

The Inner Chamber and The Inner Life

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PREFACE

The Inner Chamber suggests thoughts of the utmost importance. The daily need of retirement and quietness; the true Spirit of prayer; the Devotional reading of God's Word; the Fellowship with God for which these are meant and by which alone they bring a blessing; the Spiritual Life which they are meant to strengthen and fit for daily duty in interaction with the world; the Service for the Kingdom of God in Soul-winning and Intercession – all these truths have their share in making our devotions a source of joy and of strength. In this little book I have not attempted to take them up systematically, but I hope that the fragments I have given may bring help to some in the cultivation of the hidden life and its communion with God.

In South Africa there are various diseases that affect our orange trees. One of them is popularly known by the name of the *root disease*. A tree may still be bearing fruit, and an ordinary observer may not notice anything wrong, while an expert sees the beginning of a slow death. The *phylloxera* in the vineyards is nothing but a *root disease*, and it has been found that there is no radical cure but by taking out the old roots and providing new ones. The old sort of grape is grafted on an American root, and in course of time you have the same stem and branches and fruit as before; BUT THE ROOTS ARE NEW and able to resist the disease. It is in the part of the plant that is HIDDEN FROM SIGHT, that the disease comes, and where healing must be sought.

How the Church of Christ, and the spiritual life of thousands of its members, suffers from the root disease, the neglect of secret communion with God. It is the lack of secret prayer, the neglect of the maintenance of that hidden life "*ROOTED in Christ*," "*ROOTED and grounded in love*," that explains the feebleness of the Christian life to resist the world, and its failure to bring forth fruit abundantly. Nothing can change this but the restoration, in the life of the believer, of the

inner chamber to the place which Christ meant it to have. As Christians learn, instead of trusting their own efforts, what it is to daily anchor their roots deeper into Christ, and to make the secret personal fellowship with God their chief care, true godliness will flourish. "*If the root is holy, so are the branches.*" If the morning hour is holy to the Lord, the day with its duties will be so too. If the root is healthy, so are the branches.

I pray that God may bless these writings to some of His children in the pursuit of the deeper and more fruitful life, the life hidden with Christ in God.

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Chapter 1. THE MORNING HOUR

"My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up." - Psalm 5:3

"The Lord GOD awakens Me morning by morning; He awakens My ear to hear as the learned." - Isaiah 50:4

From the earliest times God's servants have thought of the morning as the time specially fitted for the worship of God. It is still regarded by all Christians both as a duty and privilege, to devote some portion of the beginning of the day to seeking solitude and fellowship with God. Many Christians, and specifically the Student's Christian Association, observe the *Morning Watch*; or speak of it as the *Quiet Hour*; others use the name of the *Still Hour or the Quiet Time*. All these, whether they think of a full hour or half an hour, or a quarter of an hour, unite with the Psalmist in what he says: *"My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord."*

In speaking of the extreme importance of this daily time of quiet for prayer and meditation on God's Word, Mr. Mott has said: "Next to receiving Christ as Saviour, and claiming the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, we know of no action that can do larger good to ourselves or others, than forming an undiscourageable resolution to keep the morning watch and spend the first half hour of the day alone with God." At first the statement appears too strong. The act of receiving Christ as Saviour is one of such infinite consequences for eternity, the act of claiming the Holy Spirit is one that works such a revolution in the Christian life, that such a simple thing as the firm determination to keep the morning watch hardly appears sufficiently important to place next to them. If, however, we think how impossible it is to live out our daily life in Christ as our Saviour from sin, or to maintain a walk in the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, without daily, close fellowship with God, we soon shall see the truth of

the sentiment. Because is simply means the fixed determination that Christ shall have our whole life, that the Holy Spirit shall in everything be fully obeyed. The morning watch is the key to the position in which the surrender to Christ and the Holy Spirit can be unceasingly and fully maintained.

To realise this, let us look first at what ought to be **The Object** of the morning watch. The morning watch must not be regarded as an end in itself. It is not sufficient that it gives us a blessed time for prayer and Bible study, and so brings us a certain measure of refreshment and help. It is to serve as a means to an end. And that end is – **to secure the presence of Christ for the whole day**. Personal devotion to a friend or a pursuit means that that friend or pursuit shall always hold their place in the heart, even when other engagements occupy the attention. Personal devotion to Jesus means that we allow nothing to separate us from Him for even a moment. To abide in Him and His love, to be kept by Him and His grace, to be doing His will and pleasing Him – this cannot possibly be an intermittent thing to one who is truly devoted to Him. "I need Thee every hour," "Moment by moment I am kept in His love." These hymns are the language of life and truth. "In Your name shall they rejoice all day," "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment" – these are words of Divine power. The believer cannot stand for one moment without Christ. The personal devotion to Him refuses to be content with anything less than to abide always in His love and His will. Nothing less is the true scriptural Christian life. And the importance and blessedness and true aim of the morning watch can only be seen as nothing less than this first object.

The clearer the object of our pursuit is, the better shall we be able to adapt the means to attain it. Consider the morning watch now as **the means** to this great end: I want to absolutely secure the presence of Christ all day, to do nothing that can interfere with it, I feel at once that

my success for the day will depend upon the clearness and the strength of the faith that seeks and finds and holds **Him** in the prayer closet. Meditation and prayer and the word will all be used as subordinate and supplementary to this: the link for the day between Christ and me must be renewed and firmly fastened in the morning hour. At first it may appear as if the thought of the whole day, with all its possible cares, pleasures, temptations, may disturb the rest I have enjoyed in my quiet devotion. It is possible; but it will be no loss. True religion aims at having the character of Christ so formed in us, that in our most common actions His temper and disposition shall show themselves. The spirit and the will of Christ are meant to so possess us that in our intercourse with people, in our relaxation, in our business, it shall be a second nature to us to act according to them. All this can be because Christ Himself, as the Living One, lives in us. Be not disturbed if at first the aim appears too high or difficult and occupies too much of your time in the hour of private prayer. The time you give it will be richly rewarded. You will return to prayer and the scripture with new purpose and new faith. As the morning watch begins to have its effect on the day, the day will react on its first half hour, and fellowship with Christ have a new meaning and a new power.

It will specially have its influence on **the spirit** in which you keep the morning watch. As the magnificence of the aim: unbroken fellowship with God in Christ through the day; and the true nature of the means to secure it: a definite conscious meeting with Christ and a securing of His presence for the day, possesses us, it will be seen that the one essential thing is, whole-hearted purpose: the fixed determination, whatever effort, or self-denial it may cost, to win the price. In study or on the sport field every student knows what need there is of vigorous will and determined purpose if we are to succeed. Religion needs, and indeed deserves, not less but more of intense devotion. If anything, surely the love of Christ needs the whole heart. It is this fixed determination before everything to secure Christ's presence, that will overcome every temptation to be

unfaithful or superficial in the keeping of our pledges. It is this that will make the morning watch itself a mighty means of grace in strengthening character and give us the nerve to say NO to every call for self-indulgence. It is this that will enable us at once, when we enter the inner chamber and shut the door, to be there with our whole heart, ready at once for our intercourse with Christ. And it is this determination that, from the morning watch on, will become the keynote of our daily life.

In the world it is often said: Great things are possible to any man who knows what he will and wills it with all his heart. The student who has made personal devotion to Christ his watchword, will find in the morning hour the place where day by day, the insight into his holy calling is renewed: where his will is braced up to walk worthy of it; and his faith rewarded by the presence of Christ waiting to meet him, and take charge of him for the day. We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us. A living Christ waits to meet us.

Prayer: My Lord Jesus Christ, it is my sincere desire and determination, to set apart at least half an hour every morning, for the next 18 weeks, to meet with You, first thing in the morning. I know there will be interruptions, but I pray that You will give me the grace and the strength to make meeting with You my highest priority in my day. Guide me by your Spirit through this teaching on the Inner Chamber and the Inner Life. Come into the inner chamber of heart and dwell with me. Amen.

Chapter 2. THE DOOR SHUT – ALONE WITH GOD

"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." – Matthew 6:6

Man was created for fellowship with God. God made man in His own image and likeness, that he might be capable of understanding and enjoying God, entering His will, and delight in His glory. Because God is the Omnipresent (everywhere) and All-pervading One, man could have lived in the enjoyment of unbroken fellowship during whatever work he had to do. Sin robbed us of this fellowship.

Nothing but this fellowship can satisfy the heart of either man or God. Christ came to restore this; to return to God His lost creature and bring man back to all that he was created for. Communion with God is the consummation of all blessedness on earth as in heaven. This happens when the promise becomes a **full experience**: *"I will be with you, I will never leave you nor forsake you"*, and we can say: *"The Father is always with me"*.

This communion with God is meant to be ours all day, whatever be our condition or the circumstances that surround us. But its enjoyment depends upon the reality of the communion in the inner chamber. **The power of maintaining close and joyful fellowship with God all day, will depend entirely upon the intensity with which we seek to secure it in the hour of secret prayer.** The one essential thing in the Morning Watch or the Quiet Hour is – FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

What our Lord teaches us here is the inner secret of prayer in the inner chamber: *"Shut your door and pray to your Father who sees in secret."* The first and most important thing is that you need to secure the Father's

Presence and Attention in the secret place. **Know that He sees and hears you.** More important than all your prayer requests (however urgent), more important than all your earnestness and effort to pray correctly, is this one thing: the childlike, living assurance that YOUR FATHER sees you, that you have now met Him, and that with His eye on you and yours on Him, you are now enjoying actual communion with Him.

Christian! There is a terrible danger to which you stand exposed in your inner chamber. You are in danger of substituting Prayer and Bible Study for **living fellowship with God, the living interchange of giving Him your love, your heart, and your life, and receiving from Him His love, His life, and His Spirit.** Your needs and the expression of it, your desire to pray humbly and earnestly and believingly, may so occupy you, that the light of His countenance and the joy of His love cannot enter you. Your Bible Study may so interest you, and so arouse a pleasing religious sentiment, that, yes, the very Word of God may become a substitute for God Himself, *the greatest hindrance to fellowship because it keeps the soul occupied instead of leading it to God Himself.*

And so, we go out into the day's work without the power of an abiding fellowship, because in our morning devotions the blessing was not secured.

What difference it would make in the life of many, if everything in the closet were subordinate to this one thing: **I want to continually walk with God throughout my day.** My morning hour is the time when my Father enters into a definite engagement with me and I with Him. What strength would be imparted by the consciousness: God has taken charge of me; He Himself is going with me; I am going to do His will, in His strength, the whole day; I am ready for all that may come. Yes, what a dignity would come into life, if secret prayer were not only an asking for some new

sense of comfort, or light, or strength, but **the giving away of life, just for one day, into the sure and safe keeping of a mighty and faithful God.**

"Pray to your Father who sees in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." Where the secret fellowship with the Father – in spirit and in truth – is maintained, the public life before men will show the reward. The Father who sees in secret takes charge and rewards openly. Withdrawing from people into solitude with God in the morning is the sure, the only way, to live in daily fellowship with people, with the power of God's blessed presence.

PRAYER: Father, please forgive me where I have made my quiet time about so many things, except to focus on meeting with You and securing your presence for each new day. Help me to meet with You, commune with You, so that my whole day will truly be walking with You. Thank you that you are calling me to that place of secret communion with You. Amen.

Chapter 3. THE CLOSED DOOR, THE OPEN REWARD.

"But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father, who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

– Matthew 6:17-18

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. – Acts 4:13

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So, when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him...And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.

– Exodus 34:29-33

The transition from the fellowship with God in the morning hour, to the interaction with our fellowmen, is often difficult. If we have met God, we long to maintain the sense of His presence, and our surrender to Him. We go out to the breakfast table, where, perhaps in the presence of our own family, the atmosphere is immediately different. And as the presence of people asserts itself, we begin to lose what we had found. Many young Christians had been struggling with the question on how to keep his heart filled with that encounter of which he does not feel at liberty to or has not yet had the opportunity to speak of. Even in religious circles it is, through lack of enthusiasm or boldness, not always easy to freely speak to people about those things that would give the greatest profit and pleasure. Let us strive to learn how our fellowship with people may be, instead of a hindrance, a help to maintain a life of constant communion with God.

The lessons from the life of Moses with a veil on his face, are very thought-provoking. Close and continual fellowship with God will in due time leave its mark and make itself manifest before people. Moses did not know that his face shone. The light of God shining from us will be unconscious, but it will deepen the sense of us being like clay vessels (**1Cor.1:3,4; 2Cor.4:7**). Sometimes the sense of God's presence in a person may cause others to fear, or at least, to feel uncomfortable in his company. When others notice what is in him, the true believer will begin to know what it is to veil his face, and prove by humility and love, that he is indeed a man just like those around him. And yet, there will be the unmistakable proof, too, that he is a man of God, who lives in, and have dealings with an unseen world.

The same lessons are taught by our Lord concerning fasting. Don't make a show of your fasting, so that you don't appear to others as if you are fasting; meet with them in the joy and kindness of God's gentleness, as the Father's beloved and loving child. **Count upon God, who has seen you in secret, to reward you openly; to give you the grace of fellowship with Him, and to make known to others that His grace and light are upon you.**

The story of Peter and John confirms the same truth. They had been with Jesus while He was on earth, and after He ascended into the heavenlies, had received His Spirit. They acted on what the Spirit of Christ taught them. Even their enemies could see by their boldness that they had been with Jesus.

The blessing of fellowship with God may easily be lost by going too deep into fellowship with people. The spirit of the inner chamber must be protected by a holy watchfulness throughout the day. We don't know at what hour the enemy may come. The continuance of the morning watch may be maintained by a quiet self-restraint of not giving in to the fleshly

nature. It is a good practise, if you live in a religious home, to apply the habit of sharing some spiritual truths on a fixed subject, and so give opportunity for a religious conversation.

When the abiding sense of God's presence and fellowship with Him – *"living in the fear of God all day long"* – has become the aim of the morning hour, with the deepest humility and the most loving fellowship with those around us, grace will be released and passed on to the duties of the day with unbroken fellowship with God. It is a great thing to enter into the inner chamber, shut the door, and meet our Father in secret. It is an even greater thing to open the door again and go out into an enjoyment of that Presence which cannot be disturbed by anything.

To some believers such a life does not seem necessary; the strain may be too great; or they reason that one can be a good Christian without it. Those however, who feel that if they are to influence the church and the world truly and mightily, they must be full of God and His Presence, will submit themselves to this one question: How to bear in their bodies, their earthen vessels, the heavenly treasure which is the power of Christ resting on them the whole day?

Prayer: Father God, it is my deepest desire to have continual fellowship with You. I want to know your Presence every day and all day. Teach me how to fellowship with people in such a way that I will not lose the sense of your Presence, and that those that I meet with during my day, will sense your Presence resting on me. Amen.

Chapter 4. MOSES AND THE WORD OF GOD.

Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat; thus, He spoke to him. – Numbers 7:89

Regarding the connection between prayer and the Word in our private devotion, the expression of a believer from a heathen background has often been quoted: *I pray, I speak to God; I read in the Bible, God speaks to me.* This thought is beautifully illustrated in the Scripture in **Numbers 7:89**. When Moses went in to pray for himself or his people, and to wait for instructions, he found One waiting for him. What a lesson for our morning watch! God will speak to a prayerful spirit. A prayerful spirit will be a listening spirit, waiting to hear what God says. In communion with God, His Presence, and the part He takes must be as real as my own. We must ask: what is needed for our Scripture reading and praying to be true fellowship with God?

First: Get into the right place: *"Moses went into the tabernacle to speak with God."* He separated himself from the people and went where he could be alone with God. He went to the place where God was to be found. Jesus told us where that place is. He calls us to enter into our inner chamber, shut the door, and pray to our Father who sees in secret. Anywhere where we can really be **alone with God** may be to us the secret place of His Presence. To speak with God needs a separation from all else. It needs a heart intently set upon and in full expectation of meeting God personally and having direct dealings with Him. Those who go there to speak with God, will hear the Voice of One speaking to them.

Secondly: Get into the right position. *Moses heard the Voice of One speaking to him from the mercy seat.* Bow before the mercy seat, the throne of grace (**Heb.4:16**). There the consciousness of your

unworthiness will not hinder you but will be a real help for trusting God. There you may have the assured confidence that your upward look will meet His eyes, that your prayer can be heard, that his loving answer will be given. Bow before the mercy seat and be assured that the God of Mercy will see and bless you.

Thirdly: Get into the right disposition – the listening attitude. Many Christians are so occupied with the much or the little they have to say in their prayers, that the Voice of One speaking from the mercy seat is never heard, because it is not expected or waited for. *"Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool; But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."* (Isa.66:1-2). Let us enter our inner chamber, and set ourselves to pray, with a heart that humbly waits to hear God speak; in the Word we read we shall indeed hear the Voice of One speaking to us. The highest blessing of prayer will be our ceasing to pray, to let God speak.

Prayer and the Word are inseparably linked together. The power in the use of either depends upon the presence of the other. The Word gives me matter for prayer, telling me what God will do for me. It shows me the path of prayer, telling me how God wants me to come to Him. It gives me the power for prayer, the courage of the assurance that I will be heard. And it brings me the answer to prayer, as it teaches what God will do for me. And so, on the other hand, prayer prepares the heart for receiving the Word from God Himself, for the teaching of the Spirit to give the spiritual understanding of it, for the faith that is made partaker of its mighty working.

It is clear why this is so. Prayer and the Word has one common centre – God. Prayer seeks God; the Word reveals God. In prayer man asks God; in the Word God answers man. In prayer man rises to heaven to dwell with God; in the Word God gives Himself to man.

In prayer and the Word, it must be all – God. Make God the "**all**" of your heart, the one object of your desire. Prayer and the Word will be a blessed fellowship with God, the interchange of thought, and love and life – a dwelling in God and God in us. **Seek God and live!**

Prayer: Father, I come into your Presence. I bow at the mercy seat, at your throne of grace. Here is where You wait for me. Here is where I wait to hear your Voice. Speak to me. I am listening. Amen.

Chapter 5. MOSES, THE MAN OF PRAYER

"So, Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses;" – Exodus 8:30-31

The patriarchal dispensation, with family life and the powers the fathers had, preceded Moses. Moses was the first man appointed to be a teacher and leader of God's people. In him as the servant of God, we find wonderful illustrations of the place and power of intercession.

Moses' Prayers. From Moses' first call in Midian, he prayed. He asked God what he was to say to the people (**Exo.3:11-13**). He told Him all about his weakness and begged Him to be relieved of his mission (**Exo.4:1-13**). When the people rebuked him that their burdens were increased, he went and told God (**Exo.5:22**), and he made known to Him all his fears (**Exo.6:12**). This was his first training. Out of this was born his power in prayer when, time after time, Pharaoh asked him to entreat the Lord for him, and deliverance came at Moses' request (**Exo.8:8,9,12,28,29, 30-31; Exo.9:28,29,33; 10:17,18**). Study these passages until you come under the full impression of how real a factor in Moses' work and prayer for God's redemption was.

At the Red Sea, Moses cried to God with the people and the answer came (**Exo.14:15**). In the wilderness when the people were thirsty, and when Amalek attacked them, it was also prayer that brought deliverance (**Exo.17:4,11**).

At Sinai, when Israel had made the Golden Calf, it was prayer that at once averted the threatened destruction (**Exo.32:11,14**). It was renewed prayer that gained them restoration (**Exo.32:31**). It was more prayer that secured God's presence to go with them (**Exo.33:17**), and once again it was prayer that brought the revelation of God's glory (**Exo.33:19**). And

when that had been given, it was fresh prayer that received the renewal of the covenant (**Exo.34:9,10**).

In Deuteronomy we have a wonderful summary of all this (**Deut.9:18,19,20,26**). We see with what intensity he prayed, and how in one case it was for forty days and forty nights that he fell on his face before the Lord (**Deut.9:25; 10:10**).

In Numbers we read of Moses' prayer quenching the fire of the Lord (**Num.11:2**); and obtaining the supply of meat (**Num.11:2,11**); of prayer healing Miriam (**Num.12:13**); of prayer again saving the nation when they had refused to go up to the land (**Num.14:17-20**). Prayer brought down judgment on Korah (**Num.16:15**); and when God wanted to destroy the whole nation, prayer made atonement (**Num.16:46**). Prayer brought water out of the rock (**Num.20:6**), and in answer to prayer the bronze serpent was given (**Num.21:7**). God's will in a case of difficulty was made known in prayer (**Num.27:5**), and Joshua given as Moses' successor (**Num.27:16**).

Study all this until your whole heart is filled with the understanding of what part prayer must play in the life of a person who wants to be God's servant to his fellowmen.

As we study, the parts will unite into a living whole, and Moses will be to us a living model for our prayer life. We shall learn what is needed to be an intercessor. The lessons that will come to us will be like this:

I see Moses was a man completely surrendered to God, zealous, yes, jealous for God, for His honour and will. A man, absolutely surrendered to serve his people, ready to sacrifice himself, to be the link, the channel of communication and of blessing, between God in heaven and people on earth. A life so entirely absorbed by his consciousness as mediator that

nothing could be simpler and more natural than expecting that God will hear.

I see here how God, in answer to the prayers of one man, saves and blesses those He had entrusted to him, and doing what He would not do without those prayers. I see how the whole government of God has taken prayer up into its plan, as one of its fundamental parts. I see how heaven is filled with the life and power and blessing earth needs, and how the prayer here below is the power to bring that blessing down.

I see above all, how prayer is an indicator of the spiritual life, and how its power depends upon my relation to God and my understanding of, and focus upon, being His representative. He entrusts His work to me, and the simpler and more complete my devotion to His interests are, the more natural and certain becomes the assurance that He hears me.

Think of the place God had in Moses' life, as the God who had sent him, the God to whom he was wholly devoted, the God who had promised to be with him, and who would and did always help him when and as he prayed.

Now for the practical application: How do we learn to pray like Moses? We cannot secure this grace by an act of the will. Our first lesson must be **the sense of impotence**. Then grace will work it in us, slowly and surely, if we give ourselves into its training. But though the training will be gradual, there is one thing that can be done immediately, we can **at this moment** decide to give ourselves to this life and take up the right position. Do this now, take the decision, **to live entirely to be a channel for God's blessing to flow through you to the world. Take the step**. If needed, take ten minutes for deliberate thought. Accept the Divine appointment and take something as your focus of intercession.

Take time, say a week, and get a firm hold on the elementary truths Moses' example teaches. As a music teacher insists upon practising the scales – only practice makes perfect – set yourself to learn thoroughly and to apply these important first lessons.

God seeks men and women through whom He can bless the world. Say with strong commitment: *Here I am, I will give my life to this.* Cultivate strong faith in the simple truth: **God hears prayer; God will do what I ask.**

Give yourself as wholly to people as to God and open your eyes to a sense of the need of a perishing world. Take up your position in Christ, and in the power which His Name, and Life and Spirit gives you. And move forward by practising specific, faith-filled, persevering intercession.

Prayer: Father God, here I am. I give myself entirely to You. I give to You my life, my time, my family, my ambitions, my career, my finances, my all. I believe that You, O God, hears prayer. In myself I am nothing, but your Spirit dwells in me and will teach me all things. Amen.

CHAPTER 6. MOSES, THE MAN OF GOD

Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. – Deuteronomy 33:1

The man of God! How much this name means! A man who comes from God, chosen and sent by Him. A man who walks with God, lives in His fellowship, and carries the mark of His presence. A man who lives for God and His will; whose whole being is pervaded and ruled by the glory of God; who involuntarily and unceasingly leads men to think of God. A man in whose heart and life God has taken the right place as the All in All, and who has only one desire, that He should have that place throughout the world.

Such men and women of God are what the world needs; such are what God seeks, that He may fill them with Himself, and send them into the world to help others to know Him. Moses was such a man, so distinctly that men naturally spoke of him like this – Moses, the man of God! Every servant of God should aim to be such a man – a living witness and proof of what God is to him in heaven, and is to him on earth, and what He claims to be in everyone.

In a previous chapter we spoke of *communion with God* as what man had been created for, as the privilege of daily life, as what was to be our first care in the morning watch. What was said there had chiefly referenced to our personal need, and the power of a godly happy life influencing others. The name, Moses, the man of God. And the thought of man being so closely and manifestly linked to God that other people instinctively gave this as his chief characteristic – the man of God! This leads us even further: It brings us out into public life, it suggests the idea of the impression we make upon other people and the power we can have of so

carrying the mark of God's holy presence with us, that when they see us or think of us, the name shall at once suggest itself – **The Man of God.**

These are the men and women the world needs, and God requires. And why? Because the world, by sin, has fallen away from God. Because in Christ the world has been redeemed for God. And because God chose to show humans what they ought to be, of awakening and calling and helping them, through men and women of God, in whom His life, His Spirit and His power are working. Humans was created for God, that God might live and dwell and work and show forth His glory in them and through them. God was to be their all in all. The indwelling of God was to be as natural and delightful as it is true, strange, and incomprehensible. When the redemption of Christ was completed in the descent of God the Holy Spirit into the hearts of people, this indwelling was restored. God regained possession of His home. And where a person **gives himself wholly up to the presence of the Holy Spirit**, not only as a power working in him, but as **God dwelling in Him (Joh.14:16,20,23; 1 Joh.4)** he may become, in the deepest meaning of the word, a **Man of God!**

Paul tells us that it is through the power of the Holy Scripture that "*the man of God is complete.*" This suggests that with some life is imperfect and needs to be made perfect. "*Every Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching (doctrine), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that **the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.***" (2 Tim.3:16-17).

Oh, for the grace to be truly a man or woman of God! A person that knows and proves these three things: God is all; God claims all; God works all. A person that has seen the place God has in His universe and in people – He is the **All in All!** A person who has understood that God **asks and must have all**, and who only lives to give God His due and His glory! A person who has discovered the great secret that **God works all**, and

seeks, like the Son of God, to live in the unceasing blessed dependence that the Father in Him speaks the words and does the work.

Brothers and sisters! Seek to be a man or woman of God! Let God in the morning watch be your all. Let God during the day be your all. And let your life be devoted to one thing, to bring men to God, and God to men, so that in His Church, and in the world, God may have the place due to Him.

"If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven." (2 Kings 1:10). This was Elijah's answer when the captain called to him to come down from the mountain. The true God is the God who answers by fire. And the true man or woman of God is they who knows how to call down the fire, because they have power with the God of heaven. Whether the fire be that of judgment or of the Holy Spirit, the work of the man or woman of God is to bring fire down to earth. What the world needs is people of God who knows God's power, and his power with God.

Believe that it is in the secret prayer habit of daily life that we learn to know our God, and His fire, and our power with Him. Oh, to know what it is to be a man or woman of God, and what it implies.

In Elijah, as in Moses, we see how it just means a separation from every other interest, an entire identification with the honour of God, no longer a man of the world, but a **man or woman of God**.

There is a secret feeling that all this may bring more strain and sacrifice, difficulty, and danger, than we are ready for. This is only true as long as we have not seen how absolute God's claim is, how unutterably blessed it is to yield to Him, and how certain that God Himself will work it in us.

Go back and look at Moses, the man of prayer, Moses, the man of the Word, and see how, out of these three grew – Moses, the man of God. See the same in the life of Elijah – the harmony between our hearing God's Word and Him hearing our words, and the way in which it becomes Divinely possible to be and live – **men and women of God**. And then study the application of it.

Prayer: Father God, I want You to be my All in All. I want You to be my all in my quiet time, and in my whole day. I want to know You as the God of heaven. May it be said that my life reflects that I am a man or woman of God.

Chapter 7. THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

"The word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."

– **1 Thessalonians 2:13**

The value of the words of a man depends upon my knowledge of him who speaks. What a difference when a man gives me the promise, '*I will give you half of all I have,*' whether the speaker is a poor man who owns one cent, or a millionaire who offers to share his fortune with me. One of the first requisites to fruitful Bible study is the knowledge of God as the Omnipotent One, and the power of His Word.

The power of God's Word is infinite. *"By the word of the LORD the heavens were made; For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."* (Ps.33:6,9). In the Word of God His omnipotence works; it has creative power and calls into existence the **very thing of which it speaks.** (Rom.4:17).

As the Word of the Living God, it is a living Word, and gives life. It cannot only call into existence, but even make alive again that which is dead. Its quickening power can raise dead bodies, can give eternal life to dead souls. All spiritual life comes through it, for we are born of incorruptible seed by the Word of God that lives and abides forever. (1Pet.1:23).

Herein lies, hidden from many, one of the deepest secrets of the blessing of God's Word – the faith in its creative and life-giving energy. **The Word will work in me the very disposition or grace which it commands or promises.** *"It works effectively in you who believe."* *"The voice of the Lord is in power."* Everything depends upon learning the art of receiving that word into the heart. And in learning this art, the first step is – **faith in its living, its omnipotent, its creative power.** By His Word *"God called the things that are not, as though they were."* (Rom.4:17).

As true as this is of all God's mighty deeds from creation on to the resurrection of the dead, it is also true of every word spoken to us in His holy book. Two things keep us from believing this as we should. The one is the terrible experience in all those around us, and perhaps in ourselves too, of the Word being made of no effect by human wisdom or unbelief or worldliness. The other is the neglect of the teaching of Scripture that the Word is a seed. Seeds are small, seeds may be long dormant, seeds must be hidden, and when they sprout, are of slow growth. Because the action of God's Word is hidden and unobserved, slow, and apparently feeble, we do not believe in its omnipotence. Let us make it one of our first lessons. The Word I study is the power of God unto salvation: **It will work in me all I need; all the Father asks.**

What a prospect this faith would open up for our spiritual life! We should see all the treasures and blessings of God's grace to be within our reach. The Word has power to enlighten our darkness: in our hearts it will bring the light of God, the sense of His love, and the knowledge of His will. The Word can fill us with strength and courage to conquer every enemy, and to do whatever God asks us to do. The Word would cleanse, and sanctify, would work in us faith and obedience, would become in us the seed of every trait in the likeness of our Lord. Through the Word the Spirit would lead us into all truth, that is, make all that is in the Word true in us, and so prepare our hearts to be the habitation of the Father and the Son.

What a change would come over our relation to God's Word and to the Morning Watch if we really believed this simple truth! Let us begin our training for that ministry of the Word which every believer must exercise, by proving its power in our own experience. Let us begin to seek this, quietly setting ourselves to learn the great faith-lesson, the mighty power of God's Word. Nothing less than this is meant by saying: **the Word of God is true!** Because God Himself will make it true to us. We shall have much

to learn regarding what hinders that power, much to overcome to be freed from these hindrances, much to surrender to receive that working. But all will come right if we only set out upon our Bible study with the determined resolve to believe that **God's Word has omnipotent power in the heart to work every blessing of which it speaks.**

Prayer: Father God, I believe that your Word is alive and active, that your Word has omnipotent power. I open my heart for the seeds of your Word. I determine to believe every Word You speak to be truth and to work in me every blessing of which it speaks. Remove every hindrance, all human wisdom, unbelief, or worldliness that can make your Word of no effect in me. I believe. Amen.

Chapter 8. THE SEED IS THE WORD.

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God." – Luke 8:11

I think it may be confidently said that in all nature there is no illustration of what the Word of God is, so true, so full of meaning, as that of a seed. To have a full spiritual insight into it is a wonderful means of grace.

The points it resembles are easy to state. There is the apparent insignificance of a seed – a little thing as compared with the tree that springs from it. There is the life, enclosed and dormant within a husk. There is the need of suitable soil, without which growth is impossible. There is the slow growth with its length of time calling for long patience of the farmer. And there is the fruit, in which the seed reproduces and multiplies itself. In all these respects, the seed teaches us most precious lessons as to our use of God's Word.

There is the **first lesson of faith**. Faith does not look at appearances. As we can judge, it looks more improbable that a Word of God should give life in the soul, should work in us the very grace of which it speaks, should transform our whole character, should fill us with strength. And yet so it is. When once we have learned to believe that the Word can work effectually the very truth it expresses; we have found one of the chief secrets of our Bible study. We shall then receive each Word as the pledge and the power of a Divine working.

Then there is **the lesson of labour**. The seeds need to be gathered, and kept, and put into prepared soil. And so, the mind must gather Scripture and understand and pass it on to the heart, as the only soil on which this heavenly seed can grow, the Words which meet our need. We cannot give the life or the growth. Nor do we need to: it is there. But what we

can do is to hide the Word in our heart, and keep it there, waiting for the sunshine that comes from above.

And the seed teaches **the lesson of patience**. The effect of the Word on the heart is in most cases not immediate. It needs time to strike root and grow up. Christ's words must abide in us. We must not only day by day increase our store of Bible knowledge – this is only like gathering the grain in a barn – but watch over those words of command or promise that we have specially taken and allow them room in our heart to spread both root and branches. We need to know what seed we have put in, and to cultivate a watchful but patient expectancy. In due time we shall reap if we don't faint and lose faith.

And lastly comes **the lesson of fruitfulness**. However insignificant that little seed of a Word of God appears, however feeble its life may seem, however deep hidden the very thought of what it speaks may be, and however trying the slowness of its growth may be to our patience – be sure the fruit will come. The very truth and life and power of God, of which the Word contained the thought, will grow, and ripen within you. And just as a seed bears fruit, containing the same seed for new reproduction, so the Word will not only bring you the fruit it promised, but that fruit will each time become a seed which you carry to others to give life and blessing.

Not only the Word, but "*the kingdom of heaven is like a seed.*" (**Matt. 13:31**). And all the grace of it comes in no other way than as a hidden seed in the heart of those who are born-again. Christ is a seed. The Holy Spirit is a seed. The love of God shed abroad in the heart is a seed. The exceeding greatness of the power that works in us is a seed. The hidden life is there in the heart, but not at once or always felt in its power. The Divine glory is there, but often without form or beauty, to be known only

by faith, to be counted and acted upon when not felt, to be waited for in its springing forth and its growth.

As this central truth each time is firmly grasped and held as the law of all the heavenly life on earth, the study of God's Word becomes an act of faith and surrender and dependence upon the living God. I believe humbly, almost tremblingly, in the Divine seed that there is in the Word, and the power of God's Spirit to make it true in my life and experience. I yield my heart hungrily and wholly to receive this Divine seed. And I wait on God in absolute dependence and confidence to give the increase in a power above what we can ask or think.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, teach me these lessons of the seed, the lessons of faith, labour, patience, and fruitfulness. As I humbly gather the seeds from your Word these next 17 weeks, help me to surrender to it, to transfer it from my head to my heart, to keep, to watch over it, to wait for its growth in faith, to believe that your Spirit will make it true in my life and experience. I tremble at your Word, in awe of who You are, the Sower of the heavenly seed. Amen.

Chapter 9. DOING AND KNOWING

But He [Jesus] said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" – Luke 11:28

"If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know..." – John 7:17

Some time ago I received a letter from one who was evidently an earnest Christian, asking me for some hints to help him in Bible study. My first thought was to answer that there are so many addresses and booklets on the subject, that he would find all I could say, better said already. After a little while, certain experiences in my own immediate circle made me feel how needful instruction was on this all-important subject, and I found there were points to which it appeared desirable that special prominence should be given. I take up my pen with the earnest prayer and hope that what I write may be from God, the fountain of Light and Life, to help His children to see how they may draw from His precious Word all that Divine instruction and nourishment, all that abundant joy and strength which He has there laid up for them.

I suppose myself addressing a young Christian who has said to me, "*Help me to study my Bible. Give me some rules to guide me as to how to begin, and how to go on, so that I may know my Bible well.*" The very first thing I have to say to him, the thing that comes before all else, is this: "*In your Bible study everything will depend upon the spirit in which you do it, upon the Object or the End you set for yourself. In worldly things a man is ruled and urged on by the End or Aim he sets before himself. It is no different than with the Bible. If your aim is simply to know the Bible well, you will be disappointed. If you think that the thorough knowledge of the Bible will necessarily be a blessing, you are mistaken. To some it is a curse. To others it is powerless, it does not make them holy or happy. To some it is a burden, it depresses them instead of quickening them or lifting them up.*"

And what ought then to be the Aim or the End, the real disposition of the Bible student? God's Word is food, bread from heaven. The first need for Bible study is: **A great hunger after righteousness**, a great desire to **do all God's will**. The Bible is a light. The first condition of its enjoyment is: a **longing from the heart to walk in God's ways**. Is not this what the texts I placed above teach us? *"Blessed are they who hear the word of God **and keep it**."* There is no blessedness in hearing or knowing God's Word apart from **keeping it**. The Word accomplishes nothing if it is not kept, obeyed, or done. *"If any man wills to **do His will**, he shall **know**."* According to this saying of our Lord, all true knowledge of God's Word depends upon there being first **the will to do it**. Is not this the very lesson we are enforcing? God will refuse to unlock the real meaning and blessing of His Word to any but those **whose will is firmly set upon it to doing it**. I must read my Bible with one purpose: *"Whatever He says to you, **do it**."* (Joh.2:5).

Why this is so, is easily explained when we think of what **words** are meant for. They stand between the will and the deed. A man wills to do something for you: before he does it, he expresses his thought or purpose in words; then he fulfils the words by doing what he has promised. The same with God. His words have their value from what He does. In creation His Word was with power; He spoke, and it was done. In grace He does what He says. David prayed: *"Now, O LORD God, do as You have said."* (2 Sam.7:25). Solomon said at the consecration of the temple: *"Who fulfilled with His hand what He has spoken with His mouth." "Who has kept that which You had promised;" "Who spoke it with your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand." "Let Your word come true, which You have spoken."* (2 Chr.6:4, 10; 15, 17). In the prophets God says: *"I the Lord have spoken it; **I will do it**."* (Ezek.22:14). And they say, *"What You had spoken, **is done**."* The truth and the worth of God's promises, consists in this, that **He does it**. His word of promise is meant to be done.

This is no less true of His Word of command, of things which He meant **us to do**. If we do not do them, if we seek to know them, if we admire their beauty and praise their wisdom, but do not **do them**, we deceive ourselves. They are meant **to be done**; it is only as we do them that their real meaning and blessing can be unfolded to us. It is only as we do them, that we can really grow in the Divine life. *"That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work (first this, then) and increasing in the knowledge of God"* (**Col.1:10**). It is only when we approach God's words with the same aim which God had in view **that they should be done**, that we can have any hope of blessing.

Is this not what we see all around us in the pursuit of knowledge, or in any branch of trade? The apprentice or pupil is expected to put the lessons he receives into practice; only then is he prepared for further teaching. And it is the same in the Christian life. Bible study is mere theory, a pleasing exercise of the mind and imagination, worth little or nothing for a life of true holiness or Christlikeness, until the student is ready never to open or close his Bible without making God's purpose his very own and obeying when He says: **"Do all that I say."**

This was the mark of the saints of old. *"So, Abram went, as the Lord had spoken to him," "As the Lord commanded Moses, so he did,"* is the description of the man who as a servant was faithful in all his house. And of David we read: *"I have found a man after My own heart, who shall do all My will."* In **Psalms 119** we hear him speaking with God about His word, and praying for Divine light and teaching, but always accompanied by the vow of obedience, or some other expression of love and delight. It is the doing of God's will, that even with God's own Son, is the one secret of entrance into the favour and the mind of God.

I have just been reading Mr. Moody's new book, "Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study." I doubt that many will apply the suggestions it contains.

They will think correctly: 'What has helped a man like Mr. Moody, can help me too.' And yet they may be disappointed. They must be, unless they bring to the Bible what Mr. Moody brought: **An honest desire to do whatever he saw God wanted him to do.** Christian! I beg of you by the mercies of God, when you ask God to lead you into the treasures of His Word, into the palace where Christ dwells, do it as one who presents himself as a living sacrifice, **ready to do whatever God says.** Do not think: 'Of course!' It is of more importance than you know. This is more frequently absent from Bible study than you think. Seek for it with deep humility. The first need for enjoying your food is hunger. The first requirement for Bible study is **a simple, determined longing to discover what God wants you to do, and an unshakeable earnest resolve to do it.** *"If any man wills to do His will, He shall know..."* – to him the Word of God will be opened up.

<https://www.amazon.com/Pleasure-Profit-Bible-Study-Dwight/dp/164799022X>

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I have read much of your Word without the desired effect in my life. I gained a lot of knowledge but now I earnestly desire to do your will, to obey all your commandments, to walk in your ways. Reveal to me what I must do, and then help me to obey. Amen.

Chapter 10. The Blessedness of the Doer.

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves...and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." – James 1:22, 25

What a terrible deception to be content with, to delight in hearing the Word, and yet not to do it. And how terribly common, the sight of multitudes of Christians listening to the Word of God regularly and earnestly, and yet not doing it. If their own servant were to do so, hearing but **not doing**, how quick will the judgment be. And yet, so complete is the deception, that they never know that they are not living good Christian lives. What can it be that so deceives us?

There is more than one thing. One is that people misunderstand the pleasure they find in hearing, in religion and worship. The mind delights in having the truth revealed to it; the imagination is gratified by the images of the Word; the feelings are stirred by the participation of it. To an active mind, knowledge gives pleasure. A man may study some branch of science, say electricity, for the enjoyment the knowledge gives him, without the least intention of applying it practically. And so, people go to church, and enjoy the preaching, **and yet do not do what God asks**. The unconverted and the converted person alike remain content to go on in doing and confessing, and still doing the things which they ought not to do.

Another cause for deception is the terrible perversion of the doctrine (teaching) of our impotence to do good. The grace of Christ enables us to obey, to keep from sinning and to truly make us holy, is so little believed, that people practically think that there is a necessity of sinning attached to them. They think that God cannot expect an exact obedience of them, for He knows they cannot render it. This error cuts away at the very root

of a determined purpose to do all God has said. It closes the heart to any earnest desire to believe and experience all God's grace can do in us and keeps people self-contented during sin. Hearing and not doing – what a terrible self-deception.

There is a third reason for it, having special reference to private Bible reading. The hearing or reading is regarded as a duty, the performance of which is considered to be a religious service. We have spent our five or ten minutes in the morning reading; we have read thoughtfully and attentively; we have tried to take in what was read. A duty faithfully performed eases the conscience and gives a sense of satisfaction. And there is hardly any conception of the worthlessness, and more than that, of the hardening of the influence of a duty performed or of knowledge acquired, unless we go out with our whole heart set upon **literally doing and being what God's Word says He would have us and can make us**. Terrible deception. *"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*

It is in the prayer closet, in the morning watch, that this deception must be fought and conquered. We may find that it will disturb our regular Bible reading and make us fall behind in our portions. It need not do this. But it is far better that it does, than that this point remains doubtful and unsettled. **Everything depends on this**. Our Lord Jesus said: *"If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine (teaching), whether it is from God."* (**John 7:17**). It is only the heart that delights in God's law, and **has set its will determinedly on doing it**, that can receive the divine illumination, which spiritually knows the teaching of Christ in its Divine origin and power. Without this will **to do**, our knowledge will not profit; it remains mere head knowledge.

In life, in science and art, in business, the only way of truly knowing, is doing. What a man cannot do he, does not thoroughly know. **The only**

way to know God, to taste His blessedness, is through the doing of His will. That proves whether it is a god of my own sentiment and imagination that I confess, or the true and living God who rules and works in all. It is only in doing His will that I prove I love it and accept it and make myself one with it. And there is no possible way under heaven of being united by God **but by being united to His will** in the doing of it. It is the solitude of the inner chamber, in the spirit in which I do my private Bible reading, in the determination with which I seek to have this point absolutely and finally settled, **I am going to do whatever God says**, that the awful self-deception of hearing and not doing must be conquered.

It may help us if we take some portion of God's Word and see how we are do deal with it.

Suppose it is the Sermon on the Mount - I start with the first Beatitude: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit."* I ask: What does this mean? Am I obeying the command? Am I at least thoroughly in earnest seeking day by day to maintain this disposition? As I feel how far my proud, self-confident nature is from it, am I willing to wait, and plead with Christ, and believe that He can work it in me? Am I going **to do this** – be poor in spirit? Or shall I again be a hearer and not a doer?

And so, I may go through the Beatitudes, and though the whole Sermon, with its teaching on meekness and mercy, on love and righteousness, on doing everything as unto the Father, and in everything trusting Him, on doing His will and Christ's words, verse by verse ask – **Do I know what this means? Am I doing it?** Am I what He speaks? And as always, the answer comes – I fear not, no, I see no possibility of living like this, and doing what He says, I shall be led to feel the need of an entire revision of my creed and conduct. And I shall ask whether the vow, **whatever He says I am going to do**, has ever taken the place in my Bible reading or my life which He demands that it should have.

Before I know, such questionings may begin to work in me a poverty of spirit I never knew and lead me to an entirely new insight into my need of a Christ who will breathe in me His own life **and work in me all He speaks**. I will get courage in faith to say: **I can do** all things in Him who strengthens me; whatever He says in his Word, I will do.

Prayer: Father, I am guilty of self-deception. I find so much pleasure in your Word and the Words of Christ, but I still don't do all of it. I confess that my pursuit was for knowledge and not for inner transformation of my heart. I determine, with your help, to become a doer of the Word. I believe and trust in a Saviour Who works in me all that He speaks. Whatever He says in His Word, I will do. Amen.

Chapter 11. KEEPING CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS.

"If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." – John 13:17

The blessedness and the blessing of God's Word is only to be known **by doing it.**

The subject is so important for the Christian life, and therefor in our Bible study, that I must ask you to return to it once more. And let us this time just take the one expression, keeping the Word, or keeping the commandments.

Let us first consider it in the farewell discourse. You may be familiar with the passages, but it will be of use to look at them together.

"If you love Me, keep My commandments... and the Father will give you another Helper (Comforter)." (John 14:15-16)

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father" (14: 21)

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him." (14:23)

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." (15:7)

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love." (15:10)

"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." (15:14)

Study and compare these passages, until the words enter the heart and work the deep conviction that **keeping Christ's commandments is the indispensable condition of all true spiritual blessing**. For the coming of God, the Holy Spirit, and His actual indwelling, for the enjoyment of the Father's love, the inward manifestation of Christ and the enjoyment of His friendship; the keeping of the commandments is the one requisite. And for the power to claim and enjoy these blessings in faith day by day, the childlike consciousness that we do keep them is indispensable too. And no less indispensable is, for fruitful Bible study, the quiet assurance that dare expect God's light and strength with every word of God because He knows that we are ready to obey to the very utmost. **Through the will of God, delighted in, and done, lies our only way to the heart of the Father, and His only way to our heart. Keep the commandments:** this is the way to every blessing.

See how strikingly all this is confirmed by what we find in John's first epistle. *"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."* (**1 John 2:3-5**). The only proof of true, living, saving knowledge of God; the only proof of not being self-deceived in our religion; of God's love not being an imagination, but a possession, is keeping His Word.

"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight... Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him." (**1 John 3:21, 22, 24**). Keeping the commandments is the secret confidence toward God, and true intimate fellowship with Him.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world." (1 John 5:3-4). Our profession of love is worthless, except that it is proved to be true by keeping of His commandments in the power of a life begotten of God. Knowing God, having the love of God perfected in us, having boldness with God, and abiding in Him – all, all, is depending on the one thing – **keeping the commandments.**

It is only as we realise the prominence Christ and Scripture give to this truth, that we shall learn to give it the same prominence in our life. It will become to us one of the keys to true Bible study. The person who reads his Bible with the longing and determined purpose to **search out and to obey every commandment of God and of Christ**, is on the right track to receiving all the blessing the Word was ever meant to bring. He will specially learn two things. How he needs to wait for the teaching of the Holy Spirit to lead him into all God's will. And what blessedness there is in performing daily duties, not only because they are right, or he delights in them, but because they are the will of God. He will find how all daily life is elevated, when he says as Christ did: *"This commandment I received of My Father."* The Word will become the light and the guide by which all his steps are ordered. And his life will become the training school in which the sanctifying power of the Word is proved, and the mind ever prepared anew for its teaching and encouragement. And so, the keeping of the commandments will be the key to every spiritual blessing.

Make a determined effort to grasp what this life of full obedience means. Take some of Christ's clearest commandments: *"Love one another as I have loved you; you ought to wash one another's feet; you should do as I have done to you;"* and accept a Christlike love and humility as the law of the supernatural life you are to live.

So far from the sense of failure or impotence leading you to despair; or to rest contented in what you think attainable, let it only encourage you to put your hope more entirely on Him, who by His Spirit will work in you both to will and to do.

Once again, our one aim must be to perfect harmony between conscience and conduct. Every conviction must be carried out into action. Christ's commandments were meant to be obeyed. If this is not done, the accumulation of Scripture knowledge only darkens and hardens, and works that satisfaction with the pleasure which the acquisition of knowledge brings, which unfits us for the Spirit's teaching.

I beg you, do not be weary of my repeating so often the blessed, solemn message. In your inner chamber the question is to be decided whether you will, through the day, keep the commandments of Christ. And there too will be decided whether in future life you are to bear the character of a person wholly given up to knowing and doing the will of God.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, I am setting myself, determined to search out all your commandments, and with the help of your Holy Spirit, I will obey it. I desire to have friendship with You, to worship You, to become one with You. I desire to do the will of the Father. I surrender my time, my day, my life to You. Work in me all that You promised. Amen.

Chapter 12. LIFE AND KNOWLEDGE.

And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

– Genesis 2:9

There are two ways of knowing things. The one in the mind by notion or conception; I know about a thing. The other is in the life; I know by inward experience. A blind man, who is clever, may know all that science teaches about the light, by having books read to him. A child, or a savage, who has never thought what light is, yet knows it far better than the blind scholar. The latter knows it all by thinking; the former knows it in reality by seeing and enjoying it.

It is like that with religion. The mind can form thoughts about God from the Bible, and know all the doctrines of salvation, while the inner life does not know the power of God to save. This is why we read, "*He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*" (**1 John 4:8**). A person may know about God and about love, he may be able to utter beautiful thoughts about it; but unless he loves, he does not know God. Only love can know God. The knowledge of God is eternal life.

God's Word is the word of life. Out of the heart are the issues of life. The life may be strong, even where knowledge in the mind is feeble. And the knowledge may be the object of most diligent pursuit and of great delight, while the life is not affected by it.

An illustration may make this plan. Suppose we give to an apple tree understanding, with eyes to see and hands to work. This might enable the apple tree to do for itself what the gardener now does, to gather manure or bring moisture. But the inner life of the apple tree will still be the

same, quite different from the understanding that had been added to it. And so the inner divine life in a person is something different from the intellect with which he knows about it. That intellect is indeed most useful, to offer to the heart the Word of God which the Holy Spirit can give life to. And yet the intellect is absolutely impotent, either to impart or quicken the true life. It is but a servant that carries the food; it is the heart that must feed and be nourished and live.

The two trees in Paradise are God's revelation of the same truth. If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, he would have received and known all the good God had for him, in living power as an experience. And he would have known evil only by being absolutely free from it. But Eve was led astray by the desire for knowledge – *"the fruit was desirable to make one wise."* (**Gen.3:6**). The outcome was that man got a knowledge of good without possessing it, a knowledge of it, only from the evil that was its opposite.

It is only life, experience, possession of God and His Goodness that gives true knowledge. The knowledge of the intellect cannot give life. *"And though I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, but have not love, I am nothing."* (**1 Cor.13:2**). It is in our daily Bible reading that this danger meets us; it is there it must be faced and conquered. We need the intellect to hear and understand God's Word in its human meaning. But we need to know the possession of the truth by which the intellect cannot profit, except when the Holy Spirit makes it life and truth in the heart. We need to yield our hearts and wait on God in quiet submission and faith to work in us by His Spirit. As this becomes a holy habit, we shall learn that the art of intellect and heart working in perfect harmony, and each movement of the mind being ever accompanied by the corresponding movement of the heart, waiting on and listening for the teaching of the Spirit.

Prayer: Father God, I carry in my mind the knowledge of good and evil. Teach me now by your Spirit to eat from the Tree of Life, to eat the Word in my heart, to wait on the Spirit to make it truth and life inside of me. My time with You each morning has become an absolute necessity for life. I cannot live without your presence. Feed me with the Bread of Heaven. Amen.

Chapter 13. THE HEART AND THE UNDERSTANDING.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;" – Proverbs 3:5

The main aim of the Book of Proverbs is to teach knowledge and understanding. To understand righteousness, to understand the fear of the Lord, to find good understanding, it is to this the Proverbs want to guide us. But it gives a warning in pursuit of this knowledge and understanding, to distinguish between trusting our own understanding, and intellect, and seeking spiritual understanding, given by God, an understanding of the heart.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." In all our seeking after knowledge and wisdom, in all our planning in life, or studying the Word, we have these two powers – the understanding or intellect, which knows things from without, by nature and conceptions we form, and the heart, which knows them by experience as it takes them up into the will and affection.

I am deeply persuaded that one of the main reasons why so much Bible teaching and Bible knowledge is comparatively fruitless, one of the main causes of the lack of holiness, and devotion, and power in the Church, is to be found here – trusting in our own understanding in religion. I beg my readers to give me patient hearing here.

Many argue: But surely God gave us our intellect, and without it there is no possibility of knowing God's Word. Very true; but listen. By the Fall our whole human nature was disordered. The will became enslaved, the affections were perverted, the understanding was darkened.

Everyone admits the ruin of the Fall in the former two, but practically deny it in the latter. They admit that even the believer has not in himself the power of a holy will and needs the daily renewing grace of Jesus Christ. They admit that they do not have the power of holy affection, loving God, and his neighbour, except as it is unceasingly worked in them by the Holy Spirit. But they do not notice that the intellect is just as much spiritually ruined and impotent, and incapable of apprehending spiritual truth. It was especially the desire for knowledge, in a way and at a time God had forbidden it, that led Eve astray, as the outcome of the temptation. To think that we can take the knowledge of God's truth out of His Word for ourselves as we will, is still our greatest danger. We need a deep conviction of the impotence of our understanding to really know the truth; and of the terrible danger of self-confidence and self-deception in doing so, to see the need of the word, "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.*"

It is with the heart man believes. It is with all the heart we are to seek, and serve, and love God. It is only with the heart that we can know God, or worship God, in spirit and in truth. It is in the heart, therefore, that the Divine Word does the work. It is into our heart that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son. It is the heart, the inward life of desire and love and will and surrender, that the Holy Spirit guides into all the truth.

In Bible study, "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.*"

Trust not, wholly distrust, your own understanding. It can only give you thoughts and conceptions of Divine things without the reality. It will deceive you with the thought that the truth, if received into the mind, will somehow surely enter the heart. And so, it will blind you to the terrible experience which is universal, that humans daily read, and every Sunday

delight to hear God's Word, and yet are not made humble, nor holy, nor heavenly-minded, by it.

Instead of trusting the understanding, come with your heart to the Bible. Instead of trusting the understanding, trust in the Lord, and that with all your heart. Let not the understanding, but the whole heart, set upon the living God as the Teacher, be the main thing when you enter your prayer closet. Then you will find good understanding. God will give you an understanding heart, a spiritual understanding.

You may ask me, as I have been often asked, "But what am I to do? How am I to study my Bible? I cannot see any way to do it but by using my understanding."

Perfectly right. But do not use it for what it cannot do. Remember two things. One is, that it can only give you a picture or thought of spiritual things. The moment it has done this, go with your heart to the Lord to make His Word life and truth in you. The other is, remember that **pride of intellect, the danger of leaning on your own understanding is unceasing**, and that nothing, not even the most determined purpose, can save you from this, but only the continual dependence of the heart on the Holy Spirit's teaching. It is alone through the Holy Spirit that gives life to the Word in the heart, in the dispositions and affections, that He can guide the intellect. *"He will guide the meek in judgment; He will show the meek his way." "The fear of the Lord" – (a frame of mind/mindset) – "is the beginning of wisdom."*

With every thought from the Word the understanding grasps, bow before God in dependence and trust. Believe with your whole heart that God can and will make it true. Ask for the Holy Spirit to make it work effectually in the heart. Then the Word becomes the strength of our life.

Persevere in this, and the time will come when the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the heart and life, will subject the understanding, and let His holy light shine through it.

Prayer: Father God, I bow before You. I surrender my will, my intellect, my emotions, my thoughts, and my heart to You. I believe that You can make the Word truth and life within me. Let the Holy Spirit make the Word work effectually in my heart. Please remove from my heart and mind all pride of intellect and knowledge, and fill me with a humble, teachable spirit. Amen.

Chapter 14. GOD'S THOUGHTS AND OUR THOUGHTS.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My thoughts than your thoughts." – Isaiah 55:9

The words of a wise man on earth often mean something different from what a hearer understands. How natural it is then that the words of God, as He understands them, mean something infinitely higher that we understand it to be.

There is a great need for remembering this. Doing so will lead us to continually to not rest content with our knowledge and thoughts of the Word, but to wonder and wait for a revelation as to what its full blessing, as God has meant it, may be. It will give our prayer for the Holy Spirit's teaching new meaning and urgency, especially to show us that which has not yet entered our hearts to conceive. It will give confidence to the hope that, there is for us even in this life, a fulfilment beyond our highest imagination.

God's Word has two meanings. The one is that which it has in the mind of God, making the human words it was written in, the bearer of all the glory of Divine wisdom, and power, and love. The other is our feeble, partial, defective apprehension of it. Even after grace and experience have made words such as the love of God, the grace of God, the power of God, or any of the many promises connected with these truths, very true and real to us, there is still an infinite fulness in the Word we have not yet known.

How strikingly Isaiah wrote it: *"As the heavens are higher than the earth."* We know that no person on earth would dream of trying to reach the sun or the stars with his little arm. It will not even help of if you climbed the highest mountain. This we believe with our whole heart. Now God says,

just like this, *"My thoughts are higher than your thoughts."* Even when the Word has spoken God's thoughts, and our thoughts have sought to take them in, they remain as high above our thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth. All the infinities of God and the eternal world dwell in the Word as the **seed of eternal life**. And as the full-grown oak is so mysteriously larger than the acorn from which it originated, so God's words are but seed from which God's mighty wonders of grace and power can grow.

Faith in this Word should teach us two lessons, the one of ignorance, the other of expectation. We should learn to come to the Word as little children. Jesus said: *"I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes."* (**Matt.11:25**). The prudent and the wise are not necessarily hypocrites, pharisees or enemies. There are many of God's own dear children, who, by neglecting to continually cultivate a childlike spirit and, unconsciously resting on the scriptural basis of their creed, or the honesty of their Bible study, have spiritual truth hidden from them, and never grow up to become spiritual men. *"For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."* (**1 Cor.2:11**). Let a deep sense of our ignorance, a deep distrust of our own power of understanding the things of God, mark our Bible study.

The deeper our despair of entering correctly into the thoughts of God, the greater the confidence of expectancy may become. God wants to make His Word true in us. *"All your children shall be taught by the LORD."* (**Isa.54:13**). The Holy Spirit is already in us to reveal the things of God. In answer to our humble believing prayer God will, through the Spirit, give an ever-growing insight into the mystery of God – our wonderful union and likeness to Christ, His living in us, and our being as He was in this world.

Yes, more – if our hearts thirst and wait for it, a time may come when, by a special communication of His Spirit, all our yearnings are satisfied, and Christ so takes possession of the heart, that, what was for a long time only faith, becomes an experience; that as the heavens are higher than the earth, His thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

Prayer: Father God, I surrender my thoughts about your Word, and even about Who You are, to your Spirit. I confess that my own mind and intellect cannot fathom You, nor grasp the Truth. Please teach me by your Holy Spirit to know the Truth and for Christ to be formed in me. I need and long to have the thoughts and mind of Christ. Amen.

Chapter 15. MEDITATION.

*"Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law, he meditates day and night." – Psalm 1:1-2
(Josh.1:8; Psa.119:15,23,48,78,97,99,148; 1Tim.4:15).*

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD." – Psalm 19:14.

The true aim of education, study, or reading, is to be found, not in what it brings to us, but in what it brings out of us, by the awakening of our inward power into active exercise. This is as true of the study of the Bible, as of any other study. God's Word only works its true blessing when the truth it brings to us has stirred the inner life, and reproduced itself in resolve, trust, love, or adoration. When the heart has received the Word through the mind and has had its spiritual powers aroused to practise it, the Word is no longer void, but it has done what God sent it to do. It has become part of our life and strengthened us for new purpose and effort.

It is in meditation that the heart holds and appropriates the Word. Just as in reflection the understanding grasps all the meaning and relevance of a truth, so in meditation the heart assimilates the Word and makes it a part of its own life. We need continual reminding that the heart is both the will and the affections (emotions). The meditation of the heart implies desire, acceptance, surrender, love. Out of the heart springs forth the issues of life; what the heart truly believes, it receives with love and joy; and allows to master and rule the life. The intellect gathers and prepares the food on which we are to feed. In meditation the heart takes it in and feeds on it.

The art of meditation needs to be cultivated. Just as a man needs to be trained to concentrate his mental powers so as to think clearly and

accurately, a Christian must carefully consider the Word and meditate, until the holy habit has been formed of yielding up the whole heart to every word of God.

The question is sometimes asked, how can the power of meditation be cultivated? The first thing is **to present ourselves before God**. It is His Word. The Word has no power or blessing apart from Him. The Word is meant to bring us into His presence and fellowship. Practise His presence, and receive the Word as from Himself, in the assurance that He will make it work effectually in the heart. In **Psalms 119**, we find the Word seven times, but each time as part of a prayer addressed to God. *"I will meditate on Your precepts."* *"Your servant meditates on Your statutes."* *"O how I love Your law, it is my meditation all day."* Meditation is the heart turning towards God with His own Word, seeking to take it up into the affection and will, into its very life.

Another element of true meditation is **quiet restfulness**. In our study of Scripture, in our endeavour to grasp an argument, or to master a difficulty, our intellect must often strain in utmost efforts. The habit the soul requires in meditation is different. Here we turn to God with some truth we have found, or some mystery on which we are waiting for divine teaching. We hide the Word in the depth of the heart, and believe that, by the Holy Spirit, its meaning and power will be revealed in our inner life. *"You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom."* In the description of Mary, the mother of Jesus, we read: *"Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."* In her keeping all these sayings in her heart, we have the image of a soul that has begun to know Christ and is on the sure path to know Him better.

It is hardly necessary to mention that in meditation **personal application** takes a prominent place. This is not always the case with our intellectual Bible study. There our object is to know and understand. In meditation

the main object is to appropriate and experience. A readiness to believe every promise implicitly, to obey every command unhesitatingly, to *"stand perfect and complete in all the will of God,"* is the only true spirit of Bible study. It is in quiet meditation that this faith is exercised, that this allegiance is rendered, that the full surrender to all God's will is made, and the assurance received of grace to perform our vows.

And then meditation must lead to **prayer**. It provides material for prayer. It must lead on to prayer, to definitely ask and receive what is seen in the Word or accepted from the Word. Its value is that it is the preparation for prayer, deliberate and whole-hearted supplication for what the heart has felt that the Word has revealed as needful or possible. That means the **rest of faith**, that looks upward in the assurance that the Word will open up and prove its power in the soul that meekly and patiently surrenders to it.

The reward of resting for a time from intellectual effort, and cultivating the habit of holy meditation, will be that in the course of time the two will be brought into harmony, and all our study will be animated by the spirit of quiet waiting on God, and a yielding of the heart and life to the Word.

Our fellowship with God is meant for the whole day. The blessing of securing a habit of true meditation in the morning watch, will be that we shall be brought closer to the blessedness of the man in Psalm 1, *"Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law, he meditates day and night."*

Let all the ministers and leaders of God's people remember that they need this more than others, if they are to train them to it, and to keep their own communication unbroken with the only source of strength and blessing. God says, *"I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you."*

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law...that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night...then you will have good success. Be strong and of good courage." (Jos.1:5-9).

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer." (Psa.19:14). Let nothing less than this be your aim – that your meditation may be acceptable in His sight – part of the spiritual sacrifice you offer. Let nothing less be your prayer and expectation, that your meditation may be true worship, the living surrender of the heart to God's Word, in His presence.

Prayer: Father, the desire of my heart is to learn and cultivate the art of meditating on your Word. Teach me. I offer myself and my time with You as a spiritual sacrifice. May my meditation be pleasing in Your sight. I surrender my heart to Your Word. I desire to be in Your presence. Amen.

Chapter 16. REVEALED TO BABES.

"I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes." – Matthew 11:25

The wise and prudent are those who are conscious and confident of their power of mind and reason to aid them in their pursuit of Divine Knowledge. The babes are those whose main work is not the mind and its power, but the heart and its attitudes. Ignorance, helplessness, dependence, meekness, teachableness, trust and love – these are the tempers God seeks in those whom He teaches (**Psa.25:9,12,14, 17,20**).

One of the most important parts of our devotions is the study of God's Word. It is very important that we should always receive the Word in the Spirit that waits for the Father to reveal its truth in us. It is very important that we should have the childlike, yes, the babe-like attitude, to which the Father loves to impart the secrets of His love. With the wise and prudent head-knowledge is the main thing; from them God hides the spiritual meaning of the **very thing they think they understand**. With the babes, it is not the head and its knowledge, but the heart and **feeling**, the sense of humility, love, and trust, that is the main thing; to them God reveals, in their inner life and experience, **the very thing they know they cannot understand**.

Education tells us that there are two styles of teaching. The ordinary teacher makes communication of knowledge his main objective and cultivates the powers of the child as far as they help him to reach this objective. The true teacher considers the amount of knowledge a secondary thing. His first aim is to develop the mind and spirit, and to aid the pupil, both mentally and morally, in using his powers correctly in the pursuit and application of knowledge. In a similar way, there are two

classes of preachers. Some pour forth instruction, argument, and appeal unceasingly, leaving it to the hearers to make the best use they can of what is brought to them. The true preacher knows how much depends upon the state of heart, and seeks, even as our Lord Jesus did, to subordinate the teaching of objective truth or doctrine, to the cultivation of the attitudes without which the teaching profits little. A hundred sermons, eloquent and earnest, to the wise and prudent, to Christians who listen with the thought that they can understand, and that what they hear will somehow profit them, will bring much less real blessing, than one sermon to hearers in whom the preacher has awakened a consciousness of spiritual ignorance, a babe-like docile spirit that waits for and depends on, that truly accepts and obeys the Father's teaching.

In the secret chamber, every person is, as far as human aid is concerned, his own teacher and preacher. He is to train himself in the blessed habit of babe-like simplicity and teachableness. Remembering that it was not only needful that Divine truth should be revealed to the world, but that there must be an individual revelation to each, by the Holy Spirit.

His first care is to wait on the Father to reveal to him, and within him, the hidden mystery in its power in the inner life. In this position he exercises the babe-like spirit and receives the Kingdom as a little child. All Evangelical Christians believe in regeneration. How few believe that when a person is born of God, **a babe-like dependence on God for all teaching and strength ought to be his main characteristic.**

It was the one thing our Lord Jesus insisted on above all. When He called the poor in spirit, the meek, the hungry "*blessed*"; when He called people to learn of Him, and that He was "*meek and lowly in heart*"; when He spoke so often of us humbling ourselves and become as little children, it was because the chief and first characteristic of a child of God, of being like Jesus Christ, is **an absolute dependence upon God for every blessing,**

and specially for any real knowledge of spiritual things. Let each one of you ask himself: "Did I count the babe-like spirit the first essential in my Bible study?" Of what use is Bible study without the babe-like spirit? It is the real and only key to God's school. Would it not be well to set aside everything to secure this? Then alone will God reveal His hidden wisdom.

The new birth, being born of God, by which we become God's children, is meant to make us babes. It will give us the child-spirit as well as the child-teaching. It cannot do the second without the first. Let us believe and yield ourselves to the new life in us, to the leading of the Spirit. He will breathe in us the spirit of little children. The first object of Bible study is to learn the hidden wisdom of God. The first condition of obtaining this knowledge, is to accept the fact that God Himself reveals this to us.

The first attitude needed for receiving revelation is a babe-like spirit. We all know how the first thing a wise workman does is to see that he has the proper tools, and that they are in the proper order. He does not count it lost time to stop his work and sharpen the tools. It is not lost time to let the Bible study wait, until you see whether you are in the right position – waiting for the Father's revelation in a meek and babe-like spirit. If you feel that you have not read your Bible in this spirit, confess, and forsake at once the self-confident spirit of the wise and prudent. Not only pray for a babe-like spirit but believe for it. It is in you, though neglected and suppressed. You may immediately begin to experience it as a child of God.

Do not seek by reflection or argument to bring this babe-like spirit into your heart. Work from within outwards. It is in you, as a seed, in the new life, born of the Spirit. It must rise and grow in you, brought forth by the indwelling Spirit. In this faith you must not only pray, but pray also specifically, for this grace of the Spirit, and exercise it. Live as a babe before God. As a new-born babe desire the milk of the Word.

And beware of trying to assume this state of mind only when you want to study Scripture. It must be the permanent habit of your mind, the state of your heart. Then alone can you enjoy the continual guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Father, I confess that I have the wise and prudent attitude. Forgive me that I tried to be better than others at knowing the Word for the sake of knowledge. Forgive me for my self-confidence and pride for knowing and studying the Word only with my mind and intellect. I humble myself before You. Please give me a babe-like spirit. Teach me with your Spirit. Nourish me with the milk of your Word. Amen.

Chapter 17. LEARN FROM CHRIST.

*"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls". – **Matthew 11:29***

All Bible study is learning. To be fruitful, all Bible study should be learning of Christ. The Bible is the schoolbook, Christ is the Teacher. He opens the understanding, opens the heart, and opens the seals (**Luk.24:45; Acts 16:14; Rev.5:9**). Christ is the living eternal Word, of which the written words are the human expression. Christ's presence and teaching are the secret of all true Bible study. The written Word is powerless, except as it helps us to the Living Word. No one has ever thought of accusing our Lord of not honouring the Old Testament. In His own life, He proved the He loved it as coming out of God's mouth. He always pointed the Jews to it as the revelation of God and the witness to Himself. But it is remarkable how frequently He spoke to the disciples about His own teaching as that which they needed the most, and what they had to obey. It was only after His resurrection, when they were united with Him again, and they had already received the first breath of the Spirit (**Joh.20:22**), that we find Him explaining the Scriptures.

The Jews had their self-made interpretation of the Word. They made it the greatest barrier between themselves and Him, of whom it spoke. It is so often the same with Christians. Our human understanding of Scripture, fortified as it may be by the authority of the Church, or our own circle, becomes the greatest hindrance to Christ's teachings. Christ the Living Word seeks first to find His place in our heart and life, to be our only Teacher. Then shall we learn from Him to honour and understand Scripture.

Learn of Me for I am meek and lowly of heart. Here our Lord opens up the inmost secret of His own inner life. That which He brought down to us

from heaven; that which fits Him to be a Teacher and Saviour; that which He has given to us, and which He wants us to learn from Him. You will find it in the words, "*I am meek and lowly of heart.*" It is the one virtue that makes Him the Lamb of God, our suffering Redeemer, our heavenly Teacher, and Leader. It is the one disposition which He asks of us when we come to learn from Him. Out of this, all other teachings will come. this one condition is what we need to truly learn from Christ, in all our Bible study and in our whole Christian life. He, the Teacher, meek and lowly of heart, wants to make you what He is, because that is salvation. As a learner, you must come and study Him, believe in Him, the meek and lowly One, and seek to learn from Him how to be meek and lowly too.

Why is this the first and most important thing? Because it forms the root of true relationship of a creature to God. God alone has life and goodness and happiness. As the God of Love, He delights to give and work everything in us. Christ became the Son of Man to show humans what it is to live in blessed unceasing dependence upon God. This is what it means that He is lowly in heart. It is in this attitude that the angels veil their faces and cast their crowns before God. God is everything to them, and they delight to receive all and to give all. This is the root of the true Christian life: to be nothing before God and people; to wait on God alone; to delight in, to imitate, to learn of Christ, the Meek and Lowly One. This is the very key to the School of Christ, the only key to the true knowledge of Scripture. It is with this attitude that Christ came to teach; it is only with this attitude that you can learn of Him.

How seldom in the Christian Church does humility, the meek and lowly heart, occupy the same place as it had in the life of Christ and the teachings of God's Word. I am deeply persuaded that this lack of humility is the cause of a large part of the feebleness and unfruitfulness that we hear of in the church. It is only as we are meek and lowly in heart, that Christ can teach us by His Spirit what God has for us, and what God will

work in us. Let us begin with ourselves and reckon this as the first condition of discipleship, and the first lesson the Master will surely teach us. Let us make all our Bible study a lesson to learn of Christ, to trust Him, who is so meek and gentle and kind, to wait for Him to work His own character and likeness in us. In due time our morning watch will be the scene of daily fellowship and daily blessing.

I know how difficult it is to persuade you that that a meek and lowly heart is the first thing to consider in Bible study. It is hard to make people realise that, in fellowship with God, your attitude and disposition are everything. It is even more difficult to show them that of all Christian disposition and character, a meek and lowly heart is the very seed and root of all. It is hard to convince them that without it, Bible study profits very little. It is above all hard to lead them to understand and believe that the meek and lowly heart can be theirs, because it is the very thing Christ offers to give, teaching us how to find and receive it in Himself. Even in the face of all these difficulties, I nevertheless, urge all Bible students to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider whether the very first question to be settled in the inner chamber is not this: "Is my heart in the state in which my Teacher desires it to be?" And if it is not, "Is it not my first task to yield myself to Him, to work it in me?"

Prayer: Lord Jesus, my Master and Teacher, I humble myself before You. Forgive me for my arrogance. I need a meek and lowly heart like yours. Please work it in me with your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Chapter 18. TEACHABLENESS.

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." – Matthew 11:29

The first virtue of a pupil is submissiveness and willingness to be taught. What does this imply? A consciousness of his own ignorance, a readiness to give up his own way of thinking or doing, to look at things from the teacher's perspective, and a quiet confidence that the master knows and will show him how to learn to know too. The meek and lowly spirit listens carefully to understand what the teacher's will is and is quick to obey it. If this is the attitude of the pupil, then it will be teacher's fault if he does not learn.

Why then is it that, with Christ as our Teacher, there is so much failure and so little real growth in spiritual knowledge? So much hearing and reading of the Bible, so much profession of faith in it as our only rule of life, and yet such a lack of the manifestation of its spirit and its power? So much honest, earnest application of the Word in the inner room and the Bible study group, but so little of the joy and strength God's Word could give?

This question is of the utmost importance. There must be some reason why there are so many disciples of Jesus who honestly think they desire to know and do His will, and who yet, by their own confession and the evidence of those around them, are not displaying the Word of life as a light in the world should do. If the answer can be found to this question, their lives may be changed.

Our text suggests the answer: *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."* Many have taken Christ as a Saviour **but not as Teacher**. They

have put their trust in Him as the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep; yet they know little of the reality of Him daily shepherding His flock, calling everyone by name, or of hearing His voice and following Him alone. They know little of what it is to follow the Lamb; to receive from Him, before everything, the lamb nature, and to seek to be like Him, meek and lowly in heart. It was their three-year course in His school that fitted Christ's disciples for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the fulfilment of all the wonderful promises He had given them. **It is under the personal teaching of our Lord Jesus, and through that submission of the meek and lowly heart, that daily waits for and receives that teaching,** that we can truly find rest for our souls. All the weariness and burden of strain and failure and disappointment will give way to that divine peace, which knows that everything is being cared for by Christ Himself.

The taking of Christ's yoke and learning from Him - His meekness and lowliness of heart, and with that, the teachableness that refuses to know or do anything in its own wisdom, is to be the attitude of our whole life, every day, and all day. But it is especially in the morning hour that this is to be cultivated, and deliverance from self and all its energy is to be sought. It is there, while occupied with the words of God and of Christ and the Holy Spirit, that we need to daily realise that these words only profit as they lead to, and are opened up by, the personal teaching of Christ. It is there that we need to daily experience that it is only when the living Lord Jesus **Himself**, *in whom all the fulness dwells*, and who contains all our life and salvation, **comes near, and takes charge of us**, that His teaching can be received. And it is here that we must definitely ask and cultivate the teachableness that takes up His yoke and learns of Him. Once again, teachableness is everything. If it is true that the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the Spirit of Christ Jesus "*shall teach you all things*", and if His whole life and work in us is a divine teaching, then it is also equally true that our whole life must be divine teachableness. It is

only in this way that our daily fellowship with God's Word, and our daily life, can be what our Lord Jesus can make it to be.

Unlearning is often the most important part of learning. Unlearning wrong impressions, prejudices and prepossessions are major obstacles hindering learning. Until these have been removed, the teacher labours in vain. The knowledge he communicates touches only the surface. Deep beneath the surface the pupil is guided by that which has already become a second nature to him. The first work of the teacher is to expose, to make the pupil see and remove these hindrances.

There can be no true and faithful learning of Christ where we are not ready to unlearn. Our heredity, our education, our cultural tradition, shaped our thoughts about religion and God's Word, and it often becomes a greater hindrance because we are so assured that they are indeed the truth. To learn of Christ needs a willingness to subject every truth we believe to His inspection for criticism and correction.

Humility is the root virtue of the Christian life. This law is absolute in God's Kingdom – *"He that humbles himself shall be exalted."* Our disappointment in striving for higher degrees of grace, faith, spiritual knowledge, love for souls and power to bless, is all owing to this. We have not accepted the humility of Christ as the beginning and the perfection of His salvation. *"God gives grace to the humble"* has a far wider and deeper application than we think.

Submission is one form of humility. In the morning watch we place ourselves as learners in Christ's school. Let submission, let humility be the distinguishing mark of the learner, and, if we feel how little we have of it, let us listen to the voice that says, *"Take my yoke upon you,"* and, for that this implies – *"learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart. And you shall find rest for your souls."*

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, my Master and Teacher, I bow before You. I submit myself before You. I am willing to let go of all my own wisdom, my own understanding, my own knowledge of the application of the truths of your Word. Teach me, Lord. Expose all the obstacles and hindrances in my heart. Correct me and guide me in your ways. Give me a meek and humble heart. Amen.

Chapter 19. THE LIFE AND THE LIGHT.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

– John 1:1,4

"He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the Light of Life."

– John 8:12

Because Christ was God, He could be the Word of God. Because He had the Life of God in Himself, He could be the Revealer of that Life. And so, as the Living Word, He is the Life-giving Word. The written Word can be empty and useless if one trusts in human wisdom to understand it. It is only when a person accepts it as the seed, in which the life of the Living Word is hidden, waiting to be awakened and given life by the Holy Spirit, that it can become the Word of Life to us. Our interaction with God's written Word must always be inspired and controlled by faith in the Eternal Word, who is God.

The same truth is revealed in the expression: The Life is the Light. When we see light shining, we know that there is a fire burning in some or another form. In the spiritual world it is similar. There must be life before there can be light. Light may reflect from a dead or dark object. Light may be borrowed without life. But only life can start light. Christ is the true life, and He alone has and gives the Light of Life.

These two statements of one great truth, confirm what we learnt about the Spirit of God. The Spirit knows the things of God because He is the life of God. Christ is the Word because He is God and has the life of God. In this way the light of God only shines where the life of God is. All three these thoughts bring us to what our study wants to teach us – that the life of the Eternal Word, shines its light in the heart, that the written

Word can come to life. It is only as the Holy Spirit, who knows the things of God because He is the life of God, makes the written Word life and truth within us, that our study of the Bible can really bless us.

The one great lesson that the Spirit seeks to enforce regarding the Word of God is this – that **it is only when Scripture is received out of the Life of God into our life, that we receive any real knowledge of it.** The Word is a seed that carries within it the Divine Life. If it is received in the good soil of a heart that hungers for God's life, it will spring up and bring forth fruit, like all seed, "after its kind." The Holy Spirit will reproduce in our life the very life of God, out of which it came, the very likeness, nature and character of the Father and the Son.

Do you want to know how to begin and apply this in your private Bible reading? The rules are very simple.

First: *"Be still and know that I am God."* (**Ps.46:10**). Take time to be quiet until God makes His presence known. *"Hold your peace at the presence of the Lord."* (**Zeph.1:7, Zech.2:13**) *"The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him."* (**Hab.2:20**). Worship and wait on Him that He may speak to you.

Second: Remember that the Word comes out of the Life. The heart of God imparts His life to your heart. The life of God is in the Word. Only the power of God can make it alive in you.

Third: Believe in Christ the Living Word. *"In Him was life, and the life – His Life, was the light of men."* *"He who follows Me shall have the light of life."* Follow Jesus in love and longing desire, in obedience and service, and His life will work in you. The Life shall be the Light of your soul.

Then: Ask the Father for the Holy Spirit, *who alone knows the things of God*, to make the Word in your heart living and active. Hunger for the will of God as your daily food. Thirst for the living fountain of the Spirit within you. Receive the Word into your will, your life, your joy – the life it brings will give the light with which it shines.

The reason I so often insisted upon the truth shared in these last few chapters is very simple. My own experience has taught me how long it takes before we clearly grasp that the Word of God must be received into our lives and not only into the mind before we fully believe it and act upon it. To write the same thing to you is not tedious but for you it is profitable. Study the lesson until you know it. The Word comes out of the life of God, it carries that life in itself, it seeks to enter my life and fill it with the life of God. ***This life is the light of men and gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.***

You may find that this lesson takes more than you think; that it hinders you more than it helps in your Bible study, and that it becomes more and more difficult the longer you study it. Do not be afraid or impatient, but be assured that if you learn it correctly, you will thank God that it has become a key you never had before, to unlock the hidden treasure of the Word, giving you true wisdom in your inner man.

I repeat again the simple words that are so true and inexhaustibly blessed: *As the Spirit that lives in God alone knows the things of God, it is only the Spirit living in me, that can make me know the things of God by imparting them to my life.*

As Christ was the Word because He was God, and had the life of God, the written Word can only bless me as the Living Word, and through it, brings the life of God to me. As the life was in Christ, and as the Life is the Light

of men, so it is only as I have the life of Christ through the written Word that I have the light of the knowledge of God.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, I desire your life and light in my own life. Help me by your Spirit to go from intellectual knowledge of the Word to spiritual knowledge of the Life and Light of God."

Chapter 20. The Bible Student

Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law, he meditates day and night. – Psalm 1:1-2

There is a loud call on every side for more, true, effective Bible study. Evangelists like Mr Moody and many others have proved what power there is in preaching that is drawn directly from God's Word and inspired by the faith of its power. Earnest Christians are asking: "Why can our ministries not speak in the same way by giving the Word of God a more prominent place?" Many young ministers leaving seminary confessed that they had been taught everything except the knowledge of how to study the Word themselves, and then how to stir up and help others to study it. In some of our churches, the desire was expressed that the training of ministers must address this need. It may look like a simple thing to find good men to undertake the work; and yet, men with theological training find it hard to turn to the simplicity and directness of an appeal from God's Word. Young ministers in training should be taught how to make Scripture the one source of their knowledge and teaching. Praise God that in student movements of our day, Bible study is given a place of prominence. There is a wonderful opportunity, as there is a very great need, for guiding to bring a full blessing to the individual lives, by allowing God's Word its true place in the work that must be done for Him.

Let us look at the principles underlying the demand for more Bible study, and how it can be truly effective if faithfully applied.

God's Word is the only authentic revelation of God's will. All human statements of divine truth, however correct, are defective and carry a measure of human authority. In the Word, the voice of God speaks directly to us. Every child of God needs direct interaction with the Father, through the Word. Because God reveals His whole heart and grace in it,

His child can, if he receives it from God, get all the life and power that there is in the Word into his own heart and being. Second-hand reports of messages and events cannot really be trusted. Very few people can accurately report what they have heard. Every believer has the right and calling, to be in direct communication with God. God revealed Himself, and still reveals Himself, to each individual in the Word.

This Word of God is a living Word. It carries a Divine lifegiving power in it. The human expression of the truth is often mere concepts or images of the truth, appealing to the mind and having little or no effect. The faith that the Word is God's own word, and has His presence and power in it, makes it effective. All life and spirit create for itself a form in which it is revealed. The words in which God has chosen to clothe His own Divine thoughts are God-breathed and the life of God dwells in them. God is not the God of the dead but of the living. The Word was not only inspired when it was first given; the Spirit of God still breathes in it. God is still in and with His word. Christians and teachers need to believe this. They will then teach the simple Divine word with a confidence that no human teaching can give.

Only God Himself is, and most surely will be, the Interpreter of His own Word. Divine truth needs a Divine teacher. Spiritual understanding and application of spiritual things can only come from the Holy Spirit. The deeper the conviction of the unique character of the Word, that it is essentially different from, and infinitely exalted above all merely human understanding, will show the need for a supernatural, directly Divine teaching. Then the blessing, which is the purpose of the Word, will be released. The soul will be brought to seek God Himself, and it will be led to find Him in the Holy Spirit who dwells in the heart. When that Spirit, in Whom God, so wonderfully, has entered our very life and identified Himself with it, is waited on and trusted, He wants us to know wisdom in the hidden part, in the heart and temperament. When the Word is

prayerfully read and cherished in the heart by faith, it will through the Spirit, be both light and life within us.

The Word then brings us into the closest and most intimate fellowship with God – union of will and life. God has revealed His whole heart and all His will in the Word; in His law and precepts He shows us what He wants us to do; in His redemption and His promises He shows what He wants to do for us. If we accept that will in the Word as from God Himself, and yield ourselves to its working, we learn to know God in His will, in the power of which He works in us, and in which His love towards us is known. The Word works out His richest purpose as the Divine presence and nearness fills us with reverence and dependence upon Him. This should be our aim. This will be our experience in all our Bible reading and study.

Practical application of these four thoughts:

- In Holy Scripture we have the very words in which the Holy God has spoken and in which He speaks to us.
- These words are, today, full of the life of God. God is in them, and makes His presence and power known to them who seek Him in them.
- The Spirit will reveal the spiritual meaning and power of the Word to those who ask and wait for the teaching of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

The Word is meant to be the means of the revelation of God Himself to the soul and of fellowship with Him every day. Have we learnt to apply these truths? The Word continually speaks: *"Seek God. Listen to God. Wait for God. God will speak to you. Let God teach you."* All our Bible reading, and Bible study, must lead to this one thing: Encountering God. We must be men and women, and encourage others to be men and

women, ***who never separate the written word from the Living God Himself, and who hear God in heaven speak every day.***

Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, I want to meet with You every time I read the Word. Teach me to read the Word in such a way that Your Spirit will bring the life and power of God into my heart and life, and change my behaviour and attitudes, so I can live according to Your will."

Chapter 21. Who are you?

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

Entering into God's presence in the morning hour depends upon the Christian realising not only who God is, but *who you yourself are*, and what is your relationship to God. When the question: "Who are you?" is asked, not in words but in spirit, of each one who claims right of access and an audience from the Most High, there must be a ready answer in his inmost consciousness; that consciousness must be nothing else but a living sense of the place he has in Christ before God. The mode of expressing it may differ at times, but in substance it will always be the same.

Who am I? Let me think and say who I am who now come to ask that God shall meet me here and spend this whole day with me: I am one who knows, by the Word and Spirit of God, that I am in Christ, and that my life is hidden with Christ in God. In Christ I died to sin and the world. I am now taken out of them, separated from them, and delivered from their power. I have been raised together with Christ and in Him I live unto God. My life is hidden with Christ in God, and I come to God to claim as my own and obtain all Divine life that is hidden away in Him, for today's need and supply.

Yes, this is who I am. I say it to God in humble, holy reverence, as my plea. I say it to myself to encourage others, as well as to encourage myself to seek and expect nothing less – grace to live the hidden life of heaven here on earth. I am one who longs to say, who does say, Christ is my life. The longing of my soul is for Christ, revealed within my heart by the Father Himself. Nothing less can satisfy me. My life is hidden with Christ. There is no other way that He can be my life unless He is in my heart. Yes! I am

not content with anything else than Christ in my heart. Christ as a Saviour from sin. Christ as the gift and bringer of God's love. Christ as an indwelling Friend and Lord.

O, my God, if You ask: "Who are you?", listen to my stammering answer: "I live in Christ and Christ in me. You alone can make me know, and be, all that it means."

I have more to say. It is my plea for the grace of God's presence and power all day. I come as one who desires, who seeks, to be prepared to live the life of Christ on earth today, to translate His hidden heavenly glory into the language of everyday life, with its moods and its duties. As Christ lived on earth to only do the will of God, it is my great desire to be perfect and complete in His will for today. My ignorance of His will, in all its spiritual application and interaction with the world and people, is very great. My impotence to do it is greater still. And yet, I come to God as one who dare not offer less or seek any compromise, as one who, in all honesty, accepts the high calling of living according to the will of God in all things.

This brings me to the inner chamber of prayer in the secret place. I think of all my failures to live according to God's will, I anticipate all the temptations and dangers that await me, I feel how inadequate I am, and yet I say to God – I come to claim the life that is hidden in Christ, so that I may live my life for Christ. I feel urged and drawn to not be content without the quiet assurance that God will go with me and bless me.

Who am I that I should ask these great and wonderful things of God? May I indeed expect to live the life hidden with Christ in God, so that it will be revealed in my mortal body? I may, for it is God Himself who will work it in me by the Holy Spirit dwelling in me. The same God who raised Christ from the dead, and then set Him at His right hand, has raised me with

Him and given me the Spirit of the glory of His Son in my heart. A life in Christ, surrendered to knowing and doing all God's will, is the life God Himself will work and maintain increasingly in me by the Holy Spirit. And when I come in the morning and present myself before Him, I receive afresh the life He has hidden in Himself for me, where His Son is hidden, and live it out in the flesh. I can wait confidently and quietly, as one in whom the Spirit dwells, for the Father to give the fresh anointing that teaches all things, and for Him to take charge of the new day He has given me.

My brothers and sisters, I am sure you realise how infinitely important it is to secure God's presence for the day in the morning hour, standing on the firm foundation of a complete redemption. Believe what God says to you. Accept what God has bestowed on you in Christ. Be consciously and openly what God has made you to be. Take time before God to know it and say it. The spiritual battle depends upon an impenetrable position before God, ***where God has placed you.***

The very attempt to do this may at times interfere with your ordinary Bible study or prayer. Do not worry. It will be no loss. It will be fully compensated for later. Your life depends on knowing who your God is, ***and who you are as His redeemed one in Christ.*** Your everyday life depends on it. When once you have learned the secret, it will, even when you do not think of it, be the strength of your heart, both in going into God's presence, and going with Him into the world.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, I live in You, and You live in me! I confidently say it because it is the truth. Help me to live this hidden life of Christ in me. May it be my daily experience."

Chapter 22. The will of God

*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. – **Matthew 6:10.***

The **will of God** is the living power to which the world owes its existence. Through that Will, and according to that Will, the world is what it is. It is the expression or manifestation or embodiment of the Divine Will in its wisdom, power, and goodness. All the beauty and glory that it has, is because God willed it to be so. Just as that Will formed the world, so it also maintains it every day. Creation does what it was destined for – it shows forth the glory of God. *"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."* (**Rev.4:11**).

If this is true of inanimate nature, how much truer is it of intelligent creatures. The Divine Will created a creature with a will in His own image and likeness, with the living power to know, accept and co-operate with that Will to which it owes its existence. The glory of the angels consists in counting it their highest honour and joy to be obedient to and do exactly what God wants and does. **The glory of heaven is that God's will is done there.** Sin and misery of fallen angels and humans, consist simply in having turned away from, and refused to abide in, and do, the will of God.

Redemption is nothing else but the restoration of God's will to its rightful place on earth. This is the reason why Christ came and, *in a human life, demonstrated how humans have but one thing to live for – **the doing of God's will.*** He showed us how there was only one way to conquer the self-will – by dying to it, in obeying God's will even unto death. In this way, He atoned for our self-will and conquered it for us. He opened a path through death and resurrection, into a life entirely united with, and devoted to, the will of God.

God's **redeeming will**, is now able to do in fallen humans what His creating will had always worked and continues to work in nature. In Christ and His example, ***God has revealed what He asks and expects of us – to devote ourselves to and delight in His will.*** In Christ and His Spirit, He renews and takes possession of our will, working in it both to will and do His will, enabling us to willingly do all His will. He Himself works all things according to the counsel of His will. *"He makes you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight."* (**Heb.13:21**). When this is revealed by the Holy Spirit, and believed and received into the heart, we begin to understand the prayer: *"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"* and the true desire to do God's will is awakened because of the life it promises.

It is essential that the believer realizes his relationship to God's will, and the claim it has on him. **Many believers have no concept of what their faith or their feeling should be regarding the will of God.** Very few say: *"My whole understanding about blessing is nothing else but the complete harmony of my will with the Will of God; I feel my one need is, the continual surrender to always, in the smallest thing, do what God wants me to do. By God's grace, may every hour of my life be a surrender to a life of doing the will of God, as it is in heaven."*

It is only when a **living faith in the Divine Will**, working out its purposes in us, masters the heart, that we shall have the courage to believe in the answer to the prayer our Lord taught us. It is only when we see that it is through Jesus Christ that this working of God's will in us is carried out, that we shall understand that it is the close union with Him that gives us the confidence that God will work everything in us. And it is only this confidence in God, through Jesus Christ, that assures us that we can do our part, and that it is possible for our feeble will on earth to truly surrender to and co-operate with the will of God. Let us accept our destiny and our responsibility as the one thing our heart desires, that in

everything, the will of God is done in us and by us, as it is done in heaven. Then our faith will overcome the world.

The will must not be disconnected from its living union with the Father, nor from the living presence of the blessed Son. It is only by the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit, that the will of God can be known in its glory and beauty, in its application to daily life, and in its ever-growing revelation. This teaching was given, not to the wise and prudent, but to babes, the people with a child-like attitude, who are willing to wait for, and depend on what God gives them. The guidance of the Holy Spirit will lead us in this path of God's will.

Our **secret interaction** with God is the place where we learn and repeat the great lesson: The God Whom I worship asks of me perfect union with His will; My worship means: "I delight to do Your will, O God." The morning hour, the inner chamber, the secret interaction with God, will reveal the knowledge of God's will, give the power to perform it, and enable the total and joyful surrender to everything God wants. When this is sought and cultivated, our study of God's word and our prayer will yield their true and full blessing.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, I pray as You prayed: Not my will but Your will be done. I desire with all my heart to do Your will, every day, the whole day. Work in me to reveal and do Your will."

Chapter 23. Feeding on the Word

"Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." – Jeremiah 15:16

Here we have three things. The **finding** of God's Word. This only comes to those who seek diligently for it. Then the **eating**. This means the personal appropriation for our sustenance, the taking up into our being the words of God. *"MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD OF GOD."* (Luke 4:4). And then the **rejoicing**. *"The Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."* (Matthew 13:44). The finding, the appropriating, and the rejoicing. *"Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."*

The central word here is *eating*. It is preceded by the searching and finding. It is accompanied and followed by the rejoicing. This the only aim and use for the search and finding. The secret of the inner chamber depends on this – **I ate Your words!**

To understand the difference between the eating and finding of God's words, compare it to a man who stored up wheat in his granary and then eating the bread later he has on his table. All the diligent labour to sow, harvest and gather his grain, all the rich reward he has for his care, cannot profit him, unless he feeds on the daily portion of bread his body requires. The greater the quantity of wheat he found, harvested, and gathered, the speed with which he does all these things, are great to see. But in the eating the very opposite takes place. Here it is the small quantity, and the slow and unceasing continuation of eating that characterises the appropriation of the harvest, making the wheat his own.

Can you see the application it has to your study of Scripture in the morning watch? You need to **find** God's words, and by careful thought **master** them, to have it **stored** in your mind and memory for your own use, and that of others. In this work there may often be great joy, the joy of harvest or of victory; the joy of treasure secured, or difficulties overcome; and yet, we must remember that finding and possessing the words of God is not yet the **eating** of them, which alone brings Divine life and strength to the soul.

The fact of being occupied with, and possessing good wholesome wheat, will not nourish a man. *The fact of being deeply interested in the knowledge of God's Word will not of itself nourish the soul. "Your words were found"* was the first thing. *"And I ate them"* - that brought the joy and rejoicing.

What is this eating? The wheat which the farmer grew and rejoiced in as his very own, could not nourish his life, until he took it and ate it, and so completely assimilate it, that it became part of himself, entering his blood, forming his very bone and flesh. This must be done in a small quantity at a time, two or three times a day, every day of the year. This is *the law of eating*. It is not the amount of truth I gather from God's Word; it is not the interest or success of my Bible study; it is not the increased clearness of understanding or largeness of grasp I am obtaining, that secure the health and growth of the spiritual life. By no means! All of this often leaves the natural man very unsanctified and unspiritual with very little of the holiness or humility of Christ Jesus. Something else is needed. Jesus said: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me." (John 4:34). Taking a small portion of God's Word, some definite command of the new life, quietly receiving it into the will and the love of the heart, yielding the whole being to its rule, vowing to perform it by the power of the Lord Jesus, and then *doing it*, this is eating the Word. Taking it into our inmost being that it becomes part of our very life. The same goes for a truth or a

promise. What you *eat* becomes part of yourself, you carry it with you where you go as part of the life you live.

Do you now understand the difference between the wheat stored in the granary and the eating of the bread on the table? This will become the life of your Bible study. The gathering of Scripture knowledge is one thing; the eating of God's Word, the receiving of it into your very heart by the power of the life-giving Spirit, is something totally different. Do you see how the law of eating the food, in contrast with finding and gathering it, needs to be obeyed? You can gather and store grain to last for years, but you cannot swallow a large enough quantity of bread to last you for days. Day by day, and more than once a day, you need to eat your daily food. And so, the eating of God's Word must also be in small portions, just as much as the soul receive and digest each time. And this needs to be done, day by day, from one end of the year to another.

Feeding in the Word like this will enable you to say: "*And Your word was the joy and rejoicing of my heart.*" George Muller said that he learned that he should not stop reading the Word until he felt happy and satisfied in God; then he felt fit to go out into his day's work.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Bread of Life. I want to feed on You. Teach me to eat the Word, to receive it in my heart, so that it will become part of my life. Remind me often that gathering knowledge about the Word, is not the main reason for reading the Bible."

Chapter 24. Holidays

"If the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into."

– Luke 12:39

In a speech on Education Edward Thring said: "The mighty leisure hours are occupied with things that are all-powerful...The mighty question of leisure hours ought to be the most important question of all since it influences the character most...Leisure hours are the hinge on which true education turns." This great master in the science of education had seen that noble character, and the true being, come first, and then after that, in second place, the training of skill and strength. He had seen too, that while a teacher can do much in word and deed by faith and true work to stimulate and to guide, every student has to work out his own character. It is in the leisure hours, when free from constraint and observation, that the student shows what is really the most important to him. That is why Edward Thring spoke of the leisure hours as *all-important* and *all-powerful*, the hinge on which true education turns.

The same is intensely true in religion. Thousands of students have felt it, without knowing how to express or explain it. At college or school their morning watch had its place in their timetable. The whole mind is braced up to regular and systematic work, and the time for devotion is faithfully kept similar as that for a class or private study.

When the time of relaxation comes, and one is free to do exactly as one likes, many a student finds that the morning watch and its fellowship with God had not become so natural, such a necessity of the spiritual life, and such joy, that its observance could not interfere with our holiday pleasure. **The holiday becomes the test of character**, the proof of how far one could say with Job, *"I have treasured the words of His mouth more*

than my necessary food." (**Job 23:12**). The question of leisure hours is very important. In them I freely and naturally turn to what I love most. In them I prove and increase the power to keep what I have gained.

A teacher in a large school in America is reported to have said, "the greatest difficulty with which we have to contend is the summer vacation. Just when we have brought up a boy to a good point of discipline, and he responds to the best ideals, we lose him, and when he comes back after the break, we have to start it all over. The summer holiday simply demoralises him." This statement, referring to ordinary study and duty, is powerful. Within certain limits it is also applicable to the religious life. The sudden relaxation of regular habits, and the subtle thought that perfect liberty to do as one likes means perfect happiness, causes many a student to fall back in his/her Christian life. It is at this point those older and more experienced members of the Students Christian Associations should help and guard their younger members. The attainment of months of spiritual growth may be lost by the neglect of one week. We don't know in what hour the thief comes. The spirit of the morning watch means unceasing vigilance all day and every day.

There are various ways in which the danger, and the safety from it, can be explained to such Bible students. During the holiday we are freed from the demands of daily life, but there are other laws, such as moral laws and health laws, from which there is no relaxation. Let it be a warning to every Christian that **daily fellowship with God cannot be relaxed without consequences**. One still needs to eat and breathe during the holidays, and a Christian need to daily *eat the Bread* and *breathe the Air of Heaven*.

The morning watch is not only a duty, but an unspeakable privilege and pleasure. Fellowship with God, abiding in Christ, loving the Word, and meditating on it all day – these things are life and strength, health, and happiness to the new nature. Look at it with new eyes; believe in the

power of the new nature inside of you, and act upon it. Even if you do not feel the new nature, it will come true. Count it a joy, and it will become a joy to you.

Above all, realise that the world needs you and depends on you to be its light. Christ is waiting for you, a member of His Body, to day-by-day do His saving work through you. Neither He, nor the world, nor you, can afford to lose a single day. God has created and redeemed you, that through you He may, as unceasingly as He lightens the world through the sun, let His light and life and love shine upon people through you. Every day you need afresh to drink from the fountain of life. Do not think of asking for a holiday relief from this fellowship. Even less *take* it. Treasure the holiday for the special time it gives to study in the Bible what you normally don't have time for. Treasure your holiday for the special opportunity of more fellowship with the Father and the Son. Then, instead of it become a snare, instead of exhausting all your energy to just keep you from losing ground, treasure the holiday as a blessed time for grace and victory over self and the world. You will increase in grace and strength, be blessed, and made to be a blessing.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, I wasted many leisure hours during holidays and weekends. I consecrate myself again to You. I want to spend time with You. Help me to be conscious of You every moment of my life, even when I am relaxing. Help me to stay in You."

Chapter 25. The Inward and the Outward

"Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also?"

– Luke 11:40

Every spirit seeks to create for itself a form or shape in which its life is embodied. The outward is the visible expression of the hidden inward life. The outward is generally known before the inward. Through the outward, the inward life develops and reaches its full perfection. *"However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual."* (1Cor. 15:46). One of the greatest secrets of the Christian life is to **understand and maintain the right relationship** between the inward and outward life.

If Adam in paradise had not listened to the tempter, his trial would have resulted in the perfecting of his inward life. His sin and ruin, and the cause of all his misery, were that he yielded himself to the power of the visible outward world. Instead of seeking his happiness in the hidden inward life of a heart in which God's command was honoured, in the inward attitudes of love and faith, of obedience and dependence, he fixed his desire on the world outside of himself, on the pleasure and the knowledge of good and evil that it could give him.

All false religion, from the most degrading idolatry to the corruption of Judaism and Christianity, has its root in this: that what is outward, what pleases the eye, or interests the mind, or gratifies the taste, takes the place of truth in the inward heart, and of the hidden wisdom that God seeks and gives in the heart and life.

The distinguishing feature of the New Testament is that it is a **dispensation of the inner life**. The promise of the New Covenant is: *"I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be*

their God, and they shall be My people." (Heb.8:10). *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit **within you**."* (Eze.36:26). *"I will put My Spirit **within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes."* (Eze.36:27). The promise of the Lord was: *"The Spirit of Truth...**dwells with you and shall be in you**."* (John 14:17); *"At that day **you will know** that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I **in you**."* (John 14:20).

Religion consists in the **state of the heart**, in a heart into which God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son, a heart in which the love of God is shed abroad. In such a heart **true salvation** is found. The inner chamber, with its secret interaction with the Father Who sees in secret, is the symbol and training school of the inner life. The true and faithful daily use of the inner chamber will make the hidden inner life strong and fulfilled.

The great danger in all our religion is giving more time and interest to the outward appearance than to the inner reality. It is **not the intensity** of your Bible study, **nor the frequency** or **the fervency** of your prayers or good works, that constitutes a true spiritual life. No! We need to realise that God is Spirit, so we have a spirit (a new-born spirit) that can know and receive Him, become conformed to His likeness, and be a partaker of the character and dispositions that animate Him as God, in His goodness and love.

Settle this firmly in your mind, that **our whole salvation consists of the manifestation of the nature, life and Spirit of Christ Jesus in our outward life and inward new man**. Only this restores, renews, and regains the first life of God in the soul of a human. Wherever you go, whatever you do, at home or abroad in the world, do everything with a desire to be one with Christ, to imitate His character, His attitudes, and His desires. Determine to desire nothing less than that which exercises and increases the spirit and life of Christ in your soul; and to have everything within you transformed into the image and character of our Lord Jesus.

Consider the treasure that you have in you, the Saviour of the world, the eternal Word of God, hidden in your heart. A seed of the Divine Nature that can overcome sin and death within you and generate the life of heaven again in your soul. Turn inward to your heart, and your heart will find its Saviour, its God, within itself. You feel and see nothing of God, because you seek for Him outside, in books, in the church, in outward exercises; but you **will not find Him there until you first found Him in your heart**. Seek for Him in your heart, and you will never seek in vain. **He dwells in your heart, there is the seat of His light and Holy Spirit!**

Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, You are more important than anything else in my life. I desire that the seed of your Divine Nature in me will overcome sin, the flesh, and the world. Here am I. I am seeking You in my heart. Let me find You here."

Chapter 26. The Daily Renewal – It's Power

"Our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." – 2 Corinthians 4:16

"According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." – Titus 3:5

The natural life is renewed every day. As the sun rises again with its light and warmth, the flowers open, the birds sing, and everywhere life is stirred and strengthened. As we rise from the rest of sleep and are nourished by eating our food, we gather new strength for the duties of the day. The inner chamber is the confession that *we need our inward soul and spirit to also be renewed daily*. It is only by fresh nourishment from God's Word, and fresh interaction with God Himself in prayer, that the vigour of the spiritual life can be maintained and grow. Though our outward man perishes, though the burden of sickness or suffering, or the strain of work and weariness may exhaust or wear us out, the inward man can be renewed day by day.

A quiet time and place, with the Word and prayer, are the means of this inner renewal. But only when they are animated by the divine power of the Holy Spirit working through them, the mightiest power of God working in us. Our study of the inner chamber and the inner life would be defective if we did not give the daily renewal of the inner man its rightful place. This is the function of the Holy Spirit. In the text from Titus, we learn that we have been *"saved by the washing of regeneration **and renewing of the Holy Spirit.**"* The two expressions are not meant to be a repetition. The regeneration is one great act, the beginning of the Christian life. The renewing of the Holy Spirit is a continuous work and never ends. In **Romans 12:2** we read of the progressive transformation of the Christian life, *"**the renewing of the mind**"*. In **Ephesians 4:22-23**, we

are instructed to "*put off the old man*", an act done once and for all. The word, "*be **renewed in the spirit of your mind***," is in the present tense and points to a progressive work. In **Colossians 3:10** we read: "*You have put on **the new man who is renewed** [not, has been] according to the image of Him who created him.*" We need to look at the Holy Spirit, on Whom we can count, for the daily renewal of the inner man in the inner chamber.

In our secret devotions, everything depends on our maintaining the true relation to the third Person of the Trinity, through Whom alone the Father and the Son can do their work of salvation, and through Whom alone the Christian can do his work. That relation may be expressed in the two very simple words: **faith** and **surrender**.

Faith. Scripture says: "*God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'*" (**Gal.4:6**). Every child of God, even the feeblest one, who offer up a prayer in his morning devotion that is pleasing to the Father, must remember that he has received the Holy Spirit as the spirit of prayer. His help is indispensable to enable us to pray effectively. The same is true of the Word of God. Truth, in its divine meaning and power, can only be revealed to us, and do its work in our heart, by the Holy Spirit. If you want the daily renewal of the inner man to be a reality in your morning hour, then take time to meditate, to worship, and to believe with your whole heart that the Holy Spirit has been given to you, that He is in you, and that through Him God will work the blessing which He gives through prayer and the Word.

Surrender. Do not forget that the Holy Spirit must have complete control. "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*" (**Rom.8:14**). "*Those who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*" (**Rom.8:1**). It is the **ungrieved presence of the Spirit** that gives the Word its light and power and keeps us in that blessed life of

childlike confidence and childlike obedience which is well-pleasing to God. Let us praise God for this wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit in His renewing power, and let us enter the inner chamber, as the place where the inner man is renewed day by day, with new hope and joy. In this way our inner life will be always fresh, be renewed from strength to strength, bearing much fruit, and the Father will be glorified.

If this is true, then we need to know the Holy Spirit. As the Third Person, it is His office and His work to bring the life of God to us. He hides Himself in the depth of our being, makes Himself one with us, so that He can reveal the Father and the Son in us. For Him to be the mighty Power of God working in us, He has to take control of our entire being. He asks only one thing: simple obedience to His leading. The truly yielded soul will find the secret of growth and strength and joy, in the daily renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: "Holy Spirit, You dwell in me. I believe that You were given to me to help me bear spiritual fruit that glorifies the Father and the Son. In obedience, I surrender myself again to You. Amen."

Chapter 27. The Daily Renewal: His Image

"Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him." – Colossians 3:9-10

*"If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him...that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."
– Ephesians 4:21, 23, 24*

In every pursuit it is important to have a clearly defined goal. It is not enough to have movement and progress; we also have to aim in the right direction to hit the target. When we are in partnership with another person, on whom we depend, we need to know that we both aim at the same target. If we want to attain our goal of daily renewal of the inner man, we need to know and hold on firmly to the purpose of our pursuit. *"You have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge."* The Divine life, the work of the Holy Spirit within us, is not a blind natural force. If we are to be co-workers with God, our co-operation is to be intelligent and voluntary.

*"The new man is being renewed day by day **in knowledge**."* The natural understanding can draw knowledge from the Word, but spiritual knowledge brings life and power, real truth and substance. It is the renewing by the Holy Spirit that gives true knowledge, which does not consist in thought and conception, but in an inward **tasting**, a receiving life from God, not mere words, and thoughts.

*"The new man is **renewed** in knowledge."* However diligent our Bible study may be, true knowledge cannot be gained unless one experience

spiritual renewal. The "*renewal in the spirit of the mind*," alone brings true Divine knowledge in the life and inward being.

The true aim of the spiritual knowledge is that "*the new man be renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him*." The true aim is nothing less than the image, the likeness of God. It is the one goal of the Holy Spirit in His daily renewing; and it must be the aim of the believer who seeks to be renewed.

This was God's purpose in creation: "*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness*." (**Gen.1:26**). How seldom do we consider the infinite glory of these words? The reason for which God breathed His own life into man, is that it might reproduce in earthly humans a perfect likeness of God in heaven. That image of God was revealed in Christ and seen in human form and likeness. We have been predestined, redeemed, and called to be conformed to the image of the Son. We are being taught and transformed by the Holy Spirit, to be imitators of Christ, and to walk as Christ walked. We cannot profit from the daily Bible study and prayer, nor receive the daily renewal, unless we set our heart on what God has set His heart on, "*that the new man be renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him*."

In the second passage quoted in this chapter, we have a similar thought expressed somewhat differently. "*Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*." (**Eph.4:23,24**). Righteousness is God's hatred of sin and upholding of justice. Holiness is God's indescribable glory, in perfect harmony of His righteousness and love, His infinite exaltation above created beings, His desire to be in union with man. Righteousness in man includes God's perfect will for us, our response to Him and our fellowmen. Holiness is our personal relationship to God Himself. As the new man has been created, so it has to be renewed daily,

"according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." It is to secure this, that the power of the Holy Spirit is working in us. It is to secure this, that He waits for us to daily yield ourselves to Him, to receive His renewing grace and power.

The daily morning hour is the time to secure the daily renewal work of the Holy Spirit, moulding us into the image of God, in true righteousness and holiness. We need meditation on the Word and prayer to get the heart set upon God's goal, and to get a true vision of the wonderful possibility: *"(Our) being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."* **(2 Cor.3:18)**. Christian! Let this be your aim, your satisfaction, your aspiration: The image of God, the life of God in you, His likeness seen in you. Do not separate God and His likeness anymore. Approach Him, trust Him, find Him, and let Him work His likeness into you by the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Let this be your daily prayer, to be renewed into the image of your Creator.

Prayer: Holy Spirit of God, I desire to be renewed into the image of my Creator, into the image of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I surrender myself to You to do this work in me, in true righteousness and holiness.

Chapter 28. The Daily Renewal – Its Cost

"Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day."

– 2 Corinthians 4:16

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." – Romans 12:2

It is not a little thing or easy to be a mature strong Christian. On God's side, it meant that it cost the Son of God His life, that it needs the mighty power of God to create a new man or woman, and nothing less than the unceasing daily care of the Holy Spirit to maintain that life.

From man's side, it demands that when the new man is put on, the old man must be put off. All the temperaments, habits, and pleasures of our own nature, that formed the life we have lived, are to be put away. Everything we inherited from Adam by our birth, is to be sold, if we want to possess the pearl of great price. If a person wants to follow Christ, he is to deny himself, take up his cross, forsake all and follow Christ in the path in which He walked. Such a person has to cast away not only all sin, but everything, however needful and legitimate and precious, that may become an opportunity to sin. Pluck out the eye or cut off the hand. He is to hate his own life, to lose it, if he wants to live in *"the power of an endless life."* (**Heb.7:16**) It is a solemn thing to be a true Christian. Far more solemn than most people think.

This is especially true of the daily renewing of the inward man. Paul speaks of it as being accompanied and conditioned by the *"decaying of the outward man."* (**2Cor.4:16**). The whole epistle to the Corinthians shows us how the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, even conforming

to His death, was the secret of His life-giving power and blessing to the Churches. *"For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So, then death is working in us, but life in you."* (2 Corinthians 4:11-12). The full experience of the life of Christ in our person, our body, our work for others, depends upon our **fellowship with His suffering and death**. There can be no large measure of the renewal of the inward man without the sacrifice, the decaying of the outward.

To be filled with heaven, the life must be emptied of earth. We have the same truth in our second text, *"be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* (Rom.12:2). An old house may be renewed, and yet keep very much of its old appearance; or the renewal may be so complete that people are astonished at the transformation! The renewing of the mind by the Holy Spirit means a complete transformation, an entirely different way of thinking, judging, decision-making. The fleshly mind makes way for a *"spiritual understanding."* (Col.1:9; 1 John 2:20). This transformation cannot be obtained except at the cost of giving up everything that is of the old nature. *"Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed..."* By nature, we are of this world. When renewed by grace, we are still in the world, subject to the subtle all-pervading influence from which we cannot withdraw ourselves. And what is more, the world is still in us. The leaven of the earthly nature can only be purged out by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, filling us with the life of heaven.

Let us allow these truths to take deep hold and master us. The Divine transformation, by the daily renewing of our mind into the image of Him who is far above, cannot proceed faster or further in us, unless we are seeking to be freed from every vestige of conformity to this world. The negative, *"Do not be conformed to this world,"* needs to be emphasised as strongly as the positive, *"but be transformed."* The spirit of this world and the Spirit of God contend for the possession of our being. It is only when

the former is known, renounced, and cast out, that the heavenly Spirit can enter in, and do His blessed work of renewing and transforming. The whole world and whatever is of the worldly spirit, must be given up. The whole life and whatever is of self must be lost. This daily renewal of the inward man costs much, as long as we are hesitating, or trying to do it in our own strength. Once we really learn that the Holy Spirit does all, and by faith in the strength of the Lord Jesus, give up everything, then the renewing becomes the simple, natural, healthy, joyous growth of the heavenly life in us.

Then the inner chamber becomes the place which we long for daily, to praise God for what He has done, and is doing, and what we know He will do. Day by day, we yield ourselves afresh to the blessed Lord Who has said, *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."* (**John 7:38**). The **renewing of the Holy Spirit** then becomes one of the most blessed truths of our daily Christian life.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, search me and reveal to me what it is that I still need to put off. What is there in my life that continually tempts me to sin? I want to participate in the suffering and death of Christ. Renew my mind, my attitudes, and my behaviour, so that I can be transformed to do Your will. Amen.

Chapter 29. Holiness – the Chief Aim of Bible Study

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." – John 17:17

In His great intercessory prayer, our Lord said He had given the words which the Father gave Him, to His disciples, and that they had received and believed them. It was this that made them His disciples. It was the keeping of these words that would really enable them to live the life and do the work of true disciples. ***Receiving the words of God from Christ, and keeping them, is the mark and power of true discipleship.***

Jesus asked the Father to ***keep*** the disciples when they stayed behind in the world after He had ascended to heaven. Our Lord prayed that the Father would ***sanctify them in the truth***, as truth dwells and works through His Word. Christ said of Himself, *"I am the truth."* (John 14:6). He was the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). His teaching was not like that of the law which came by Moses, giving knowledge, a promise of good things to come which was only an image or a shadow. *"The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life,"* (John 6:63), giving the very substance and power and Divine possession of what they speak of. Christ had spoken of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth, who would lead into all the truth that there was in Himself, not as a matter of knowledge or doctrine, but into its actual experience and enjoyment. And then He prays that in this living truth, as it dwells in the Word, and is revealed in Him by the Spirit, that the Father would sanctify them. He says, *"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth."* (John 17:19). He asks the Father, in His power and love, to take charge of His disciples, that His object – to sanctify them in the truth, through His Word which is truth – may be realised, and that they, like Himself, may be sanctified in truth. Let us study the wonderful lessons given here in regard to God's Word.

*"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth." **The great object of God's Word is to make us holy.*** No diligence or success in Bible study will really profit us unless it makes us humbler, holier disciples of Jesus. In all our use of Holy Scripture, this must definitely be our main aim. The reason there is often so much Bible reading with so little real results of a Christ-like character, is that *"salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,"* is not actually sought. People imagine that if they study the Word and accept its truths, this will in some way, of itself, benefit them. But experience teaches that it does not. *The fruit of holy character, of a consecrated life, of power to bless others, does not come, for the simple and most natural reason, that we only get what we seek. Christ gave us God's Word to make us holy. It is only when we make this our definite aim in all Bible study, that the truth, not the doctrinal truth, but its Divine quickening power, imparting the very life of God, that it contains as a seed, can open and impart itself to us.*

*"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth." **It is only God Himself who alone can make us holy by His Word.*** The Bible, separated from God and His direct operation, cannot avail. The Bible is an instrument: God Himself must use it. God alone is the Holy One. He alone can make holy. The unspeakable value of God's Word is that it is God's means of holiness. The terrible mistake of many is that they forget that God alone can use it or make it effective. It is not enough that I have access to the dispensary of a physician. I need him to prescribe medicine for me. Without him, my use of his medicines might be fatal. It was similar to the scribes. They boasted in God's law; they delighted in their study of Scripture and yet they remained unrighteous. The Word did not sanctify them, because they did not seek for righteousness or sanctification in the Word, and they did not yield to God to do it for them.

*"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth." **Holiness through the Word must be sought and waited upon from God in prayer.*** Our Lord not

only taught His disciples that they must be holy; He not only sanctified Himself for them, that they might be sanctified in truth, but He brought His words and His work to the Father with the ***prayer that He would sanctify them.*** We need to know God's Word and meditate on it. We need to set our heart upon being holy, as our first and main object in studying the Word. But all of this is not enough. Everything depends upon our following Christ in asking the Father to sanctify us through the Word. ***It is God, the Holy Father, who makes us holy,*** by the Spirit of Holiness who dwells in us. He works in us the very mind and disposition of Christ who is our sanctification. *"There is none holy but the Lord."* (1Sam.2:2). All holiness is His and what He bestows by His holy Presence. The tabernacle and the temple were not holy by virtue of cleansing, or separation or consecration. They became holy by the incoming and indwelling God. Him taking possession of them made them holy. God sanctifying us through His Word is nothing else than Him bringing Christ and the Holy Spirit into us. And the Father cannot do this unless we wait silently on Him in deep dependence and full surrender of ourselves to Him. It is in prayer offered in the Name of Jesus, the fellowship with Him, and the faith of the Great Intercessor when we pray, *"Sanctify me through Your truth, Your Word is truth,"* that the Father's sanctifying power is released, and God's Word truly makes us holy.

How sacred is the Morning Watch! The hour specially devoted to yield up your soul to God's holiness, to be sanctified through the Word. Let us always remember, the one aim of God's Word is to make us holy. Let it be our continual prayer, "Father, sanctify me in Your truth."

Prayer: Father, sanctify me in Your truth. Your Word is truth. I wait in total surrender and dependence on You. I desire to obey your Word in everything in my life. Amen.

Chapter 30. Psalm 119 and its teaching

"Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all day." – Psalm 119:97

"Consider how I love Your precepts." – Psalm 119:159

"My soul keeps Your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly."

– Psalm 119:167

There is one portion in the Bible that is wholly devoted to teaching us the place which God's Word ought to have in our esteem, and how we can secure its blessing. It is the longest chapter in the Bible, and, with hardly any exception, in every one of its 176 verses, the Word is mentioned using different names. Anyone who really wants to know how to study his Bible according to God's will, should make a careful study of this Psalm. In every Christian's life there need to be a set time when he resolves to study the teaching of this Psalm and **to apply it practically**. No wonder our Bible study does not bring more spiritual benefits because we neglect the Divine directions this Psalm offers us. Maybe it is possible that you have never read it as a whole even once. If you don't have time, find time. A free Sunday hour, or why not a free weekly hour? Read it through and try to grasp its main thought, or at least catch its spirit. If you find it difficult to do this by reading it once, repeat it more than once. You will immediately feel the need to give it more careful thought. The following hints may help you to study it:

1. Note all the different **names/attributes** used for **God's Word**.
2. Note all the different **verbs** expressing how **we ought to feel and respond** to the Word. Let this leads you to carefully consider what place God's Word claims in your own heart and life, and how every part of your being – desire, love, joy, trust, obedience, and behaviour – is affected by it.

3. Count and note how many times the writer speaks in the past tense of his **having kept, observed, stuck to, or delighted in** God's testimonies. How many times he expresses how he **rejoices in, loves, and esteems God's law** in the present tense. And then how, in the future tense, he **promises and vows to observe** God's precepts to the end. Put all these together and see how, more than a hundred times, he presents his soul before God as **one who honours and keeps His law**. These expressions are connected with his prayers to God. Study them especially until you have a clear image of the **righteous man whose fervent, effective prayer avails much**.
4. **Study the prayers themselves** and write down the different requests he makes with regard to the Word, whether for the teaching to understand it and the power to practise it, or for the blessing promised in the Word that can be found by doing it. Note especially prayers like "*Teach me Your Statutes,*" "*Give me understanding.*" Also, those where the plea is "***according to Your Word.***"
5. Count the verses in which there is any reference to **suffering**, whether from his own state or from his enemies, or the sins of the wicked or God delaying "*to help him.*" Learn how it is in the **time of trouble** that we especially **need God's Word**, and that this alone can bring **comfort** to us.
6. Then comes one of the most important things. Mark how often the little pronoun You, Yours, Your, occurs, and how often it is understood in every petition, "*Teach You me,*" "*Revive You me,*" (*Old English does this better by using Thou, Thine, Thee*), and you will see how **the whole psalm is a prayer spoken to God**. Everything the psalmist says about the Word of God, whether in regard to his own attachment to it, or his need of God's teaching and quickening, is spoken upwards into the face of God. He believes that it is pleasing to God and good for his own

soul, to connect his meditation and thoughts on the Word, as continually and as closely as possible, by prayer, with the living God Himself. Every thought of God's Word, instead of drawing him away from God, leads him to fellowship with God.

The Word of God becomes to him the **rich and inexhaustible material for maintaining communion with the God Whose Word** it is, and **to Whom** is meant to lead him. As we gradually gain an insight into these truths, we shall find new meaning from the single verses. And when, from time to time, we read a whole paragraph with its eight verses, we shall find how they raise us up, with and through the Word, into God's presence, and into that life of obedience and joy which says, *"I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep Your righteous judgment." "O, how I love Your law, it is my meditation all day."*

Let us seek, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to have the kind of devotional life which this Psalm reveals, worked into our Morning Watch. **Let God's Word every day, and before everything else, lead us to God.** Let every blessing contained in it be a matter of prayer of our special need of Divine teaching. Let our **intense attachment to it** be our **childlike plea and confidence that the Father will help us.** Let our prayers be followed by the vow, that as God stirs and blesses us, we shall run in the way of His commandments. Let the Word of God make us more earnest in our desire to carry that Word to others, whether for the awakening or the strengthening of the life of God in our soul.

Prayer: Lord God, how I love Your Word. I think about it all day. Teach me according to Your Word. Revive me according to Your Word. Teach me Your ways. Give me understanding. I want to know You and obey Your Word. Amen.

Chapter 31. The Holy Trinity

*"For this reason I bow my knees to **the Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might **through His Spirit** in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded **in love**, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the **love of Christ** which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the **fullness of God**. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to **the power that works in us** [the Holy Spirit], to Him be glory in the church by **Christ Jesus** to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."*

– Ephesians 3:14-21

These words have often, and with good reason, been regarded as one of the highest expressions of what the life of a believer may be on earth. And yet, it is dangerous to foster the idea that the attainment of such an experience is to be regarded as something exceptional and distant, or to hide the blessed truth that in varying degrees it is meant to be the certain and immediate inheritance of every child of God.

Every morning each believer has as much the right as the need to say: "My Father will strengthen me today with power. He is strengthening me even now in my inner man through His Spirit." Every day we are to be content with nothing less than the indwelling of Christ by faith, a life rooted in love, and strengthened to know the love of Christ. Each day we believe that the blessed work of being filled with all the fulness of God is prepared, carried out and accomplished in us. Every day we should be strong in the faith of God's power, and give Him glory in Christ, as being able to do above what we ask and think, according to the power of the Spirit working in us.

The words are, among many other things, remarkable for how they present the truth of the Holy Trinity's influence on our practical life. Many Christians do understand that at different times in the pursuit of the Christian life, it is right and needful to give special attention to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. They often feel that it is difficult to combine various truths into one, and to know how to worship the Three-in-One. Our text reveals the wondrous relationship and perfect unity of God. We have the Spirit within us as the power of God, and yet He does not work at our will or at His own. It is the Father who, according to the riches of His glory, grants us to be strengthened "*through the Spirit in the inner man.*" It is the Father Who does exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or think "*according to the Power that works in us.*" It is not that the Spirit in us takes the place of God. In fact, He renders us more absolutely and more unceasingly dependent on the Father. The Spirit can only work as the Father works through Him. We need to combine the two truths – **a deep reverent, trusting consciousness of the Holy Spirit** as indwelling us, with a **continual and dependent waiting on the Father** to work in us through the Spirit.

It is the same with Christ. We bow our knees to the Father in the Name of the Son. We ask Him to strengthen us through the Spirit with the one aim, that Christ may dwell in our hearts. In this way the Son leads to the Father and the Father reveals the Son in us. When the Son dwells in the heart, it is rooted and grounded in love, drawing its life out of Divine love as its soil, bringing forth fruits and doing works of love, all the while being filled with all the fulness of God. The whole heart with the inner and outer life becomes the scene of the blessed interchange of the operation of the Holy Three-in-One. As our hearts believe this, we, through the Triune God in us, give glory to Him Who is able to do more than we can think, by His Holy Spirit.

Our hearts are the scene of a wonderful salvation: The Father always breathing His Spirit into us, and by His daily renewal fitting our hearts to be the home of Christ; the Holy Spirit always revealing and forming Christ within us, so that His very nature, temperament and character becomes ours; the Son imparting His life of love, and leading us to be filled with all the fulness of God.

This is meant to be our everyday religion. O, let us every day worship the Three-in-One God in the fulness of faith. In whatever direction our Bible study and our prayer lead us, let this always be the centre we depart from and return to. We were created in the image of the Three-in-One God. The salvation by which God restores humanity is an inward salvation. It means nothing to us unless it is worked in our hearts and enjoyed there. The God who saves us can do it no other way than as the indwelling God, completely filling us with His fullness. Let us worship and wait; let us believe and give Him glory.

Have you noticed how the three Persons of the Trinity is always mentioned together in Ephesians?

1:3 - The Father, Jesus Christ, spiritual or Holy Spirit blessings.

1:12,13 - The Father, to the praise of His Glory, in Christ, sealed with the Holy Spirit.

1:17 - The Father, our Lord Jesus, the Spirit of Wisdom.

2:18 - Access through Christ, in one Spirit, to the Father.

2:22 - In Christ, a habitation of God, through the Spirit.

3:4-9 - The mystery of Christ, hidden in God, preached by the Grace of God, revealed by the Spirit.

4:4-6 - One Spirit, One Lord, One God and Father.

5:18-20 - Filled with the Spirit, giving thanks to God, in the Name of Christ.

6:10-18 – Strong in the Lord, the whole armour of God, the sword of the Spirit, praying in the Spirit.

As you study and compare these passages and seek to understand their teaching in some true and humble concept of the glory of our God, notice what an intensely practical truth the Holy Trinity is. Scripture teaches little of its mystery in the Divine nature. Almost everything has reference to God's work in us, and our faith and experience of His salvation.

True faith in the Trinity will make us strong, smart, God-possessed Christians. The Divine Spirit making Himself one with our life and inner being; the Blessed Son dwelling in us, as the way to perfect fellowship with God; the Father, through the Spirit and the Son daily working out His purpose – that we will be filled with all the fullness of God.

Let us bow our knees to the Father. Then the mystery of the Trinity will be known and experienced.

Prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! I bow my knees before You. Reveal to me the mysterious work of Your Trinity in my heart. I want to know and experience You. Be glorified in me. Amen.

Chapter 32. In Christ

"Abide in Me, and I in you." – John 15:4

All teaching proceeds from the outward to the inward. When some knowledge of reality has been obtained in words or deeds, in nature or history, the mind is prepared to seek for the inner meaning hidden in them. It is similar to the teaching of Scripture concerning Jesus Christ. He is portrayed as a man among us, before us, above us, doing a work for us here on earth, continuing that work for us in heaven. Many Christians never advance beyond this understanding of an external exalted Lord, in whom they trust for what He has done and is doing for them and in them. They know and enjoy very little of the power of the true mystery of Christ in us, of His inward presence, as an indwelling Saviour.

The former and simpler view is that of the first three Gospels; the latter characterises the Gospel of John. The former is the aspect of truth presented in the Scriptural doctrine of justification. The latter is the teaching concerning the union of the believer with Christ and his continual abiding, especially as taught in the Book of John and the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians.

To the Christians to whom I wrote this book, and who are prepared to take Christ to the world, I cannot stress it enough – **make sure that this abiding in Christ and Christ in you, is not only a doctrinal truth in your understanding of the Gospel, but that, as a matter of life and experience, it influences and drives your faith in Christ and all your interaction with God.** To be present in a room means that everything there is at your disposal, its furniture, its comforts, its light, its air, its shelter. To be in Christ, to abide in Christ, to be present with Him – O, to know what this means! It is not a matter of intellectual faith or conception, but a spiritual reality.

Think Who and What Christ is. Consider Him in the five states or stages that characterise and reveal His nature and work. He is **the Incarnate One**, in Whom we see how God's Omnipotence united perfectly with the Divine and human nature. Living **in Him** we are partaking of the Divine nature, and of eternal life. He is **the Obedient One**, living a life of entire surrender to God and perfect dependence on Him. Living **in Him**, our life becomes one of complete subjection to God's will and continual waiting upon His guidance. He is **the Crucified One**, who died for sin and to sin that He might take it away. Living **in Him** we are free from the curse and domination of sin, and we live, like Him, being dead to the world and our own will. He is **the Risen One**, who lives forevermore. Living **in Him** we share His resurrection power, and walk in newness of life, a life that has triumphed over sin and death. He is **the Exalted One**, sitting on the throne and continuing His work for the salvation of people. Living **in Him** His love possesses us, and we give ourselves to Him to use us to win the world back to God. Being in Christ, abiding in Him, means that God Himself places the soul in Christ, in the midst of this wonderful environment of the life of Christ that is simultaneously human and Godly, completely consecrated and dedicated to God in obedience and self-sacrifice, completely filled with God's resurrection life and glory. **The nature and character of Jesus Christ – His attitudes and affections, His power and glory – these are the elements in which we live, the air we breathe, the life in which our life exists and grows.**

The full revelation of God and His saving love cannot come in any other way than by **indwelling**. Because of Christ's Divinity and Divine power, He can only dwell in us, as far as we abide in Him. In as far as the heart is given to Him in faith, and the will surrendered in active obedience, He will enter in and make His home in us. Then we can say, because we know: Christ lives in me.

The main of everything in this life is: **Christ in us and we in Him**. If this is true of our real everyday life, then our spirit must be renewed and strengthened in the personal interaction with God as we start the day in the Morning Watch. Our access to God, our sacrifice to God, our expectation from God, must all be in Christ, in **a living fellowship with Him**.

If you ever feel that you want to get closer to God, to realise His presence or power, or love, or will, more fully – to have more of God in your life – come to God **in Christ**. Think of how He, as man on earth, drew near to the Father in deep humility and dependence, in full surrender and entire obedience, then **seek to come in His spirit and attitude**, in union with Him, to the Father. **Seek to take the very place before God that Christ has taken in heaven**. The place of accomplished redemption, perfect victory, full entrance into God's glory. **Take the very place before God that Christ took on earth** on His way to the victory and the glory. Do it by faith in His indwelling and enabling power in you here on earth; confidently approach God, not according to your own righteousness, but reckon on the fact that in Christ you are accepted. Surrender your heart and Christ Who dwells in you, will lead you on the path of truth and power.

Prayer: Father I draw near to You. I want more of You. I want to experience what it is to abide in Christ, in reality and truth. I come before You in Christ. I desire to live according to His attitudes, His character, His affections. I want to dedicate myself as completely to You as He did, in humility and submission to You. Amen.

Chapter 33. Himself Alone

"Therefore, when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone." – John 6:15

The Gospels frequently mention Christ retreating into solitude for prayer. Luke mentions Jesus' praying eleven times. In his very first chapter, Mark tells us that after a busy evening with the whole city gathering at his door, and Jesus, healing many, *"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."* (**Mark 1:35**). Before He chose His twelve apostles, *"He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."* (**Luke 6:12**). This thought of complete retirement to be alone appears to have deeply impacted the disciples, prompting John's use of the significant expression, *"He departed to the mountain by Himself alone."* Matthew also wrote, *"He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there."* (**Matt.14:23**). The man Christ Jesus felt the need for perfect solitude. Let us humbly seek to find out what this means.

Himself alone. Entirely by Himself, alone with Himself. We know how much interaction with people draws us away from ourselves and exhausts our strength. The man Christ Jesus knew this too, and felt the need to come to Himself again, to gain His strength again, and renew the consciousness of Who He was and what He needed, fully realising His high calling, His human weakness, His entire dependence on the Father.

How much more does the child of God need this! Whether it be the distraction of worldly engagements or religious service, whether it be to maintain our own Christian life, or the renewal of our strength to influence people for God, there is always the urgent call to every believer

to follow in the Master's steps and find a place and time when he can indeed be by himself alone.

Himself alone, with spiritual realities. It is in the entire withdrawal from contact with visible and temporal things that we are free to yield ourselves fully to the powers of the unseen world and allow them to master us. Jesus needed time and silence to anew realise what He came to contend with and conquer the power of the kingdom of darkness. He had to be aware of the needs of the people He came to save, and the presence and the power of the Father Whose will He had come to do. In Christian service, nothing is more indispensable than that a person should at times set himself apart to intensely focus his thoughts on the spiritual realities which he knows of but is not familiar with, and which as yet had so little effect on his heart and life. The truths of eternity have infinite power, yet they are often so powerless because we do not give them time to be revealed in us. Himself alone – this is the only cure.

Himself alone, with God the Father. It is sometimes said that work is worship, and that service is fellowship. If there ever was a man who could dispense with special seasons for solitude and fellowship, it was our blessed Lord. But He could not do His work or maintain His fellowship with the Father without His quiet time. As a man, He felt the need of bringing all His work, past and future, putting it before the Father, renewing His sense of absolute dependence on the Father's power and absolute confidence in the Father's love in seasons of special fellowship. When He said, *"the Son can do nothing of Himself,"* (John 5:19), *"As I hear, I judge,"* (John 5:30), He was simply expressing the simple truth of His relationship to God. It was this relationship that made His being alone with God a necessity and an unspeakable joy.

O, that every servant of God would understand and practise this blessed art of withdrawal unto God, that the Church knew how to train Christians to get a sense of this high and holy privilege, and that every believer may

and must have a time when he is truly by himself alone with God. O, the thought to have God all alone to myself! And to know that God has me to Himself all alone!

Himself alone, with the Word. As a man our Lord had to learn God's Word as a child; during the long years of His life in Nazareth, He fed on that Word and made it His own. In His solitude He conferred with the Father on all that that Word spoke of Him, on the will of God it revealed for Him to do.

It is one of the deepest lesson a Christian must learn in his spiritual life, that the Word without the living God avails little; that the blessing of the Word comes when it brings us to the living God; that the Word that we get from the mouth of God brings the power to know it and to do it. Let us learn the lesson: **personal fellowship with God in secret** alone can make the Word to be life and power.

Himself alone, in prayer. What an unspeakable privilege prayer is as it allows a person to lay his whole life open to God, and to ask for His teaching and His strength. Try to think for a moment what prayer meant to Jesus, what adoring worship, what humble love, what childlike pleading for everything He needed. As little as we can correctly perceive this, can we realise what blessedness awaits the person who knows to follow in Christ's steps, and to prove what the utmost is that God can do to someone who makes this his or her chief joy – to be with Him, Himself alone.

Himself alone. How deep these words reveal to us the life of Christ on earth, and of the life that He now lives in us. This is one of the most blessed elements of the life He lives in us by His Holy Spirit – He reveals and imparts to us everything that the Word means – He Himself alone.

Prayer: Father, what a privilege that I can come to You in the morning watch. That I may have You to myself alone. I pray that the time I spend with You every day, will be blessed and fruitful. That both You and I will enjoy it, and that You will daily nourish me with Yourself. Amen.

Chapter 34. Soul winning

"He who wins souls is wise." – Proverbs 11:30

In an article in *The Student Movement* of February 1901, on "A *Spiritual Awakening*," by H.W. Oldham, I found the following sentences: "In the constitutions of most Student's Christian Unions it is stated that **the chief aim** of the S. C. Union is **to lead students to become disciples of Jesus Christ**. But if the question is pressed home, 'Are students actually being won from indifference and unbelief to faith in Jesus Christ?' the reply must be that, although this is the case in a few instances, in the majority of Unions it is very doubtful. Some Unions, discouraged by previous failure, have become sceptical as to the possibility of winning men for Christ in circumstances so difficult as their own. They may carry on to some extent **traditional methods of aggressive work** but have ceased to expect to do more than strengthen such as already have faith. The Executive of the General College Department have definitely set **the spiritual awakening of students** in the forefront of their policy. If the local Unions will rally round the Executive, we may fully expect to see God working in the lives of those around us. The love that won us, can win many. It is right to recognise the seriousness of adopting this aim. **It involves close companionship with Jesus Christ in holy living, in self-sacrifice, in loving service**; it requires submission to the correction and control of God's Spirit. We must lift the aim of **winning students for Christ** out of the background in our work and **place it first**. Our Unions have more than sufficient mechanical workers. They need men and women with definite aims, who will think and pray, and pray and work, until their Union is a fit instrument in God's hand for transforming the lives of students."

In an editorial in the same number, we read with regard to the Day of Prayer, "There are many confessions, and many requests which we need

to make on the day of prayer, but we feel that the most urgent prayer must be for a spiritual awakening. We have been gradually recognising the fact that the most of our Unions **are not winning students for Christ**, and some have begun to realise, with dismay, that this fact has caused them very little sorrow. 'It is certainly a misfortune that students have not been won for Christ, but what can we do?' Truly a spiritual awakening is needed; needed in our own hearts. When it comes, we shall soon find out what we must do about this situation. Where is the passionate longing to help students? Where is the urgent prayer for souls that will not be denied? At the very heart of the whole matter is our *lack of interest*. What interests us will influence people. It is only when deep down among the eternal interests of our souls, there is a fire for **the passionate desire to lead people to Christ**, that we shall meet those who need our help, and who will welcome it. It is only when words and deeds burst from the **burning passion of desire to help people**, where we will find the opportunities of influencing lives. For it is only where there is a desire like this, that the Holy Spirit is a fellow-worker with us. And without Him we are powerless either to find those who are ready, or having found them, can help them. Shall we not unitedly ask that **a passion for souls** may be birthed in each of us on the day of prayer?"

Let me add an extract from an article on "*Indian Needs*," in the January number of the same paper. The writer (Rev. W.E.S. Holland, formerly Trav. Sec. B.C.C.U.) had spoken of the central purpose in the creation of Mission Colleges being "the personal influence which the teachers would be able to gain over their pupils." He then said: "Yet I have it on authority of teachers in four of the largest Indian Mission Colleges, that their time is so fully occupied with lecturing that they have neither time nor spirit for personal intercourse with their students. Five or six hours teaching per day, with several more hours for preparation, in an Indian climate, leave one exhausted, with neither time nor energy for **the most intense of all work, individual dealing with a person about his soul.**"

He concludes his paper with these words: "40 000 workers are needed, not less, if all India is to hear the gospel. Yet one almost shrinks from an appeal for workers. Why? Because they may be useless. **For missionary work is after all nothing else but soul winning.** And you cannot become a soul-winner in India if **one has not been one at home.** A sense of duty, or of the great need, may **bring** a worker to India, but nothing can enable him to **live** a missionary **life** our here year by year, unless he has such a burning love for Christ **that compels him to sacrifice and live a life of soul winning at home.**

What thoughts these extracts suggest in regard to the work of soul winning! The first great requisite in a missionary is a burning desire to win souls for Christ. Going to a mission field will not necessarily make one a soul-winner. It is at home, before you enter the mission field, that the spirit of self-sacrifice and soul-winning must be received and exercised. The chief aims of the Student Movement, to train its members in the art of soul-winning, will be the practical measure of its strength and success. The danger is that we relapse into traditional and mechanical methods, therefore continual, fervent, united, and private prayer ought to be made for more love for souls, and continual, earnest, united and private efforts made in every Students' Union that our fellow students may be won for Christ.

The great distinction of the Divine life, whether in God, or in Christ, or in us, is **love seeking to save the lost.** Let this be the Christian life we cultivate; a love that finds its blessedness in saving people. This life can be cultivated in no other way than by close personal attachment to Jesus, and daily fellowship with Him as a Friend we love. It is in the inner chamber that this fellowship with the Father and the Son is to be maintained. It is especially in this that the Father who sees us in secret will reward us openly.

Prayer: O Lord! Forgive me for my lack of love for souls! Forgive me for spending so much attention and time on myself, my pleasures, my work, my success, my happiness, my prosperity, that I spend so little time to pray and work for the salvation of souls. Make me attentive in my quiet time with You, of my destiny here on earth: to tell others about You. Amen.

Chapter 35. The Power of Intercession.

"Please tell me where your great strength lies." – Judges 16:6

This is the question we want answers to from the men and women of old who, as intercessors for others, had power with God, and have prevailed. More than one who has desired to give himself or herself to this ministry of prayer, has wondered why he or she found it so difficult to rejoice in it, to persevere, and to prevail. Let us study the lives of the leaders and heroes of the prayer world, maybe some of the elements of their success will be revealed to us.

The true intercessor is a person who knows that God knows that their heart and life are **wholly surrendered to God and His glory**. This is the only condition on which an officer at the court of an earthly king could expect to exert much influence on his sovereign. Moses and Elijah, and Daniel, and Paul, proved that it the same in the spiritual world. Our Lord Himself is the proof of it. He did not save us by intercession, but by self-sacrifice. His power of intersession is rooted in His sacrifice. It claims and receives what the sacrifice had won. It is so clearly said in the last words of Isaiah 53: *"He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."* (Isa.53:12). He first surrendered Himself to the will of God. There He won the power to influence and guide that will. He gave Himself for sinners in all-consuming love, and so He won the power to intercede for them. There is no other path for us. It is the man who seeks to enter personally into death with Christ, and gives himself wholly for God and men, who will persevere in prayer like Daniel or Paul. Whole-hearted devotion and obedience to God are the first marks of an intercessor.

You complain that you do not feel able to pray like this and ask how you may be fitted to do so. You speak a lot of the feebleness of your faith in God, lack of love for souls, lack of delight in prayer. The person who is to have power in intercession must stop these complaints. He must know that he has a **nature perfectly adapted to the work**. An apple tree is only expected to bear apples, because it has the apple nature within it. *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."* (**Eph.2:10**). The eye was created to see. How beautifully fitted it is for its work! You are created in Christ to pray. It is your very nature as a child of God. The Spirit has been sent into your heart – to do what? To cry: Abba, Father! To draw your heart up in child-like prayer. The Holy Spirit prays in us with groanings that cannot be uttered, with a divine power which mind, and feelings cannot understand. Learn, if you need to be an intercessor, to give the Holy Spirit much greater honour that is generally done. Believe that He is praying in you, and then be strong and of good courage. As you pray, be still before God to believe and yield to this wonderful power of prayer within you.

But there is so much conscious sinfulness and defects in our prayer? True, but have you not learned what it is to pray **in the Name of Christ**? Does the Name not mean the living power? Do you not know that you are in Christ and He in you? That your whole life is hidden and bound up in His? And His whole life is hidden and working in you? The person who is to intercede with power, must know that Christ and he are one in the work of intercession, not only in words and concepts, but in actual, living, divine reality. He appears before God clothed with the Name and the Nature, the Righteousness and Worthiness, the Image and Spirit and Life of Christ. Do not spend your prayer time only by repeating your petition, but in humbly, quietly, confidently claiming your place in Christ, your perfect union with Him, your access to God in Him. It is the person who comes to God in Christ, bringing to the Father the Christ in whom He

delights, as his life and his law, and his only trust, who will have the power to intercede and prevail with God.

Intercession is predominantly a work of faith. Not the faith that tries only to believe the prayer will be heard, but the faith that is at home amidst the heavenly realities. A faith that does not worry about one's own nothingness and feebleness, because what matters is that you are living in Christ. A faith that does not hope or depend on feelings, but upon the faithfulness of the Triune God to answer the prayer brought to Him. A faith that has overcome the world and let go of the visible world to be wholly present in the spiritual, to take possession of the heavenly and eternal realities. A faith that knows that it is heard and receives what it asks, and therefore quietly and deliberately perseveres in its supplication until the answer comes. The true intercessor must be a man or woman of faith.

The intercessor must be a **messenger** – one who keeps himself ready, who earnestly offers himself personally to receive the answer and to dispense it. Praying and working go together. Think of Moses – his boldness in pleading with God for the people was no greater than his pleading with the people for God. We see the same in Elijah – the urgency of his prayer in secret is equalled by his jealousy for God in public, as he testified against the sin of the nation. Let intercession always be accompanied, not by more diligent work, but by the meek and humble waiting on God to receive His grace and spirit, and to know more definitely what and how He want us to work. It is one thing, a great thing, to undertake the work of intercession – the drawing down to earth the blessings heaven has for every need. It is a greater thing as intercessor to personally receive that blessing, and go out from seeking God's face, knowing that we have secured something that we can impart. May God make us all whole-hearted, believing, blessing-bearing intercessors.

Prayer: Father, here am I. I give myself to You as an intercessor for people who are lost, people who need help. I believe that Christ, the Intercessor, dwells in me; that the Spirit of Intercession prays through me. Open my eyes so that I can see who I must pray for, and who around me needs You. Amen.

Chapter 36. The Intercessor.

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months."

– James 5:16-17

There is nothing that weakens the force of the call to imitate the example of the Bible saints as much as thinking that they were exceptional cases, and that what we see in them is not to be expected of all of us. The aim of God in Scripture is the very opposite. He gives us these men for our instruction and encouragement, as an example of what His grace can do, as living embodiments of what His will and our nature together, demands and render possible.

It was especially so in the case of effective prayer, to remove the error alluded to, and to give confidence to all of us, that James wrote: *"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours..."* There was no difference between his nature and ours, or between the grace that worked in him and works in us, there is no reason why we should not, like him, pray effectively. If our prayer is to have power, we must seek to have somewhat of Elijah's spirit. The ambition, "let me seek grace to pray like Elijah," is perfectly legitimate and most needful. If we honestly seek for the secret of his power in prayer, the path he walked will open to us. We shall find it in his life with God, his work for God, his trust in God.

Elijah lived with God.

Prayer is the voice of our spiritual life. As a man lives, so he prays. Not the words or thoughts with which he is occupied at set times of prayer, but the attitude of his heart as seen in his desires and actions, is regarded by God as his real prayer. The life speaks louder and truer than the lips. **To**

pray well, I must live well. He who seeks to live with God, will learn to so know His mind and please Him, that he will be able to pray according to His will. Think how Elijah, in his first message to Ahab, spoke of "*the Lord God, before whom I stand.*" Think of his solitude at the brook Cherith, receiving his bread from God through the ravens, and then at Sarepta through the ministry of a poor widow. **He walked with God, he learned to know God well.** When the time came, he knew how to pray to a God whom he had tested and Who proved faithful to His word. It is only out of a **life of true fellowship with God** that the prayer of faith can be born. Let the link between the life and the prayer be clear and close. As we give ourselves to walk with God, we shall learn to pray.

Elijah worked for God.

He went where God sent him. He did what God commanded him. He stood up for God and His service. He testified against the people and their sin. All who heard him could say: "*Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth.*" (**1Kin.17:24**). His prayers were all in connection with his work for God. He was equally a man of action and a man of prayer. When he prayed down, first the drought and then the rain, it was, as part of his prophetic work, that the people, by judgment and mercy, might be brought back to God. When he prayed down fire from heaven on the sacrifice, it was that God might be known as the true God. All he prayed for was for the glory of God.

How often believers seek power in prayer, that they may be able to get good gifts for themselves. **The hidden selfishness robs them of the power and the answer.** It is when **self is lost in the desire for God's glory,** and our life is devoted to work for God, that power to pray can come. God wants to love, and save, and bless men. The believer who surrenders himself to God's service to do the same, will find new life in prayer.

Service to others proves the honesty of our prayer for them. Service to God similarly reveals our need and our right to pray boldly. Cultivate the consciousness of total surrender to God's service and speak it out before Him; it will strengthen your confidence that He hears your prayer.

Elijah trusted God.

He had learned to trust Him for His personal needs in the time of famine; he dared to trust Him for greater things in answer to prayer for His people. What confidence that God will hear his prayer is seen in his appeal to *"the God who answers by fire."* What confidence that God will do what he asked, when he announced to Ahab the abundance of rain that was coming, and then, with his face to the ground, pleaded for it, while his servant brought the message six times! *"There is nothing."* (1Kin.18:43). **An unwavering confidence in the promise and character of God, and God's personal friendship with himself, acquired in personal interaction, and proved in his work for God, gave power for the effective prayer of the righteous man.**

The inner chamber is the place where this has to be learned. The morning watch is the training school where we are to exercise the grace that can shape us to pray like Elijah. Let us not fear. **The God of Elijah still lives.** The Spirit that was in him, dwells in us too. Let us cease from the limited and selfish views of prayer, which only aim at enough grace to keep us standing. Let us cultivate the consciousness that Elijah had of **living wholly for God**, and we shall learn to pray like him. Prayer will bring to ourselves and to others the new and blessed experience, that our prayers too are effective and avail much.

In the power of that ***Redeeming Intercessor who always lives to pray***, let us take courage and not fear. We have given ourselves to God, we are working for Him. We are learning to know and trust Him. We can count

on the life of God in us, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, to lead us on to this grace too: "*the effective prayer of a righteous man avails much.*"

*Gebed: Father God, I bow before You, the God of heaven and earth. In this school of prayer, I learnt that my strength, my life, and my pleasure, are found in the inner chamber where I am **alone with You**. The first hour of my day belongs to You. It is here where You meet me, where You sanctify me through your Word, where You teach me to pray and live. Here I receive your power. Never again do I want to neglect this hour with You alone. Here am I. Meet me here every day. Amen.*

