spirit.

For if by the one man’s offense death {spiritual powerlessness} reigned through the one {Adam}, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:17)

Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather healed. (Heb. 12:12)

## **Believing Just Now**

## **From “White Robes”**

The only way into the kingdom of God is by becoming absolutely childlike in your dependence upon God. There needs to be a letting go of everything until you are in a place to live by childlike faith.

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as {dependent} little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven {and enjoy Christ’s Kingdom-life}. (Matt. 18:3)

Adam separated Himself from the Tree of Life when he chose to become independent and live by self-will. A barrier was then established that prevented man from living through the life of God. But Christ removed the barrier through His death. If we will come out from this old way of life and touch not the unclean thing, God will “dwell in” us and “walk in” us as He originally did with the first Adam and as He did with the Second Adam—Jesus Christ. “For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them...” (2 Cor. 6:16)

It is not possible to live in the kind of childlike dependence that permits God to direct our every step while we choose to live by self-will. The highest honor of man is to fully surrender his free will to God for the purpose of entering into perfect harmony with His

will and plans—“that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” (Col. 4:12) It is by being converted and becoming like a little child who never directs his own steps that we enter into our Lord’s heavenly Kingdom-life and learn of His glorious will.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God {live by His Spirit alone}...that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom. 12:1-2)

Jesus walked in what might be called a “crucifixion life.” He did not do anything according to His own will. Even though He possessed a personal will, He kept it fully surrendered to His Father’s will. “Not My will, but Yours, be done.” He lived without sin because He did not do anything independently of His Father. He did not permit anything self-originated to enter into His life.

I do nothing of Myself... The Father has not left Me alone {His indwelling Presence never departs}, for I always do those things that please Him. (John 8:28-29)

It is useless to try to build a spiritual life up to God. Your only real hope of finding His life is in sinking into a childlike dependence upon Him so you will be in a place where He can lift your spirit with His power into His Presence. “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” (1 Pet. 5:6 NIV)

After you have read and prayed and wept and struggled, at last you will be absolutely compelled to quit all your own works and look to God as a dependent little child to do what He has promised. The Lord will then reveal Himself to you “in the power of an endless life.” (Heb. 7:16)

## **“Let God”**

## **From “Soul Food”**

The name of God occurs thirty-five times in the first thirty-five verses in Genesis. And the word “let” occurs fourteen times in the same verses. The first “let” is, “Let there be light,” and the last is, “Let them have dominion over all things.”

Each of these lets represent a part of the restoration process that establishes full salvation. We will therefore find that from the first dawn of divine light in the soul through the establishment of God’s kingdom where we share with Christ in the power of His throne, the secret of every step is to be so utterly yielded to the unfolding will of God as to “let” Him work in us, and by us, and for us.

We must learn over and over again to cease from all our planning, all our imaginings of ways and means, all our uneasiness of care, and just calmly, sweetly, patiently “let God” manage and work in us and for us as He has planned. Our one great work is to yield to the

movings of the Holy Spirit and to expect in faith to have Him accomplish what He has purposed to do.

Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” (John 6:28-29)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.  
(Rom. 8:14)

It is not unusual to see sanctified Christians striving in their own efforts to make sure that everything works out as they see fit. Those who strive in their own strength naturally become “worried and troubled about many things.” (Luke 10:41) It also prevents God from working through our life in a supernatural way. Even after entering the Kingdom-life where everyone rests from their own works, we must learn to “let God” do in us and for us what He has planned. These words “let God,” when they become a natural part of our life, become the glorious key that unlocks hundreds of doors in the vast palaces of divine life and providence.

If from the very depths of our hearts we yield a constant, loving “let” to God, then He, by the eternal Spirit, will fulfill through us and for us all these fourteen “lets” of His marvelous creation, from “Let there be light,” to “Let him have dominion over” all things. We are given the opportunity to share with Him in His dominion when we are living by His will and praying in harmony with His Spirit.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

## **Threshing Out Chaff**

## **From “Spiritual Feasts”**

There are several references in Scripture to threshing out chaff. Even though God wants it removed, chaff is not a type of sin. It is essential to the growing of grain. Except for the chaff, a grain of wheat would be lost in its early stages of development. However, it only serves a temporary purpose. When the chaff is no longer needed it must be removed. It is then good for nothing, except to be burned.

Weeds and briars are Scripture emblems of sinful dispositions that choke out the growth of grain. This sin needs to be removed immediately. But the chaff is an essential protection to the young grain in its milk state. It must not be removed until the grain is mature. These facts in nature have their exact counterpart in grace.

If we trace out this thought about separating the chaff from the matured corn, it will explain many of the perplexing experiences that God’s children pass through after entering

into a fully sanctified life. We need to remember that the land of Canaan still needed to be conquered after the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River.

Let us now apply this principle of threshing out chaff to us personally. This is what Paul does in Romans 5:1-5. He first says that we are “justified by faith.” Then, after that, we “have access by faith into established grace.” It is then, after our sanctification, that we are put through a process of “tribulation.”

The word tribulation comes from the word “tribulum,” which is a flail that the ancient Romans used to beat out the ripened grain and separate the wheat from the chaff. And we need to realize that this tribulum could never be used on the grain until after it had become full and mature. Only then could the tribulum be used to separate it from the chaff.

The same principle will apply to every holy saint. Even as Christians fully surrendered to God’s will there is still chaff closely enfolded around our spiritual lives that needs to be removed. These things are not positively sinful. In fact, in many respects they are needful to protect the weak and milk stages of spiritual life. If they were removed too early the soul would be overtaxed and it would cause spiritual ruin. Hence, we must be ripened in the hot sunshine of Divine truth and sanctified into completeness by the Holy Spirit before we are prepared for the tribulum. Only then are we in a state where we can be placed in God’s providential threshing machine.

Among the things that make up the chaff, which needs to be threshed out of a sanctified soul, we may enumerate the following:

*Unwise Zeal.* “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” (Rom. 10:2) Real zeal is most essential to a Christian life, but it needs to be expressed through clear judgment and divine love. The early stages of zeal are generally used to draw attention to ourselves. Much of this zeal may be offensive and critical, causing the immature to stumble.

Though the heart may be pure in its desire to serve God, the judgment will still need correcting. Consequently, the zeal, even in fully sanctified Christians, may be unwise at times. But even unwise zeal, if it were taken away too soon, would end up ruining the soul. And so after being fully sanctified, the work of tribulation will begin to remove inappropriate zeal by chastening the judgment. The purpose is to separate the excess without destroying the golden grain of holy zeal.

*Error in the knowledge of Scriptures.* No Christian has ever lived who did not need to correct, or enlarge, or rearrange his theology after the experience of entire sanctification. After souls are immersed into Christ’s Spirit, and the mental faculties have been strengthened with a new and heavenly spiritual life within the heart, then the Lord’s tribulum begins to work. By sore trials and severe temptations the understanding is marvelously sharpened. Those deeper truths, especially the many teachings about the role of suffering in the Christian’s life, begin to be understood. The mind is lifted into a sweep of vision where it becomes possible to analyze fine points of experience and make a deeper discovery of the character of Jesus Christ. It is from this new perspective that the mind

begins to eliminate many old traditions, erroneous concepts about holiness, and even false teachings that were previously held sacred.

Some form of theology is absolutely essential to every Christian. We must have a system of beliefs to hold us steady as we are separated from the ways of this world. For example, we are in the age when we are to live by the Spirit in perfect love rather than by the law. But the new believer still needs the law to constrain his actions. And if this sense of needing to live by law was taken away too soon, the soul would be weakened and easily overcome by the devil. Only when faith has become fully established through the work of entire sanctification will the believer be prepared to have this chaff threshed out.

For if there had been a law given which could have given life {the Kingdom-life from heaven}, truly righteousness would have been by the law... But before faith came {until faith is perfected}, we were kept under guard by the law... (Gal. 3:21-23)

There arises another Priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life...for the law made nothing perfect... (Heb. 7:15-16, 19)

*Phenomena and forms of emotional experience.* There are many types of emotions and expressions found in Christians who are living in the milk state. But these outbreaks of emotion prevent them from reflecting the true life and character of Jesus. There is much emotional chaff in our manners, in our voices and in our gestures that need to be removed before Christ can be seen. But these emotions can provide helpful wells of refreshment to spiritually immature Christians who are still crossing through the wilderness. After entering into the life of promise, however, those imprudent, boisterous and unrestrained actions that draw so much attention to the individual must be thumped away with the tribulum. God must send His threshing machine to take out the chaff and sober them down to a humble, patient and steady walk in the Holy Spirit.

We have listed only a few items that make up the chaff that tribulation must thresh out even from fully sanctified souls. They are not sins, but spiritual trappings. And while they may be needful to help spiritually weak Christians, they become a real hindrance when it comes to displaying the life and character of Jesus Christ.

In threshing these things out there will inevitably be pain and heartache and lonely hours of desolate feeling. This is the deeper death that takes place in the Christian life after sanctification. Every soul must pass through it before they can rise up into the highest realms of Christ's heavenly life. When this chaff is threshed out, all the faculties of the soul become as pure gold and enter into a deep, sweet, solid, inexpressible union with Christ. There is a sinking into a limitless sea of love, of charitable feelings, of kind thinking, of holy insights into the heavenly life, which is truly the apostolic state of grace.

## Pure Gold

## From “Pure Gold”

The Scripture explain in numerous lessons how God’s children, after being fully sanctified, are led through severe trials and hot furnace-testings that are intended to reveal with ever-increasing glory the life and character of Jesus. These are the conflicts that correspond with the seven years of war that took place in claiming the land of Canaan. It has been likened to the process of making gold more pure and refined. Those who continue to respond in faith to all revealed light will be lifted higher and higher into the spiritual life of Jesus.

These extraordinary testings may be either external or internal. In whatever shape the furnace may be, God’s purposes are the same: namely, the complete mellowing, melting and transformation of the whole nature into a heavenly transparency and sweetness that provides a more pure display of the Christ-like character. The gold needs to be repeatedly put into the fire to reach this greater refinement.

We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4:8-10)

As the fully sanctified believer will take on a more serious nature as he is repeatedly taken through the furnace. The work of perfect love is marvelously intensified, and broadened, and made more profound and simple in all its characteristics.

In this higher state, the love of God glows in the heart like a sweet, steady, spicy flame. The up and down emotions are burned out. There is a steady upward lifting of the spirit with little variation in the experience.

It is a state of wonderful simplicity, and every action becomes transparent. There is no longer a need to develop false images or wear masks to change our outward appearance. We no longer sense the need to work at impressing others. Words therefore become fewer.

A divine stillness begins to pervade the mind. The understanding is lifted into a higher atmosphere where it sees God in every event and looks for Him to be the source of all progress.

Another trait of gold in this advanced state of purity is its exquisite softness. It becomes so soft that it is rendered unfit for commercial purposes. In like manner, the soul that has passed through this burning and melting love can no longer apply itself to advancing its own purposes. Holy love lives for the kingdom of God alone. There is no longer an “I” to express itself, but only Christ and His life to be expressed.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. (Gal. 2:20)

## **Paul's Thorn**

## **From "Pure Gold"**

It is not necessary for us to understand precisely the nature of the thorn that was so bothersome to the apostle Paul. The Infinite Searcher of spirits saw something that Paul could not see. There was something in him that had a liability toward over-exaltation. He says, "Lest I should be exalted above measure, a thorn was given to buffet me." While Paul had difficulty seeing the trouble, God knew exactly what was needed to tone him down. Saints mightily used by God in every age will always have their blind spots.

The fact is, no human being understands the working of his own spirit, except as the Holy Spirit reveals it. Good people, holy people, absolutely need crosses, and trials, and sorrows, and sometimes, as in the case of Madame Guyon, a horrible disfigurement to keep them at the minimum and Christ at the maximum in their life.

We learn from Paul how there is something in the natural constitution of man that is neither sin on the one side nor Christ on the other, which needs to be chastened, and corrected, and brought into harmony with the Christ-life. Paul's thorn did not eliminate any sin, but it served to grind into a finer flour the natural grain of his make up.

There is a very important lesson in this for everyone who desires to be lifted into the highest realms of holy love. We learn that the soul can be so subdued and filled with unspeakable humility that it will actually take delight in thorns and crosses and humiliations. When Jesus revealed to Paul His design, that is, Divine strength would be made perfect through his weakness, Paul received a vision of the blessedness of suffering. It was then that he could begin to say in all truthfulness, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor 12:10)

Have you learned to take pleasure in your infirmities, reproaches, needs, persecutions, and distresses? May God also give you this wonderful grace of humility!

We are now speaking of a degree of spiritual victory that carried Paul beyond even his visions of Paradise. Humility in its fullness, the kind that can rejoice in suffering, is what enables God to keep His children lifted into the highest realms of His heavenly spiritual life. (1 Pet. 5:6) These deeper measure of humility are therefore much more helpful than even glorious visions of heaven.

It is true that we need all the heavenly visions that His mercy is pleased to grant us. But we need the humility that Paul acquired much more than these. We absolutely need the resurrection power of God working in our lives. And this power is increased in direct proportion to our humility.

God can therefore be expected to use various means to keep us in humble dependence upon Him. He does it for both our good and the good of His eternal kingdom. We all need to come to the place where we can treasure in our lives those unpleasant persons, those

hard circumstances, those pains and mortifications, those infirmities and sad limitations that lead us to live more dependently upon God and the power of His Spirit.

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead. (2 Cor 1:8-10)

## **Feeding our Faith**

## **From “Soul Food”**

Inasmuch as the state of our spiritual life is directly related to our dependent faith in God, it is beneficial to have it nourished in every possible way. When faith is fed and strengthened it will grow. But the growth of faith is often contrary to our notions concerning it. We often suppose that encouragement from others is one of the best ways to increase our faith. But in reality, these encouragements, unless they point us back to God and His promises, are ineffective in the long run. It is only as we lose hope in all other supports that we begin to look to God in a way that permits an overcoming faith to develop. It is in this sense that “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)

Our faith will be increased the most by holding onto the promises of God while being taken through severe trials. The heart that has learned to anchor itself to the promises alone, until God has chosen to faithfully fulfill them, will grow strong.

In theory, Christians will insist that Christ alone can give them life. And if asked, they will insist they are depending on Him. But as an all-knowing God, He can see into the situation more clearly. He sees when people are relying on other supports. And if God did not break them down, they would go on, self-deceived, thinking their faith was in God rather than in these other things.

Using one trial after another God enters into a work of detaching His children from other sources of support. He scourges them to take away their strength. This work is generally a slow and tedious process.

Many souls are unable to put up with this utter desolation of secondary supports. God allows these weak Christians to have a junior faith, and to more or less lean on other things.

Those who keep pressing forward in this way of faith do not always perceive the value of what is taking place when the external world begins to fall apart around them. But the soul that endures will later discover how its faith in God has grown and expanded with every wave that has beat against it. Faith grows when we least expect it. Storms and difficulties, temptations and conflicts, are its field of operation.



## **A Deeper Death to Self**

## **From “Soul Food”**

There is not only a death to sin (self-will), but in a great many things there is a deeper death to self—a crucifixion in detail, after the soul has been sanctified. The very largest degrees of self-renunciation will take place after the work of heart-purity. Things that are not positively sinful can still keep us from entering into the fullest cooperation with the Holy Spirit. We will therefore find that our loving and all-wise God takes us in hand and begins to lead us through a deep, interior crucifixion to our fine parts and our lofty reason. The crucifixion goes on till we have learned to live by faith in Him alone.

There are innumerable degrees of interior crucifixion on these various lines. Perhaps not one sanctified person in ten thousand ever reaches that degree of death to self and dependent faith in God that Paul and Madame Guyon, and similar saints, have reached.

In contrast to heart-cleansing, this finer crucifixion to self is gradual. It extends through months, or even years. The interior spirit is mortified over and over on the same points, till it reaches a state of complete yieldedness to even the most severe difficulties taking place around it. God, rather than second causes, is seen in everything. A great host of believers have obtained heart-purity, and yet, for a long time, have gone through all sorts of “dying daily” to self, before they found that calm, fixed union with God.

When the soul reaches the upper ranges of this deeper death to self, it breaks out into a great wideness of spiritual comprehension and love. It is a state of almost uninterrupted prayer; of boundless charity for all people; of deep, quiet thoughtfulness; of extreme simplicity of life and manners; and of profound insights into the eternal kingdom of God.

## **The Benefit of Deep Crucifixion**

## **From “Soul Food”**

The depth and power of the spiritual life in every person is directly related to the degree of their crucifixion. Jesus was exalted to the place of absolute power and authority when He had reached the state of absolute weakness. The power of the resurrection working through our lives will be in direct proportion to our weakness in self and our dependence upon God.

This crucifixion also destroys the littleness and narrowness of the mind. The heart that has been united with God’s life of love is set free from natural prejudice, political partisanship and sectarian feeling. It is emphatically a citizen of heaven where everyone becomes perfect in one. “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

This may seem like strong meat, and many Christians will disagree with these words, but everyone who enters into this place of deep crucifixion speaks in the same way. When this deeper death to self has been reached, it becomes possible to love all creatures through God’s divine love. The Holy Spirit, in pouring out this love, breaks away all the banks and

boundaries of our narrow education, and creed, and theology, and nationality, and race, and takes us up into the boundlessness of His own life and feelings.

And the glory {the life of perfect love} which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one {living in complete harmony with each other}: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one...that the love {perfect love} with which You love Me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:22-23)

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing {by sharing in the same life}, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Cor. 1:10)

Another great benefit of this deeper death to self is an inexpressible tenderness. The whole being is soaked in a sea of gentleness.

There are many souls who are earnest Christians—nay, many who are sanctified—who have an indescribable something in them that still needs the crushing and melting of a deeper crucifixion. They still speak too much about themselves, or their spirit is still too dictatorial or harsh. They often make themselves the standard to measure others. While they may be sanctified, and desire to live only for the Lord, there is still something in their constitution that needs to be humbled.

Let us simply say that it is well worth having our hearts crushed if it will bring us out into a beautiful tenderness and sweetness of spirit that is the very atmosphere of heaven where everyone lives as one with each other. This kind of tenderness cannot be produced through human efforts. It is not the transitory sweetness that can be developed through training. It needs to be a fixed and all-pervading gentleness that flows out of the very life of Christ as He abides within our soul.

Another benefit of complete crucifixion is the way in which it detaches the heart from all earthly things. Did you ever notice how your mind stretches itself out into ten thousand things of earth and time, and how the fingers of your thoughts grasp onto countless little treasures? Look at that ever-changing world within your own heart. Examine how your desires, and hopes, and dreams, and plans keep latching onto something else. There is always something new you need to do, or to make, or to achieve to help you to be happy. Can you see how your thoughts keep coming back to yourself?

We are not speaking about things that are wicked, or even things that are stigmatized as sinful. We are referring to things that Christian people recognize as innocent. And yet, in a thousand ways, they fetter the heart and bind it to earthly thought processes. A deeper death to self is what is needed to free the heart from the world. This is what opens the channels of the heart and permits the rivers of life from heaven to flow freely.

As this river of life from the throne of God increases from ankle deep, to knee deep, to waist deep, to a rushing river (Ezk. 47:1-5), we begin to sense that we are citizens of the

New Jerusalem a hundred times more powerfully than we are the citizens of any earthly country. We become more and more pervaded with the sweet life of the world to come.

## **Dissolved in Love**

## **From “Spiritual Feasts”**

The old writers on Christian perfection had much to say about being “dissolved in love,” “lost in God,” and “sunk in the sea of Divine peace.” They uniformly spoke of entering into this state at some point beyond the first fervors of sanctification.

It is one thing to have a clean heart, and a very different thing to have all the faculties so subdued and pervaded with Divine love that we instinctively walk as Jesus did. To have all the mental faculties act under the power of a kind and gentle spirit, to put the best construction on everything, to make generous allowances for others that we would never make for ourselves, to look at everything from the slain Lamb’s perspective; in other words, to have the mind that was in Christ wrapped up in a loving heart, is one of the proofs that the soul is dissolved in love.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails... (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

## **Our Joy In God**

## **From “Our Own God”**

We have been struck with the strong words of the Psalmist, “I will go to God Who is my exceeding joy.” The joy that resides in the life of Christ is to be the source of a Christian’s strength. “For the joy of the LORD is your strength.” (Neh. 8:10) The presence of this supernatural joy is what carries the soul through the most severe trials.

I will see you again {as an indwelling life} and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. (John 16:22)

These things I have spoken to you; that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11)

There is a difference between joy and pleasure. Pleasure only lasts for a season. In contrast, the joy that comes from God is deep and lasting. It is an innate part of the endless supply of Living Water that flow from the Holy Spirit.

Pleasure is on the surface. It deals with the senses and is the gratification of our outward fleshly nature. The joy that comes from the eternal life is calm, like the placid river, or the quiet, unspeakable tranquility of a gorgeous sunset. Its very nature is quiet, and it is soothing to the inward parts of the soul. In contrast, pleasure is like a thunderstorm. It comes quickly and it leaves quickly. It also agitates the faculties like the

wind causes a choppy sea. While it lifts the emotion one moment, it quickly departs and results in a depressed spirit.

Because natural joys are temporal in nature they continue to die. The joy that comes from the life of God is everlasting. There is in God's very nature an infinite, boundless and eternal ocean of love, peace, joy and satisfaction. And this is the life we are to receive from our Lord in an abundantly full measure.

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

## **The Captive Bride**

## **From "Coals of Fire"**

As a new bride becomes one spirit with her husband and loses herself in him, the soul that is to be married to Christ must become one spirit with Him and be lost in Him. "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (1 Cor. 6:17) It leaves the soul without any right to have an independent life of its own.

There are Christians who are not enjoying a fullness of the spiritual life promised in the Scriptures. They are still living by their natural strength. It has never dawned on them how their self-sufficiency has kept them separated from the life and power of Christ's Spirit. Human wisdom and self-made plans have taken over much of our Lord's Church.

There is probably not one in a thousand who understand what took place in the Fall. When Satan introduced his pride into the world, he led Adam into a self-originated form of life. Ever since then, fallen man has been living by his own resources.

When the Son came into the world as the Last Adam to demonstrate how God had intended for His children to live, He did not do anything "out from" Himself. He said, "I can of Myself do nothing." (John 5:30) "I do nothing of Myself..." (John 8:28) And He now expects us to walk by the Spirit as He did.

Divine strength goes to work in our lives at the point where our sense of weakness leads us to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit. We must expect God to take away our confidence in the flesh, so we will live by His Spirit rather than "out from" ourselves.

Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Have you suffered so much {to break your self-sufficient spirit} for nothing—if it really was for nothing? (Gal. 3:3 NIV)

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit {live by the Spirit}, rejoice in Christ Jesus {for what He is doing}, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

It is often a strange and alarming experience when our earnest search for more of God is answered by God revealing more than ever our spiritual poverty and utter weakness. Ah, soul! In order that the new locks of God-given energy may cover thy head, those remnants of natural strength—your human wisdom and natural will-power—that you so often trust in, must all be shaved away.

We can generally see the good in God desolating sinners to prepare them for conversion. But most of us do not want to be desolated ourselves. We tend to fight against having our self-originated form of life taken from us. But we will remain separated from an inward knowledge of Christ's heavenly life until we have counted "as loss" everything we have used to make ourselves great.

If anyone thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so... But what things were gain to me {according to the thought processes of this world}, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him. (Phil. 3:4, 7-8)

## **Learning Spiritual Lessons**

## **From "Pure Gold"**

No one ever finds the fullness of the Christ-life without first being fully crucified to self and the world. "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ {the cross that takes away the strength of the flesh-life}, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal. 6:14) "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20)

As a part of this work of the cross that kills the flesh-life, God permits Satan, as He did with Job, to throw a strange darkness around the mind. We pass through what has been termed "the dark night of the soul" where many things in our life seem to miscarry. As we can bear it, the Lord begins to take us through very difficult trials. He permits our old world to crumble around us. He knows that we will never come to a personal knowledge of Christ's indwelling life until we have come to the end of our flesh-life.

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may be glad with exceeding joy. (1 Pet. 4:12-13)

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them...that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:22, 26)

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings

of Christ {a partaker with Christ in His sufferings}, and also a {current} partaker of the glory that will be revealed. (1 Pet. 4:19-5:1)

It is necessary to pass through the cross and into resurrection life before the vessel of the body can be filled with the glory that reveals God nature of perfect love. Those who seek to possess the kind of merciful love that was displayed by Jesus are asking for trouble. There is no easy way to pass through the cross and into resurrection life.

Many begin to turn away from Christ's way of the cross when these trials become severe. These are the "ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away." (Luke 8:13 NIV) They are unwilling to go through these deeper degrees of mortification.

God permits all sorts of unlovely and painful things to occur as He tests our willingness to remain fully surrendered to the pure, gentle and unlimited love of Christ. Each time our love fails, we become more aware of our need to pay the full price for the heavenly Pearl. We become more willing to do whatever is necessary to find His pure and divine love—the love that never fails.

Divine love is a sweet mantle of pure linen. If there is any woolen threads mixed in, it will scorch and burn in the fiery furnace of these testings of love. Mere human love is wool. It burns easily and fails when taken through severe tests. God's love is asbestos linen, and is utterly indestructible. The more it is burned, the broader and sweeter it gets. Each time divine love passes through some long and terrific strain it comes out into a broader ocean of sacrificial giving and merciful tenderness.

And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. (2 Cor. 12:15)

## **Little Things**

## **From "Soul Food"**

Just in the same proportion that all human things grow in size, they tend to separate us from the power of God. Great men, great learning, great Churches, great sermons and fine music, great camp-meetings—anything great in the creature—soon absorbs so much attention that the sensitive Holy Spirit, who lives to glorify the Son, turns away to hunt up little people to do a work where Christ alone can receive the glory. In every age the Holy Spirit has been traveling away from the big things into the small. He is always looking for people who are willing to hide themselves so that God may reveal Himself and receive all the glory.

But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God. (John 3:21)

God knows when we are really little. Many say they are humble, but within an hour they cannot peacefully and lovingly endure to be contradicted, or reproved, or slighted, or

slandered. But the Spirit of God can be counted upon to use His providences to keep exposing this remains of pride within the heart.

Those who are the “least” in themselves become the greatest in the kingdom of God. The work they do in the Spirit will one day be revealed and put to shame all the activities that the pride of life generates in making things big. The believer who truly wants to become like Jesus and work in the power of His Spirit will therefore be on a constant lookout for everything that turns him away from what God has chosen to honor.

God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Cor 1:26-29)

## **Simplicity**

## **From “Soul Food”**

When the blessed Spirit softly unveils to our inner perceptions the perfect simplicity of the Christ-life, the unmixedness, the transparency of His inner kingdom, there is a holy charm and sweet satisfaction that enters into the mind beyond the expression of words. When all doubleness and tangled complexity of every sort is purged out of us, and when the Holy Spirit floods all our inner being with the very same simplicity that is in Jesus, how it makes us put off our false coverings and live as simple little children.

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (2 Cor. 11:3)

Anything that is done for extravagant display, or tries to be grand, or loud, or smart, or odd, or complex in order to be honored by man is offensive to God. There needs to be an abhorrence of the things that are used by the people of this world to attract attention. Perfect love to God never seeks to develop and project a special image.

For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. (Luke 15:16)

## **Loquacity**

## **From “Soul Food”**

Talkativeness becomes ruinous to deep spirituality. It is one of the most unrecognized hindrances to deep, solid union with God. Not only do we need cleansing from sin, but also our natural human spirit needs a radical death to its wordiness.

Many of the words that people speak are intended to impress others. Jesus said, “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory.” (John 7:18) It is not difficult to recognize

this tendency, even in the Church, to hold up before the eyes of the people the things this world considers grand and significant. But these words are generated by the spirit of the world rather than by the Spirit of God.

Jesus never sought to make a reputation for Himself. He said, “I do not receive honor from men” (John 5:41) In fact, He specifically went out of His way to make Himself of no reputation so that His Father could be all in all. He could therefore say that His Father’s Presence was always with Him. Do you believe in this Jesus? “How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?” (John 5:44)

A person who likes to talk cannot at the same time be listening to the leadings of the Spirit. You will find that people who are always talking are typically led by their emotions. Their emotions, as they are influenced by the lust {desires} of the flesh, the lust {desires} of the eye or the pride of life, drown out the still small voice of the Spirit.

Talkativeness dissipates spiritual power. The thoughts of the soul are like powder and steam—the more they are condensed, the greater their power. The steam that, if properly compressed, would drive a train forty miles an hour would not move it an inch when allowed too much expanse. And so the true unction of the heart, when it is expressed in a few Holy Spirit selected words, will sink deeply into the minds of the hearer. It will never come back void. But if these same words are dissipated in a rambling conversation, it is likely to be of no profit.

Talkativeness is also a waste of time. Those who spend their time speaking about temporal things {of this world} will have little value to the kingdom of God. If the hours spent in useless conversations were spent in communing with God, in reading about the deeper things of God and in leading other souls into a deeper walk with Jesus, the soul and the Church would soon enter into a region of spiritual life and power that is beyond our present dreams.

Talkativeness naturally results in unwise and unprofitable things being said. The Holy Spirit has specifically stated that “When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.” (Prov 10:19 NIV) It is impossible for even the best of saints to talk beyond a certain point without saying something unkind, or foolish, or in error. And a word spoken can never be retrieved.

We must settle this personally. If others are noisy and gabby, we must determine to speak as we are led by the Spirit. We must not be concerned about trying to make others think we are someone special. We must guard our speech as a sentinel does a fortress. And while maintaining respect for others and avoiding rudeness, we need to be prepared to hold our tongue in many conversations. And at times we may even need to withdraw from company so we may commune with our precious Lord.

For I have not spoken on My own... Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak. (John 12:49-50)



So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. (Luke 5:16)

If we are to speak effectively, it will be necessary to restrain our words while seeking to remain in harmony with the Holy Spirit. The Lord will help us make these decisions, which permit the peace of God to rule our hearts. This is what will enable us to become an expression of the Son's life, in the same way He became an expression of the Father's life.

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. (Jam. 1:26)

For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body...

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. (Jam. 3:2, 6)

He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory... (John 7:18)

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matt. 12:36-37)

## **Superiority of Love**

## **From "Love Abounding"**

John Wesley once said that if we are seeking anything other than more of God's life of holy love we have gone astray from the true faith. Love is the bond of perfection. We are knit together in love. As Wesley puts it, every person who becomes a fanatic is a fanatic because of his lack of "lowly, humble, patient love."

All the actions of God originate and terminate in love. And when we are so melted and transformed by His Spirit that all our thoughts are loving thoughts, and all our judgments are conceived and uttered in a loving spirit, and all our labors are prompted with love to God and our neighbor, it is then that we are fitted by perfect similarity to live in an everlasting communion with Him in heaven. We can never become like God in His gifts and talents. But in love we may bear His full image. Thus, the greatest of these is love.

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. (1 John 4:17)

Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom. 13:10)

## **Tenderness of Spirit**

## **From “Pure Gold”**

The very essence of the Gospel is a divinely imparted tenderness and sweetness of Spirit. Without this, even the strongest religious life is a misrepresentation of the true Christ-life. Unfortunately, even among intensely religious people, we seldom see this all-pervading spirit of tenderness. The Christ-life is not abiding in them.

Tenderness of spirit is preeminently divine. We are not speaking of the soft sensibility of a mere gentle make-up. Rather, it is a supernatural work of the Spirit that transforms the inner nature into a merciful type of gentle love. “Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.” (Luke 6:36)

Tenderness of spirit mellows the will, softens the judgments, melts the affections, refines the manners and molds the whole being after the image of Him who was infinitely meek and lowly in heart. While some people will go out of their way to occasionally put on a display of tenderness, it is generally short-lived. It is quickly lost when someone crosses their will. We are now referring to an inner nature that naturally expresses tender mercies in the most difficult of circumstances. It is emphatically supernatural and will flow out incessantly from the inner fountains of the soul once the inner being has become filled with God’s life of love. It is in this sense we can find Paul praying that Christians may “know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:19)

Deep tenderness of spirit is the very essence of the Christ-life. What gravity is to the planet, what perfume is to the rose, what rhythm is to poetry, what harmony is to music, all this and much more is what tenderness of spirit is to the Christ-life. It is possible to be very religious, and staunch, and persevering in all Christian duties, even to be sanctified and a brave preacher of holiness, and yet to be greatly lacking in tenderness of spirit, which is that all-subduing, all melting love that is the very essence of Heaven.

This merciful and loving tenderness is not the sap that flows up in the grape vine in early spring. On the contrary, it is the sweet and pure juice of the grape that has been crushed out under the mighty squeeze of the winepress. It is in connection with Job’s manifold and strange sufferings that he says, “God had made his heart soft.”

Madam Guyon says that while we are purified from sin by the blood of Jesus, the attributes and constitution of our nature must be utterly broken under the manifold cross of suffering to render us divine-like in our feelings and sympathies.

We often see Christians who are bright and clever and strong; in fact, a little too bright, and a little too strong. They do their best to leave the impression they are living holy and righteous lives. But we can also see the self-life in their strength. Their righteousness has therefore remained severe and critical. They have everything they need to become heavenly saints except the crushing weight of crucifixion to grind them into a supernatural tenderness.

The merciful and loving tenderness that comes from Christ will never put out a flickering wick in any soul. It instinctively avoids wounding the feelings of others by wrangling in an argumentative way. Having lost the desire to quarrel, it carries its point by ceasing to contend.

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth.... *From such withdraw yourself.* (1 Tim. 6:3-5)

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (Jam. 3:17)

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth... (2 Tim 2:24-25)

Tender love cannot be provoked into harsh judgments and it “thinks no evil.” It instinctively buries and forgets all bad things. Those who are tender in spirit see all things from God’s standpoint. Because they have come to a knowledge of God, they have a personal knowledge of how divine “love suffers long and is kind...does not seek its own, is not provoked...thinks no evil...bears all things.”

## **A Critical Spirit**

## **From “Pure Gold”**

There is an ingrained frailty in fallen human nature that leads man to think he has a right to climb on God’s throne to be the judge of others. Because of his God-given power to discriminate, he begins to misapply the gift by looking for defects in other people. And it is not long before he is also exercising a police authority in hunting down everyone with an opposing view. Like the Pharisee, he can be very precise in conforming to certain laws, but he ends up being void of merciful love. Consequently, no one ever sees the “light” that is able to draw people into the heavenly life found in the true kingdom of God.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin {in keeping all the outward laws}, *and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith.* (Matt. 23:23)

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven {the heavenly Kingdom-life of perfect love} against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are

entering {those who have been called out from the world} to go in. (Matt. 23:13)

The spirit of criticism is invariably a legal spirit. It focuses on the technicalities in the law without ever understanding the principle behind the law. There is a reason behind God's laws. And God will not fill the temple with His glory until the heart is fully submitted to the principles. Many of those who think they are right because of how they obey certain laws have not been filled with the glory of "righteousness and peace and holy in the Holy Spirit." When people live by law without understanding the underlying spiritual principle, they will inevitably violate these principles at points not covered by their list of rules. And so the Lord is unable to manifest His heavenly life of merciful love within the temple of their body.

The person with a critical spirit spends more time fixing boundary lines than improving the country. He clings more to a definition of religion than to the life it is intended to produce. You will find him exerting much more fervor in staking out the exact limits of the first and second blessings than he expends in drawing others into the life of the meek and lowly Jesus.

A person who has remained critical will invariably make himself the meter or gauge that is used to judge everything else. It reveals a self-exalted state that has never entered into the kind of humility that would enable the Spirit of God to lift them spiritually into Christ's heavenly life of merciful love.

It is an infallible law of God that our severity in judging others marks the lowness of our own spiritual state. It reveals how far we are separated from Christ's heavenly life.

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. (Luke 23:34)

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual *restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness*, considering yourself lest you also be tempted {and fall into a judging and critical spirit}. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. (Gal. 6:1-3)

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved {find the life of heaven}. (John 3:17)

There is a mysterious quality of heart-gentleness and soul-sweetness in those who have truly been crucified with Christ. It is far more than outward correctness of life, or even an orthodox profession of sanctification and it is infinitely more mighty than "holiness preaching" or "correct doctrine." It is the breath of Jesus in the heart and the perfume of the rose of Sharon permeating the life. These Christians who have truly died to their own righteousness begin to walk in the light of life from heaven.

God has designed and created every believer to be a channel for the outflow of His life. A critical spirit actually chokes up the channel in the soul. It ends up preventing Christ's Living Water from flowing out to touch the souls of others. And we cannot expect to further His Kingdom-life in this world without first displaying His life. A harsh and critical spirit will never draw others to the true Christ. Our capacity to further the true kingdom of God will be in proportion to how the fruit of His Spirit flows out of our life.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23)

There are persons who rank themselves as perfectly orthodox and very correct in their outward life and teachings while missing the very nature of Jesus. There is an interior choking that prevents the divine life from coming out. If their heart nature were to be thoroughly explored, it would reveal a lack of kindness, a smallness of charity, a severity of judgment and a subtle dictatorialness that has corrupted their spirit. It has prevented the sweet nature of God's love to consistently flow through them.

Wherever we walk we carry an unpronounced but recognizable spirit with us. A critical spirit can be felt by others even when we try to conceal it. Our only safety against this malady is to count everything as loss, including our self-produced righteousness, so we may come to "know Christ." We must receive the imparted righteousness that comes from God by faith. (Phil. 3:2-11)

## **The Daily Cross**

## **From "Soul Food"**

There are some, through their own hallucinations, who have come to the conclusion that it would be better for them if they could get free from their difficulties. We have all thought at some point that it would be good to be free from every infirmity and painful annoyance so we might fly unimpeded toward heaven. But there is nothing further from the truth. If you want deep union with Jesus, being separated from the things that make you dependent on the Lord is the very thing to defeat it. There is something better than finding freedom from hardship, and that is to pass into the ocean-depths of the Christ-life where every trial can be borne in a heavenly spirit that reveals the life of Jesus.

For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor. 4:11)

Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities {the things that make me weak in self and dependent upon God}, that the power of Christ may rest on me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor. 12:9-10)

Not many saints ever reach this level of spiritual life where they actually receive their trials as gifts from the hands of their Lord. We need to realize that God notices our inner

feelings, thoughts and choices when we suffer. The spirit in which we bear our trials today will determine how much of the life of heaven He is able to manifest within our eternal soul. The way we walk in this world becomes grade of our standing in the world to come. We therefore need to learn to use persevering prayer to get on the triumphant side of every trial so we may walk as Jesus did.

For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. (Phil. 1:29)

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. (1 Pet. 4:19)

## **Full Assurance**

## **From “Spiritual Feasts”**

Christians with little understanding of divine things are always locating holiness in externals rather than in a heart that has been filled with Divine love. Hence we generally hear people emphasizing the outward things that God has changed in their lives. While these changes are indeed good, the Lord has come to do a much deeper work than this.

The things we need to get saved from are evil tempers, critical speech, harshness, bitterness, resentfulness, covetousness, tale bearing, deceitful statements, imprudent conduct, murmuring, fretfulness of spirit, dictatorialness, self-conceit, selfishness, love of ease, love of praise, extravagance both in living and in speaking, and every other principle that is unlike Jesus. We need to find the fullness of this great salvation before we will be enabled to walk as Jesus did and reveal the glory of God.

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him... (Heb. 7:25)

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away... How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...? (Heb. 2:1, 3)

## **Obstruction to Growth**

## **From “White Robes”**

It says in the book of Job, “the righteous will hold to his way, and he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger.” (Job 17:9) This statement reveals how purity removes the obstructions to spiritual growth and strength. When the heart is purified with a desire to live for God alone, then the whole being is prepared for the most rapid and steady advancement in wisdom, love and power.

And yet there are many who have had this capacity for great growth in the divine life but have failed to comply with the royal conditions of progressive union with God. There are various reasons why this growth can be hindered in a soul that was once sanctified. These reasons need to be understood.

Most of God's people are perpetually locating their spiritual hindrances outside of themselves. If a mighty voice should pierce the heart of every Christian and ask the question, "Why are you not more cheerful and peaceful and content and loving in spirit? Why are you not more gentle and sweet and victorious in all your relationships?" there would be an instantaneous response of blaming some outward condition. There are very few who would blame themselves. It is so hard to believe and so mortifying to be convinced that all our spiritual obstructions are located within our own heart. *And yet, it is emphatically true.*

Christians do experience sore trials, temptations and opposing elements in their life. But these things are not in themselves hindrances to growth in holy love. In fact, if the soul is truly purified, all these things are intended to advance our spiritual character. If our heart has been purified and the enemy within has been cast out, then it is impossible for anyone, including evil spirits, to prevent us from increasing in the knowledge of our Lord's life of love. The only thing that hinders is our own choices.

A hot spring pours forth hot water from its own internal conditions. All the external ice and frost in the world cannot prevent the out-streaming of a warm current. In like manner, a soul filled with holy love grows and flourishes by its internal conditions. There may be ice and frost and confusion and enemies and painful incidents without; but if the soul walks with the slain Lamb in His way of the cross, its devotion will be deepened and brightened by what seems to be hardships. It is in this sense that John Wesley found that ill usage, disappointments and other hardships were the best agents for promoting growth in humility, patience and love.

These things I have spoken to you, that *in Me you may have peace*. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John 16:33)

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11)

Those who have fully surrendered to God to be conformed to the image of the Son can depend on Him to begin making "all things" work together for their good. (Rom. 8:28) If we will stand on this promise by faith in full submission to God, then nothing can ever occur in the universe that will not be useful for our advancement in the life of heaven. And since the Lord has overcome the world, there is nothing in this world that can cut off the flow of His heavenly life.

## **Benefits of Temptation**

## **From "Soul Food"**

It is God's design that we shall have the most perfect victory on the very points where we have been the weakest. It is gained through a full crucifixion of self and a complete possession by the Holy Spirit. Those who press forward in their faith can expect the Lord

to work out this perfect victory. “But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (Jam. 1:4)

A persistent effort to resist specific temptations will induce an increased hatred for them. The very habit of fighting any particular evil will form a loathing of the thing. It will begin to be watched as an old and bitter foe.

Temptation drives us to a deep, serious study of ourselves. It leads us to take ourselves to pieces, to analyze our affections, our wills, our motives and our propensities. It will cause us to begin searching our actions and our thoughts and our words. It draws us to solitude and secret prayer where we can dig into the secret foundations of our character.

Temptation reveals our true nothingness and weakness. It withers our cleverness, cauterizes our smartness, and brings us into true humility. It quiets our speech. It leads to the perfection of patient endurance. If it were not for severe temptations, the soul would go skipping along, gloating over its own piety, and remaining full of self-admiration. As a severe case of smallpox keeps a person from standing before a mirror, so terrible temptations will keep a holy soul from admiring their own righteousness.

Blessed are they that endure temptation till not only sinful self is purged out, but till the last forms of righteous self are gone, and the soul is taken out of its furnace into a supernatural embrace with Christ’s life in the heavenly realms.

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life {an inward revelation of Christ’s heavenly life} which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Jam. 1:12)

## **Some Striking Incidents**

## **From “Soul Food”**

The deeper our union with Jesus, the more clearly we recognize the presence of God in everything. One of the reservation secrets of heaven will be to go back over the pages of our earthly lives and see every moment of our history from God’s standpoint. We will then understand how His watchful, overruling hand was working in the very places where we least suspected Him.

If we look for wonders, we will not likely see them. But if we seek in perfect lowliness to please God, He will begin to wonderfully reveal how He is a living God working out each of the details in our lives. He will continue to reveal Himself and provide the guidance that is needed to walk with Him. “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it’...” (Isa. 30:21)



## Spiritual Glimpses

## From “Pure Gold”

By looking closely at Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well we can find that the word “well,” as used by the woman and by Christ, are two different words in the Greek. The woman used the word that means a “cistern,” but Christ used the word that means a “fountain.” A cistern that can be filled and emptied, which can leak and get out of repair, is the poor creature’s highest conception of a blessing. But God’s idea is far beyond what crossed her mind. He had in mind an eternal fountain, which can never be drained, never be polluted, never get out of order, and never know any scantiness.

Jesus offers to plant Himself like a great ocean spring in the hidden depths of our nature. And then, from His own personality, He plans to continually pour forth streams of holiness, love, peace, joy, humility, charity, perseverance, prayer, and every holy virtue we need, like crystal rivers.

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38)

This vision of Christ becoming an actual fountain of divine life within our inner being is intended to press every believer into the reality of the promise. A proper understanding of this truth will turn us away from depending on our conversion, or our sanctification, or our healing, or our wisdom, or our perseverance, and turn us toward Him in a dependent faith that looks moment by moment for His indwelling Presence to supply these “rivers” of Living Water. This is our only hope of revealing His eternal life. How it should thrill and inspire us to press forward in our faith once we begin to perceive how intimately we may be united to that eternal fountain of divine Life.

Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (Rev. 22:17)

Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. (John 4:14 NIV)

And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life. (1 John 2:25)

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called... (1 Tim. 6:12)

## Human Religion

## From “Pure Gold”

The world is full of human religion. Multitudes of people have been brought together by human ecclesiastical methods into a sort of mechanical Christianity. An examination of much of the present church will reveal how the first principles of divine life seem to be utterly unknown. And the worst of it is, many of these people are earnest souls who have remained blinded to the truth because they love their human religion.

Human religion has a great many marks about it. But there is one thing in common. It will employ tactics that are highly valued by the people of this world. And it is this emphasis on using human wisdom and strength to please and to exalt the self-life that ends up causing God to withdraw His glory.

“Woe to the rebellious children,” says the Lord, “Who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit... Who... strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!” (Isa. 30:1-2)

For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. (Luke 16:15)

Human religion, like the world, goes in for show, whether it is at a funeral, a picnic, a wedding or a sacramental service. Whatever it does, it must swell and show off. There is something about the fallen human nature that thrives on appearances and on rituals.

This move back toward human religion is one of the reasons why so much formality began to rise up in the Christian religion after the first century. It did not take long for human wisdom to develop Romanism. When the Spirit of glory departs there is a natural tendency to move toward systems and hierarchical structure. This human religion that emphasizes position and display is naturally in conflict with the meek and lowly Jesus who made Himself of no reputation.

Church members who have human religion look to receive attention for what they are doing. They need to be regularly coaxed, to be praised for their work, and to have their whims consulted. This human religion is always anxious about results and about what the crowd thinks. It is overly cautious, easily frightened, full of compromise and uses human policy as a substitute for life in the Spirit.

All its enterprises have an atmosphere of earthliness about them. Because it loves pomp and display, it does not see much value in the little, humble people that God has chosen to be great in His eternal kingdom. They have been caught up in works that will never pass through the testing fires of Judgment.

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise...and the base {the insignificant or lowly} things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to

bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Cor. 1:27-29)

For he who is least among you all will be great. (Luke 9:48)

## **The Dangers of Prosperity**

## **From “Pure Gold”**

Prosperity is not necessarily a token of God’s favor. We know that Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of this world. The devil wanted Him to bow down to the self-serving and self-seeking way of life that was fostered on the world at the Fall. People throughout history have been accumulating wealth following this corrupt way of life.

God created man to be a vessel of His life and work. But fallen man has chosen to serve himself and to build his own little kingdom. The devil is constantly tempting man to follow his self-seeking and self-exalting way of life. He knows that it will result in rebellion against God. “For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord our God, *and Him only you shall serve.*’” (Matt. 4:10)

The children of God are not to live for themselves. There are some awful warnings spoken by Jesus about neglecting the poor while making our own lives cozy and prosperous in this world. Jesus spoke the following words to a man who ended up being eternally separated from God for neglecting to help someone in need: “remember that in your lifetime you received your good things.” (Luke 16:25) He did not go to hell for committing gross sins. The implication is that he focused his attention on living for his own pleasures while leaving others to suffer.

Can there be a darker curse in eternity than what has been implied by these words? And yet multitudes of people within the Church—those who have easy access to Christ’s teachings—are now living as if they want to have the same words spoken to them. “Remember that in your lifetime you received your good things.”

Jesus could have avoided the suffering that was slated for His life by responding to the temptations of the devil. But Jesus refused to serve Himself. He knew that eternal “glory” was reserved for those who are willing to sacrifice themselves and to suffer for the good of this fallen world. And so He carefully instructed His disciples to follow Him.

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:33)

Prosperity also gives us a false estimate of ourselves. It leads to a growing conviction that it was our skill and wisdom that enabled us to be successful. Like the ancient king, we tend to say, “Is not this great Babylon which I have built?” And our emphasis is always on the “I.” Those who have hoarded their wealth, by an unavoidable law of comparison, tend to think more highly of themselves than the poor people of this world. It naturally

separates the soul from the life of Christ who gave up all His riches and made Himself of no reputation to become a ministering servant to the poor.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich {in the life of heaven}. (2 Cor. 8:9)

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor... (Luke 4:18)

Jesus has provided some very clear instructions about what His followers are to do with their available resources. While it is acknowledged that everyone has basic needs in this world, needs that God has promised to supply, we are instructed to focus our attention on serving the Lord according to His will.

No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. (Matt. 6:24-25)

The teachings found in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount will sound unreasonable to people who do not intend to enter into His life of perfect love. We will need to become "one spirit with Him" before we can joyously live in harmony with the life He revealed through His mortal body.

Since our Lord commands us to store our treasures in heaven by using our resources in the work of His kingdom, it is easy to see the necessity of selling our earthly "treasures" so we may put the resources to work. And since this is God's specific will for His children, we are not surprised when we hear of the horrible punishment that will be given to those who reject Christ's instructions.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... (Matt. 6:19)

And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after {because they do not have faith in God}, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God {His Kingdom-life}, and all these things shall be added to you.

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. {His Kingdom-life will be revealed within our inner being when we have fully submitted to His ways.} Sell what you have {your hoarded treasure here on earth} and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail... (Luke 12:29-33)

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted... Your gold and silver are corroded,

*and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasures in the last days {in this age of fulfillment when our resources are to be used to further God's eternal Kingdom-life}... You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. (Jam. 5:1-5)*

Yes, there are many professing Christians who have refused to respond to Christ's teachings. We are afraid they will one day hear Jesus say, "remember that in your lifetime you received your good things." (Luke 16:25) They have lived on the earth in pleasure and have fattened themselves like a cow being prepared for slaughter.

There were people in the Corinthian church who had been deceived into following a way of life that was in conflict with Christ's teachings. Following the example of the world, they assumed that the objective of life was to become prosperous in this world and to seek high positions for their own glory. They had evidently worked hard to achieve their success so they could enjoy the pleasures of this world. Considering what Christ commanded, we are therefore not surprised when the apostle Paul uses a little sarcasm in revealing how their current course would prevent them from reigning with Christ and the apostles in God's eternal kingdom.

You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign {by being seated with Christ in His eternal Kingdom-life}, that we also might reign with you! For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last {because the last and the least become the first and the greatest in the Lord's kingdom}, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world... We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands... (1 Cor. 4:8-12)

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16)

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you {with His life and nature of sacrificial love}?—unless indeed you are disqualified. (2 Cor. 13:5)

No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back {to live for his own pleasures}, is fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62)

But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me. (Luke 22:28-29)

The people of this world naturally seek to acquire as much as possible for themselves so they may live in temporal pleasure. It is their means for developing their spiritual life. They also seek the highest seats of prominence. In contrast, those who desire to share with Christ in His heavenly Kingdom-life follow Him in His way of the cross. They seek to become the least of servants. They are willing to take the lowest seat. They sell their treasures and use the resources for His kingdom. Because they have actually responded to the truth recorded in the Scriptures, they gain access to the promised hundredfold return. (Matt. 19:29) It is a heavenly spiritual life they are enabled to share with Christ in both this age and in the age to come.

It is not difficult to recognize a true believer in Jesus. By their actions you will know them. Those who believe in Jesus will do what He has commanded. They trust in Him. Because He promised to provide a ten thousand percent return on their investment {a hundredfold return} they logically sell as much as possible so they may invest the resources into the work of God's eternal kingdom. To these believers, it makes absolutely no sense to risk living in pleasure in a world where their life is like a mist that quickly appears and then disappears in comparison to their life in eternity. They do not want to be found with a lot of possessions that are constantly wearing out. They intelligently store their treasures in heaven.

It is in this sense that we need to examine ourselves to see if we truly believe in Jesus. If our spiritual life keeps running out of our soul like water out of a cracked cistern, we can know we have exchanged the Glory of God for what does not profit. (Jer. 2:12-13) Will we ever learn to find life from our God by obeying His Word with a discernment that rejects the wisdom of this world?

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets {the period of time when fallen man did not have access to the life from heaven} were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. (Luke 16:14-16)

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction...who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven... (Phil. 3:17-20)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. {You are to sit with Him and reign with Him.} Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ *who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:1-4)

Blessed be the God...who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly place in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

What mankind looks upon as utter failure, often turns out to be the grandest kind of success with God and in the light of eternity. God's ways are diametrically opposed to the ways of this world. The simplest child of prayer, having no gold or silver of his own, is in a position where he can accomplish much through childlike faith. Let us never forget that God has chosen the weak things, the insignificant things, the despised things and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should ever glory in His presence. (1 Cor. 1:27-28) Clearly we will never know who has done the most for God's eternal kingdom until the whole human race renders up their account before the great white throne.

Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have {access to divine power} I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." (Acts 3:6)

## **Lukewarmness**

## **From "Soul Food"**

So then, because you are lukewarm...I will vomit you out of my mouth.  
(Rev. 3:16)

One of the worst features about lukewarmness is that it takes possession of the soul in such a quiet, respectable way. If the horrible thing had horns and hoofs, and a smack of criminality in it, it would alarm the soul. But, as a rule, lukewarmness of spirit is so decent and well behaved, that it chloroforms its victim and kills him without a scream of terror. While sin slays its hundreds, lukewarmness slays its tens of thousands.

Lukewarmness will reveal itself in a sort of indefinite contentment with present levels of spiritual life. It may still go through all the outward forms of religion, but it has lost its desire to commune with God and sacrifice itself for the good of His eternal kingdom.

It is amazing how few Christians are seriously determined to get beyond their present experience. Their lukewarmness is revealed by their disposition to criticize as heretics those who do push beyond. The legalist has suspicions about people who insist they have experienced an inward sense of having their sins forgiven. The merely converted man looks with suspicion at those who insist they have experienced entire sanctification. And those who were once sanctified tend to regard any greater enlargements in the Divine life as bordering on heresy. And so it goes on. Will there ever be any end to the narrowness and the littleness of our minds and our faith?

Another element in lukewarmness is the tendency to think that the soul has done so much for God, has fought so many battles, endured so many afflictions, experienced so many uplifts in grace, that it can put itself on the retired list. It then takes its retirement pay

and begins to seek out the comforts of this world. This is a very subtle disposition, and the soul hardly dares to whisper it to itself.

There are many who are now serving God on cold principle. One of the worst things about it is its respectability. It keeps in the beaten path of decent religion. No one can lay a charge against it. It can pass in and out of any church circle without alarm. It is a well-behaved thing, keeping on good terms with everybody in general. This state of religion is so pleasing to the devil that he never does anything to disrupt it, lest the individual should be shocked and begin looking for the heavenly life that comes down from above.

When this condition of lukewarmness is first experienced, there will be an inward sense of breaking with God. Something in the heart is not right. The orthodoxy is all right; the outward life may be correct; the verbal testimony is still kept up; and duties are performed; but the inward life of the Spirit has weakened. There is no conscious touch from God, no sense of His spiritual life enlarging the heart. Some unpleasant, indefinable something has settled over the soul. And unless something is done to rekindle the fading fires, it will end up nauseating the infinite heart of God. "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot... So then, because you are lukewarm...I will vomit you out of My mouth." (Rev. 3:15-16) May we all recognize the terrible state of lukewarmness.

## **Purple Fingernails**

## **From "Pure Gold"**

When people are very ill and receding into death there are certain symptoms that can be observed with painful alarm. One of these signs of approaching death is a deep purple color settling in the fingernails. In like manner, when the spiritual life begins to decline, and the pulse of holy love beats fickle and slow, when Christ-like zeal is cooling within the heart, there are certain symptoms that correspond with purple fingernails. These signs become the sad herald of spiritual decay and death.

One of the purple nails that reveals a decline of divine love is a disposition to shrink from hardships and to begin looking for earthly pleasures. The eyes begin to lust for what others are enjoying. There is a positive leaning toward things that are well cushioned, and amiable, and soothing. It can be recognized by the way treasures are stored on earth.

While there may be no outspoken rebellion when confronted with trials and crosses, there is a whining or complaining spirit. The "first love" that was willing to suffer anything for Christ has clearly been lost.

I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil... Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have lost your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand {your source of light} from its place—unless you repent. (Rev. 2:2-5)



The soul that is dying spiritually is inclined to self-preservation. It is mostly concerned about protecting itself from any troubles or hardship. This purple nail indicates that spiritual decay has struck at the very center of the soul.

Another purple nail is a tendency to begin looking at spiritual truths in a theoretical and argumentative light. Having lost the desire to grow in the heavenly life of God, it settles down to a religion of mere words.

Another purple nail is a lack of perseverance. Faith becomes brittle and breaks under deep strain. It is easily disappointed when outward signs of success are lacking. It leads to peevishness or irritability. It is especially noticeable when financial resources seem to be inadequate. These are all symptoms of leaning on the temporal realm for support, rather than drawing spiritual life directly from the sweet fountains of the Holy Spirit.

Another purple nail is to become critical of testimonies that reveal a spiritual life in advance of its own. One of the clearest signs of self-conceit is to make self the criterion of experience. It figures that if it does not know something it is not worth knowing. It tries to defend its current state by criticizing testimonies that speak of a higher life.

A soul in its first love, or a sanctified soul enjoying a larger disclosure of God, finds itself remarkably free from casting reflections on deeper experiences. It is then in a condition to expect great things from God. But a “cooling down” will lead to a questioning of anything that does not tally with its own understanding. This is another symptom of a receding spiritual life that has begun to harden and become brittle.

There is a need to examine our spiritual fingernails to see if they are turning blue. It is the first signs of something going wrong. If we permit the spiritual circulation to weaken further, it will not be long before the nails turn purple and permanent death sets in.

## **Dangers to Deep Spirituality**

## **From “Spiritual Feasts”**

People who depend on the law become tangled in a thousand difficulties. Their life becomes filled with inward strife rather than enjoying that restful, peaceful walk with God in the liberty of perfect love. Those who are living by law and attempting to produce their own righteousness can expect God to use various means to smash the idol.

One such danger is the desire for position. It is true that God prepares people for leadership positions in every line of His work. But we must not be like the unsaved Gentiles who seek to have position and authority over others as a means to lift ourselves spiritually. It will only be a matter of time before the will begins to act and plan and pull wires and manage things for the purpose of gaining more power and honor from men. This spiritual ambition always separates the soul from God.

Another danger to the spiritual life is the giving or receiving of personal praise. While there is a place for proper expression of appreciation, those who find “life” from the praise and honor that comes from man cannot walk with Christ at the same time.

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? (Amos 3:3)

I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you... How can you believe {in the true Christ}, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? (John 5:41-44)

The danger lies at that delicate point where the honor is received into the heart. How easy it is to be drawn by praise into Satan’s self-exalting way of life.

The holy man who walks with God in His Kingdom-life is one who merits great honor, and yet shrinks from it. His heart actually experiences pain whenever he finds himself being put on display and praised by man. Those who have been honored by God with His Kingdom-life know that all praise and honor and glory must go to Him. And the only way for God to be all in all is for the child of God to become nothing in itself.

Many Christians have ruined their spiritual lives, not because they were praised, but because they sipped it as a sweet wine. They allowed their affections to drink it in. And God is able to see this even when it is hidden from everyone else. And He responds based on what He sees going on in the heart.

Praise is a thing that is highly esteemed among men. We should therefore expect to find it wherever we turn. It is a worldly temptation that needs to be feared. And yet, a Christian would never be hurt by it if he or she did not receive it into the affections and take a measure of joy in it, just as a diver can descend down into the ocean with perfect safety as long as the ocean is kept outside of him. We can protect ourselves from this danger by choosing to become the lowest of servants without trying to have any reputation of our own.

Another danger to spiritual life is an unwillingness to be corrected. If we are to enjoy this fullness of life from Christ, there needs to be a complete victory over what is called touchiness. People who profess holiness and yet fancy they are beyond being corrected will eventually find themselves being ground to powder by the millstones of God's providence. The only cure for getting miffed and having our feelings hurt is to be utterly dissolved in Christ's heavenly life of perfect love.

## **The Spirit of Crucifixion**

## **From "Soul Food"**

The act of crucifixion is one thing, but the spirit in which the crucifixion is to be borne is another. We will have a better understanding of what it means to walk in a crucified life by examining Jesus' character during His final few hours between the Last Supper and His death on the cross. It will be helpful to note some of the traits that stand out.

*It is a silent spirit.* It suffers quietly. A dog or a pig will howl and squeal at the least pain or fright, but the young lamb suffers in silence. This crucifixion spirit of Jesus can be snubbed, scolded, criticized, misunderstood, misrepresented, physically abused and hindered in a thousand ways without a groan, or a kick, or a trace of rudeness. Even though it wants to see truth, justice and mercy revealed, it does not become loud and boisterous about having its rights violated. While it speaks the truth when someone honestly seeks understanding, it does not try to defend itself when falsely accused by belligerent and unreceptive people.

*It is sworn to eternal submissiveness.* It has agreed to die to the ways of this world. It can have a thousand little treasures, pleasant hopes, and friendly ties snatched out of its hand without trying to hold on to them. It gently and sweetly lets everything go with a submissive spirit. It can obey God and be rushing at full speed on lines of service and duty, and then, at the touch of God's providential air brake, it can be brought to a standstill without having its soul-rest disturbed. Even when it is required to take the path of suffering, it continues to rest peacefully in the will of its Sovereign God.

And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy {filled with Christ's Spirit}... (Acts 20:22-24)

*It is a free spirit.* It is no longer affected by the opinions of others. The only thing that matters is that God's will is accomplished. Having overcome the world, it is no longer restrained by what the world considers appropriate. It has lost complete interest in the pleasures and honors that come from man. Because it desires to receive the honor that comes from God, it easily gets by with the simple necessities of life. And regardless of how difficult the circumstances become, it always possesses a thankful and sweet disposition.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thess. 5:16-18)

*It embraces suffering as its natural food.* The rugged cross, which frightens so many Christians, is embraced, because it becomes the means for entering into an enlarged and sweeter life of love in the Holy Spirit. What other Christians shun as a hardship, it gladly accepts as an opportunity for deeper union with God in His heavenly life. It can be bruised and trampled on by outspoken religionists and continue to walk in a love that never fails. It naturally desires to have everyone forgiven, even those who have caused the greatest suffering. “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.” (2 Cor 12:15)

*It will not receive human honor into itself.* The spirit of crucifixion finds its highest delight by sinking into God and being little. It loves to humble itself both before God and man. While it will speak the Word of God boldly, it also shuns debate and theological argument.

And the servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth {and see the light from Christ’s life}. (2 Tim. 2:24-25)

*It is modest and retiring and loves to get out of God’s way and see Him work.* It would rather see the ark capsize than to put forth its finger to meddle with God’s authority. It does not make others wear its sackcloth; but rather, it prefers to take on the suffering of others. Its one great desire is to reveal Christ and draw others into His heavenly life.

When the soul enters sanctification, it is just the beginning of this spirit of crucifixion which must be permitted to spread, and intensify, and brighten until it pervades the whole heart. If it is permitted to develop, it will become a flame of sacrificial love, which takes hold on all sorts of woes, and troubles, and mortifications, and pains, and poverty, and hardships, as a very hot fire takes hold on wet logs and makes out of them fresh fuel to reveal more of God’s holy love.

This spirit of crucifixion that was displayed by Jesus during His last few hours of walking on this earth is the spirit that opens the gate to the life of heaven without touching it. This is the spirit that wears out the patience of persecutors, which softens the heart of stone, that wins its way through a thousand obstacles, and that makes the soul that possesses it, truly precious in God’s sight.

## **Our Need of Humility**

## **From “Soul Food”**

No grace is more befitting to a human being than that of perfect humility. When we sink deeply into our nothingness and into a complete yieldedness to the perfect will of God we enter into a spiritual life that cannot be touched.

Jesus once said that the devil did not have anything in Him. The devil is the one who filled the world with pride. Jesus never allowed it to enter His soul. And since the devil can only reach people through the pride that he has placed within their hearts, there was nothing in Jesus that the devil could touch. Similarly, when we have permitted Christ's life of humility to purge out all pride from our heart, the devil loses his ability to touch our spiritual life.

Strictly speaking, the only one in the universe that can do us any harm is ourselves. What may seem to be a bad situation or a mean treatment from others will inevitably work for our good if it is accepted in deep humility as coming from the loving hand of our Sovereign God.

Our nothingness is the fortress in which we should hide. Around that fort our heavenly Father places His Sovereignty as a wall, and no event or act of others, including the work of the devil, can penetrate that wall and reach us, without passing through the Divine will for a very special purpose.

While others are studying to be great and pushing their own interests, let us seek to be like Jesus. Let us continually keep ourselves yielded to the life of humility that He revealed during His final hours on the way to the cross.

God does not ask us to make ourselves like Jesus. He merely asks us to yield our whole being to the light of truth that Jesus revealed. This yielded heart is then in a place to look to Him in faith to make His divine nature known as an innate part of our inner nature. “According to your faith let it be to you.” (Matt. 9:29)

The more thoroughly we humble ourselves, and look to Jesus for everything, the more God is exalted. He will reveal His heavenly life within everyone who humbles themselves under His mighty hand and looks in childlike faith to direct their every step.

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11)

## **Substitutes for Holiness**

## **From “White Robes”**

Those who can see things in the light of eternity will begin to see little idols that are being worshiped instead of Jesus. These things, which are being thrust before the eyes of the people as important parts of religion, become a substitute for the simplicity of living every movement through Christ by His Spirit.

The church is idolizing her statistical tables and is far more anxious to crowd large numbers into a building than to crowd Christ’s life of holy love into her members. The curse of David for gloating over the statistics of Israel is utterly unheeded by this age of proud church boasters. Much of the boasting that has been taking place will be spoiled when the Great Judgment cuts down the bloated church statistics to what is real.

Once the power of God is lost, church machinery and ritualism becomes a substitute for holiness. When a church loses the holiness of heart that produces self-sacrificing love, it must turn to rituals, or programs, or showy display, or something else that becomes a miserable substitute for primitive power.

We have denounced Roman priests for being devoted to rituals instead of Christ, but the same impure devotion to a church system is fearfully spreading in holiness churches. Let us not be deceived! God will not allow anything, in earth or heaven, as a substitute for Himself and the indwelling of His sanctifying Spirit of love.

## **Take Time**

## **From “Pure Gold”**

When we start rushing forward in our own thinking, speaking or acting we are displaying a lack of faith in God. It reveals an inability to apprehend God’s dominion over all things. Jesus is our example. He did not do anything out from Himself. As He heard from His Father through the still small voice of the Spirit, He judged and acted in harmony with His Father’s will. Everything He did had its source in the Father.

The Spirit-led child of God does not act hastily. To act prematurely by fleshly emotions is a characteristic of infancy. It results in a self-originated form of life. This is the life that needs to be denied and taken to the cross before Christ can manifest His life and works through our mortal bodies.

One of the lessons that will become more clear as we become intimately acquainted with God is the celestial art of walking slow. To learn to move slowly with God is not laziness, nor over-lateness. To the contrary, it is the very highest type of earnestness; that is, watchful promptness. Learning how to take time to listen to the Spirit will introduce the soul into a whole new realm of spiritual power. It is when the Spirit is in full control that the true work and progress of God’s kingdom takes place. “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:25)

We must take time to pray. The greatest lack in the Christian life today is a lack of taking time for deep and thoughtful communion with God. There is a real need to pray each subject out in all its details before the Lord and then wait for the Holy Spirit to speak in the depths of our spirit so we may learn God's will on the matter.

If all the time that Christians spend in anxiety, or in foolish speculations, or in making plans and building air castles, was spent in patient and thoughtful prayer, what vast realms of heavenly light and clear divine guidance would be opened to the church. God's people would begin to learn the knowledge of His will on all lines. His children would then be seen walking daily in a deep, restful assurance because they expect their prayers to be answered and God's plans to be fulfilled through their lives.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. (John 15:16)

There will be a day when we all discover that time was the raw gold, and that prayer was the mint in which moments were coined into heavenly wealth. Because God is the source of all goodness, we will learn that the only work that passes through the testing fires of Judgment is the work we have permitted Him to do through our lives.

Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:13-15)

The greater the work that God intends to accomplish through our lives, the longer it takes for Him to prepare us for what He has planned to do. How eager human nature is to get into an enterprise, or a field of work, before there is a thorough preparation.

To be prepared for a work of God requires a great deal more than going through a school. If the life of Jesus is to be revealed, the soul must have had time to develop patient endurance. It takes time to learn to wait on God. We must expect to be taken through some periods of deep trial before the divine life can grow into a richness that enables the world to see Christ in all our activities.

But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (Jam. 1:4)

Volumes could be written on this subject. He was eighty years training Moses for the work of forty. John the Baptist was thirty years preparing for the work of two years. And the incarnate God was thirty years getting ready for the ministry of three.

What we call preparation for a life work is often so utterly human, and so stuffed with man-made theories, as to be a positive hindrance to the Holy Spirit. God's work of preparing a person involves many things beyond human education.

The life and nature that we are required to reveal as Christians cannot be learned through human thought processes. One who would work for the Lord is expected to know in personal experience "the love of Christ which passes knowledge." Since this life of love exceeds what the mind can work out, we can see how needful it is to be "filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:19) We need the life of Christ revealed within us by the power of the Spirit before we can walk as Jesus did.

It pleased God...to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles. (Gal. 1:15-16)

My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you. (Gal. 4:19)

We could all identify times in our past that we made a decision, uttered a rebuke, or expressed our thoughts a little too soon in our conversations. If we were perfectly dead to all impulsiveness and living in a deep and quiet union with God, and if we had taken time to move gently and slowly according to the movings of His Spirit, the Lord would have revealed Himself through our activities and better results would have been accomplished.

We all need to work at restraining our flesh-life until we have learned the art of walking in harmony with the Holy Spirit. "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest..." (Heb. 4: 11) Only in this way can we always know that we are fulfilling God's purposes in God's timing. Let us always be prepared to say with Jesus when people attempt to push us forward according to their plans, "What does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." (John 2:4)

The disciple should not, however, hold back from a life of service simply because he finds the remains of selfishness within his heart. The only way to have the selfish nature completely taken out of the heart is by pressing forward in this service of love during the time of testing. But let us be prepared to wait for Him to reveal His Kingdom-life within our heart before we become too concerned about His specific calling on our lives.

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all...so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness... (1 Thess. 3:12-13)



## **Anxiety and Faith**

## **From “Spiritual Feasts”**

Anxiety and faith are just the opposite of each other. By contrasting the two we will learn how to lose the one and acquire the other. It will also help us to see how our faith has begun to recede as soon as anxiety begins to develop.

Anxiety has its center in the creature, but faith has its center in God. Anxiety can only occur when the soul has placed some of its trust in something other than God.

Reason is the parent of anxiety. Because it naturally looks at the creature, at friends or foes, at works of nature, at circumstances and probabilities, which are all unstable, it can never produce perfect confidence.

In contrast, faith pierces through all creatures, and all circumstances, and fastens itself upon an infinite, loving, and Sovereign God—a God who knows all and superintends all. Faith is the eye of the human spirit looking at God; and, in a certain lofty sense, ignoring everything but God. In childlike faith it trusts in His promise to work out all things for the good of His children.

Anxiety originates in the unfulfilled desires that come out of the fallen state. Faith, on the other hand, has its origin in the fullness of the provisions of God. The fallen condition of the soul causes it to have many overreaching desires and excessive feelings of want. Its spiritual life is dependent on what is taking place around it in the natural realm. Reason is therefore always busy with these wants, constantly searching for ways and means to improve the situation and gratify its desires. It sees the many instances where its plans are hindered—where these wants are not supplied—and this creates anxiety. And since these wants tend to grow as they are brooded upon, the natural life eventually becomes an endless reaching out to do something about these unfulfilled desires, which continues to compound anxiety.

In contrast, faith goes out from the creature and looks upon the fullness of God. It searches into His character, His benevolence, and His inexhaustible power to supply whatever is needed, including His heavenly spiritual life, and then simply rests in Him. This vision of the fullness of God destroys anxiety.

Anxiety is related to what it can see through the natural perceptions and is attached to how the human will chooses to deal with its immediate surroundings. But faith has a wonderful expansiveness to it, and is attached to God’s will wherever His will leads. It enters into His Sabbath-rest, ceases from its own works, and learns to trustingly live by God’s Spirit.

The natural reason is nearsighted and sees things only that affect the present hour and emergency. It sees things fragmentary, and so it becomes perplexed at the problems and complications of men and things. It attaches itself to this or that thing or enterprise, and when something does not work, or there is a disappointment, it is in consternation.

In contrast, faith is long-visioned and is expanded whenever there is trust in God. It is firmly attached to the Divine will, so that it does not cling to any creature, or human plan, or circumstance, or nation, or position, or church, or earthly prop. It is internally united to God Himself, and thus it can easily let go of all things and circumstances to be in harmony with God's providences. And in this place where the will is in complete union with God's will, it finds perfect rest of soul.

Faith looks at passing events from the standpoint of eternity, as they will appear thousands of years from now. On the other hand, anxiety results from seeing all creatures and events out of their proper proportion. With its microscopic view, it sees things to be giants—things that faith is able to look at in the light of eternity and regard as only tiny insects.

Human reason, which is the instrument of anxiety, fixes its hope first on this person, then on that, first on this party or government, or enterprise, or prospect, or plan and then on that. Anxiety is therefore like a person crossing a river of floating blocks of ice, stepping on one and hoping it will float them over, but when they find it is melting or sinking they step on another. The mind never reaches a solid rest and deep repose in God.

In contrast, faith has gotten down through the shifting sands on the earth's surface and is anchored in the primeval rock of God and His promises. It never changes its object. Because it has learned to find its perfect rest in an infinite God, it spurns everything that is separated from God's eternal purposes. It has complete assurance that the will of God is always accomplished. And the more it expands and apprehends God, the farther it gets from ever wanting to look to the temporal realm for hope.

Perfect faith in God reduces all things in life to a state of simplicity. The reason, the judgment, the affections, the words, the labors of such a soul all move in straight lines under the dominion of a deep and simple faith in God. It knows that nothing can occur that is not according to God's will. It therefore shuns the complex where reason naturally goes in an attempt to work out its own results.

We should begin to see how those who still become anxious and uneasy have a mixed religion. "For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind." (Jam. 1:6) It comes from trying in some way to depend on human reason rather than walking by the Spirit with faith in God. It results in chronic worry and distress. These souls find themselves continually caught up in a fruitless effort to accomplish their own will rather than simply trusting in what God is already working out for their good according His Sovereign will.

Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part {enjoying the peace of God}, which will not be taken away from her. (Luke 10:41-42)

There is a sweet satisfaction when faith in God has become perfect. It drinks continually from the sun bright fountains of God Himself through the person of Jesus Christ and by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. With the soul always satisfied, and

with the reason and the will always in harmony with God's perfect will, it finds a heavenly rest. And nothing can take it away. It is able to wait on God to bring about His purposes, without ever depending on the outward signs of apparent success or failure. It is set free indeed from all anxiety that originates in the laborious, demanding and tiresome struggles of the natural mind.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7)

## **God's Quiet Conquests**

## **From "Our Own God"**

The works of the flesh are typically done with great show, and noise, and demonstration. Many churches are now working along this same line. When they plan for a revival, there must be a blast of trumpets and drums. There is a great spread-eagle splurge. But when the fuss and rattle is over it is well-nigh impossible to find one soul truly living for Jesus. While there may be many emotional decisions for Christ, the people go on directing their own steps through life.

In contrast, God is able to work mightily through the humble saint who is out in the cornfield weeping and praying for the salvation of lost souls. Such praying in the power of the Holy Spirit becomes ten thousand times more useful in drawing people into the true kingdom of God than the ecclesiastical thunder of the huge man-managed revivals.

This is not to imply that God does not work in big ways. Because the history of revival proves that He does. But God is a spirit, and He will only work through the Holy Spirit. There must be someone who has discovered His plans and begun to pray in harmony with His will so that the work may be carried out through the mighty power of His Spirit.

God has chosen to work through the people of prayer rather than through committees and great organizations. The strongest force on earth is the individual who has discovered how to perfect God's power through the weakness of dependent faith. Once God has fully conquered the individual, taking away his independence and self-sufficiency, the Holy Spirit will take possession of the heart and begin to pour through it the great purposes that God has planned from the beginning.

When men do not walk by the Spirit of God they strive to build their organizational structures and their systems of operation in their attempts to achieve results. The tower of Babel was built by an organized national committee, which said, "Let us build us a city, and a tower."

But God singled out one man, Abraham, and called him to be a pilgrim, and the founder of a race of people who lived by faith. The history of God's progress in the world has always been connected to individuals who became fully possessed by God and His

will. The record will point out individuals such as Noah, Abraham, Moses and Paul—individuals who permitted God to impart His thoughts and plans into their hearts. They came out from the self-directed ways of this world and learned to walk with Him.

We should also note how those who were used by God were generally considered to be failures and outcasts by those in the established religion. Again and again God chooses “the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

If the Lord should give His people what men call success, such as plenty of money and personal prosperity, it would draw them away from the life of faith, ruining both their soul and the work that He had planned to do through them for His kingdom. God succeeds by causing them to fail in their own strength and keeping them totally dependent upon Him. And yet, most of the committee decisions in the church today are based on the availability of temporal resources.

To look at this fallen world after reading the Bible it may appear that God is being defeated. But we generally do not see what is going on from His perspective. The things that often appear to be a failure from a human viewpoint will often benefit God’s eternal kingdom. The true progress of His kingdom within the hearts of men and women in this age will remain hidden from the world in general.

The kingdom of God does not come with {outward} observation; nor will they say, “See here!” or “See there!” For indeed, the kingdom of God is {to be established} within you." Luke 17:20-21

God is not working according to human plans or men’s judgments. Those leaders who have appeared to be successful by the outward standards of this world shall be found to be utter failures when they are evaluated on the basis of how much they have advanced our Lord’s heavenly Kingdom-life. In contrast, there will be those who have appeared to be of little importance, and yet, have quietly worked in the background to further the invisible kingdom of God in the souls of individuals.

God’s plan is that there shall be none of self and all of Christ. The very people who are doing the most for God are those who are working without worldly advantages. As the apostles of old, these saints are kept in a position of living by faith and taking from God, day by day, the supplies that are needed to carry out His work.

While it may have looked to the world that Jesus was a failure, His way of laying down His life in weakness for the good of others always comes out on top. Not only did it keep His soul filled with the glory of His Father while He walked in this world, it brought Him to the place He could be highly exalted into the heavenly realms and seated above every other principality and power. It provided Him with access to infinite power.

Everyone who desires to share with Christ in His glory in this world and also be highly exalted into a position of power in His eternal kingdom must be willing to take His way of weakness and dependent faith. While it may appear to the world that this life is an absolute

failure, this willingness to take the way of the cross will turn out to be the most valuable thing that could ever have been done.

Rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (1 Pet. 4:13)

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world... We are fools for Christ's sake... We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! (1 Cor. 4:9-10)

Even though Jesus and His apostles ended up being despised and treated poorly by the world in general, God always comes out ahead and on the top. He seems to give Satan and this sinful world all the advantages. Then He handicaps Himself, and like Jacob, walks with a lame leg, and goes afoot while the great men of this world, like Esau, ride on horses, and make a great show. In the end, like lame Jacob, God conquers and carries His point in such a quiet way that He seems to be doing very little from the perspective of this self-exalting world. And yet, like the actions of chemistry, He is always working miraculous changes out of sight and far under the surface of things. There will be a day, however, when He does reveal His kingdom of holy saints. They will then show forth the glory that He has given to them through His Spirit.

## **The Fullness of Capability**

## **From "White Robes"**

Inasmuch as God formed us for Himself, we never reach our true self till we have become one in life and nature with Him. It is the fullness of the Spirit that brings out the full capabilities of the creature. Two results are secured when the believer is filled with the Spirit of God. First, the dross of inward sin is purged away. And secondly, all the faculties and latent capacities of the soul begin to be opened in Divine service.

Thousands of believers who are living as servants of God are yet almost totally ignorant of their spiritual capabilities. You will never know your capacity for endurance, for faith, for vividness of spiritual understanding, for witnessing to the resurrection life of Jesus, for intimate communion with God, for intensity of self-sacrificing love, for victory over trial, for courage and gentleness, for steady zeal and tireless work, until you are living in a way that permits God to keep you filled with His Spirit up to your measure.

Throughout the length of Christendom you will hear ministers substituting culture for Christ's Spirit. On every hand you can hear this: "I am trying to educate the members of my church to do better and to give more." But these attempts to change the heart by human effort are ineffective in the long run. While the emotions can be worked up, and great spurts of self-sacrifice can be drawn out of the people, it will be short-lived. And so the minister must continue to work week after week in an attempt to maintain the momentum.

In contrast to these human means, you will find that the very things that Christians shrink from, saying they cannot do or suffer such things, are the very things they will gladly do when they are walking in the fullness of Christ's Spirit. The Holy Spirit, as He reveals the life of Jesus within the soul, provides an inward desire that loves to sacrifice itself for the good of God's eternal kingdom.

Preachers who are vainly trying to educate their people into God's service need to focus their attention on leading them by faith into our Lord's Kingdom-life of perfect love. Then they would discover to their glad amazement how Christ's Spirit is able to resurrect and inflame the latent capacities of the various church members more in one week than all their poor education could do in a lifetime. To be filled with Christ's Spirit, to be drinking every day deeper and yet deeper of the nature of God, this will purify, adorn and expand every God-given capability of man. And only in this way, after entering into this supernatural life, can we ever expect to lead others into the same life.

## **How God Deals with Us**

## **From "Our Own God"**

God generally calls people to some special work by filling their minds with a vision of it. But after inspiring their hearts with a longing zeal to do the work, He then holds them back, and allows the intervention of difficulties and time to discipline them in various ways, before permitting them to do the work.

When we have exhausted our knowledge, and have reached the point of stillness where we can live by dependent faith alone, God will begin to speak. Moses was forty years in Horeb praying after failing in his own efforts to help his people. For much of this time he was probably troubled over his failure. But God still had a plan and was preparing His servant for the work. Because of the greatness of the work, Moses needed to become the most humble man on earth. It was not until he had reached the place of helplessness, deep humility and interior stillness that he could begin hearing the voice of God calling to him from the burning bush.

God will need to humble and still our soul before we will be prepared to walk by His Spirit. It does little good to clamor for Him to speak loudly through the storm and earthquake. When the emotions remain active and loud, preventing God's quiet voice from being heard, there is little that God can do through us. He will need to wait until all this human activity has ceased and we have learned to quietly wait on Him. Only then will He begin to speak and reveal the details of what He has planned to do.

## **Counterpart Providences**

## **From "Our Own God"**

If the Holy Spirit has called you to a certain line of work, He never takes back His own call. "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (Rom. 11:29) God does not fool with His creatures and mock their deepest convictions. As truly as He has spoken in your heart about a certain sphere of work, so truly has He been preparing the place of work.

Those who remain fully yielded to His purposes can expect Him to bring the two hemispheres of His providence together.

When we are absolutely sunk into God's will, and seek only to please Him, no creature, nor any multiplied millions of creatures, either good or bad, can hinder what He has planned to do. The only thing that can prevent God from carrying out His preordained work through our lives is our own self-will.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus {in His image} for good works, *which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*  
(Eph. 2:10)

Those who are working for the Lord alone can know that the Holy Spirit is always working. The Spirit of God watches over every movement. He is constantly adjusting causes to effects, and leading us to respond to the situation, and moving things both near and far to make all things work out for good. Nothing can be too small in His daily dealings with us. The more closely we watch and respond to His leadings and providences, the more we will see His mighty hand at work.

## **Going Slow with God**

## **From "Our Own God"**

There is a universal weakness in fallen man that leads to impatience, impulsiveness and doing things prematurely. This fallen nature inevitably thinks that God moves far too slowly. But God is never slow from His standpoint.

When we first set out to discover God's ways we find there are many things to unlearn. His heavenly way of doing things can only be revealed to us as we move into more advanced stages of grace. One of these deeper lessons is that of learning to move very slowly with our Creator. It is not laziness, or indifference, nor lagging behind. It is just the opposite of a dull and careless spirit. It is a disposition that is ceaselessly waiting on God's order and responding to His every movement.

There is no hurry in a Being Who sees and knows everything from all eternity. True, God often acts instantaneously, but it is the immediacy of a mature and boundless wisdom, and not the quickness of a creature hastily reacting by the emotions because of being fearful of the unknown future.

We will not walk in close harmony with God until we learn to walk slowly with Him by faith. It involves taking time to pray, to listen to what He is saying, and to watch the pace of His guidance, measuring our steps accordingly.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. (Ps. 37:23)

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My {all-knowing} eye. (Ps. 32:8)

If we are to walk as Jesus did—the Son who never said or did anything out from Himself—we will need to learn to listen carefully to the guidance of the Spirit. There should never be a change of course without first recognizing clear guidance from our heavenly Father.

If you have been led to do something, do not permit your emotions and desires to change the course. “For if you live according to the flesh, you will die.” (Rom. 8:13) You will lose whatever spiritual life you once possessed.

God does not change His plans to accommodate our whims. Those who live by the impulses of the flesh, instead of waiting on the Spirit, will find that God works against them. In contrast, those who walk slowly with Him will see His hand quietly unfolding and opening the various opportunities that He has prepared. There will be gentle prompts and checks of the Holy Spirit upon our decisions or words. These leadings of the Spirit are not heard by those who impulsively respond to the latest whims of the flesh.

There is no telling how much we have lost spiritually by not walking slow with God. Everything that grows and gets its life from God needs an opportunity to become ripe. While there is work to do in preparing a crop for harvest, the resulting produce always has its source in God. The results are always His responsibility. And we will inevitably experience loss if we try to harvest the crop ahead of God’s timing.

This is why it is so important to enter into God’s rest where we cease from our own works. We need to come to the place where we prefer the deep, quiet, and peaceful work of the Spirit to the rushing, noisy and wild movements of the flesh. The very center of the soul must be calm and peaceful before it will ever enter into God’s way of doing things.

## **A Holy Taste**

## **From “White Robes”**

There is a deep meaning in the old Methodist interrogation, “Do you enjoy religion?” It means a great deal more than enjoying church life or being a Christian in the ordinary sense of the term. It refers to a form of life where God’s Presence is always known. It speaks of the “rivers” of Living Water that fill the channels of the soul to such a degree that it has become a rolling tide of luxury.

There is a place where the tastes of the soul are so corrected that every form of service to God, regardless of the suffering involved, becomes our highest, keenest and sweetest joy. The ways of the Spirit become a perpetually increasing charm to our tastes.

When the heart is still mixed with the things of this world, the mind remains divided. Part of the mind still has a taste for worldly things, including its literature, its honors, its security, its comforts, its pleasures and its temporal rewards. This division results in



conflict and unrest. And yet, it would never go as far as worldly people naturally do. It thinks it can eat just a little from the forbidden tree without being completely cut off from the Tree of Life. But those who take this course will find that their soul never finds deep satisfaction.

Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit. Be astonished... For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water. (Jer. 2:11-13)

Multitudes of Christians, both preachers and their flocks, are trying to find spiritual life from both the world and heaven at the same time. It is like eating junk food. It tends to satisfy the desires of the body, but in the end, because it supplies improper nourishment, it leads to sickness and disease. The same principle applies to our spiritual life. We are able to satisfy ourselves to some degree when we feed on worldly things, but the soul ends up becoming sick and diseased.

Those who call themselves Christians would feel disgraced to go as far as worldly people do in pursuing earthly things. And yet, {should it be said?} they would feel nearly as disgraced if they pursued the life of heaven through a complete separation from all earthly idols.

God has purposed to turn our body into a holy temple that He can use to reveal His Life and Glory. But there must be a complete separation from all idols of the heart before it is possible to come into His heavenly Presence.

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them...” Therefore, “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you...” (2 Cor. 6:16-18)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

Everything in the service of God becomes a perennial joy in a Spirit-filled soul. The tastes of the intellect, the perceptions of reason, the dictates of conscience, the choices of will and the appetites of the heart flow like a crystal stream towards the heavenly and Divine. Then the things of this world become beautiful only as the light from Christ’s life shines on them and we relate to them through the mark of the Lamb.

When our tastes are thoroughly cleansed and renewed by the Spirit, they are far more intense toward Divine things than they ever were toward earthly things. Nothing is normal in the soul until it is brought into this full harmony with God. Hence, when our taste is restored to the pure taste of God, we begin to act with an energy and zest for the things of the heavenly world that far surpasses our former relish for the things of this world.

Who will believe these truths and prove their reality to the world? These heavenly ardors can be raised only upon the utter spoliation of our earthly and semi-earthly tastes. God fits us for heaven by completely spoiling our taste for the things of this world.

The vulture and the dove are divided only by their taste; so are demons and seraphs. When all the tastes are perfectly holy, the soul will be spoiled for all worlds except heaven, into which it naturally gravitates.

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction...who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven... (Phil. 3:17-20)

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:2-3)

## **Thou Art My God**

## **From “My Own God”**

There are many religious zealots in the world who are working arduously to build up sectarian establishments or are ambitiously pouring themselves out to accomplish religious goals. Because most of this work comes from the creature, it will not pass through the testing fires of Judgment. It is what we have permitted the Spirit of God to accomplish through us that will bear everlasting fruit. The work that will be recognized in heaven takes place when the soul dies to its own plans and ambitions, yields up its life to God, takes into itself God’s plan and the welfare of His kingdom, and begins to work directly for Him through His Spirit.

The highest form of Divine appropriation is that by which we receive Christ so deeply into our thoughts and choices and desires, that we spontaneously become vessels of His life. Once we have died to the flesh-life and have truly found our life in God, we begin receiving insight into the movement of His mind and purposes. A new kind of wisdom develops that has its source in the character and life of Christ. “We have the mind of Christ.” (1 Cor. 2:16) As we share with Him in His divine nature, we share in His calmness, restfulness, extreme simplicity, impartiality, limitless charity and the humility that utterly ignores what the world calls great and fine.

Blessed are they who can open every part of their being without reserve to God and appropriate Him through the channel of Christ’s humanity in all His character, and say continually, “O God, Thou art my God.”

I have become its servant {a minister of Christ’s Church} by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make

known...the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me...

My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments... So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, *continue to live in him*... (Col. 1:25-2:6 NIV)