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J. B. CHAPMAN

LET the
WINDS
BLOW

Selected Writings

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Compiled by
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PREFACE

Almost ten years ago the author of the following essays went to his heavenly home. While he lived, he enjoyed writing equally as well as he enjoyed preaching. All of his writing was easy to read and was written for the people of his church. He wrote for those who lived in a world filled with problems and perplexities.

The essays which are contained in this volume have been gathered from books and writings published over a period of twenty-five years. It was the thought of the publisher to give the rising generation of readers a chance to become acquainted with one who spent most of his spare time writing.

Dr. Chapman, my father, loved people. He loved boys and girls. His one desire was to make the life of a Christian attractive to all who would learn of Jesus.

Many times friends would come to my father and say, "You are a born writer." Yet in moments of reflection my father often declared, "Writing is the hardest thing I do. No one is born a writer. One is a writer because he writes."

May this book, *Let the Winds Blow*, prove a blessing and be an encouragement to all who peruse its pages.

January, 1957

GRACE RAMQUIST

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1. The Christian Faith

I believe that God is a Person of infinite power, infinite knowledge and love; and that in a universe so large that the telescope cannot discover its outer fringe and so perfectly formed that the microscope reveals a miniature universe in its smallest visible portion, I am yet the object of His tender consideration and care.

I Know God Is My Father

Two or three of us stood by in wordless grief and sympathy while the fond mother endeavored to go yet farther into the narrows of "the valley of shadows" with her fourteen-year-old son. Over and over she called to him, and as she stroked his pallid face, she said, "O Claud, please smile again and make me know you realize I am your mother." The fact that she was his mother did not fully satisfy her. She wanted him to be conscious of the relationship, and she wanted him to confess it.

And how dull are the compensations of those who discourse upon the fatherhood of God in the atmosphere of cold logic and documentary evidence! This situation too calls for consciousness and confession. I am thankful for the logic by which the fitness of things is made to show that we are God's offspring. I am thankful for the documentary evidence, especially for that found in the Holy Scriptures, which warrants the assumption by which I am enabled to say, "Our Father which art in heaven." But even these are not enough. Perhaps it would be presumptuous beyond defense for me to say they are not enough for the Heavenly Father, and that He, like the mother at the bedside of her dying

boy, longs for our recognition that He is our Father. But I can speak quite freely concerning the human side of it, and say that my own heart requires full and direct assurance.

God promised Abraham that he should possess the land of Canaan, and that his descendants should be his heirs of the same patrimony. The noble patriarch entertained no doubts as to the validity of the promise, but in a matter so vital he felt that he should have assured knowledge. And in such a spirit and temper, he cried out to God, "Whereby shall I *know* that I shall inherit it?" Answering him, God came in the symbols of the smoking furnace and burning lamp, met Abraham between the pieces of the bisected sacrifice, and sealed the promise with solemn guaranties.

God is my Father. The Bible justifies my making this claim upon my meeting certain conditions, and logic sustains me in such a testimony; but whereby shall I *know* that this is true? Whereby shall I find personal consciousness that the general principle has personal example in me? It will require the smoking lamp and burning furnace of God's Holy Spirit to bring these tokens, and I am happy to say this proof is mine today. God is my Father; I feel it and know it by the witness of the Spirit which He has given me. I confess this relation and give testimony to it that others may hear and come to know the same full assurance that my poor heart has found.

It Makes All the Difference

It makes all the difference whether man is immortal or not. If he is not immortal, then the best philosophy of life is, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." But if he is immortal, then this life is a probation period in which we are expected to prepare for the unending ages yet to be. "Seeing all these things are to be destroyed, what manner of men ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

It makes all the difference whether there is a supreme God of infinite power, wisdom, and holiness. If there is not such a God, then the universe and we ourselves are mere accidents of blind chance, no moral responsibility is involved, and no judgment awaits us. But if there is such a God, then we are His creatures, no matter how much we may make of secondary causes, and we are responsible to Him now and shall answer to Him later when our day on earth is finished.

It makes all the difference whether sin is truly reprehensible and defiling. If it is not, then there is no reason to become agitated about it. If it is mere weakness and misfortune and is no more than a rash on the skin, we do well to forget it and go on in moral and spiritual indifference. But if it is truly the des-

picable thing that God hates, if its guilt bars us from the favor of God and its defilement makes us unhappy in the company of the holy now and everywhere, all possible duties must give way to a search for a remedy for this mortal moral ailment. Salvation for ourselves and others is the chief concern.

It makes all the difference whether Jesus Christ is God. If He is not God, then He is merely a great teacher and example whose wisdom may enlighten us and whose manner of life may inspire us to our own best human effort. But if He is God, then His blood is merit for our pardon and purifying and His Spirit is efficient to make us good where we are bad, and victorious over all the enemies of our highest good.

Man is immortal; God is eternal, and is infinite in power, wisdom, and holiness. Sin is indescribably real and terrible; Jesus Christ is very God, as well as very man. Therefore we are responsible creatures, salvation is our one chief concern, the blood of Jesus Christ is efficacious for our pardon and cleansing, and the Holy Spirit is present with His offer of help to regenerate and sanctify and to empower. Those who build upon these facts and conclusions are never disappointed!

Jesus Christ the Peerless

Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. Angels are created sons, saved men are redeemed sons, but only Jesus Christ is the begotten Son. This word describes not so much a history of origin as a mode of existence. He is and always has been the only begotten Son of God. This statement implies equality in the Godhead among the three adorable Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost, hence had no human father, and was born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a spotless life, worked such miracles as only God can do, taught the way of salvation and life without a single error, died to provide atonement for the sins of all men, and arose from the grave in the power of an endless life.

When Jesus ascended to heaven the Holy Spirit was sent into the world to carry out in power what Jesus had given in provision. This Holy Spirit reproves sinners of sin, gives contrition of heart to those who will to repent, regenerates the hearts of those who receive Jesus Christ as Saviour, and sanctifies to entirety the hearts of all Christians who make full consecration to God

and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the purifying of their souls.

In His glorified presence Jesus Christ pleads for us all at the right hand of God. In His spiritual presence He comes to dwell within our hearts. And according to the promise, He will return to this world the second time to take to himself those who have been saved by His grace and sanctified by His Spirit. And the brightest promise relating to a glorious heaven assures us that we shall be "for ever with the Lord."

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Heb. 13:20-21).

And the Word was made 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 (John 1:14).

The Normal Spirit-filled Life

Hearsay concerning holiness is exceedingly persistent. Weak, unthinking sentimentalists strive to minimize sin, and they tell us that all are practically holy when they are born, and that what little there is the matter with us is just weakness and misunderstanding, and that no one really wants to be bad. On the other hand, stalwart theologians speak quite to the contrary, and say that none can possibly be holy in this life. Between these extremes many sincere Christians settle down to the conclusion that perhaps one now and then may become really good, but that the average person can at best live only on the fringe of that blessed state. But the Holy Scriptures teach that the Spirit-filled life is the normal Christian life, and that it is the privilege and duty of all true believers, not only to strive for purity, but to actually trust the promise of God and obtain the priceless boon.

By His death upon the cross, Christ potentially saved everybody, and saved everybody to the uttermost. But only the Holy Spirit can save us efficiently by His regenerating and sanctifying power. And the distinguishing quality of a Christian is not power to repress sin, but power to expel it.

Negative holiness is a concept of thinkers, but it does not exist in fact. Sin is dethroned only when Christ is enthroned, and the heart continues pure only while Christ remains. I write these lines in a stateroom on the lower deck of a steamer in the south Atlantic. Just now I have the electric light on and the whole room is full of light. But the darkness is gone conditionally, rather than absolutely. It is gone on condition that the light remains. Likewise, only a Spirit-filled heart is a pure heart—no theory can invalidate this fact.

In the New Testament "baptized with the Holy Spirit" and "filled with the Holy Spirit" are sometimes used as interchangeable terms, but they are not always so used. Baptism describes the initiation, fullness describes the continuing results. There is, normally and properly, one baptism with the Holy Spirit; but the Spirit-filled life is a thing of constancy and continuation in which there is place for "many fillings" and unlimited enlargement.

It is not normal for any of us to think ourselves entitled to something that is offered only to the favored few. But the commandment, "Be filled with the Spirit," has no limitations. The humblest child of God, as well as the most noted apostle or missionary, needs this grace, and by diligent search may come to possess it, for the Spirit-filled life is the normal Christian life.

The Essentials of True Faith

The first four of the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-6) set forth the elements of the faith that is indispensable to acceptance with God in both the crises and processes of Christian life. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: . . . they that mourn: . . . the meek: . . . they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Poverty of spirit is deep inner consciousness of need. The Pharisee who went to the place of prayer did not have this. The publican at the same place did. God disdains the haughty, but lends ear to the humble; and none who feels himself sufficient finds his way into the kingdom of Heaven. "All the fitness Christ requireth is to feel your need of Him." "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him" (Ps. 34:6).

Mourning is the attitude of penitence; it is the acceptance of responsibility that things are no better than they are. Alibis, accusation of others, excuses, and self-justification bar both pardon of sins and companionship with God. "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree" (Luke 1: 51-52).

Meekness is the positive, purposeful positioning of one's self for receiving. It is not mere surrender. It is insistent claim for the low place—the place of blessing. The lowlands get the rain. True meekness is not pessimistic, but optimistic; for it rests upon the conviction that God stands in the shadows, and that the Judge of all the earth will do right. It is the submission of confidence, not the surrender of despair.

But the poor in spirit must not be content with poverty. The mourner must get rid of the causes for his grief. The meek must reach out to the storehouse of all good. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Poverty, penitence, persistence! Kingdom, condition, comfort, contentment!

Faith is not something we use only when we first petition God. Faith is indeed an act, but it is also an attitude. It does have a beginning, but its tenure is permanent. For everyone, whether mature saint or seeking sinner, poverty and patrimony, penitence and pacification, position and power, persistence and plentitude are related as conditions and as consequences. And together these constitute the faith that finishes.

Why I Am a Christian

The beginning of my personal, vital interest in Christianity was based upon a sentiment composed of fear and hope in fairly equal proportions. I was afraid of failure in the principal purposes of life, and of judgment and hell in the world yet to come; and I hoped I might find the solution for my problem and refuge from my fear in Christ and the salvation He offers.

My conversion was so clear and definite that I have been spared subsequent doubts concerning the existence of God and the reality of spiritual things. Since my conversion I have had to be a Christian to preserve my self-respect and honor. But the grace of Christ has been so abundant as to enable me to live principally in the sphere of the voluntary. I have not found it necessary to draw very often upon the sense of moral necessity, for I have found satisfaction in the Christian experience and life. My heart has found healing and assurance in Him.

And then the Christian philosophy of life has met the demands of my intellect. I can see logical consistency in the scheme of affairs. Whether they affect me directly or not, and whether they affect me favorably or otherwise, I have learned from the Bible and the testimony

of experience that "there is a destiny that shapes our ends" in the realm of the spiritual, and that good is a moral and spiritual quality, not a physical or social factor at all. I have found intellectual satisfaction in the Christian way.

Christ and Christianity have so completely met the deep needs of my heart and mind that they constitute a compulsion stronger than force. I seem incapable of wishing to be anything more and anything other than a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as deep and true a Christian as I can find means for being. There is no good life except the Christian life, and no ultimate goal except the prospect of one day awakening in His glorious likeness.

But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee (Acts 26:16).

2. The Gospel Call

*Remorse leads to darkness and death;
repentance leads to light and life: so choose
repentance.*

Full Heads Bend Over

Observing that only part of his congregation bowed when prayer was called, the minister remarked that he had observed in the wheat fields the full heads bent over as the harvest neared, but those heads that bore no grain stood upright even as the reaper approached.

The wise head is humble, even as the good heart is reverent. Sound thinking and noble emotions are inseparable companions. The wise man, conscious of sin, bows in repentance; assured of pardon, he bends in thanksgiving; aware of his ignorance, he stoops in humility; surveying his weakness, he reclines in meekness; crushed by sorrow, he falls low in submission; conscious that he is the recipient of unmerited favors from both God and men, his head goes limp in wonder and praise. Full heads bend over!

The wise man enters the house of God with prayer in his heart and on his lips. He bows in petitionary prayer for blessings upon the hour of worship. He refrains from listless staring, from conversation with his fellows, from laughter and all lightness during the waiting moments, during the preliminary service, and during the time in which the Word of God is read and expounded. When prayer is called, the wise man bows,

shuts out the world of time and sense, and enters into the closet with his God. Full heads bend over!

Seeing Daniel Webster about to enter an orthodox church, a light-thinking acquaintance of Unitarian leanings asked: "Are you going in there to worship three gods?" He with the full head made answer, "My friend, there are many things that are true that you and I do not understand." And so saying, Webster went on to his place to worship. Full heads bend over!

Skepticism has laid ready claim to possession of the brains of the world. But sober investigation does not support its claims. The rule with science as with religion is that full heads bend over. But the exceptional makes the news. It is so unusual that one should be humble enough to enter the kingdom of knowledge while yet too arrogant to enter the Kingdom of grace that when one does this contradictory thing the whole world takes notice. Still, when looking upon a meeting of true scholars one would observe that here, as in the church, the full heads bend over!

What My Religion Demands of Me

My religion demands that I turn my back forever upon everything that is wicked and worldly and wrong. I cannot hold to faith in Christ except as I set my will uncompromisingly to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts." Being friends with God necessitates that I break all voluntary friendships with the ungodly world.

My religion demands that I not only refuse the things which are expressly forbidden, but also all such as I find by experience as I go along to be at variance with the fullest light God lets shine upon my pathway, and which serve in any measure to lessen my enjoyment of God. Whenever I fall into even a temporary carelessness concerning the details of the will of God for me, I suffer the threat of spiritual eclipse, and find it necessary to take myself in hand and give fullest heed to the checks of the Spirit.

My religion demands that I devote myself to God and to His work without stint and without limitation. I have as yet not been called upon to die a martyr's death, but I am called upon day by day to live a martyr's life—ready to pay the last installment yet due on a martyr's crown at the first intimation that such is God's plan for me. My service is often no more significant in

appearance than the giving of a cup of cold water, but the spirit with which I serve must always be of the highest possible order.

My religion demands that I identify myself with the deep needs of dying humanity, and that I serve my day and generation as God shall show me how, without respect to the approval or disapproval of those whom I seek to save and to serve. I am called to minister, and not to be ministered unto. My life is not my own. It has been bought by the price of Christ's own precious blood. I cannot take a way because it is pleasant, nor refuse another way because it is disagreeable. Only two questions matter, and they are answered as one: Where am I needed? and, Where does God want me?

My religion demands that I obey the will of God, as it is given me to know that will, instantly, gladly, and fully, without regard to the consequence or apparent consequences; for "there's no other way [for me] to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey."

All or None

Jesus' coat was without seam, being woven in one piece, so that dividing it would ruin it. The soldiers to whom the garment fell concluded it would be better for one of them to have a useful garment than for each of them to have a worthless scrap. Christ cannot be divided. We must take Him only or not take Him at all. It cannot be Christ and Mohammed, Christ and Buddha, or Christ and the world. It must be Christ or the others—Christ and no others.

And it must be Christ in all His fullness or no Christ at all. It cannot be just Christ as an example; Christ as a teacher, but not Christ as Saviour and Lord. Jesus is either what He claimed to be or He was an impostor. He could not be a good man and claim to be the Son of God if He were not the Son of God. He could not be a wise teacher and yet be unable to show men the way to everlasting life. But if He shows the way to everlasting life, then that way is by faith in Him as the Son of God. If believing on Jesus Christ as the Son of God will not save men, then Jesus cannot save men, for He never proposed to save them any other way than this. Either we must take Jesus Christ as Lawgiver,

Teacher, Example, Saviour, and King or we must reject Him.

And it must be Christ with all the heart or no Christ at all. It cannot be Christ on Sunday, and self the other days of the week. It cannot be Christ in religion, and the world in politics and business. It cannot be Christ in appearance and profession, but with reservations concerning His sufficiency. We must hang our souls on Christ as our only hope and stay, or we must leave Him out in favor of the substitutes with which He is in competition. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

It must be Christ in the heart, Christ in the life, Christ in the home, Christ in the forum, Christ in the marts of trade, Christ everywhere and all the time. It must be Christ in the morning, in the noontide, in the evening, and in the dark hours of the night. It must be Christ when His name is praised, and Christ when He is maligned by men. He must be our choice whether He is on the scaffold or on the throne. It must be Christ in sickness and in health; Christ in life and in death; Christ Jesus forevermore!

There can be no divided allegiance. I answer the challenge and take Him as my all in all. I give Him my all, and of His fullness I now receive. The lot has fallen to me. I have drawn, not the undivided, seamless coat, but the glorious, undivided Christ that wore the coat.

O Christ of the seamless coat, be Thou my undivided possession! Be now and always my all in all!

The Monotony of Mischief

The drug fiend, the addict to alcohol, and the slave to nicotine are all examples of the bondage to which the practice of evil unerringly leads. It is only when the victim first indulges that sin is thrilling. Sin itself is monotonous, and like the taskmasters of Egypt, continues to demand its toll of bricks long after it ceases to furnish the straw of pleasure.

In the history of our race, man became proficient in sin before he made any perceptible advancement in science, art, or religion. Man of today may coarsen or refine the forms, but he cannot invent any basically new type of evil. Cain committed murder just outside of Eden! The generations that lived before the Flood were violent in vice, confirmed in crime, and immovable in impiety. Noah got drunk on alcohol before the earth was yet entirely dry of the waters of judgment. Sodom was so proficient in crimes against purity that she gave her name to deeds of shame that otherwise are anonymous. And there is not a base thought or criminal deed that is not catalogued in the first three chapters of the Book of Romans.

Evil is retrogressive and degenerative, and moves with increasing speed as it approaches its center of

gravity. Thought fathers deed, deed generates habit, habit produces character, character predetermines destiny. The insatiable desire for "thrills" is but obedience to the inexorable downward pull of the master of perdition. At the bottom of the hill is hell, the octopus from which reach out the capturing, destroying tentacles of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—vice and crime and sin in all their multitudinous forms.

The young sinner is like one just entering a treacherous stream; the seasoned sinner is like one borne on by the swift and turbulent current of that same stream. The old and dying sinner is like one who has come to the cataract over which he is about to plunge. The young sinner is illusioned, the seasoned sinner is delusioned, but the old sinner (when it is too late) is disillusioned and then destroyed.

No one person can commit all sins, for the house of sin is divided against itself. One cannot be both a miser and a spendthrift, a courtier and a slanderer, a publican and a Pharisee. Repetition leads to callousness, so that new forms of sin and larger quantities of old vices become objects of eternal pursuit, and there is therefore "no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Samson's treadmill leads to no goal, but to shame and death. The monotonous road of mischief leads to the multiple ways of death!

Come Just as You Are

The travel-stained and weary traveler is cheered by the homely words on the hotel sign: "Come just as you are"; for this means that the guest will not be ostracized on account of his appearance. It will not be necessary for the guest to adjust; the hotel will do that. The traveler, it is promised, will become the center of interest. It is as though the hotel were in business just for the guest's comfort; as though the management were looking for him and would be disappointed if he does not come.

Enlarging upon the fact that Jesus was born in a stable belonging to an inn, Boreham suggests that this, in symbol, was the widest possible invitation for all to come. The inn is open to the rich and the poor. There is no need to ring a bell or use the knocker. No special permission is required. No guards or doormen will annoy. Everything says as plainly as possible, "Come just as you are."

Sometimes when people are seeking God they wonder why they are not told just exactly how they should come. Shall they stand or sit or kneel to pray? Shall they go into their own private room, to a small company of friends, or to a public altar of prayer? Shall they pray aloud or only in a low whisper? Shall they

ask the help of others or shall they try to find the way themselves? Why can it not be said in just so many words, Do this and do that and you will find God and pardon and peace? But that is just it. If the time and place and posture and method were defined, then there would be times and places when one could not come, and there might even be some people who could not come at all, because they would be unable to come in the manner prescribed. But it is like a mother who calls her child, saying, "Come." She does not stop to say, "Come running," or, "Come creeping." She leaves these incidental matters to the child. Just let him come in his own way. Only let him be sure to come.

And the call of Christ is universal like that. "Whosoever will, let him come." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Come just as you are. Come in your own way. Only come. Come with loud weeping, or come in complete silence. Come on your knees, sitting on your chair, standing, walking, or lying prone upon the ground. Come in the closet of secret prayer, or in the presence of the great congregation. Come on the advice of others, or come with no human counsel at all. Only be sure to come. "Oh, everybody come, come to the Saviour, come."

3. The Way of Holiness

Shall we suffer any fear of exhausting the heights? Shall we say the hills are enough for us? Nay, let us arise and ask for the mountains. And let us not be content with the mere legal title. Let us up and set our feet on the high places and follow the river of life to its Source. Come, let us go up to the mountains of God!

The Barrier Is the Boundary

No thoughtful person has ever questioned that there are gradual processes involved in receiving entire sanctification. The real question is, Is there a sense in which sanctification is also instantaneous? John Wesley contended that no matter how closely one may approach by gradual stages, there is a last moment when sin exists in the heart and a first moment when sin is all gone, but these two moments are so contiguous that it is impossible to posit any measure of time as separating them. At this very moment we are, each one of us, either entirely free from sin, or we are not free from sin. If we are free, then we are, in the New Testament sense, sanctified wholly; if we are not free, then we are not yet entirely sanctified.

The children of Israel approached Canaan, their inheritance, and the type of our spiritual inheritance, by gradual stages. They came ever nearer and nearer to it by a long series of checkered experiences. Sometimes they were quite near, as when they came first to Kadesh-barnea, and only an agreed line separated them from it. Then again they wandered farther way, but they never went back into Egypt. In the end they recovered the lost ground, and came at last to the border of the good land

which God had promised them for an inheritance. Even on the plains of Moab, they were near the land, but not actually in it; the Jordan River still lay between them and their patrimony. The Jordan was indeed a barrier, but it was also a boundary; across it lay Canaan.

In such an illustration of Christian truth and experience as the history of God's ancient people presents, it is scarcely possible to imagine a better symbol of the instantaneous character of the grace by which we are made clean from sin than the Jordan River affords. That that crossing was not so sudden as the flash of lightning or the twinkling of an eye is so much the better for the typology; for sanctification itself is not sudden like that, but is instantaneous like a birth or a death or a baptism. But there is no escape from the conclusion that on the east side of the river the Israelites were not in Canaan, and on the west side they were in "the land." On which side of the barrier and boundary of the Canaan land of perfect love to you find yourself today?

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God
(Heb. 4:9).

The Urgency of the Blessing

Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it (Num. 13:30).

The first section of our Holy Bible does not end with Deuteronomy, but with Joshua; for it is in the Book of Joshua that we find the ancient people of God settled in their Promised Land. We have high authority for considering these ancient people as examples for the ages that have followed. It is neither safe nor necessary to attempt to establish essential doctrines or sound practices by the simple use of Biblical types or figures. However, whenever these doctrines and practices have upon them the plain stamp of "Thus saith the Lord," the types and shadows are found useful for illustration and emphasis.

God has always had a heritage for His people. The land of Canaan was such to the Israelites, whom He chose to be the progenitors of the race through which His Son was to make His advent into the world. And that land of Canaan has become the symbol of the heritage of the people of God in the Christian dispensation. Canaan in Christian thought and experience is not heaven, but is a heavenly estate—a spiritual inheritance which may be attained in this world. For this belief

there is abundant authority both in the Bible and in the literature and hymnology of the Church throughout all the centuries.

This Canaan-land experience is known by a variety of terms, among them entire sanctification, holiness, perfect love, and the baptism with the Holy Ghost. It is not obtained at conversion, but one need not wait for death to receive it. Its condition is faith, and faith is a function possible in this life. The call of God to all His people is a call to holiness of heart and life.

But too often Christians are like the children of Israel when they first approached their Promised Land. The scouts they sent over to spy out the land reported that it was a good land, but that the demands for its conquest and possession were too great. Accepting the words of these "unfaithful spies," the children of Israel drew back. But in the critical moment of their hesitation, Caleb, stilling their clamors, cried, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." Caleb spoke by faith in God. That is the basis of our claim that we, too, can have the blessing of holiness (our spiritual Canaan), and that we can have it now.

Meeting the Conditions

The experiences of the children of Israel from the time they approached the Jordan until they entered into Canaan are strikingly typical of the conditions the Christian must face in order to obtain the grace and experience of entire sanctification.

An old writer in describing the conditions met by these ancient representatives of God's people says it required courage, consecration, and committal.

First, there had to be the *courage* of purpose in order to obtain the inheritance. The world of Christians cannot be divided simply into opposers and possessors or seekers. There are also the well-intended but timid, who cannot be classed as opposers, but who are too passive to gain the victory. We must not be content to be classed as friends and well-wishers. We must come with boldness and courage, fully determined to pay the price.

We are to be like the old man who was offended when the ticket agent gave the travel information requested, and then added a statement as to the price of the ticket. The old man said, "Never mind telling me the price. I decided to pay that, whatever it is, before I came to the station."

Consecration is the definite dedication to God of one's

self, and all that is his or dear to him, for time and for eternity. There can be no reservations and no limitations. Because this act cannot be performed by a rebel sinner, one cannot be entirely sanctified at the same time that he is justified. But he can be sanctified at any time after justification, and there is no reason why sanctification should not occur soon after justification. As distinguished from repentance (which is the definite giving up of evil), consecration is the dedication of all one's good—the positive presentation of all one's ransomed powers to God without reservation and without limitation.

Committal is the act of definite trust or faith, and faith is so closely related to obedience that it is impossible always to differentiate them. The case of the Israelites is an illustration. The waters of the Jordan did not divide until the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant actually touched the water. It was not enough that they should stand on the bank and pray; they must needs commit themselves to the consequences of their faith. It was a "sink or swim, survive or perish" committal. This is what brought the victory.

The Latitudes of Holiness

John Edward Bushnell speaks of "magnitudes beyond the narrows" from the words of the Master in Luke 12:50, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" He says that the child must pass the narrows of the alphabet and the multiplication table and the copybook before he reaches the magnitudes of learning and mathematics and the author's sphere. In traversing the countryside, narrow gates must usually be passed before the wide fields are entered. Always the glory is in the magnitudes, not in the gates.

The gate of repentance with its "wormwood and gall" is a narrow gate, but beyond the gate are the expansive plains of pardon and peace. The gate of full consecration likewise is narrow, but beyond the gate lies Beulah Land. The gate of death is so narrow that one must pass through it alone. Even the closest friend cannot walk beside. But beyond the gate is heaven.

Everyone is restricted when the things he desires to do are prohibited or penalized. He alone is free whose desires do not exceed his privileges. Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi were yet free because they did not desire to go anywhere besides; but the roamer

of the seven seas is restricted if his happiness calls for more travel than the limits of time will allow.

The man who is scripturally "dead to the world" is the only one who is really free from the world; for desires for the world have a way of outrunning the realization of the things of the world, so that the worldling is a slave to the world, and the genuinely spiritual man is free from the world. The happiness of men is not to be judged by the abundance of the things they possess, but by their ability to live contentedly without the things the world has to offer. Therefore the poor man may be rich, and the rich man is often pressed with poverty.

No man is free to do as he pleases, but a genuine Christian is free to choose what he must take. He may not be able to obtain health by praying for it, but he may prefer sickness in the will of God to health and strength with grace withheld. The Spirit-filled Christian desires nothing but the will of God, and this he can find without limitation.

David rejoiced that God had brought him out into a "wealthy place" (some margins read "a wide place"). The language is that of a man who has passed the **narrows and come out into a life in which he feels no restrictions**. He wants only what he can have, and does not grieve for the things that are denied him. His desires have been chastened until they have become the slaves of holiness, and the man himself no longer chafes under discipline, for he delights to know and do the will of God. Such a Christian has room, not only for life, but for life more abundant. The life of holiness is not the narrows—it is the life beyond the narrows. It is not the Jordan crossing, but the valleys of Eshcol and the plains of Esdraelon and Sharon. It is not a perpetual search for the unpossessable, but the actual staking of a blessed inheritance.

The Integrating Power of Holiness

E. Stanley Jones tells of a Chinese who answered the question, "To what religion do you adhere?" by saying, "Confusion" (meaning Confucianism). And Dr. Jones remarks that there are many whose religion could well be described as confusion. Many who strive to serve the Lord Jesus Christ find, like Paul, that they have divided hearts and are unable to choose and do what in their deepest souls they desire to choose and do. When they would do good, evil is present with them; and what they would not do, that they do.

There is help in the domination of a noble purpose, but not help enough. Consecration adjusts the will, but there is need of power to purify the affections. Example is insufficient—we need power to follow the example. Sin disintegrates, and we need something that will integrate. Sin and carnality divide and defeat. We need something that will unite and give victory. "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

Although a pagan untouched by the light of dependable revelation, Socrates hungered for integration. At the conclusion of "Phaedrus" it is recorded that once he went into the temple and offered this prayer: "Beloved Pan, and all ye gods who haunt this place, give

me beauty in the inward soul, and may the outward and inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be wealthy, and may I have such a quantity of gold as none but the temperate can carry. Anything more? That prayer, I think, is enough for me."

Justified Christians have prayed, "Now rest my long divided heart." Well, the grace of entire sanctification is the answer to the prayer. In this blessing the purpose of the heart is established, and the affections are purified and alienated from sin and the world and exalted to supreme love to God. The outward and inward man are reconciled, and rest of soul is found. The grace of God in full salvation is the best psychiatry (Greek *psyche*—"mind," and *iatreia*—"healing") in the world.

In scientific medicine, diagnosis is but the beginning. After the disease has been detected, the remedy must be prescribed. If there is no remedy, the whole purpose of diagnosis has failed. What does it matter what is wrong with one's body if there is no cure for the malady? And it is like that in the therapeutics of the soul. It is not enough to ferret out sin and enlarge upon man's unhappy state. The remedy must be prescribed. And thank God, there is a remedy. Cold orthodoxy will not meet the need. Activity of the human powers is not enough. But there is a fullness in the Holy Spirit that meets the full demand in us. There is holiness for the soul, just as there is health for the body. And although the conditions for bodily health may not be possible to all, holiness for the soul is offered on conditions which we all can meet.

The Fruit of Holiness

And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs . . . and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it (Num. 13:23-27).

Holiness is designed to be satisfying as an inner grace and convincing as it appears in outward expression; for its fruit appears in both the inner character (known only to God and to the possessor) and in the outer practical life. In the inner life this fruit is perfect love, full joy, and undisturbed peace. In its expression toward God it is undoubting faith, meekness without pride, and self-control. In its expression toward men it is long-suffering unmarred by unkindness, gentleness that does not become raw, and goodness that is real, not feigned.

The qualities mentioned are seen in the life of any Christian; but as the fruits of Canaan showed that land to be superior to the wilderness, so the fruit of the Christian life shows a healthiness and a fullness in the sanctified that commend this estate to all who see the fruits and hear the testimony.

A truly holy heart is a healthy and contented heart. But the estate of the heart is a personal matter, and so we must depend upon the expressional phases of life to inform us of the spirit within. One may say he is sanctified wholly, but observers require practical evidence to corroborate the claim. The claim that the heart is satisfied is contradicted if the professor yet shows too great interest in the world and reveals too high regard for the opinions of men. And in practical living, the testimony to holiness is of no force unless the claimant lives the life his profession involves.

A Chinese came to the missionary and asked to be baptized. But since he lived in a village where there had been no gospel preacher, the missionary asked, "When did you ever hear the gospel?" The Chinese replied, "Please, sir, I have never heard the gospel; I saw it. For a whole year now I have had for my neighbor in the shop right next to mine a Christian man. I believe the gospel, as I have seen it in my neighbor, and I want to be baptized as a Christian myself."

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth (Eph. 5:9).

4. The More Abundant Life

He is not only the Christ for Sabbath morning—best clothes, pealing organ, open songbook, thrilling sermon, trained choirs—He is the Christ who comes in everyday dress, for everyday workshops and everyday toils: when we are controlling our business, tilling our fields, striking our anvils, pruning our trees, mending our children's clothes, cooking in the kitchen . . . He is a working-day Christ, in working-day clothes, for working-day hardships of working-day people.

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In the Secret Place of the Most High

Men who have been carried by the Spirit into the realm of exalted spiritual life have ever borne testimony to the eternity of Christ's power and glory. When the Apostle John—a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos for the testimony of Jesus—heard the voice of the Spirit, he turned and beheld in the midst of the golden candlesticks the presence of the glorified Christ.

How changed He was! Yet John knew Him, and in his attempt to describe Him he but lifts up his earthly characteristics and glorifies them. Whether in His humiliation or in His glory, Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. The thorn-crowned head—derided by men on earth—is now that of the Ancient of Days in heaven. His tears as the Man of Sorrows glisten like flames of fire. The travel-stained and dusty feet glow like fine brass in a furnace. His words, once esteemed so lightly on earth, are like the sound of many waters; and the visage of the suffering Servant, more marred than that of any man, has become the countenance of One shining like the sun in His strength.

But the beauty and comfort of the vision lie in this, that when John saw Jesus, He was still walking among the golden candlesticks, and still holding His ministers

in His hand. The Intercessor in the garden had become a King-Priest, clothed with a royal robe and girded about with a golden girdle—emblem of regal power. But He still ministered at the altar, trimming the wicks at eventime, and filling the golden bowls with oil. When times of darkness come, when supplies run low and worldly men prophesy failure, Jesus walks among the people, trimming the wicks and supplying the oil of His grace, until the light so feeble shines forth with new strength and glory.

There is an exalted zone where the spiritual song may be heard, and where the melodies of the eternal order comfort and cheer the wayfarer amidst the din and strife of this present world. Men may not only see the light and feel the power of Christ's ministering grace; they may hold communion with Him in person. Through a new and living way—the rent veil of His flesh—men may by the Spirit enter into the holy of holies and behold the Christ glorified, there to dwell in His presence forevermore. "I in them; and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Our Dependence Will Not Let Us Forget

Give us this day our daily bread (Matt. 6:11).

Asked why God limited the supply of manna to one day's need at a time, a devout old rabbi replied, "Once there was a king who made an allowance for his son's support, and arranged for the amount to be paid in annual installments. In time it happened that the son arranged to see his father only on the day each year when his gratuity was needed. So the father divided the amount into 365 parts and ordered that the portion due should be delivered each day. After that the son came to his father every day."

Solomon, knowing the temptation of the rich was to forget God, asked that riches be not given, lest he die. And it should be observed that our Lord, in the model prayer, taught us to ask for the daily portion—not for a store that will last. And the prayer was not for luxuries, but for necessities; not for cake, just bread. We are fortunate in that we are dependent for the indispensables. We must have grace, as well as glory. We draw on God for life, as well as for health.

Our fathers prayed wisely when they said, "Past blessings have gone with past necessities." In the strictest sense, accumulations are neither wise nor possible.

Our relationship to God is like that of the motor to the dynamo. We must stay connected if we would keep supplied. The stored manna bred worms and became useless. Every morning the fresh supply must be gathered, and thus every morning contact with God must be established.

There are no interludes in prayer. We are commanded to "pray without ceasing." There is no single act of faith that answers for all time. "The just shall live by faith." There is no depositum of grace between the soul and the primary source—"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

If we could get spiritual supplies for an extended period, perhaps we, like the king's son, would forget to come to our Heavenly Father for that companionship which is of greater consequence than any detached "blessing" which could possibly come to us. But our continual dependence will not let us forget. "I need Thee every hour." "Shouldst Thou withdraw thyself from me, ah, whither shall I go?"

Plowing Around the Stumps

Three years before I was born my father claimed his heritage on sixty acres of wooded land in southern Illinois. He cut down the trees, burned the branches, and made such use of the trunks as their size and texture suggested. But the stumps of oaks and elms persisted, and among my earliest lessons in *domestic science* were some relating to methods for "plowing around the stumps." Some of the stumps were large and tall. These we did not so much dread. But some were "blind" in that they did not rise above the surface of the ground. These laid hold of the plowshare and brought everything to an abrupt stop, playing havoc with old trace chains, weak singletrees, and plowboy's patience. But the stumps were there and we had to farm the land to produce bread corn and seed wheat, so there was nothing to do but to repair the damages, and go on plowing around the stumps.

Take our own personal lives: there is promised to us a blast of Pentecostal dynamite that will remove the old stump of sinful carnality. But those who would build holy character still have to contend with weak eyes, bad digestion, frail and faulty judgment, and oddities and limitations of temperament and disposition—stumps,

stakes, thorns in the flesh that will remain until the Lord shall give us new and glorified bodies. But we must not become discouraged and quit. We must plow around these obstinate buffers and strive ever onward toward a harvest of ultimate Christlikeness and mature sainthood.

Then there is our field in the world in which we are called to labor. Here are blatant infidels, subtle skeptics, wobbly disciples, crooked professors of religion, and consummate hypocrites—stumps around which we must plow or else leave the field to become fallow ground. "Why does not God kill the devil?" cries the persecuted saint. "Nothing can ever be done in this community until some of these people die or move away," observes the fainthearted Christian who has looked away from his Lord to the conditions under which the work must be promoted.

Stumps do make farming difficult, we admit that; and wherever it is possible to use the ax and mattock effectively the work may be made more pleasant and fruitful. But some stumps cannot be immediately removed, and the people will perish if they must wait for a harvest until the field can be entirely cleared of buffers. We wish the field were better and the work more pleasant, but we must take the field as it is, and not as we wish it were. Such stumps as will not yield to our efforts to remove them must be plowed around, for we must have bread corn and seed wheat. We must keep personal victory, regardless of our human limitation and consequent disappointments. We must win souls and promote revivals, in spite of all hindrances and difficulties. We wish the field were clear of stumps but it is not. This makes for a difficult task, but it can be done.

Do Not Let Your Debts Get Old

One of the young men, now grown old, who used to attend Dr. F. B. Meyer's Bible class in London, on Saturday afternoons, recalls that that stalwart saint used to repeat the exhortation, "Keep short accounts with God." By this he meant, do not allow anything to stand long between your soul and your Saviour. If you do or say something that you feel is not pleasing to Him, go quickly and confess it and trust for mercy and pardoning grace.

Susanna Wesley was not content to warn her children against immorality and presumptuous sins, but used to challenge them, each in turn, "Beware of anything that diminishes your relish for spiritual things." St. Paul counseled his converts to "abstain from all appearance of evil." Both these instances savor rather of prevention than of cure. They attempt to build a fence at the top of the cliff to keep people from falling over, rather than building a hospital at the foot of the precipice for the restoration of those who have already fallen.

If you read the story carefully, you will find that just as soon as Peter *began* to sink that night when he went walking on the water to meet his Lord, he began

to cry out, "Lord, save or I perish!" Too often men wait until they have all but sunk before they begin to pray. They may begin when the water is up to their necks, but they do not pray seriously until the water engulfs their heads.

The Master of all taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." This speaks of immediacy in our relations with God. We are not to seek a supply that will enable us to go away and forget. Rather, we are to live so close to the storehouse that a private hoard is unnecessary.

Asked the cause of his declension, a backslider answered, "Oh, it was just a lot of little things." But a lot of little things do not come all at once. This man had attempted to run long accounts with God, and the accumulation of many small deficits brought about spiritual bankruptcy. He tolerated things which, while not disgraceful, diminished his relish of spiritual things. He disregarded the apparitions of evil until evil itself was emboldened to come and live at his house.

Here is the way—at the first suggestion that we have offended God, let us fly to Him in full contrition. Even with our friends and loved ones, let us learn to say quickly and sincerely, "I am sorry." Let us cultivate a tender conscience. Let us mind the inner checks. David described a state of obedience in which the Lord guides me with His eye. This is in contrast with guiding us, as though we were mules or horses, with bit and bridle. In that instant obedience, He has only to look at us and then at the task, and we are up and at it.

We should not forget the merices of the past, but we must not depend upon them. We must insist on daily audience with God. Our pardon must bear a recent date. Our cleansing must be written in progressive form—"cleanseth." Our assurance must be instant. Our joy must be new every morning. No debt with either God or man must be allowed to get old.

The Upper and the Nether Springs

Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs (Josh. 15-19).

The upper springs are the springs of God's supernatural grace. The nether springs are the springs of providence and homely wisdom and human adjustment. We all need both these springs. The one is essential to personal, eternal salvation; the other is **indispensable** to happiness and usefulness in the world.

We all have the tendency to be lopsided, so that it is not unusual to find one of whose grace from God it is not easy to doubt, but who is at the same time impractical, poorly adjusted, and of little purpose in service to others. Likewise it is possible to find those who are fine neighbors, agreeable friends, well-adjusted citizens of the community, but who are void of that grace which makes one a vital Christian.

But, if we are wise, we shall insist on both the upper and the nether springs. We will insist on possessing that grace that transforms the sinner and makes him a saint, and also we will insist on that practical quality that makes one an agreeable and useful friend of man.

Moreover, it is possible for one to possess unquestioned piety, and yet be poorly adjusted in his own life. It has sometimes been remarked that religion seems to make some people miserable; and at times this want of practical Christianity is the result of dry nether, rather than of upper, springs.

Perhaps because we are convinced that Christianity works, we have concluded that it works automatically and without condition. But this is a false deduction. Christianity will work, but we must work at it. It is well to pray that God shall not lead us into temptation, but this prayer will be more effectual if we follow it with care in abstaining from all appearance of evil. The useful Christian is not only a spiritual Christian, drinking from the upper springs of divine mercy and grace; but also he is a practical Christian, taking heavy draughts from the nether springs of hospitality, temperance, and good judgment. A good motto is: Heart in heaven; feet on earth—possessed of vision, but not visionary.

Radiance a Duty

A candle is not lighted to be set in a secret place, but on a candlestick, that all may see the light. Likewise God does not save us merely that we may "enjoy ourselves," but that we may witness for Him and tell forth His praises among men.

The fault of the Pharisees was that they put unlighted candles on the candlestick. There must be inner light before there can be outer radiance. "Ye must be born again." The fault of the hermits was that they burned their candles where no light was needed. "Let your light so shine before men." The right practice is a combination of the two. The candle must be lighted by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and then it must be placed where it can reveal to men the path of life.

Alibis are cheap, but unsatisfactory at best. One says he does not testify because he does not want to boast. Well, if for him testifying would be boasting, it is so because his candle is not lighted. One says he does not join the church because there are so many hypocrites in it. But there are more hypocrites outside the church than in it. One claims that inconsistent professors are a stumbling block to him. Still he should

not be walking backward, and he would not want to admit that mere pretenders are in the road ahead of him. One would give his money, only he is not sure that all the program of the church is wise and best. But if he keeps his money he will perish with it, and the program of the church is the most economical and direct way of enlarging the kingdom of God. Still another would put forth his efforts, only the world is too wicked and too indifferent. But a little light shows up better in the dark than anywhere else. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

5. The Day of Adversity

*And shall we not sing in the shadow,
knowing as we do that the shadow must
pass, and that we shall yet live in a land
where clouds never come?*

My Heritage of Sorrow

From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus (Gal. 6:17).

In substance, Paul was saying: "Please do not come to me with little, petty complaints. Shallow griefs and trifling sorrows are too light to count. I have a burden of sorrow so heavy that it makes me immune to the griefs that pass with the day. In fact I feel myself incapable of sympathizing much with those who complain over mere inconveniences and fleshly suffering. I have lost so much that, after this, nothing can be very bad by comparison. Having contended with the horsemen, footmen cannot weary me. Having passed the deep swellings of Jordan, I no longer flinch before the prospect of any pain. Common pain is but as pleasure when it is placed in the balances over against a broken heart."

A man's attainment in grace is better indicated by the size of the griefs he can bear than by the weight of joy he must have to be satisfied. A good man makes much of small joys, and little of deep griefs. Joy has a tendency to make us shallow, but grief is like ballast in the hold of the ship, which serves to keep it balanced in the storm.

Grace does not do all its work in direct application. "The means of grace" have their place also. And a full list of the means of grace would include grief as well as happiness. When we "count our blessings," we must include the disagreeable as well as the pleasant.

It is difficult for the saint to become weaned from the world while yet the world is too kind to him. In the days of the martyrs it was found that long periods of immunity from persecution served to make the Christians love life too well, so that when martyrdom again became the price of faith, a good many recanted to save their lives. But when one's heritage of sorrow grows large, his dependence upon the world grows small, until finally he can boldly say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Why not say, "I reckon that the joys of the present are not worthy to be compared with the joys of heaven"? Why, the metaphor requires the use of the largest and heaviest portion to which we may lay claim, and for the many, this is suffering rather than elation. But since sorrow is *weight*, Paul set over against it "a far more exceeding and eternal *weight* of glory" as its compensation in heaven.

If the thought is simply to get earthly sympathy, then, "Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone." The world does not want those whose hearts are heavy. But as a son of God in exile, with your heart set on going home, cherish deeply your heritage of grief and sorrow. Take comfort in the fact that its leaden weight is to be balanced off with enough buoyant glory to compensate so many times that no comparison is worthy.

The Service of the Shadow

Dr. Jowett calls attention to the fact that flowers require sunshine, but ferns grow best in the shade. And ferns in their place are quite as beautiful as flowers.

Sunshine and flowers need no champions. They stand in the order of universal favorites. Usually those who say they can see God in nature mean only that they can see Him in the sunshine and the flowers; for the shade and the ferns have no appeal for them.

But sun and shadow complement each other; and often the brighter the sun, the sharper the shadow. It is useless to expect to live always in the sunshine. No one could do so unless he were able to travel from east to west at the same incredible speed with which the earth turns on its axis within the twenty-four hours. No, we must live part of the time in the shadow, whether we will or not.

Every man is in reality a little universe, and within the sphere of his life he experiences both sun and shadow. There are the beautiful and pleasant to be enjoyed, and there are the sordid and painful to be endured. The sun provides a proper atmosphere for the growth of flowers; the shadow is the correct habitat for ferns.

But what are the flowers of grace? Undoubtedly

their list includes joy and gladness, victory and praise. And how sweet the odor, how beautiful the hue of these denizens of God's garden! They are symbols of abounding life and favorable environment.

And what are the ferns of holiness? Surely they must include long-suffering, gentleness, patience, and meekness among the others. Their bare mention inspires visions of prison cells where saints have languished, of unpleasant domestic situations which Christians have endured, of bodily afflictions which living martyrs have borne, and of ostracism from loved ones, persecutions from peers, and jeers from inferiors, all of which righteous men have taken in love for the Lord's sake. And like the ferns, these graces are quiet and unobtrusive. Nevertheless they have utilized the shadow for the production of beauty, and without them the flowers would not be complete.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (I Pet. 4:12-13).

From Sin—in Tribulation

Last night I had a pleasant room and a good bed, but my rest was broken. There are no ravenous beasts in this country and the house was barred against desperate men. I was not sick in body or disturbed with unwelcome thoughts and anxious cares. The trouble was a mouse that had become entrapped in the room and thought he had found a convenient place near the head of my bed to gnaw his way out. One time after another, just as I approached slumber, the noise of his teeth on the hard wood brought me back and pushed me out to turn on the light, move the portable furniture, and search for my miniature disturber. Little animals thus break the sleep, just as little foxes spoil the vines.

But the dawn came early, and with it my disturber disappeared. Perhaps he had such a strenuous time that he will come no more. Anyway the day is bright and I shall not borrow anxiety as to what tonight shall bring. Either the mouse will not come tonight, or if he does, I shall be somewhat accustomed to his annoyance and perhaps I can sleep in spite of him. I have determined that so small a foe shall not steal my peace and defeat my plans.

A mere thorn in the flesh may occasion more annoyance than a decay in the bones, for the deep disease may be more deadly than painful, and it is pain from which we shrink. And prayer for the removal of the thorn may have its answer in the increase of grace to bear, rather than in the banishment of the pain. But what matters is that I may know He heareth me—then I know I have the petition I desired of Him. Whether it be the assuaging of the hurt or the increase of the solace, I shall be satisfied. He delivers me from sin, but He may elect to deliver me in tribulation. The variation proves His personal care for me. I cannot worship law, any more than I can worship idols of stone. My God is a living, loving, thinking, almighty God. *I know His way is best!*

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us (Rom. 5:3-5).

Let the Winds Blow

The wind was brisk—almost a gale—this morning. The little maple tree at my window, now clothed in full summer foliage, appeared alternately amused and frightened by the treatment accorded it. Sometimes the little tree bowed and straightened gracefully, or twisted grudgingly and resumed its poise without a smile. Sometimes the gust was so sudden and so violent that the little tree bent sharply, sprang back like a drawn bow, and seemed to look at me appealingly as though trying to say, "That was a narrow escape."

That little maple tree spoke to me as a parable of the humor and seriousness of life. Perhaps in theory the tree would prefer the motionless evening, when there is no strain and no unusual risk. But I think in fact it is partial to the gale. At any rate, I am sure it enjoys part of the wind's rough play; and the rest is helpful, if not pleasant. For by resisting the wind's attempts to move it from its moorings, the roots of the tree are enabled to push more deeply into the soil; the exercise the wind makes necessary contributes to the toughness of the tree's fiber, and the ever-changing front which the blow forces the leaves to present gives fuller op-

portunity to the atmosphere to make its contribution to the general form and culture of the tree.

Perhaps we all dream of ease and security and inactivity. We think we should like to be left alone by everything that occasions labor and strain and inconvenience. But this is just theory. Like the little maple tree, I think in fact we all love the conflict, the strain, the activity—the gale—and not the calm. Perhaps we do not like it all, but some, like Dr. Vance, so long the beloved pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, are even willing to admit that they “have had lots of fun fighting the devil.” But whether we confess to enjoyment or not, it is the strong wind that becomes the occasion for our stability, our rugged dependability, and our most noticeable enlargement of soul.

We need not concern ourselves as to whether the winds will blow or not. They will blow, we can count on that! Our concern is to make them the occasion for the developing of a surer, stronger, fuller, more satisfying Christian experience and life. Phillips Brooks warned that we were not to pray for tasks equal to our strength, but for strength equal to our tasks. God is the Ruler of our strength, but the Overruler of our storms. If He permits the wind to blow hard, that is just proof that He is ready with strength to enable us to survive and to become stronger thereby.

Rivers Must Have Banks

I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys (Isa. 41:18).

That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers (Isa. 44:27).

Rivers must have banks. Otherwise they would have no channels, and would spread out as sloughs and swamps. The banks do indeed limit the rivers, but they also direct them and enable them to develop force for the wheels of industry and depth for the accommodation of commerce. Perhaps the rivers are restive under restraint and wonder why they are not always permitted to do as they please, seeing their purpose is to do good. And yet it is the banks that give the rivers their course and character. Although the rivers may protest against them, and may at times disregard them, the banks help the rivers, even when they seem most to hinder them.

There are rivers in our lives, and these too must have banks. There is the river of liberty, which is carefully restrained by the banks of duty, for without these banks liberty would spread out into the miasmatic swamp of unrestrained license. The river of pleasure chafes against the banks of pain. The river of joy must flow between the banks of sorrow. Even the river of peace

keeps channel and course because turmoil guards it from the wide reaches that it must someday attain that it may be a sea covering the earth.

But rivers and banks are only contrasting terms. Natural rivers have been known to depart from their ancient beds to cut new channels, and to turn the former channel into a bank to restrain the new-formed river. And so with us! When woe is the river, divine consolation forms the banks. God proposes to open rivers in high places, and to say to the deep, "Be dry." And how often that happens with us: that which was the river becomes the bank, and that which was the bank becomes the stream!

When death is the river, one of its banks is life and the other is everlasting life. Between these two banks, thank God, the river of death is confined. Those who are saved by His grace do not traverse the river lengthwise at all—they just enter on the side of life and cross over to the side of everlasting life. "There's a light at the river for me!"

No Immunity Now

People who are rich or noble have sometimes found it wise to conceal their positional advantages while in pursuit of real and lasting friendships, lest attachments be formed upon the basis of money or power, rather than upon personal worth and genuine love. This concealment is often quite as helpful to others as to those who practice this pardonable suppression, for it enables them to prove that their attachment is personal and real. Whether they are actually guilty or not, the poor man who marries the rich woman or the commoner who marries the prince are vulnerable to the charge of interested and selfish motives.

We are here in a world of probation. If we come to the end of our day of trial successfully, we must come attached to our Lord and His service with real and unselfish love and devotion. Suppose, therefore, that being good brought immediate deliverance from trouble, sickness, trial, disappointment, sorrow, bereavement, and every undesirable lot to which the general run of human beings are exposed. Under such circumstances unselfish goodness would be made many times more difficult, if not practically impossible. Under such circumstances the strain upon motive would be too great, and proof

that our religion is pure and not improperly related to self-interests would be impossible to render. Suppose God sent rain and sunshine only to the just; the need for sunshine and rain would make righteousness a utilitarian necessity. It would be impossible to refute Satan's charge that Job served God for material benefits.

It is a challenging thought—I hesitated long before making it—but I know now that I am glad the righteous do not have temporal security and immunity from present trouble and disaster; for this want of immunity is minister to purity of motive, and gives us chance in a world of trial to be good for Jesus' sake, and to serve God from pure intention. It is enough that later, when Jesus comes or when He calls us home, the difference between the estates of him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not shall be fully known and appreciated.

They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

(Of whom the world was not worthy) (Heb. 11:37-38).

6. Prayer for Today

In thy presence today I beg no gift. I ask only that Thou, O Lord, shalt be my portion . . . Be Thou my Fortune and my Home. In life, in death, and throughout eternity, Thou art all I need, all I want and all I ask.

An Early Morning Prayer

The light of the dawning day reminds me, O blessed Christ, that Thou thyself art my Son and Shield, and that I am as dependent upon Thee as is the day upon that celestial orb which mortal men have learned to call the center and material source of our solar system. Without Thee I should be cold and dark and lifeless. But in Thy favor I find warmth and light and life, and for all these eternal necessities I thank Thee now.

And as all nature rejoices in welcome to the dawning day, so likewise I bring to Thee this morning my offering of praise. In imitation of that glad abandon with which the creatures beneath greet the earthly sun, their lord, I come here to sing praises for the very joy of Thee. I cannot stop now to count my blessings; my heart is too ready with its worship of Thee, the Giver of all. And then if I should attempt to enumerate the things for which I am glad, I would, in my shortsightedness, likely omit the very things which, in a better perspective, I shall find to be the fullest tokens of Thy love. I therefore just receive all that comes as gifts of Thine, seeing they must reach me through Thy permissive will. I shall not discriminate as between the pleasant and the unpleasant, for all is good if Thou art in it.

The day is before me. Its privileges invite me, but its demands appall me. O blessed Christ, glorify thyself in me this day. I would be the clay; come Thou and be the Potter. I would not be like the Dead Sea, which receives and holds all it receives. Rather I would be like the Sea of Galilee, which receives abundantly, but passes on what it gets to others. I do not ask for a task which is light in agreement with my small strength; rather I ask for grace and strength commensurate with my task. This, I understand, is in harmony with that item in the model prayer which says, "Give us this day our daily bread."

I do not ask for large portions, for I have found that "little is much, if Thou art in it," and all paths are paths of peace if Thou art my Companion. Be Thou my portion this day, O blessed Christ, and be Thou my Guide and Fellow Traveler, and I shall ask no more. Even when the eternal day, of which this new day is but a symbol, shall dawn on the mountains of God, I ask for no fuller reward than that I shall see Thy face. To Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be glory forever and forever! Amen!

A Prayer for Purity

We read in Thy Word, O Lord, that the pure in heart shall see Thee. Since all our purposes and aims are destined to fail unless we see Thee both now and at the end of life's way, we ask Thee to cleanse our hearts from all sin. With David we pray, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Any sense of sin or impurity makes us so miserable that we must cry out with Isaiah, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." We understand that the lips are an index to the heart, seeing that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. It is the uncleanness of our hearts that makes us wretched.

But when the prophet prayed, an angel came with a live coal and laid it upon his lips, and announced that the prophet's iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged. Oh, touch our hearts with the fire of Thy Spirit and then our hearts shall be pure. Water may suffice to wash away the guilt of sin, but we crave that deeper purging that only fire can accomplish. Jesus prayed

that we might be truly sanctified, and we ask that that prayer may be fulfilled in us. We would not stop with being consecrated. We would be truly sanctified. We would not be content with partial purity. We would be sanctified wholly. We would not have just our feet washed of Thee but would have also our hands and our heads plunged into the fountain. We would hold no limitations. We would be preserved spirit and soul and body unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We would acknowledge that Thou hast called us unto holiness. Then we would rely on the Apostle's assurance that Thou who hast called us art faithful, and that Thou wilt do for us that which this call involves. That is, that Thou wilt sanctify us wholly and preserve us completely until Thou shalt come. We come according to Thy Word. We bring only the blood of Jesus for our merit and for our plea. We come in faith as the condition which Thou dost regard. And now we receive Thy Spirit as a sanctifying flame. To the blessed Holy Spirit, we say, "Spirit of burning, come; scatter Thy life through every part and sanctify the whole." And in the confidence, and now also in the consciousness, that our prayer is heard, we rejoice. "The cleansing stream, I see, I see. I plunge, and, oh, it cleanseth me!" To Thee be praise and glory now and evermore, in Jesus' blessed name. Amen!

A Midday Prayer

The sun is high, the shadows are short, the day is full. It all reminds me, O blessed Christ, that the "path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." At the morning watch Thou didst come to me in the garden of my heart. And now that the sun is hot and the work of the day is all about, come Thou again and be my Shade and my Rest. If heat and labor can serve as ministers of Thy favor by causing me to feel more deeply my need of Thee, then welcome sweat and burden and care. I do not ask now or ever for the rest of inactivity. I ask only for the rest of Thy approving smile. The hart, chased by the hounds, longs for the cooling brooks of water; but my busy, hunted soul would find its refreshing only in Thee. The parched desert would reserve its fruits and flowers until rain from the mountains can cause it to bloom. But I would produce love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and holy temperance under the refreshing of the springs and showers of Thy grace.

At this midday pause I look back toward the morning over the face of a task thus far pursued. This part is done. I cannot now improve my efforts, and to sigh in regret can serve only to sap my strength and make

me weary to no purpose. Take Thou the work of my hands thus far accomplished. Erase from it, if Thou wilt, those traces of indolence and want of care which I am too conscious are there to be seen. Accept, if Thou canst, the will for the deed. I have been rewarded as I went along, so there is no remuneration due. I keep no books with Thee. And if I did, I myself would be infinite debtor.

And now I look ahead upon the unfinished task. I have yet as far to go to the end of the day as I have come since early morning, but I am not so fresh as I was at the beginning of the day. I need more support this latter half than I have had during the former. Sunstroke is a malady of the early afternoon. Inefficiency is normal to the weariness of the midafternoon watch. But the rounded day involves a good finish as well as a good beginning, and I would rejoice with the reapers, even as I have labored with the sowers. Sustain me now, my God, in this time of pressure. Be Thou my Tower of Strength until the day is finished. To Thee be the power now, and to Thee be the glory forevermore. Amen.

As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me.

Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice (Ps. 55:16-17).

O Lord, I Give to Thee

O Lord, I give to Thee first of all my heart, that it may be Thy very own, and that in it Thou mayest live with none other to interfere, and reign with none besides to share Thy throne. Every sinful motive, every selfish impulse, every doubtful imagination, every trend toward careless thinking wilt Thou purge away, and bring every force and function of my heart and mind into full captivity of obedience to thyself.

I give Thee my eyes and my ears, that through them Thou mayest see the needs of my fellow men, and hear the cry of the lost and dying everywhere. Give me grace, I pray, to close my eyes to the seeing of evil and to close my ears to the hearing of blood. Give me sight only for what Thou wouldst have me see, and hearing only for that which Thou wouldst have me hear. Take my eyes and my ears and use them fully and freely and only for Thine own glory.

I give Thee my feet with which to run on missions of mercy and grace. Make them swift to this end. Any use other than what Thou dost make I shall count a sacrilege. I give Thee my hands for deeds of kindness. I give my lips to speak forth Thy love. I give my tongue that it may sing only of Thy praise. I give Thee my mind

that it may think Thy thoughts, and that it may meditate upon Thy goodness and reverently follow in the ways of Thy wisdom. I give Thee my love that it may be an ointment poured forth at Thy feet.

I give Thee my influence that it may be exercised only for Thy glory. May I be enabled to hide behind the Cross, that any praise or word of honor may have Thee only for its object. I give Thee my every earthly possession. I pass the title over to Thee here and now, and I ask that henceforth Thou shalt make disposition of anything I may ever have or hold, and that Thou shalt make disposition instantly as pleaseth Thee, without any further necessity for asking my consent. This consent today is for everything and for all time.

I give to Thee anything else of value—real or imaginary—which I may have now or which may come into my hands hereafter, and which this list does not specifically cover. That too, my Lord, I give to Thee. And I kneel here today, utterly devoted, with nothing whatsoever held in reserve. All, all is Thine, forevermore.

And in Thy presence today I beg no gift. I ask only that Thou, O Lord, shalt be my portion, as Thou wast the portion of Levi of old. I ask for no inheritance among my brethren. Be Thou my portion, my only estate. Be Thou my Deliverer and Preserver. Be Thou my Counselor and Friend. Be Thou my Fortune and my Home. In life, in death, and throughout eternity, Thou art all I need, all I want, and all I ask. Throughout the ages of the ages, I ask for no better heaven than just to bear Thy name on my forehead and be permitted to see Thy face. And even these things I leave wholly to Thy sovereign will. I ask nothing more and nothing less. Amen.

An Evening Prayer

The day is done. The gathering shadows lend an atmosphere of intimacy. It is as though the herds were wending their way homeward, as Gray saw them in his immortal "Elegy." It is the time when little children come in from their play to enjoy the protection and close fellowship of parents and the joys of the family circle. But I would come into an inner circle with Thee. I would feel the touch of Thy intimacy. I would sit in the circle of holy communion. I would know Thy comforting voice. The shades of evening I would make into a veil to shut out intrusions, and into a curtain to shut me in with Thee.

I thank Thee for another day lived. Tomorrow is as yet a heritage unused. Today, the day I have just finished, is a heritage possessed. I have used the day, and it is still mine. It is mine not alone in memory, but it is mine in the contributions it has made to my essential being. I have stored up no earthly surplus today, for I choose rather to live on the bounty that comes fresh from Thy hand. But I have been made richer in promises fulfilled, and in the power of endurance developed. I would not go back to the morning. I thank Thee that this day

has been added to my kingdom by actual right of possession.

The close of day has brought to me a sense of relief from responsibility. While the day was on, I felt it was demanded of me that I should labor, and any repose I sought was mixed with disquietude from the thought that I was but imitating the sluggard. But now I can rest. I shall rest in joy that I have labored faithfully. I shall rest in faith for Thy mercy even when recollections of wasted hours intrude. I shall rest in hope that a new day shall bring new and larger employment, and fuller and finer rewards.

I ask of Thee an added sense of security, since the night is the time when unseen dangers lurk. Hide me in Thy pavilion. Cover me with Thy feathers. Surround me with Thy defending angels. Give me that sleep which is the portion of Thy beloved. Since Thou who dost keep me doth neither slumber nor sleep, it is not necessary that I also should stay awake. And in this confidence, I close my eyes, knowing that on some glad morning I shall awake in Thy likeness. Accept this my evening sacrifice of prayer and praise. Amen and Amen!

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night
(Ps. 91:5).

7. The Christian's Long Home

My ship is soon to sail. The ship is stout. May the passage be smooth! My loved ones await my landing. I am happy in the prospect. Let us lift anchor and sail to the other side!

The Saints' Everlasting Rest

Richard Baxter was a Christian of purest type, a minister of white-heat intensity, a writer and pastoral worker of such tireless spirit that he fairly burned himself out for the salvation of men.

But as time passed on and the burden of his incessant labors continued to press heavily upon him, he thought more and more of the reward which awaits the saint at the end of his course in this world. Others might think of heaven in terms of peace, joy, or aesthetic satisfaction, but Baxter thought of it in terms of rest. And knowing the value of books, he committed to writing one of the most splendid treatises on the present and eternal rewards of the Christian life that has yet been written, and he entitled that treatise *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*.

There are indispensable moral and spiritual prerequisites to heaven. No sin, either of guilt or of depravity, can enter heaven. All must be left behind in repentance and in consecration. And all must be cleansed and purged by the holy fire of the Spirit of God. Heaven is not so much a question of transportation as it is a question of transformation. The question is not, "By

what means shall I get to heaven?" but rather, "How shall I become qualified to be happy in heaven, where any craving for anything unholy could never be gratified?"

But beyond the indispensable moral and spiritual prerequisites, there seem also to be antithetical requirements. To the soldier of the Cross, heaven will be peace; to the burden-bearer, it will be a jubilee; to the heart-broken for Jesus' sake, it will be joy; and to the earnest toiler in the vineyard, it will be rest. But what will heaven be to the man who did no fighting, bore no burdens, carried none of the world's sorrows, and entered not into labors of his Lord? Without the battle there can be no victory, without the cross there can be no crown, without the labors there can be no rest.

Richard Baxter lay dying at the age of seventy-six. After a brief sleep, he aroused and said, "I shall enter into rest." These were not the words of one who was dissatisfied with life, but of one who, having finished an honest day in the field, is soothed with the realization that repose is now justly his. The shirker may steal from his labors and "beat time" unjustly, but the honest toiler comes in at close of day to enjoy the rest that his labors have really earned. What will heaven be to you?

The Omissions of Heaven

And there was a rainbow round about the throne
(Rev. 4:3).

The rainbow is caused by the meeting of the storm and the sun. But in heaven there is neither storm nor sun, yet the rainbow is there. To Noah, after the Flood, the rainbow was the sign that the sun should ultimately prevail over the storm. But in heaven the rainbow is the symbol of the eternal permanence of the good, for after the storm has passed and the sun is no longer needed, the bow which their union produced—the bow of beauty and of promise—still remains.

In our sky the rainbow is over at the edge, for it is the shining of the sun from the center which produces it. But in heaven the rainbow is in the center—"round about the throne." Thinking of heaven as a place, the throne must be in the center, and the rainbow is round about the throne. The order of earth is reversed in heaven. Here we come from the extremes and pass on to the extremes. We begin with infancy and pass on to old age. We start with birth and end with death. But in heaven beginnings and endings are no more. Everything gathers about the center, and the center is typical of eternity.

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” And in that new there is solid substance, but no sea. There is light, but no darkness. There is day, but no night. There is joy, but no tears. There is life, but no death. There is laughter, but no crying. There is pleasure, but no pain. “For the former things are passed away.” That is, the storm and the sun are passed, but the rainbow remains. Thank God for the omissions of heaven. There will be saints there too—but no sinners. Heaven will be well populated, but the big concern for you and me is to make sure we do not miss it ourselves. Let us set our hearts to see that city.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away (Rev. 21:4).

On Being Fenced In

A call for unfenced pastures is testimony that the grass is sparse, and therefore there must be more acres. When the sheep eats to its full and lies down in the midst of green, uncropped grass, it has no aversion to fences that hold it in. It would not wander, even if there were no fences at all. Fences around green meadows are to keep strays from coming in, not to keep the favored from going away.

Sin is bondage. Salvation is liberty. Sin imitates liberty, but the best it can do is to offer the tinsel of license. No man is ever free to "do as he pleases," unless he is able to bring his desires within the fencing of righteousness. License cannot ever make wrong right. It can only strive vainly to make right and wrong change places. In the end license becomes bondage. The only man who ever drinks all he wants to, smokes all he wants, gambles all he wants, dances all he wants, and carouses all he wants is the man who does not want to do these wrong things at all. For if evil is catered to, it increases its demands, so that at the end desire is farther ahead of indulgence than it was at the beginning. God works it the other way. He takes out of the heart all desire for the forbidden, and gives the rest and peace

and joy of righteousness that result in a deeper satisfaction than the world ever dreamed could be possessed.

Hell is a pit. Heaven is a city. Hell has impregnable walls and gates and bars, for its inhabitants must be fenced in. Heaven has walls, but they are made of jasper and are for beauty, and not for strength. It has gates also. But the gates are never closed, for there is no one in that city who wants out—not ever! The inhabitants would raise no objection to the closing and locking of the gates, for the gates are ornamental and not utilitarian in purpose. The inhabitants of that city want nothing that is outside the city. They are monumental pillars in the house of God and shall go out no more forever. The love of God and the contentment of heaven have fenced them in forever.

“Sweet will of God, still fold me closer.” Shut me in within the palace walls of Thy love, O God of peace and grace and purity. Fence me in with Thy protecting care. Fence out everything that ministers not to Thy praise. For in Thy mercy there are length and breadth and width and height beyond all my ability to explore, even in the eternity of the eternities!

From Famine to Feast

At Dives' gate that morning they found but a leprous corpse clothed in rags. Observers sighed, but took consolation from the conclusion that Lazarus had not been used to much, and so his end was not so tragic nor so pathetic as would have been the case with one more fortunate. He had used as his regular food the ends of the loaves which others had laid aside when they became too short to permit being further dipped in the sop. He had been attended only by Dr. Dog when he was sick. Rags were befitting apparel for one who was but a beggar. And now it was not necessary to go to the trouble and expense of giving the unsightly corpse a burial. Earth's harvest had ended in doleful famine.

But even while observers sighed over the doleful end of a doleful life at the gate of the rich man's mansion, strong angels were lifting up the doors of heaven, and a redeemed, Blood-washed soul was passing through. At a place nearest to the gate the bliss-enfolded arrival sought repose in the hope that he might spend eternity there in praise and thanksgiving for his eternal salvation. But angel companions beckoned him on. Over pavements of transparent gold glorified feet led the way toward higher mansions of light. The erstwhile beggar

protested, but his words were disregarded. The dwellings of the great were seen and passed, only to be hidden by palaces of increasing spaciousness and indescribable beauty. And still the guides led on and on.

At last the company stood just outside a diamond-bedecked hall from which came the sound of sweetest heavenly praise. Inside there sat a company of sun-crowned saints of highest rank, with Abraham, the father of the faithful, at the head of the table. The guard of honor led the way, but the beggar could no longer follow. Lost in wonder, love, and praise, he saw the place of honor at Abraham's right hand, and saw that it was empty. He saw also that his angel guides were intent on leading him to that place of high praise—and so he stopped. His was not the hesitation of disobedience, but the reluctance of modesty. A mistake surely had been made. All this could not be intended for him. His name must have been mistaken for some great one. Any place in heaven would be too good for him, and now he was being shown to the high seat at the feast.

The glorified beggar waited and protested. The angels gathered around and explained and persuaded. But when the beggar could not comprehend, two of the tallest of the celestial ones made a saddle of their hands while others lifted the beggar to the position where he could be borne. And thus Lazarus was "carried" to the place of honor, where when he reclined, as men do at feasts where all reason for haste has been removed, his head would rest upon the bosom of Abraham.

The famine was past. The feast had started. One of heaven's earliest surprises had come. Lazarus had reached home, and home was heaven. Let us stand and sing the doxology.

Eternal Praise

A woman who described her vision of heaven said that, although there is no night in heaven, there is a softening of the light in suggestion of lessened activity, and that at such a time she lapsed into peaceful thought. At the time when the light brightened, suggestive of a new day, this new arrival in heaven arose, knelt, as her custom on earth had been to do, and sought to pray. But she found no petition in her heart, and finished her devotions, as she commenced them, on the note of praise and thanksgiving. Later she asked one who had been there longer, "How do you pray in heaven, seeing there is no unsatisfied desire?" The answer was, "Prayer in heaven is just all praise." Think of it: every longing satisfied, every mystery made clear, every prayer a praise!

But even in this world, praise is one of the most important elements of prayer. There is no surer way to added blessings than true thankfulness for blessings already received. There is no fuller plea than that which speaks, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." David made praise volitional, saying, "I will praise the Lord." If praise is spontaneous, well and good. But if it is not spontaneous, then let it be volitional. Praise God in the

sunshine, praise Him in the shadows. Praise Him when your heart is joyful, praise Him when you are sore and tired. Praise Him when there are evidences of His favor. Praise Him by faith when He seems to hide His face. Make praise a vocation: for there is no greater thing that anyone can do than to worship God in the beauty of holiness and to bring an offering and come into His court. "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth." When one cannot praise God for his circumstances, it is yet his privilege to praise Him in spite of his circumstances, even as Job said in his distress. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Those who praise God here by faith, shall praise Him there in sight; for to them who make the glory of God their goal, the glory of God shall be revealed. "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

My Ship Is Soon to Sail

The old Christian was a prisoner in chains. The death sentence had already been passed, and the hour of execution was drawing near. There was but a dingy prison in which to wait, and a bloody chopping block on which to lay the neck. To the mundane eye everything was either tragic or pathetic. Here was a busy, unselfish life about to end in ignominy and blood.

But the old Christian harked back to his free days when he roamed both land and sea in search of souls. Once again he stood upon the deck of a ship in a foreign port and watched the longshoremen place the last cargo in the hold. He saw the passengers come on board, heard the call, "All ashore who are going ashore," saw the gangplank lifted. He heard the order, "Cut her loose," and the creak of windlasses as the anchors were lifted from the sea bottom to their places of rest on the side of the ship. He saw the sailors unfurl the sails, and observed the skipper watching for a proper breeze to take his ship to the open sea and to the harbor beyond the sea. The old traveler's heart was thrilled, for that distant harbor was his homeland. He watched every operation with sympathetic interest and lifted a prayer for success in the undertaking.

And now the old Christian was back again in his prison cell, and bethought himself of the action of the court and of the issue so near at hand. He was sending his final word to his young friend at Ephesus. The metaphor seemed fitting, so he added this cheering word, "The time is near; I am about to lift anchor and sail to the heaven in the homeland on the other side of the sea" (paraphrase of II Tim. 4:6). Loved ones and friends, he was sure, were awaiting his arrival—the prospect was alluring, and he was all but impatient to be away. As in the old sailing days, he watched every preparation with interest and solemn joy. Not that the journey itself mattered so much—it was the land beyond that enticed him.

But I too have sailed the seas. I too have felt the thrill of the hour for departing. I have felt the pull of the homeland beyond, and blessed the prospect of greeting loved ones and friends once more. And today I observe the intimations of an early departure for the final haven of my soul. The sails are filling, the shore lines are being severed. The Skipper awaits the rising breeze. My ship is soon to sail. The ship is stout. May the passage be smooth! My loved ones await my landing. I am happy in the prospect. Let us lift anchor and sail to the other side!