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F. R. HAVERGAL

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PREFATORY NOTE.

My beloved sister Frances finished revising the proofs of this book shortly before her death on Whit Tuesday, June 3, 1879, but its publication was to be deferred till the Autumn.

In appreciation of the deep and general sympathy flowing in to her relatives, they wish that its publication should not be withheld. Knowing her intense desire that Christ should be magnified, whether by her life or in her death, may it be to His glory that in these pages she, being dead,

“Yet Speaketh!”

MARIA V. G. HAVERGAL.

OAKHAMPTON, WORCESTERSHIRE,
11th June, 1879.

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TAKE my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and "beautiful" for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold ;
Not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it Thine ;
It shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart ; it is Thine own ;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love ; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.

Take myself, and I will be
Ever, *only*, ALL for Thee.

CHAPTER I.

OUR LIVES KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my life that it may be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee!”

MANY a heart has echoed the little song,

“Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee!”

And yet those echoes have not been, in every case and at all times, so clear, and full, and firm, so continuously glad as we would wish, and perhaps expected. Some of us have said:

“I launch me forth upon a sea
Of boundless love and tenderness.”

and after a little we have found, or fancied, that there is a hidden leak in our barque. and though we are doubtless still afloat, yet we are not sailing with the same free, exultant confidence as at first. What is it that has dulled and weakened the echo of our consecration song? What is the little leak that hinders the swift and buoyant

course of our consecrated life? Holy Father, let Thy loving Spirit guide the hand that writes, and strengthen the heart of every one who reads what shall be written for Jesus' sake.

While many a sorrowfully-varied answer to these questions may, and probably will, arise from touched and sensitive consciences, each being shown by God's faithful Spirit the special sin, the special yielding to temptation which has hindered and spoiled the blessed life which they sought to enter and enjoy, it seems to me that one or other of two things has lain at the outset of the failure and disappointment.

First, it may have arisen from want of the simplest belief in the simplest fact, as well as want of trust in one of the simplest and plainest words our gracious Master ever uttered! The unbelieved fact being simply that He hears us; the untrusted word being one of those plain, broad foundation-stones on which we rested our whole weight, it may be many years ago, and which we had no idea we ever doubted, or were in any danger of doubting now—"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

“Take my life!” We have said it or sung it before the Lord, it may be many times; but if it were only once whispered in His ear with full purpose of heart, should we not believe that He heard it? And if we know that He heard it, should we not believe that He has answered it, and fulfilled this, our heart’s desire? For with Him hearing means heeding. Then why should we doubt that He did verily take our lives when we offered them—our bodies when we presented them? Have we not been wronging His faithfulness all this time by practically, even if unconsciously, doubting whether the prayer ever really reached Him? And if so, is it any wonder that we have not realized all the power and joy of full consecration? By some means or other He has to teach us to trust implicitly at every step of the way. And so, if we did not really trust in this matter, He has had to let us find out our want of trust by withholding the sensible part of the blessing, and thus stirring us up to find out why it is withheld.

An offered gift must be either accepted or refused. Can He have refused it when He has said, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise

cast out?" If not, then it must have been accepted. It is just the same process as when we came to Him first of all, with the intolerable burden of our sins. There was no help for it but to come with them to Him, and take His word for it that He would not and did not cast us out. And so coming, so believing, we found rest to our souls; we found that His word was true, and that His taking away our sins was a reality.

Some give their lives to Him then and there, and go forth to live thenceforth not at all unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them. This is as it should be, for conversion and consecration ought to be simultaneous. But practically it is not very often so, except with those in whom the bringing out of darkness into marvelous light has been sudden and dazzling, and full of deepest contrasts. More frequently the work resembles the case of the Hebrew servant described in Exodus xxi., who, after six years' experience of a good master's service, dedicates himself voluntarily, unreservedly, and irrevocably to it, saying, "I love my master; I will not go out free;" the master then accepting and sealing him to a life-long service, free in law, yet bound in love.

This seems to be a figure of later consecration founded on experience and love.

And yet, as at our first coming, it is less than nothing, worse than nothing that we have to bring; for our lives, even our redeemed and pardoned lives, are not only weak and worthless, but defiled and sinful. But thanks be to God for the Altar that sanctifieth the gift, even our Lord Jesus Christ Himself! By Him we draw nigh unto God; to Him, as one with the Father, we offer our living sacrifice; in Him, as the Beloved of the Father, we know it is accepted. So, dear friends, when once He has wrought in us the desire to be altogether His own, and put into our hearts the prayer, "Take my life," let us go on our way rejoicing, believing that He *has* taken our lives, our hands, our feet, our voices, our intellects, our wills, our whole selves, to be ever, only, all for Him. Let us consider that a blessedly settled thing; not because of anything we have felt, or said, or done, but because we know that He heareth us, and because we know that He is true to His word.

But suppose our hearts do not condemn us in this matter, our disappointment may arise from

another cause. It may be that we have not received, because we have not asked a fuller and further blessing. Suppose that we did believe, thankfully and surely, that the Lord heard our prayer, and that He did indeed answer and accept us, and set us apart for Himself, and yet we find that our consecration was not merely miserably incomplete, but that we have drifted back again almost to where we were before. Or suppose things are not quite so bad as that, still we have not quite all we expected; and even if we think we can truly say, "O God, my heart is fixed," we find that, to our daily sorrow, somehow or other the details of our conduct do not seem to be fixed, something or other is perpetually slipping through, till we get perplexed and distressed. Then we are tempted to wonder whether, after all, there was not some mistake about it, and the Lord did not really take us at our word, although we took Him at His word. And then the struggle with one doubt, and entanglement, and temptation only seems to land us in another. What is to be done then?

First, I think, very humbly and utterly honestly, to search and try our ways before our God; or

rather, as we shall soon realize our helplessness to make such a search, ask Him to do it for us, praying for His promised Spirit to show us unmistakably if there is any secret thing with us that is hindering both the inflow and outflow of His grace to us and through us. Do not let us shrink from some unexpected flash into a dark corner; do not let us wince at the sudden touching of a hidden plague-spot. The Lord always does His own work thoroughly, if we will only let Him do it; if we put our case into His hands, He will search and probe fully and firmly, though very tenderly. Very painfully, it may be, but only that He may do the very thing we want—cleanse us and heal us thoroughly, so that we may set off to walk in real newness of life. But if we do not put it unreservedly into His hands, it will be no use thinking or talking about our lives being consecrated to Him. The heart that is not entrusted to Him for searching, will not be undertaken by Him for cleansing; the life that fears to come to the light lest any deed should be reproved, can never know the blessedness and the privileges of walking in the light.

But what then? When He has graciously

again put a new song in our mouth, and we are singing,

“ Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me His praise should sing ? ”

and again with fresh earnestness we are saying,

“ Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee ! ”

are we only to look forward to the same disappointing experience over again? are we always to stand at the threshold? Consecration is not so much a step as a course; not so much an act, as a position to which a course of action inseparably belongs. In so far as it is a course and a position, there must naturally be a definite entrance upon it, and a time, it may be a moment, when that entrance is made. That is when we say, “Take;” but we do not want to go on taking a first step over and over again. What we want now is to be maintained in that position, and to fulfill that course. So let us go on to another prayer. Having already said, “Take my life, for I cannot give it to Thee,” let us now say, with deepened conviction, that without Christ we really can do

nothing—"Keep my life, for I cannot keep it for Thee."

Let us ask this with the same simple trust to which, in so many other things, He has so liberally and graciously responded. For this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. There can be no doubt that this petition is according to His will, because it is based upon many a promise. May I give it to you just as it floats through my own mind again and again, knowing whom I have believed, and being persuaded that He is *able to keep* that which I have committed unto Him?

Keep my life, that it may be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Keep my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Keep my hands that they may move
At the impulse of Thy love.

Keep my feet that they may be,
Swift and "beautiful" for Thee.

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Keep my voice that I may sing
Always, only, for my King.

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Keep my silver and my gold ;
Not a mite would I withhold.

Keep my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Keep my will, oh, keep it Thine,
For it is no longer mine.

Keep my heart ; it *is* Thine own,
It is now Thy royal throne.

Keep my love ; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.

Keep myself, that I may be
Ever, *only*, ALL for Thee.

Yes ! He who is able and willing to take unto Himself, is no less able and willing to keep for Himself. Our willing offering has been made by His enabling grace, and this our King has "seen with joy." And now we pray, "Keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people" (1 Chron. xxix. 17, 18).

This blessed "taking" once for all, which we may quietly believe as an accomplished fact, followed by the continual "keeping" for which He will be continually inquired of by us, seems analogous to the great washing by which we have part in Christ, and the repeated washing of the feet for which we need to be continually coming to Him. For with the deepest and sweetest consciousness that he has, indeed, taken our lives to be his very own, the need of His active and actual keeping of them in every detail and at every moment is most fully realized. But then we have the promise of our faithful God, "I, the Lord, *do* keep it, I will keep it night and day." The only question is, Will we trust this promise, or will we not? If we do, we shall find it come true. If not, of course it will not be realized. For unclaimed promises are like uncashed cheques; they will keep us from bankruptcy, but not from want. But if not, *why* not? What right have we to pick out one of His faithful sayings, and say we don't expect Him to fulfill that? What defence can we bring, what excuse can we invent, for so doing?

If you appeal to experience against His faith-

fulness to His word, I will appeal to experience too, and ask you, did you ever *really trust* Jesus to fulfill any word of His to you, and find your trust deceived? As to the past experience of the details of your life not being kept for Jesus, look a little more closely at it, and you will find that though you may have asked, you did not trust. Whatever you really did trust Him to keep, He has kept, and the unkept things were never really entrusted. Scrutinize this past experience as you will, and it will only bear witness against your unfaithfulness, never against His absolute faithfulness.

Yet this witness must not be unheeded. We must not forget the things that are behind till they are confessed and forgiven. Let us now bring all this unsatisfactory past experience, and, most of all, the want of trust which has been the poison-spring of its course, to the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth us, even us, from all sin, even this sin. Perhaps we never saw that we were not trusting Jesus as He deserves to be trusted; if so, let us wonderingly hate ourselves the more that we could be so trustless to such a Saviour, and so sinfully dark

and stupid that we did not even see it. And oh, let us wonderingly love Him the more that He has been so patient and gentle with us, upbraiding not, though in our slow-hearted foolishness we have been grieving Him by this subtle unbelief; and then by His grace may we enter upon a new era of experience, our lives kept for Him more fully than ever before, because we trust Him more simply and unreservedly to keep them!

Here we must face a question, and perhaps a difficulty. Does it not almost seem as if we were at this point led to trusting to our trust, making everything hinge upon it, and thereby only removing a subtle dependence upon ourselves one step farther back, disguising instead of renouncing it? If Christ's keeping depends upon our trusting, and our continuing to trust depends upon ourselves, we are in no better or safer position than before, and shall only be landed in a fresh series of disappointments. The old story, something for the sinner to *do*, crops up again here, only with the ground shifted from "works" to trust. Said a friend to me, "I see now! I did trust Jesus to do everything else for me, but

I thought that this trusting was something that *I* had got to do." And so, of course, what she "had got to do" had been a perpetual effort and frequent failure. We can no more trust and keep on trusting than we can do anything else of ourselves. Even in this it must be "Jesus only;" we are not to look to Him only to be the Author and Finisher of our faith, but we are to look to Him for all the intermediate fulfillment of the work of faith (2 Thess. i. 11); we must ask Him to go on fulfilling it in us, committing even this to His power.

For we both may and must
Commit our very faith to Him,
Entrust to Him our trust.

What a long time it takes us to come down to the conviction, and still more to the realization of the fact that without Him we can do *nothing*, but that He must work *all* our works in us! This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He has sent. And no less must it be the work of God that we go on believing, and that we go on trusting. Then, dear friends, who are longing to trust Him with unbroken and unwavering

trust, cease the effort and drop the burden, and *now* entrust your trust to Him! He is just as well able to keep that as any other part of the complex lives which we want Him to take and keep for Himself. And oh, do not pass on content with the thought, "Yes, that is a good idea; perhaps I should find that a great help!" But, "Now, then, *do it.*" It is no help to the sailor to see a flash of light across a dark sea, if he does not instantly steer accordingly.

Consecration is not a religiously selfish thing. If it sinks into that, it ceases to be consecration. We want our lives kept, not that we may feel happy, and be saved the distress consequent on wandering, and get the power with God and man, and all the other privileges linked with it. We shall have all this, because the lower is included in the higher; but our true aim, if the love of Christ constraineth us, will be far beyond this. Not for "me" at all, but "for Jesus;" not for my safety, but for His glory; not for my comfort, but for His joy; not that I may find rest, but that He may see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied! Yes, for *Him* I want to be kept. Kept

for His sake ; kept for His use ; kept to be His witness ; kept for His joy. Kept for Him, that in me He may show forth some tiny sparkle of His light and beauty ; kept to do His will and His work in His own way ; kept, it may be, to suffer for His sake ; kept for Him, that He may do just what seemeth Him good with me ; kept, so that no other lord shall have any more dominion over me, but that Jesus shall have all there is to have—little enough, indeed, but not divided or diminished by any other claim. Is not this, O you who love the Lord—is not this worth living for, worth asking for, worth trusting for ?

This is consecration, and I cannot tell you the blessedness of it. It is not the least use arguing with one who has had but a taste of its blessedness, and saying to him, " How can these things be ? " It is not the least use starting all sorts of difficulties and theoretical suppositions about it with such a one, any more than it was when the Jews argued with the man who said, " One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." The Lord Jesus does take the life that is offered to Him, and He does keep the life for Himself

that is entrusted to Him; but until the life is offered we can not know the taking, and until the life is entrusted we can not know or understand the keeping. All we can do is to say, "O taste and see!" and bear witness to the reality of Jesus Christ, and set to our seal that we have found Him true to His every word, and that we have proved Him able even to do exceeding abundantly above all we asked or thought. Why should we hesitate to bear this testimony? We have done nothing at all; we have, in all our efforts, only proved to ourselves, and perhaps to others, that we had no power either to give or keep our lives.

Why should we not, then, glorify His grace by acknowledging that we have found Him so wonderfully and tenderly gracious and faithful in both taking and keeping as we never supposed or imagined? I shall never forget the smile and emphasis with which a poor working-man bore this witness to his Lord. I said to him, "Well, H., we have a good Master, have we not?" "Ah," said he, "a deal better than ever *I* thought!" That summed up his experience, and so it will sum up the experience of every

one who will but yield their lives wholly to the same good Master.

I can not close this chapter without a word with those, especially my younger friends, who, although they have named the name of Christ, are saying, "Yes, this is all very well for some people, or for older people, but I am not ready for it; I can't say I see my way to this sort of thing." I am going to take the lowest ground for a minute, and appeal to *your* "past experience." Are you satisfied with your experience of the other "sort of thing?" Your pleasant pursuits, your harmless recreations, your nice occupations, even your improving ones, what fruit are you having from them? Your social intercourse, your daily talks and walks, your investments of all the time that remains to you over and above the absolute duties God may have given you, what fruit that shall remain have you from all this? Day after day passes on, and year after year, and what shall the harvest be? What is even the present return? Are you getting any real and lasting satisfaction out of it all? Are you not finding that things lose their flavor, and that you

are spending your strength day after day for nought? that you are no more satisfied than you were a year ago—rather less so, if anything?

Does not a sense of hollowness and weariness come over you as you go on in the same round, perpetually getting through things only to begin again? It can not be otherwise. Over even the freshest and purest earthly fountains the Hand that never makes a mistake has written, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again." Look into your own heart and you will find a copy of that inscription already traced, "*Shall thirst again.*" And the characters are being deepened with every attempt to quench the inevitable thirst and weariness in life, which can only be satisfied and rested in full consecration to God. For "Thou hast made us *for Thyself*, and the heart never resteth till it findeth rest in Thee." To day I tell you of a brighter and happier life, whose inscription is, "*Shall never thirst,*" a life that is no dull round-and-round in a circle of unsatisfactorinesses, but a life that has found its true and entirely satisfactory centre, and set itself towards a shining and entirely satisfactory goal,

whose brightness is cast over every step of the way. Will you not seek it?

Do not shrink, and suspect, and hang back from what it may involve, with selfish and unconfiding and ungenerous half-heartedness. Take the word of any who have willingly offered themselves unto the Lord, that the life of consecration is "a deal better than they thought!" Choose this day whom you will serve with real, thoroughgoing, whole-hearted service, and He will receive you; and you will find, as we have found, that He is such a good Master that you are satisfied with His goodness, and that you will never want to go out free. Nay, rather take His own word for it; see what He says: "If they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures." You can not possibly understand that till you are really *in* His service! For He does not give, nor even show, His wages before you enter it. And He says, "My servants shall sing for joy of heart." But you cannot try over that song to see what it is like, you cannot even read one bar of it, till your nominal or even promised service is exchanged for real and undivided consecration.

But when He can call you "My servant," then you will find yourself singing for joy of heart, because He says you shall.

"And who, then, is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?"

"Do not startle at the term, or think, because you do not understand all it may include, you are therefore not qualified for it. I dare say it comprehends a great deal more than either you or I understand, but we can both enter into the spirit of it, and the detail will unfold itself as long as our probation shall last. Christ demands a hearty consecration in *will*, and He will teach us what that involves in *act*."

This explains the paradox that "full consecration" may be in one sense the act of a moment, and in another the work of a lifetime. It must be complete to be real, and yet, if real, it is always incomplete; a point of rest, and yet a perpetual progression.

Suppose you make over a piece of ground to another person. You give it up, then and there, entirely to that other; it is no longer in your own possession; you no longer dig and sow, plant and reap, at your discretion or for your own profit.

His occupation of it is total ; no other has any right to an inch of it ; it is his affair thenceforth what crops to arrange for and how to make the most of it. But his practical occupation of it may not appear all at once. There may be waste land which he will take into full cultivation only by degrees, space wasted for want of draining or by over-fencing, and odd corners lost for want of enclosing ; fields yielding smaller returns than they might, because of hedgerows too wide and shady, and trees too many and spreading, and strips of good soil trampled into uselessness for want of defined pathways.

Just so is it with our lives. The transaction of, so to speak, making them over to God is definite and complete. But then begins the practical development of consecration. And here He leads on "softly, according as the children be able to endure." I do not suppose any one sees anything like all that it involves at the outset. We have not a notion what an amount of waste of power there has been in our lives ; we never measured out the odd corners and the undrained bits, and it never occurred to us what good fruit might be grown in our straggling hedgerows, nor how the

shade of our trees has been keeping the sun from the scanty crops. And so, season by season, we shall be sometimes not a little startled, yet always very glad, as we find that bit by bit the Master shows how much more may be made of our ground, how much more He is able to make of it than we did; and we shall be willing to work under Him and do exactly what He points out, even if it comes to cutting down a shady tree or clearing out a ditch full of pretty weeds and wild-flowers.

As the seasons pass on, it will seem as if there was always more and more to be done; the very fact that He is constantly showing us something more to be done in it, proving that it is really His ground. Only let Him *have* the ground, no matter how poor or overgrown the soil may be, and then "He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord." Yes, even *our* "desert!" And then we shall sing, "My beloved is gone down into *His* garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies."

Made for Thyself, O God!

Made for Thy love, Thy service, Thy delight;

Made to show forth Thy wisdom, grace, and might;

Made for Thy praise, whom veiled archangels laud
Oh, strange and glorious thought, that we may be
A joy to Thee!

Yet the heart turns away
From this grand destiny of bliss, and deems
'Twas made for its poor self, for passing dreams,
Chasing illusions melting day by day,
Till for ourselves we read on this world's best,
"This is not rest!"

CHAPTER II.

OUR MOMENTS KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.”

IT may be a little help to writer and reader if we consider some of the practical details of the life which we desire to have “kept for Jesus” in the order of the little hymn at the beginning of this book, with the one word “take” changed to “keep.” So we will take a couplet for each chapter.

The first point that naturally comes up is that which is almost synonymous with life—our time. And this brings us at once face to face with one of our past difficulties, and its probable cause.

When we take a wide sweep, we are so apt to be vague. When we are aiming at generalities we do not hit the practicalities. We forget that faithfulness to principle is only proved by faithfulness in detail. Has not this vagueness had something to do with the constant ineffectiveness

of our feeble desire that our time should be devoted to God?

In things spiritual, the greater does not always include the less, but, paradoxically, the less more often includes the greater. So in this case, time is entrusted to us to be traded with for our Lord. But we cannot grasp it as a whole. We instinctively break it up ere we can deal with it for any purpose. So when a New Year comes round, we commit it with special earnestness to the Lord. But as we do so, are we not conscious of a feeling that even a year is too much for us to deal with? And does not this feeling, that we are dealing with a larger thing than we can grasp, take away from the sense of reality? Thus we are brought to a more manageable measure; and as the Sunday mornings or the Monday mornings come round, we thankfully commit the opening week to Him, and the sense of help and rest is renewed and strengthened. But not even the six or seven days are close enough to our hand, even to-morrow exceeds our tiny grasp, and even to-morrow's grace is therefore not given to us. So we find the need of considering our lives as a matter of day by day, and that any more general

committal and consecration of our time does not meet the case so truly. Here we have found much comfort and help, and if results have not been entirely satisfactory, they have, at least, been more so than before we reached this point of subdivision.

But if we have found help and blessing by going a certain distance in one direction, is it not probable we shall find more if we go farther in the same? And so, if we may commit the days to our Lord, why not the hours, and why not the moments? And may we not expect a fresh and special blessing in so doing?

We do not realize the importance of moments. Only let us consider those two sayings of God about them, "In a moment shall they die," and, "We shall all be changed in a moment," and we shall think less lightly of them. Eternal issues may hang upon any one of them, but it has come and gone before we can even think about it. Nothing seems less within the possibility of our own keeping, yet nothing is most inclusive of all other keeping. Therefore let us ask Him to keep them for us.

Are they not the tiny joints in the harness

through which the darts of temptation pierce us? Only give us time, we think, and we should not be overcome. Only give us time, and we could pray and resist, and the devil would flee from us! But he comes all in a moment; and in a moment—an unguarded, unkept one—we utter the hasty or exaggerated word, or think the un-Christ-like thought, or feel the un-Christ-like impatience or resentment.

But even if we have gone so far as to say, "Take my moments," have we gone the step farther, and really *let* Him take them—really entrusted them to Him? It is no good saying "take," when we do not let go. How can another keep that which we are keeping hold of? So let us, with full trust in His power, first commit these slippery moments to Him,—put them right into His hand,—and then we may trustfully and happily say, "Lord, keep them for me! Keep every one of the quick series as it arises. I cannot keep them for Thee; do Thou keep them for Thyself!"

But the sanctified and Christ-loving heart can not be satisfied with only negative keeping. We do not want only to be kept from displeasing

Him, but to be kept always pleasing Him. Every "kept *from*," should have its corresponding and still more blessed "kept *for*." We do not want our moments to be simply kept from Satan's use, but kept for His use; we want them to be not only kept from sin, but kept for His praise.

Do you ask, "But what use can He make of mere moments?" I will not stay to prove or illustrate the obvious truth that, as are the moments so will be the hours and the days which they build. You understand that well enough. I will answer your question as it stands.

Look back through the history of the Church in all ages, and mark how often a great work and mighty influence grew out of a mere moment in the life of one of God's servants; a mere moment, but overshadowed and filled with the fruitful power of the Spirit of God. The moment may have been spent in uttering five words, but they have fed five thousand, or even five hundred thousand. Or it may have been lit by the flash of a thought that has shone into hearts and homes throughout the land, and kindled torches that have been borne into earth's darkest corners. The rapid speaker or the lonely thinker little

guessed what use his Lord was making of that single moment. There was no room in it for even a thought of that. If that moment had not been, though perhaps unconsciously, "kept for Jesus," but had been otherwise occupied, what a harvest to His praise would have been missed !

The same thing is going on every day. It is generally a moment—either an opening or a culminating one—that really does the work. It is not so often a whole sermon as a single short sentence in it, that wings God's arrow to a heart. It is seldom a whole conversation that is the means of bringing about the desired result, but some sudden turn of thought or word which comes with the electric touch of God's power. Sometimes it is less than that ; only a look (and what is more momentary ?) has been used by Him for the pulling down of strongholds. Again, in our own quiet waiting upon God, as moment after moment glides past in the silence at His feet, the eye resting upon a page of His Word, or only looking up to Him through the darkness, have we not found that He can so irradiate one passing moment with His light that its rays never die away, but shine on and on through days and

years? Are not such moments proved to have been kept for Him? And if some, why not all?

This view of moments seems to make it clearer that is impossible to serve two masters, for it is evident that the service of a moment cannot be divided. If it is occupied in the service of self, or any other master, it is not at the Lord's disposal; He cannot make use of what is already occupied.

Oh, how much we have missed by not placing them at His disposal! What might He not have done with the moments freighted with self or loaded with emptiness, which we have carelessly let drift by! Oh, what might have been if they had all been kept for Jesus! How He might have filled them with His light and life, enriching our own lives that have been impoverished by the waste, and using them in far-spreading blessing and power!

While we have been undervaluing these fractions of eternity, what has our gracious God been doing in them? How strangely touching are the words, "What is man, that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him, and that Thou shouldest visit him every morning, and *try him every*

moment?” Terribly solemn and awful would be the thought that He has been trying us every moment, were it not for the yearning gentleness and love of the Father revealed in that wonderful expression of wonder, “What is man, that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him?” Think of that ceaseless setting of His heart upon us, careless and forgetful children as we have been! And then think of those other words, none the less literally true because given under a figure: “I, the Lord, do keep it; *I will water it every moment.*”

We see something of God's infinite greatness and wisdom when we try to fix our dazzled gaze on infinite space. But when we turn to the marvels of the microscope, we gain a clearer view and more definite grasp of these attributes by gazing on the perfection of His infinitesimal handiworks. Just so, while we cannot realize the infinite love which fills eternity, and the infinite vistas of the great future are “dark with excess of light” even to the strongest telescopes of faith, we see that love magnified in the microscope of the moments, brought very close to us, and revealing its unspeakable perfection of detail to our wondering sight.

But we do not see this as long as the moments are kept in our own hands. We are like little children closing our fingers over diamonds. How can they receive and reflect the rays of light, analyzing them into all the splendor of their prismatic beauty, while they are kept shut up tight in the dirty little hands? Give them up; let our Father hold them for us, and throw His own great light upon them, and then we shall see them full of fair colors of His manifold loving-kindnesses; and let Him always keep them for us, and then we shall always see His light and His love reflected in them.

And then surely they shall be filled with praise. Not that we are to be always singing hymns, and using the expressions of other people's praise, any more than the saints in glory are always literally singing a new song. But praise will be the tone, the color, the atmosphere in which they flow; none of them away from it or out of it.

Is it a little too much for them all to "flow in ceaseless praise?" Well, were will you stop? What proportion of your moments do you think enough for Jesus? How many for the spirit of praise, and how many for the spirit of heavi-

ness? Be explicit about it, and come to an understanding. If He is not to have all, then *how much?* Calculate, balance, and apportion. You will not be able to do this in heaven—you know it will be all praise there; but you are free to halve your service of praise here, or to make the proportion what you will.

Yet,—He made you for His glory.

Yet,—He chose you that you should be to the praise of His glory.

Yet,—He loves you every moment, waters you every moment, watches you unslumberingly, cares for you unceasingly.

Yet,—He died for you!

Dear friends, one can hardly write it without tears. Shall you or I remember all this love and hesitate to give all our moments up to Him? Let us entrust Him with them, and ask Him to keep them all, every single one, for His own beloved self, and fill them *all* with His praise, and let them *all* be to His praise!

CHAPTER III.

OUR HANDS KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my hands, that they may move
At the impulse of Thy love.”

WHEN the Lord has said to us, “Is thine heart right, as My heart is with thy heart?” the next word seems to be, “If it be, give Me thine hand.”

What a call to confidence, and love, and free, loyal, happy service is this! and how different will the result of its acceptance be from the old lamentation: “We labor and have no rest; we have given the hand to the Egyptians and to the Assyrians.” In the service of these “other lords,” under whatever shape they have presented themselves, we shall have known something of the meaning of having “both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.” How many a thing have we “taken in hand,” as we say, which we expected to find an agreeable task, an interest in life, a something towards filling up that uncon-

fessed "aching void" which is often most real when least acknowledged; and after a while we have found it change under our hands into irksome travail, involving perpetual vexation of spirit! The thing may have been of the earth and for the world, and then no wonder it failed to satisfy even the instinct of work, which comes natural to many of us. Or it may have been right enough in itself, something for the good of others so far as we understood their good, and unselfish in all but unravelled motive, and yet we found it full of tangled vexations, because the hands that held it were not simply consecrated to God. Well, if so, let us bring these soiled and tangle-making hands to the Lord, "Let us lift up our heart with our hands" to Him, asking Him to clear and cleanse them.

If He says, "What is that in thine hand?" let us examine honestly whether it is something which He can use for His glory or not. If not, do not let us hesitate an instant about dropping it. It may be something we do not like to part with; but the Lord is able to give thee much more than this, and the first glimpse of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord will

enable us to count those things loss which were gain to us.

But if it is something which He can use, He will make us do ever so much more with it than before. Moses little thought what the Lord was going to make him do with that "rod in his hand!" The first thing he had to do with it was to "cast it on the ground," and see it pass through a startling change. After this he was commanded to take it up again, hard and terrifying as it was to do so. But when it became again a rod in his hand, it was no longer what it was before, the simple rod of a wandering desert shepherd. Henceforth it was "the rod of God in his hand" (Ex. iv. 20), wherewith he should do signs, and by which God Himself would do "marvellous things" (Ps. lxxviii. 12).

If we look at any Old Testament text about consecration, we shall see that the marginal reading of the word is, "fill the hand" (*e. g.*, Ex. xxviii. 41; 1 Chron. xxix. 5). Now, if our hands are full of "other things," they cannot be filled with "the things that are Jesus Christ's;" there must be emptying before there can be any true

filling. So if we are sorrowfully seeing that our hands have not been kept for Jesus, let us humbly begin at the beginning, and ask Him to empty them thoroughly, that He may fill them completely.

For they *must* be emptied. Either we come to our Lord willingly about it, letting Him unclasp their hold, and gladly dropping the glittering weights they have been carrying, or, in very love, He will have to force them open, and wrench from the reluctant grasp the "earthly things" which are so occupying them that He cannot have His rightful use of them. There is only one other alternative, a terrible one,—to be let alone till the day comes when not a gentle Master, but the relentless king of terrors shall empty the trembling hands as our feet follow him out of the busy world into the dark valley, for "it is certain we can carry nothing out."

Yet the emptying and the filling are not all that has to be considered. Before the hands of the priests could be filled with the emblems of consecration, they had to be laid upon the emblem of atonement (Lev. viii. 14, etc.). That

came first. "Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin-offering." So the transference of guilt to our Substitute, typified by that act, must precede the dedication of ourselves to God.

" My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin."

The blood of that Holy Substitute was shed "to make reconciliation upon the altar." Without that reconciliation we cannot offer and present ourselves to God; but this being made, Christ Himself presents us. And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in His sight.

Then Moses "brought the ram for the burnt-offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram, and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar; it was a burnt-offering for a sweet savor, and an offering

made by fire unto the Lord." Thus Christ's offering was, indeed, a whole one, body, soul and spirit, each and all suffering even unto death. These atoning sufferings, accepted by God for us, are, by our own free act, accepted by us as the ground of our acceptance.

Then, reconciled and accepted, we are ready for consecration ; for then "he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration ; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram." Here we see Christ, "who is consecrated forevermore." We enter by faith into union with Him who said, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

After all this their hands were filled with "consecrations for a sweet savor," so, after laying the hand of our faith upon Christ, suffering and dying for us, we are to lay that very same hand of faith, and in the very same way upon Him as consecrated for us, to be the source and life and power of our consecration. And then our hands shall be filled with "consecrations," filled with Christ, and filled with all that is a sweet savor to God in Him.

“And who then is willing to fill his hand this day unto the Lord?” Do you want an added motive? Listen again: “Fill your hands to-day to the Lord, that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day.” Not a long time hence, not even to-morrow, but “this day.” Do you not want a blessing? Is not your answer to your Father’s “What wilt thou?” the same as Ach-sah’s, “Give me a blessing!” Here is His promise of just what you so want; will you not gladly fulfill His condition? A blessing shall immediately follow. He does not specify what it shall be; He waits to reveal it. You will find it such a blessing as you had not supposed could be for you—a blessing that shall verily make you rich, with no sorrow added—a blessing *this day*.

All that has been said about consecration applies to our literal members. Stay a minute, and look at your hand, the hand that holds this little book as you read it. See how wonderfully it is made; how perfectly fitted for what it has to do; how ingeniously connected with the brain, so as to yield that instantaneous and instinctive obedience without which its beautiful mechanism would be very little good to us! *Your* hand, do you

say? Whether it is soft and fair with an easy life, or rough and strong with a working one, or white and weak with illness, it is the Lord Jesus Christ's. It is not your own at all; it belongs to Him. He made it, for without Him was not anything made that was made, not even your hand. And He has the added right of purchase—He has bought it that it might be one of His own instruments. We know this very well, but have we realized it? Have we really let Him have the use of these hands of ours? and have we ever simply and sincerely asked Him to keep them for His own use?

Does this mean that we are always to be doing some definitely "religious" work, as it is called? No, but that *all that we do* is to be always definitely done *for Him*. There is a great difference. If the hands are indeed moving "at the impulse of His love," the simplest little duties and acts are transfigured into holy service to the Lord.

"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine."

GEORGE HERBERT.

A Christian school-girl loves Jesus ; she wants to please Him all day long, and so she practices her scales carefully and conscientiously. It is at the impulse of His love that her fingers move so steadily through the otherwise tiresome exercises. Some day her Master will find a use for her music ; but meanwhile it may be just as really done unto Him as if it were Mr. Sankey at his organ, swaying the hearts of thousands. The hand of a Christian lad traces his Latin verses, or his figures or his copying. He is doing his best, because a banner has been given him that it may be displayed, not so much by talk as by continuance in well-doing. And so, for Jesus' sake, his hand moves accurately and perseveringly.

A busy wife, or daughter, or servant has a number of little manual duties to perform. If these are done slowly and leisurely, they may be got through ; but there will not be time left for some little service to the poor, or some little kindness to a suffering or troubled neighbor, or for a little quiet time alone with God and His word. And so the hands move quickly, impelled by the loving desire for service or communion, kept in busy motion for Jesus' sake. Or it may

be that the special aim is to give no occasion of reproach to some who are watching, but so to adorn the doctrine that those may be won by the life who will not be won by the word. Then the hands will have their share to do ; they will move carefully, neatly, perhaps even elegantly, making everything around as nice as possible, letting their intelligent touch be seen in the details of the home, and even of the dress, doing or arranging all the little things decently and in order for Jesus' sake. And so on with every duty in every position.

It may seem an odd idea, but a simple glance at one's hand, with the recollection, "This hand is not mine ; it has been given to Jesus, and it must be kept for Jesus," may sometimes turn the scale in a doubtful matter, and be a safeguard from certain temptations. With that thought fresh in your mind as you look at your hand, can you let it take up things which, to say the very least, are not "for Jesus?" things which evidently cannot be used, as they most certainly are not used, either for Him or by Him? Cards, for instance ! Can you deliberately hold in it books of a kind which you know perfectly well, by sadly repeated experience, lead you farther from instead of nearer to

Him? books which must and do fill your mind with those "other things" which, entering in, choke the word? books which you would not care to read at all, if your heart were burning within you at the coming of His feet to bless you? Next time any temptation of this sort approaches, just *look at your hand!*

It was of a literal hand that our Lord Jesus spoke when He said, "Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table;" and, "He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me." A hand so near to Jesus, with Him on the table, touching His own hand in the dish at that hour of sweetest, and closest, and most solemn intercourse, and yet betraying Him! That same hand taking the thirty pieces of silver! What a tremendous lesson of the need of keeping for our hands! Oh that every hand that is with Him at His sacramental table, and that takes the memorial bread, may be kept from any faithless and loveless motion! And again, it was by literal "wicked hands" that our Lord Jesus was crucified and slain. Does not the thought that human hands have been so treacherous and cruel to our beloved

Lord, make us wish the more fervently that our hands may be totally faithful and devoted to Him?

Danger and temptation to let the hands move at other impulses is every bit as great to those who have nothing else to do but to render direct service, and who think they are doing nothing else. Take one practical instance—our letter-writing. Have we not been tempted (and fallen before the temptation), according to our various dispositions, to let the hand that holds the pen move at the impulse to write an unkind thought of another; or to say a clever and sarcastic thing, or a slightly colored and exaggerated thing, which will make our point more telling; or to let out a grumble or a suspicion; or to let the pen run away with us into flippant and trifling words, unworthy of our high and holy calling? Have we not drifted away from the golden reminder, "Should he reason with unprofitable talk, and with speeches wherewith he can do no good?" Why has this been, perhaps again and again? Is it not for want of putting our hands into our dear Master's hand, and asking and trusting Him

to keep them? He *could* have kept; He *would* have kept!

Whatever our work or our special temptations may be, the principle remains the same, only let us apply it for ourselves.

Perhaps one hardly needs to say that the kept hands will be very gentle hands. Quick, angry motions of the heart will sometimes force themselves into expression by the hand, though the tongue may be restrained. The very way in which we close a door or lay down a book may be a victory or a defeat, a witness to Christ's keeping or a witness that we are not truly being kept. How can we expect that God will use this member as an instrument of righteousness unto Him, if we yield it thus as an instrument of unrighteousness unto sin? Therefore let us see to it, that it is at once yielded to Him whose right it is; and let our sorrow that it should have been even for an instant desecrated to Satan's use, lead us to entrust it henceforth to our Lord, to be kept by the power of God through faith "for the Master's use."

For when the gentleness of Christ dwells in us, He can use the merest touch of a finger.

Have you not heard of one gentle touch on a wayward shoulder being the turning-point of a life? I have known a case in which the Master made use of less than that—only the quiver of a little finger being made the means of touching a wayward heart.

What must the touch of the Master's own hand have been! One imagines it very gentle, though so full of power. Can He not communicate both the power and the gentleness? When He touched the hand of Peter's wife's mother, she arose and ministered unto them. Do you not think the hand which Jesus had just touched must have ministered very excellently? As we ask Him to "touch our lips with living fire," so that they may speak effectively for Him, may we not ask Him to touch our hands, that they may minister effectively, and excel in all that they find to do for Him? Then our hands shall be made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob.

It is very pleasant to feel that if our hands are indeed our Lord's, we may ask Him to guide them and strengthen them, and teach them. I do not mean figuratively, but quite literally. In

everything they do for Him (and that should be *everything we ever undertake*), we want to do it well—better and better. “Seek that ye may excel.” We are too apt to think that He has given us certain natural gifts, but has nothing practically to do with the improvement of them, and leaves us to ourselves for that. Why not ask Him to make these hands of ours more handy for His service, more skillful in what is indicated as the “next thyng” they are to do? The “kept” hands need not be clumsy hands. If the Lord taught David’s hands to war and his fingers to fight, will He not teach our hands, and fingers too, to do what He would have them do?

The Spirit of God must have taught Bezaleel’s hands as well as his head, or he was filled with it not only that he might devise cunning works, but also in cutting of stones and carving of timber. And when all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, the hands must have been made skillful as well as the hearts made wise to prepare the beautiful garments and curtains.

There is a very remarkable instance of the hand of the Lord, which I suppose signifies in that case the power of His Spirit, being upon the

hand of a man. In 1 Chron. xxix. 19, we read : "All this," said David, "the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern." This can not well mean that the Lord gave David a miraculously-written scroll, because a few verses before, it says that he had it all by the Spirit. So what else can it mean but that as David wrote, the hand of the Lord was upon his hand, impelling him to trace, letter by letter, the right words of description for all the details of the temple that Solomon should build, with its courts and chambers, its treasuries and vessels? Have we not sometimes sat down to write, feeling perplexed and ignorant, and wishing some one were there to tell us what to say? At such a moment, whether it were a mere note for post, or a sheet for press, it is a great comfort to recollect this mighty laying of a Divine hand upon a human one, and ask for the same help from the same Lord. It is sure to be given !

And now, dear friend, what about your own hands? Are they consecrated to the Lord who loves you? And if they are, are you trusting

Him to keep them, and enjoying all that is involved in that keeping? Do let this be settled with your Master before you go on to the next chapter.

After all, this question will hinge on another: Do you love Him? If you really do, there can surely be neither hesitation about yielding them to Him, nor about entrusting them to Him to be kept. *Does He love you?* That is the truer way of putting it; for it is not our love to Christ, but the love of Christ to us which constraineth us. And this is the impulse of the motion and the mode of the keeping. The steam engine does not move when the fire is not kindled, nor when it is gone out; no matter how complete the machinery and abundant the fuel, cold coals will neither set it going nor keep it working. Let us ask Him so to shed abroad his love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, that it may be the perpetual and only impulse of every action of our daily life.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR FEET KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my feet, that they may be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.”

THE figurative keeping of the feet of His saints, with the promise that when they run they shall not stumble, is a most beautiful and helpful subject. But it is quite distinct from the literal keeping for Jesus of our literal feet.

There is a certain homeliness about the idea which helps to make it very real. These very feet of ours are purchased for Christ's service by the precious drops which fell from His own torn and pierced feet upon the cross. They are to be His errand-runners. How can we let the world, the flesh, and the devil have the use of what has been purchased with such payment?

Shall “the world” have the use of them? Shall they carry us where the world is paramount, and the Master cannot be even named because the

mention of His name would be so obviously out of place? I know the apparent difficulties of a subject which will at once occur in connection with this, but they all vanish when our bright banner is loyally unfurled, with its motto, "*All for Jesus!*" Do you honestly want your very feet to be "kept for Jesus!" Let these simple words, "*Kept for Jesus,*" ring out next time the dancing difficulty or any other difficulty of the same kind comes up, and I know what the result will be!

Shall "the flesh" have the use of them? Shall they carry us hither and thither merely because we like to go, merely because it pleases ourselves to take this walk or pay this visit? And after all, what a failure it is! If people only *would* believe it, self-pleasing is always a failure in the end. Our good Master gives us a reality and fulness of *pleasure* in pleasing Him which we never get out of pleasing ourselves.

Shall "the devil" have the use of them? Oh, no, of course not! We start back at this, as a highly unnecessary question. Yet if Jesus has not, Satan has. For as all are serving either the Prince of Life or the prince of this world, and

as no man can serve two masters, it follows that if we are not serving the one, we are serving the other. And Satan is only too glad to disguise this service under the less startling form of the world, or the still less startling one of self. All that is not "kept for Jesus," is left for self or the world, and therefore for Satan.

There is no fear but that our Lord will have many uses for what is kept by Him for Himself. "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" That is the best use of all; and I expect the angels think those feet beautiful, even if they are cased in muddy boots or goloshes.

Once the question was asked, "Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?" So if we want to have these beautiful feet, we must have the tidings ready which they are to bear. Let us ask Him to keep our hearts so freshly full of His good news of salvation that our mouths may speak out of their abundance. "If the clouds be full of rain they empty themselves upon the earth." The "two olive branches empty the golden oil out of them-

selves." May we be so filled with the Spirit that we may thus have much to pour out for others!

Besides the great privilege of carrying water from the wells of salvation, there are plenty of cups of cold water to be carried in all directions; not to the poor only,—ministries of love are often as much needed by a rich friend. But the feet must be kept for these; they will be too tired for them if they are tired out for self-pleasing. In such services we are treading in the blessed steps of His most holy life, who "went about doing good."

Then there is literal errand-going,—just to fetch something that is needed for the household, or something that a tired relative wants, whether asked or unasked. Such things should come first instead of last, because these are clearly indicated as our Lord's will for us to do, by the position in which He has placed us; while what *seems* more direct service, may be after all not so directly apportioned by Him. "I have to go and buy some soap," said one with a little sigh. The sigh was waste of breath, for her feet were going to do her Lord's will for that next half-hour much more

truly than if they had carried her to her well-worked district, and left the soap to take its chance.

A member of the Young Women's Christian Association wrote a few words on this subject, which, I think, will be welcome to many more than she expected them to reach :

“ May it not be a comfort to those of us who feel we have not the mental or spiritual power that others have, to notice that the living sacrifice mentioned in Rom. xii. 1 is our ‘ bodies ? ’ Of course, that includes the mental power, but does it not also include the loving, sympathizing glance, the kind, encouraging word, *the ready errand for another*, the work of our hands, opportunities for all of which come oftener in the day than for the mental power we are often tempted to envy? May we be enabled to offer willingly that which we have.” For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

If our feet are to be kept at His disposal our eyes must be ever toward the Lord for guidance. We must look to Him for our orders where to go. Then He will be sure to give them. “ The steps

of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Very often we find that they have been so very literally ordered for us that we are quite astonished,—just as if He had not promised!

Do not smile at a *very* homely thought! If our feet are not our own, ought we not to take care of them for Him whose they are? Is it quite right to be reckless about "getting wet feet," which might be guarded against either by fore-thought or after-thought, when there is, at least, a risk of hindering our service thereby? Does it please the Master when even in our zeal for His work we annoy anxious friends by carelessness in little things of this kind?

May every step of our feet be more and more like those of our beloved Master. Let us continually consider Him in this, and go where He would have gone, on the errands which He would have done, "following hard" after Him. And let us look on to the time when our feet shall stand in the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, when holy feet shall tread the streets of the holy city; no longer pacing any lonely path, for He hath said, "They shall walk with Me in white."

“And He hath said, ‘How beautiful the feet!’
The ‘feet’ so weary, travel-stained, and worn—
The ‘feet’ that humbly, patiently have borne
The toilsome way, the pressure, and the heat.

“The ‘feet,’ not hasting on with winged might,
Nor strong to trample down the opposing foe;
So lowly, and so human, they must go
By painful steps to scale the mountain height.

“Not unto all the tuneful lips are given,
The ready tongue, the words so strong and sweet.
Yet all may turn, with humble, willing ‘feet,’
And bear to darkened souls the light from heaven.

“And fall they while the goal far distant lies,
With scarce a word yet spoken for their Lord—
His sweet approval He doth yet accord;
Their ‘feet’ are beauteous in the Master’s eyes.

“With weary human ‘feet’ He, day by day,
Once trod this earth to work His acts of love;
And every step is chronicled above
His servants take to follow in His way.”

SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

CHAPTER V.

OUR VOICES KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.”

I HAVE wondered a little at being told by an experienced worker, that in many cases the voice seems the last and hardest thing to yield entirely to the King; and that many who think and say they have consecrated all to the Lord and His service, “revolt” when it comes to be a question whether they shall sing “always, only,” for their King. They do not mind singing a few general sacred songs, but they do not see their way to really singing always and only unto and for Him. They want to bargain and balance a little. They question and argue about what proportion they may keep for self-pleasing and company-pleasing, and how much they must “give up;” and who will and who won’t like it; and what they “really *must* sing,” and what they “really *must not* sing” at certain times and places;

and what "won't do," and what they "can't very well help," and so on. And so when the question, "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" is applied to this particularly pleasant gift, it is not met with the loyal, free-hearted, happy response, "All! yes, *all* for Jesus!"

I know there are special temptations around this matter. Vain and selfish ones—whispering how much better a certain song suits your voice, and how much more likely to be admired. Faithless ones—suggesting doubts whether you can make the holy song "go." Specious ones—asking whether you ought not to please your neighbors, and hushing up the rest of the precept, "Let every one of you please his neighbor *for his good to edification*" (Rom. xv. 2). Cowardly ones—telling you that it is just a little too much to expect of you, and that you are not called upon to wave your banner in people's very faces, and provoke surprise and remark, as this might do. And so the banner is kept furled, the witness for Jesus is not borne, and you sing for others and not for your King.

The words had passed your lips, "Take my voice!" And yet you will not let Him have it;

you will not let Him have that which costs you something, just *because* it costs you something! And yet He lent you that pleasant voice, that you might use it for Him. And yet He, in the sureness of His perpetual presence, was beside you all the while, and heard every note as you sang the songs which were, as your inmost heart knew, *not* for Him.

Where is your faith? Where is the consecration you have talked about? The voice has not been kept for Him, because it has not been truly and unreservedly given to Him. Will you not now say, "Take my voice, for I had not given it to Thee; keep my voice, for I can not keep it for Thee?"

And He will keep it! You can not tell, till you have tried, how surely all the temptations flee when it is no longer your battle, but the Lord's; nor how completely and *curiously* all the difficulties vanish, when you simply and trustfully go forward in the path of full consecration in this matter. You will find that the keeping is most wonderfully real. Do not expect to lay down rules and provide for every sort of contingency. If you could, you would miss the sweetness of the

continual guidance in the "kept" course. Have only one rule about it—just to look up to your Master about every single song you are asked or feel inclined to sing. If you are "willing and obedient," you will always meet His guiding eye. He will always keep the voice that is wholly at His disposal. Soon you will have such experience of His immediate guidance that you will be utterly satisfied with it, and only sorrowfully wonder you did not sooner thus simply lean on it.

I have just received a letter from one who has laid her special gift at the feet of the Giver, yielding her voice to Him with hearty desire that it might be kept for His use. She writes: "I had two lessons on singing while in Germany from our Master. One was very sweet. A young girl wrote to me, that when she had heard me sing, 'O come, every one that thirsteth,' she went away and prayed that she might come, and she *did* come, too. Is not He good? The other was: I had been tempted to join the *Gesang Verein* in N———. I prayed to be shown whether I was right in so doing or not. I did not see my way clear, so I went. The singing was all secular. The very first night I went I caught a bad cold

on my chest, which prevented me from singing again at all till Christmas. Those were better than any lessons from a singing-master!" Does not this illustrate both the keeping *from* and the keeping *for*? In the latter case I believe she honestly wished to know her Lord's will—whether the training and practice were needed for His better service with her music, and that, therefore, she might take them for His sake; or whether the concomitants and influence would be such as to hinder the close communion with Him which she had found so precious, and that, therefore, she was to trust Him to give her "much more than this." And so, at once, He showed her unmistakably what He would have her *not* do, and gave her the sweet consciousness that He Himself was teaching her and taking her at her word. I know what her passionate love for music is, and how very real and great the compensation from Him must have been which could thus make her right down *glad* about what would otherwise have been an immense disappointment. And then, as to the former of these two "lessons," the song she names was one substituted when she said, "Take my voice," for some which were far more effective

for her voice. But having freely chosen to sing what might glorify the Master rather than the singer, see how, almost immediately, He gave her a reward infinitely outweighing all the drawing-room compliments or concert-room applause! That one consecrated song found echoes in heaven, bringing, by its blessed result, joy to the angels and glory to God. And the memory of that song is immortal; it will live through ages to come, never lost, never dying away, when the vocal triumphs of the world's greatest singers are past and forgotten forever. Now you who have been taking a half-and-half course, do *you* get such rewards as this? You may well envy them! But why not take the same decided course, and share the same blessed keeping and its fulness of hidden reward?

If you only knew, dear hesitating friends, what strength and gladness the Master gives when we loyally "sing forth the honor of His Name," you would not forego it! Oh, if you only knew the difficulties it saves! For when you sing "always and only for your King," you will not get much entangled by the King's enemies. Singing an out-and-out sacred song often clears one's path

at a stroke as to many other things. If you only knew the rewards He gives—very often then and there; the recognition that you are one of the King's friends by some lonely and timid one; the openings which you quite naturally gain of speaking a word for Jesus to hearts which, without the song, would never have given you the chance of the word! If you only knew the joy of believing that His sure promise, "My Word shall not return unto me void," will be fulfilled as you *sing* that word for Him! If you only tasted the solemn happiness of knowing that you have indeed a royal audience, that the King Himself is listening as you sing! If you only knew—and why should you not know? Shall not the time past of your life suffice you for the miserable, double-hearted calculating service? Let Him have the *whole* use of your voice at any cost, and see if He does not put many a totally unexpected new song into your mouth!

I am not writing all this to great and finished singers, but to everybody who can sing at all. Those who think they have only a very small talent, are often most tempted not to trade with it for their Lord. Whether you have much or

little natural voice, there is reason for its cultivation and room for its use. Place it at your Lord's disposal, and He will show you how to make the most of it for Him; for not seldom His multiplying power is brought to bear on a consecrated voice. A puzzled singing-master, very famous in his profession, said to one who tried to sing for Jesus, "Well, you have not much voice; but, mark my words, you will always beat anybody with four times your voice!" He was right, though he did not in the least know why.

A great many so-called "sacred songs" are so plaintive and pathetic, that they help to give a gloomy idea of religion. Now *don't* sing these; come out boldly, and sing definitely and unmistakably for your King, and of your King, and to your King. You will soon find, and even outsiders will have to own, that it is a *good* thing thus to show forth His loving kindness and His faithfulness (see Ps. xcii. 1-3).

Here I am usually met by the query, "But what would you advise me to sing?" I can only say that I never got any practical help from asking any one but the Master Himself, and so I

would advise you to do the same! He knows exactly what will best suit your voice and enable you to sing best for Him; for He made it, and gave it just the pitch and tone He pleased; so, of course, He is the best counsellor about it. Refer your question in simplest faith to Him, and I am perfectly sure you will find it answered. He will direct you, and in some way or other the Lord will provide the right songs for you to sing. That is the very best advice I can possibly give you on the subject, and you will prove it to be so if you will act upon it.

Only one thing I would add: I believe there is nothing like singing His own words. The preacher claims the promise, "My word shall not return unto Me void," and why should not the singer equally claim it? Why should we use His own inspired words, with faith in their power, when speaking or writing, and content ourselves with human words put into rhyme (and sometimes very feeble rhyme) for our singing?

What a vista of happy work opens out here! What is there to prevent our using this mightiest of all agencies committed to human agents, the Word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper

than a two-edged sword, whenever we are asked to sing? By this means even a young girl may be privileged to make that Word sound in the ears of many who would not listen to it otherwise. By this the incorruptible seed may be sown in otherwise unreachable ground.

It is a remarkable fact that it is actually the easiest way thus to take the very highest ground. You will find that singing Bible words does not excite the prejudice or contempt that any other words, sufficiently decided to be worth singing, are almost sure to do. For very decency's sake a Bible song will be listened to respectfully; and for very shame's sake no adverse whisper will be ventured against the words in ordinary English homes. The singer is placed on a vantage ground, certain that at least the words of the song will be outwardly respected, and the possible ground of unfriendly criticism thus narrowed to begin with.

But there is much more than this. One feels the power of His words for oneself as one sings. One loves them and rejoices in them, and what can be greater help to any singer than that? And one knows they are true, and that they can

not really return void, and what can give greater confidence than that? God *may* bless the singing of any words, but He *must* bless the singing of His own Word, if that promise means what it says!

The only real difficulty in the matter is, that Scripture songs, as a rule, require a little more practice than others. Then practice them a little more! You think nothing of the trouble of learning, for instance, a sonata, which takes you many a good hour's practice before you can render it perfectly and expressively. But you shrink from a song, the accompaniment of which you cannot read off without any trouble at all. And you never think of such a thing as taking one-tenth the pains to learn that accompaniment that you took to learn that sonata! Very likely, too, you take the additional pains to learn the sonata off by heart, so that you can play it more effectively. But you do not take pains to learn your accompaniment by heart, so that you may throw all your power into the expression of the words, undistracted by reading the notes and turning over the leaves. It is far more useful to have half a dozen Scripture songs thoroughly learnt and made your own

than to have in your portfolios several dozen easy settings of sacred poetry which you get through with your eyes fixed on the notes. And every one thus thoroughly mastered makes it easier to master others.

You will say that all this refers only to drawing-room singing. So it does, primarily, but then it is the drawing-room singing which has been so little for Jesus and so much for self and society ; and so much less has been said about it, and so much less *done*. There would not be half the complaints of the difficulty of witnessing for Christ in even professedly Christian homes and circles, if every converted singer were also a consecrated one. For nothing raises or lowers the tone of a whole evening so much as the character of the music. There are few things which show more clearly that, as a rule, a very definite step in advance is needed beyond being a believer or even a worker for Christ. Over how many grand or cottage pianos could the Irish Society's motto, "For Jesus' sake *only*," be hung, without being either a frequent reproach, or altogether inappropriate ?

But what is learnt will, naturally, be sung. And

oh! how many Christian parents give their daughters the advantage of singing lessons without troubling themselves in the least about what songs are learnt, provided they are not exceptionally foolish! Still more pressingly I would say, how many Christian principals, to whom young lives are entrusted at the most important time of all for training, do not give themselves the least concern about this matter. As I write, I turn aside to refer to a list of songs learnt last term by a fresh young voice which would willingly be trained for higher work. There is just one "sacred" song in the whole long list, and even that hardly such a one as the writer of the letter above quoted would care to sing in her fervent-spirited service of Christ. All the rest are harmless and pleasing, but only suggestive of the things of earth, the things of the world that is passing away; not one that might lead upward and onward, not one that might touch a careless heart to seek first the kingdom of God, not one that might show forth the glory and praise of our King, not one that tells of His grace and love, not one that carries His comfort to His weary ones or His joy to His loving ones. She is left to find and learn *such*

songs as best she may ; those which she will sing with all the ease and force gained by good teaching of them are no help at all, but rather hindrance in anything like wish or attempt to “ sing for Jesus.”

There is not the excuse that the songs of God's kingdom, songs which waft his own words to the souls around, would not have answered the teacher's purpose as well. God has taken care of that. He has not left Himself without witness in this direction. He has given the most perfect melodies and the richest harmonies to be linked with His own words, and no singer can be trained beyond His wonderful provision in this way. I pray that even these poor words of mine may reach the consciences of some of those who have this responsibility, and lead them to be no longer unfaithful in this important matter, no longer giving this strangely divided service—training, as they profess to desire, the souls for God, and yet allowing the voices to be trained only for the world.

But we must not run away with the idea that singing sacred songs and singing for Jesus are

convertible terms. I know by sorrowful personal experience that it is very possible to sing a sacred song and *not* sing it for Jesus. It is easier to have one's portfolio all right than one's heart, and the repertory is more easily arranged than the motives. When we have taken our side, and the difficulties of indecision are consequently swept away, we have a new set of more subtle temptations to encounter. And although the Master will keep, the servant must watch and pray; and it is through the watching and the praying that the keeping will be effectual. We have, however, rather less excuse here than even elsewhere. For we never have to sing so very suddenly that we need be taken unawares. We have to think what to sing, and perhaps find the music, and the prelude has to be played, and all this gives quite enough time for us to recollect whose we are and whom we serve, and to arouse to the watch. Quite enough, too, for quick, trustful prayer that our singing may be kept free from that wretched self-seeking or even self-consciousness, and kept entirely for Jesus. Our best and happiest singing will flow when there is a sweet, silent undercurrent of prayerful or praise-ful communion with our Master all through the

song. As for nervousness, I am quite sure this is the best antidote to that.

On the other hand, it is quite possible to sing for Jesus without singing a sacred song. Do not take an ell for the inch; this seems to give and run off with the idea that it does not matter after all what you sing, so that you sing in a good frame of mind! No such thing! And the admission needs very careful guarding, and must not be wrested into an excuse for looking back to the world's songs. But cases may and do arise in which it may be right to gratify a weary father, or win a wayward brother, by trying to please them with music to which they will listen when they would not listen to the songs you would rather sing. There are cases in which this may be done most truly for the Lord's sake, and clearly under His guidance.

Sometimes cases arise in which we can only say, "Neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee." And when we honestly say that, depend upon it we shall find the promise true, "I will guide thee with Mine eye." For God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the

temptation, also make a way (Gr. *the way*) to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

I do not know why it should be so, but it certainly is a much rarer thing to find a young gentleman singing for Jesus than a young lady—a *very* rare thing to find one with a cultivated voice consecrating it to the Master's use. I have met some who were not ashamed to speak for Him, to whom it never seemed even to occur to sing for Him. They would go and teach a Bible class one day, and the next they would be practicing or performing just the same songs as those who care nothing for Christ and His blood-bought salvation. They had left some things behind, but they had not left any of their old songs behind. They do not seem to think that being made new creatures in Christ Jesus had anything to do with this department of their lives. Nobody could gather whether they were on the Lord's side or not, as they stood and sang their neutral songs. The banner that was displayed in the class-room was furled in the drawing-room. Now, my friends, you who have or may have far greater opportunities of displaying that banner than we womenkind, why should you be less brave and

loyal than your sisters? We are weak and you are strong naturally, but recollect that want of decision always involves want of power, and compromising Christians are always weak Christians. You will never be mighty to the pulling down of strongholds while you have one foot in the enemy's camp, or on the supposed neutral ground, if such can exist (which I doubt), between the camps. You will never be a terror to the devil till you have enlisted every gift and faculty on the Lord's side. Here is a thing in which you may practically carry out the splendid motto, "All for Jesus." You cannot be all for Him as long as your voice is not for Him. Which shall it be? *All* for Him, or *partly* for Him? Answer that to Him whom you call Master and Lord.

When once this drawing-room question is settled, there is not much need to expatiate about other forms of singing for Jesus. As we have opportunity we shall be willing to do good with our pleasant gift in any way or place, and it is wonderful what nice opportunities He makes for us. Whether to one little sick child, or to a thousand listeners, according to the powers and openings granted, we shall take our happy position among

those who minister with singing (1 Chron. vi. 32). And in so far as we really do this unto the Lord, I am quite sure He gives the hundredfold now in this present time more than all the showy songs or self-gratifying performances we may have left for His sake. As we steadily tread this part of the path of consecration, we shall find the difficulties left behind, and the real pleasantness of the way reached, and it will be a delight to say to oneself, "I *cannot* sing the old songs;" and though you have thought it quite enough to say, "With my song will I please my friends," especially if they happened to be pleased with a mildly sacred song or two, you will strike a higher and happier, a richer and purer note, and say with David, "With my song will I praise *Him*." David said also, "My lips shall greatly rejoice *when* I sing unto Thee, and my soul, which Thou hast redeemed." And you will find that this comes true.

Singing for Jesus, our Saviour and King;
Singing for Jesus, the Lord whom we love!
All adoration we joyously bring,
Longing to praise as they praise Him above.

Singing for Jesus, our Master and Friend,
Telling His love and His marvellous grace,—
Love from eternity, love to the end,
Love for the loveless, the sinful, and base.

Singing for Jesus, and trying to win
Many to love Him, and join in the song;
Calling the weary and wandering in,
Rolling the chorus of gladness along.

Singing for Jesus, our Life and our Light;
Singing for Him as we press to the mark;
Singing for Him when the morning is bright;
Singing, still singing, for Him in the dark!

Singing for Jesus, our Shepherd and Guide;
Singing for gladness of heart that He gives;
Singing for wonder and praise that He died;
Singing for blessing and joy that He lives!

Singing for Jesus, oh, singing with joy;
Thus will we praise Him, and tell out His love,
Till He shall call us to brighter employ,
Singing for Jesus forever above.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR LIPS KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my lips, that they may be
Filled with messages from Thee.”

THE days are past forever when we said, “Our lips are our own.” Now we know that they are not our own.

And yet how many of my readers often have the miserable consciousness that they have “spoken unadvisedly with their lips!” How many pray, “Keep the door of my lips,” when the very last thing they think of expecting is that they *will* be kept! They deliberately make up their minds that hasty words, or foolish words, or exaggerated words, according to their respective temptations, must and will slip out of that door, and that it can't be helped. The extent of the real meaning of their prayer was merely that not quite so many might slip out. As their faith went no farther, the answer went no farther, and so the door was not kept.

Do let us look the matter straight in the face. Either we have committed our lips to our Lord, or we have not. This question must be settled first. If not, oh, do not let another hour pass! Take them to Jesus, and ask Him to take them.

But when you *have* committed them to Him, it comes to this,—is He able or is He not able to keep that which you have committed to Him? If He is not able, of course you may as well give up at once, for your own experience has abundantly proved that *you* are not able, so there is no help for you. But if He is able—nay, thank God there is no “*if*” on this side!—say, rather, *as* He is able, where was this inevitable necessity of perpetual failure? You have been fancying yourself virtually doomed and fated to it, and therefore you have gone on in it, while all the time His arm was not shortened that it could not save, but you have been limiting the Holy One of Israel. Honestly, now, have you trusted Him to keep your lips *this day*? Trust necessarily implies expectation that what we have entrusted will be kept. If you have not expected Him to keep, you have not trusted. You may have tried and tried very hard, but you have not *trusted*, and

therefore you have not been kept, and your lips have been the snare of your soul (Prov. xviii. 7).

Once I heard a beautiful prayer which I can never forget; it was this: "Lord, take my lips, and speak through them; take my mind, and think through it; take my heart, and set it on fire." And this is the way the Master keeps the lips of His servants, by so filling their hearts with His love that the outflow can not be unloving, by so filling their thoughts that the utterance can not be un-Christ-like. There must be filling before there *can* be pouring out; and if there is filling, there *must* be pouring out, for He hath said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

But I think we should look for something more direct and definite than this. We are not all called to be the King's ambassadors, but *all* who have heard the messages of salvation for themselves are called to be "the Lord's messengers," and day by day, as He gives us opportunity, we are to deliver "the Lord's message unto the people." That message, as committed to Haggai, was, "I am with you, saith the Lord." Is there not work enough for any lifetime in unfolding and distributing that one message to His own peo-

ple? Then, for those who are still far off, we have that equally full message from our Lord to give out, which He has condensed for us into the one word, "Come!"

It is a specially sweet part of His dealings with His messengers that He always gives us the message for ourselves first. It is what He has first told us in darkness—that is, in the secrecy of our own rooms, or at least of our own hearts—that He bids us speak in light. And so the more we sit at His feet and watch to see what He has to say to ourselves, the more we shall have to tell to others. He does not send us out with sealed dispatches, which we know nothing about, and with which we have no concern.

There seems a seven-fold sequence in His filling the lips of His messengers. First, they must be purified. The live coal from off the altar must be laid upon them, and He must say, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged." Then He will create the fruit of them, and this seems to be the great message of peace, "Peace to him that is far off and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him" (see Isa. lvii. 19). Then comes

the prayer, "O Lord, open Thou my lips," and its sure fulfillment. For then come in the promises, "Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth," and, "They shall withal be fitted in thy lips." Then, of course, "the lips of the righteous feed many," for the food is the Lord's own giving. Everything leads up to praise, and so we come next to "My mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips, when I remember Thee." And lest we should fancy that "*when*" rather implies that it is not, or can not be, exactly *always*, we find that the mediation of Jesus throws this added light upon it, "by *Him*, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God *continually*, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to" (margin, confessing) "His name."

Does it seem a coming down from the mount to glance at one of our King's commandments, which is specially needful and applicable to this matter of our lips being kept for Him? "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." None of His commands clash with or supersede one another. Trusting does not supersede watching; it does but complete and effectuate it. Un-watchful trust is a delusion, an untrustful watch-

ing is in vain. Therefore, let us not either willfully or carelessly *enter* into temptation, whether of place, or person, or topic, which has any tendency to endanger the keeping of our lips for Jesus. Let us pray that grace may be more and more poured into our lips as it was into His, so that our speech may be *alway* with grace. May they be pure, and sweet, and lovely, even as "His lips, like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh."

We can hardly consider the keeping of our lips without recollecting that upon them, more than all else, (though not exclusively of all else), depends that greatest of our responsibilities, our influence. We have no choice in the matter; we can not evade or avoid it; and there is no more possibility of our limiting it, or even tracing its limits, than there is of setting a bound to the far-vibrating sound-waves, or watching their flow through the invisible air. Not one sentence that passes these lips of ours but must be an invisibly prolonged influence, not dying away into silence, but living away into the words and deeds of others. The thought would not be quite so oppressive if we could know what we have done and shall be

continuing to do by what we have said. But we *never* can, as a matter of fact. We may trace it a little way, and get a glimpse of some results for good or evil; but we never can see any more of it than we can see of a shooting star flashing through the night with a momentary revelation of one step of its strange path. Even if the next instant plunges it into apparent annihilation as it strikes the atmosphere of the earth, we know that it is not really so, but that its mysterious material and force must be added to the complicated materials and forces with which it has come in contact, with a modifying power none the less real because it is beyond our ken. And this is not comparing a great thing with a small, but a small thing with a great. For what is material force compared with moral force? What are gases, and vapors, and elements compared with souls and the eternity for which they are preparing?

We all know that there is influence exerted by a person's mere presence, without the utterance of a single word. We are conscious of this every day. People seem to carry an atmosphere with them, which *must* be breathed by those whom they approach. Some carry an atmosphere in

which all unkind thoughts shrivel up and cannot grow into expression. Others carry one in which "thoughts of Christ and things divine" never seem able to flourish. Have you not felt how a happy conversation about the things we love best is checked, or even strangled, by the entrance of one who is not in sympathy? Outsiders have not a chance of ever really knowing what delightful intercourse we have one with another about these things, because their very presence chills and changes it. On the other hand, how another person's incoming freshens and develops it, and warms us all up, and seems to give us, without the least conscious effort, a sort of *lift*!

If even unconscious and involuntary influence is such a power, how much greater must it be when the recognized power of words is added!

It has often struck me as a matter of observation, that open profession adds force to this influence, on whichever side it weighs; and also that it has the effect of making many a word and act, which might in other hands have been as nearly neutral as anything can be, tell with by no means neutral tendency on the wrong side. The question of Eliphaz comes with great force

when applied to one who desires or professes to be consecrated altogether, life *and* lips: "Should *he* reason with unprofitable talk and with speeches *wherewith one can do no good?*" There is our standard! Idle words, which might have fallen comparatively harmlessly from one who had never named the Name of Christ, may be a stumbling-block to inquirers, a sanction to thoughtless juniors, and a grief to thoughtful seniors, when they come from lips which are professing to feed many. Even intelligent talk on general subjects by such a one may be a chilling disappointment to some craving heart, which had indulged the hope of getting help, comfort, or instruction in the things of God by listening to the conversation. It may be a lost opportunity of giving and gaining no one knows *how* much!

How well I recollect this disappointment to myself, again and again, when a mere child! In those early seeking days I never could understand why, sometimes, a good man whom I heard preach or speak as if he loved Christ very much, talk about all sorts of other things when we came back from church or missionary meeting. I did so wish he would have talked about the Saviour,

whom I wanted, but had not found. It would have been so much more interesting, even to the apparently thoughtless and merry little girl. How could he help it, I wondered, if he cared for that Pearl of Great Price as I was sure I should care for it if I could only find it! And oh! why didn't they ever talk to me about it, instead of about my lessons or their little girls at home? They did not know how their conversation was observed and compared with their sermon or speech, and how a hungry little soul went empty away from the supper-table.

The lips of younger Christians may cause, in their turn, no less disappointment. One sorrowful lesson I can never forget; and I will tell the story in hope that it may save others from causes of similar regret. During a summer visit, just after I had left school, a class of girls about my own age came to me a few times for an hour's singing. It was very pleasant indeed, and the girls were delighted with the hymns. They listened to all I had to say about time and expression, and not with less attention to the more shyly-ventured remarks about the words. Sometimes I accompanied them afterwards down the

avenue ; and whenever I met any of them I had smiles and plenty of kindly words for each, which they seemed to appreciate immensely. A few years afterwards I sat by the bedside of one of these girls—the most gifted of them all with both heart and head. She had been led by a wonderful way, and through long and deep suffering, into far clearer light than I enjoyed, and had witnessed for Christ in more ways than one, and far more brightly than I had ever done. She told me how sorrowfully and eagerly she was seeking Jesus at the time of those singing-classes. And I never knew it, because I never asked, and she was too shy to speak first ! But she told me more, and every word was a pang to me,—how she used to linger in the avenue on those summer evenings, longing that I would speak to her about the Saviour ; how she hoped, week after week, that I would just stretch out a hand to help her ; just say one little word that might be God's message of peace to her, instead of the pleasant, general remarks about the nice hymns and tunes. . And I never did ! And she went on for months, I think for years, after, without the light and gladness which it might have been my privilege to

bring to her life. God chose other means, for the souls that he has given to Christ cannot be lost because of the unfaithfulness of a human instrument. But she said, and the words often ring in my ears when I am tempted to let an opportunity slip, "Ah, Miss F., I ought to have been *yours!*"

Yes, it is true enough that we should show forth His praise not only with our lips, but in our lives; but with very many Christians the other side of the prayer wants praying—they want rousing up even to *wish* to show it forth not only in their lives, but with their lips. I wonder how many, even of those who read this, really pray, "O Lord, open Thou *my* lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise."

And when opened, oh, how much one *does* want to have them so kept for Jesus that He may be free to make the most of them, not letting them render second-rate and indirect service when they might be doing direct and first-rate service to His cause and kingdom! It is terrible how much less is done for Him than *might* be done, in consequence of the specious notion that if what we are doing or saying is not bad, we are

doing good in a certain way, and therefore may be quite easy about it. We should think a man rather foolish if he went on doing work which earned five shillings a week, when he might just as well do work in the same establishment and under the same master which would bring him in five pounds a week. But we should pronounce him shamefully dishonest and dishonorable if he accepted such handsome wages as the five pounds, and yet chose to do work worth only five shillings. excusing himself by saying that it was work all the same, and somebody had better do it. Do we not act something like this when we take the lower standard, and spend our strength in just making ourselves agreeable and pleasant, creating a general good impression in favor of religion, showing that we can be all things to all men, and that one who is supposed to be a citizen of the other world can be very well up in all that concerns this world? This may be good, but is there nothing better? What does it profit if we do make this favorable impression on an outsider, if we go no farther and do not use the influence gained to bring him right inside the fold, inside the only ark of safety? People are not converted

by this sort of work ; at any rate *I* never met or heard of any one. "He thinks it better for his quiet influence to tell!" said an affectionately excusing relative of one who had plenty of special opportunities of soul-winning, if he had only used his lips as well as his life for his Master. "And how many souls have been converted to God by his 'quiet influence' all these years?" was my reply. And to that there was no answer! For the silent shining was all very beautiful in theory, but not one of the many souls placed specially under his influence had been known to be brought out of darkness into marvellous light. If they had, they must have been known, for such light can't help being seen.

When one has even a glimmer of the tremendous difference between having Christ and being without Christ ; when one gets but one shuddering glimpse of what eternity is, and of what it must mean, as well as what it may mean, without Christ ; when one gets but a flash of realization of the tremendous fact that all these neighbors of ours, rich and poor alike, will *have* to spend that eternity either with Him or without Him,—it is hard, very hard indeed, to understand how a man

or woman can believe these things at all, and make no effort for anything beyond the temporal elevation of those around, sometimes not even beyond their amusements! "People must have entertainment," they urge. I do not find that *must* in the Bible, but I do find, "We *must* all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." And if you have any sort of belief in that, how can you care to use those lips of yours, which might be a fountain of life to the dying souls before you, merely to "entertain" them at your penny reading or other entertainment? As you sow, so you reap. The amusing paper is read, or the lively ballad recited, or the popular song sung, and you reap your harvest of laughter or applause, and of complacency at your success in "entertaining" the people. And there it ends, when you might have sown words from which you and they should reap fruit unto life eternal. Is this worthy work for one who has been bought with such a price that he must say,

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all?"

So far from yielding "all" to that rightful

demand of amazing love, he does not even yield the fruit of his lips to it, much less the lips themselves. I cannot refrain from adding, that even this lower aim of "entertaining" is by no means so appreciated as is supposed. As a cottager of no more than average sense and intelligence remarked, "It was all so *trifling* at the reading; I wish gentlefolks would believe that poor people like something better than what's just to make them laugh." After all, nothing really pays like direct, straightforward, uncompromising words about God and His works and word. Nothing else ever made a man say, as a poor Irishman did when he heard the Good News for the first time, "Thank ye, sir; you've taken the hunger off us to-day!"

Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord; what about ours? Well, they *are* all uttered before the Lord in one sense, whether we will or no; for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, Thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether! How solemn is this thought, but how sweet does it become when our words are uttered consciously before the Lord as we walk in the light of his

perpetual presence! Oh, that we may so walk, that we may so speak, with kept feet and kept lips, trustfully praying, "Let the meditation of my heart and the words of my mouth be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer!"

Bearing in mind that it is not only the words which pass their lightly-hinged portal, but our literal lips which are to be kept for Jesus, it can not be out of place, before closing this chapter, to suggest that they open both ways. What passes in should surely be considered as well as what passes out. And very many of us are beginning to see that the command, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," is not fully obeyed when we drink, merely because we like it, what is the very greatest obstacle to that glory in this realm of England. What matter that we prefer taking it in a more refined form, if the thing itself is daily and actively and mightily working misery, and crime and death, and destruction to thousands, till the cry thereof seems as if it must pierce the very heavens! And so it does—sooner, a great

deal, than it pierces the walls of our comfortable dining-room! I only say here, you who have said, "Take my lips," stop and repeat that prayer next time you put that to your lips which is binding men and women hand and foot, and delivering them over, helpless, to Satan! Let those words pass once more from your heart *out* through your lips, and I do not think you will feel comfortable in letting the means of such infernal work pass *in* through them.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR SILVER AND GOLD KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.”

“**T**HE silver and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts.” Yes, every coin we have is literally our “Lord’s money.” Simple belief of this fact is the stepping-stone to full consecration of what He has given us, whether much or little.

“Then you mean to say we are never to spend anything on ourselves?” Not so. Another fact must be considered,—the fact that our Lord has given us our bodies as a special personal charge, and that we are responsible for keeping these bodies, according to the means given and the work required, in working order for Him. This is part of our “own work.” A master entrusts a workman with a delicate machine, with which his appointed work is to be done. He also provides him with a sum of money with

which he is to procure all that may be necessary for keeping the machine in thorough repair. Is it not obvious that it is the man's distinct duty to see to this faithfully? Would he not be failing in duty if he chose to spend it all on something for somebody else's work, or on a present for his master, fancying that would please him better, while the machine is creaking and wearing for want of a little oil, or working badly for want of a new band or screw? Just so, we are to spend what is really needful *on* ourselves, because it is our charge to do so; but not *for* ourselves, because we are not our own, but our Master's. He who knoweth our frame, knows its need of rest and medicine, food and clothing; and the procuring of these for our own entrusted bodies should be done just as much "for Jesus" as the greater pleasure of procuring them for some one else. Therefore there need be no quibbling over the assertion that consecration is not real and complete while we are looking upon a single shilling as our own to do what we like with. Also the principle is exactly the same, whether we are spending pence or pounds; it is our Lord's money and must not be spent without reference to Him.

When we have asked Him to take, and continually trust Him to keep our money, "shopping" becomes a different thing. We look up to our Lord for guidance to lay out His money prudently and rightly, and as He would have us lay it out. The gift or garment is selected consciously under His eye, and with conscious reference to Him as our own dear Master, for whose sake we shall give it, or in whose service we shall wear it, and whose own silver or gold we shall pay for it, and then it is all right.

But have you found out that it is one of the secrets of the Lord, that when any of His dear children turn aside a little bit after having once entered the blessed path of true and conscious consecration, He is sure to send them some little punishment? He will not let us go back without a sharp, even if quite secret, reminder. Go and spend ever such a little without reference to Him after you have once pledged the silver and gold entirely to Him, and see if you are not in some way rebuked for it! Very often by being permitted to find that you have made a mistake in your purchase, or that in some way it does not prosper. If you "observe these things," you

will find that the more closely we are walking with our Lord, the more immediate and unmistakable will be His gracious rebukes when we swerve in any detail of the full consecration to which He has called us. And if you have already experienced and recognized this part of His personal dealing with us, you will know also how we love and bless Him for it.

There is always a danger that just because we say "all," we may practically fall shorter than if we had only said "some," but said it very definitely. God recognizes this and provides against it in many departments. For instance, though our time is to be "all" for Him, yet He solemnly sets apart the one day in seven which is to be specially for Him. Those who think they know better than God, and profess that every day is a Sabbath, little know what flood-gates of temptation they are opening by being so very wise above what is written. God knows best, and that should be quite enough for every loyal heart. So, as to money, though we place it all at our Lord's disposal, and rejoice to spend it all for Him directly or indirectly, yet I am quite certain it is a great

help and safeguard, and, what is more, a matter of simple obedience to the spirit of His commands, to set aside a definite and regular proportion of our income or receipts for His direct service. It is a great mistake to suppose that the law of giving the tenth to God is merely Levitical. "Search and look" for yourselves, and you will find that it is, like the Sabbath, a far older rule, running all through the Bible,* and endorsed, not abrogated, by Christ Himself. For, speaking of tithes, He said, "These *ought* ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." To dedicate the tenth of whatever we have is mere duty; charity begins beyond it; free-will offerings and thank-offerings beyond that again.

First-fruits, also, should be thus specially set apart. This, too, we find running all through the Bible. There is a tacit appeal to our gratitude in the suggestion of them,—the very word implies bounty received and bounty in prospect. Bringing "the first of the first-fruits into the

* See Gen. xiv. 20 xxviii, 22; Lev. xxvii. 30, 32; Num. xviii, 21; Deut. xiv. 22; 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 6, 12; Neh. x. 37, xii. 44, xiii. 12; Mal. iii. 8, 10; Mat. xxii. 23; Luke xi. 42; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Heb. vii. 8.

house of the Lord thy God," was like "saying grace" for all the plenty He was going to bestow on the faithful Israelite. Something of gladness, too, seems always implied. "The day of the first-fruits" was to be a day of rejoicing (compare Num. xxviii. 26 with Deut. xvi. 10, 11). There is also an appeal to loyalty: we are commanded to *honor* the Lord with the first-fruits of all our increase. And *that* is the way to prosper, for the next word is, "*So* shall thy barns be filled with plenty." The friend who first called my attention to this command, said that the setting apart first-fruits—making a proportion for God's work a *first charge* upon the income—always seemed to bring a blessing on the rest, and that since this had been systematically done, it actually seemed to go farther than when not thus lessened.

Presenting our first-fruits should be a peculiarly delightful act, as they are themselves the emblem of our consecrated relationship to God. For of His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. How sweet and hallowed and richly emblematic our little acts of obedience in this matter become, when we throw this light upon

them! And how blessedly they may remind us of the heavenly company, singing, as it were, a new song before the throne; for they are the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Perhaps we shall find no better plan of detailed and systematic setting apart than the New Testament one: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." The very act of literally fulfilling this apostolic command seems to bring a blessing with it, as all simple obedience does. I wish, dear friends, you would try it! You will find it a sweet reminder on His own day of this part of your consecration. You will find it an immense help in making the most of your little charities. The regular inflow will guide the outflow and ensure your always having *something* for any sudden call for your Master's poor or your Master's cause. Do not say you are "afraid you could not keep to it." What has a consecrated life to do with being "afraid?" Some of us could tell of such sweet and singular lessons of trust in this matter, that they are written in golden letters of love on our memories. Of course there will be trials of our faith in this, as well as in

everything else. But every trial of our faith is but a trial of His faithfulness, and is "much more precious than gold which perisheth."

"What about self-denial?" some reader will say. Consecration does not supersede this, but transfigures it. Literally, a consecrated life is and must be a life of denial of self. But all the effort and pain of it is changed into very delight. We love our Master; we know, surely and absolutely, that He is listening and watching our every word and way, and that He has called us to the privilege of walking "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." And in so far as this is a reality to us, the identical things which are still *self-denial* in one sense, become actual *self-delight* in another. It may be self-denial to us to turn away from something within reach of our purse which it would be very convenient or pleasant to possess. But if the Master lifted the veil, and revealed Himself standing at our side, and let us hear His audible voice asking us to reserve the price of it for His treasury, should we talk about self-denial then? Should we not be utterly ashamed to think of it? or rather, should we, for one instant, think about self or self-denial at all? Would it

not be an unimaginable joy to do what He asked us to do with that money? But as long as His own unchangeable promise stands written in His word for us, "Lo, I am with you *always*," we may be sure that He *is* with us, and that His eye is as certainly on our opened or half-opened purse as it was on the treasury, when He sat over against it and saw the two mites cast in. So let us do our shopping "as seeing Him who is invisible."

It is important to remember that there is no much or little in God's sight, except as relatively to our means and willingness. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." He knows what we have *not*, as well as what we have. He knows all about the low wages in one sphere, and the small allowance, or the fixed income with rising prices in another. And it is not a question of paying to God what can be screwed out of these, but of giving Him all, and then holding all at His disposal, and taking His orders about the disposal of all.

But I do not see at all how self-indulgence and needless extravagance can possibly co-exist with

true consecration. If we really never do *go without* anything for the Lord's sake, but just because He has graciously given us means, always supply for ourselves not only every need, but "every notion," I think it is high time we looked into the matter before God. Why should only those who have limited means have the privilege of offering to their Lord that which has really cost them something to offer? Observe, it is not *merely* going without something we would naturally like to have or do, but going without it *for Jesus' sake*. Not, "I will go without it, because, after all, I can't very well afford it;" or, "because I really ought to subscribe to so and so;" or, "because I dare say I shall be glad I have not spent the money;" but "I will do without it, because I *do* want to do a little more for Him who so loves me—just that much more than I could do if I did this other thing." I fancy this is more often the heart-language of those who *have* to cut and contrive, than of those who are able to give liberally without any cutting and contriving at all. The very abundance of God's good gifts too often hinders from the privilege and delight of really doing without something superfluous or

comfortable or usual, that they may give just that much more to their Lord. What a pity!

The following quotation may (I hope it will) touch some conscience: "A gentleman once told us that his wine-bill was £100 a year—more than enough to keep a Scripture reader always at work in some populous district. And it is one of the countless advantages of total abstinence that it at once sets free a certain amount of money for such work. Smoking, too, is a habit not only injurious to the health in a vast majority of cases, and, to our mind, very unbecoming in a 'temple of the Holy Ghost,' but also one which squanders money which might be used for the Lord. Expenses in dress might in most people be curtailed; expensive tastes should be denied; and simplicity in all habits of life should be a mark of the followers of Him who had not where to lay His head."

And again: "The self-indulgence of wealthy Christians, who might largely support the Lord's work with what they lavish upon their houses, their tables, or their personal expenditure, is very sad to see." *

* Christian Progress, vol. iii., pp. 25, 26.

Here the question of jewelry seems to come in. Perhaps it was an instance of the gradual showing of the details of consecration, illustrated on page 29, but I will confess that when I wrote, "Take my silver and my gold," it never dawned on me that anything was included beyond the coin of the realm! But the Lord "leads on softly," and a good many of us have been shown some capital bits of unenclosed, but easily enclosable ground, which have yielded "pleasant fruit." Yes, *very* pleasant fruit! It is wonderfully nice to light upon something that we really never thought of as a possible gift to our Lord, and just to give it, straight away to Him. I do not press the matter, but I do ask my lady friends to give it fair and candid and prayerful consideration. Which do you really care most about—a diamond on your finger, or a star in the Redeemer's kingdom, shining for ever and ever? That is what it comes to, and there I leave it.

On the other hand, it is very possible to be fairly faithful in much, and yet unfaithful in that which is least. We may have thought about our gold and silver, and yet have been altogether thoughtless about our rubbish! Some have a

habit of hoarding away old garments, "pieces," remnants, and odds and ends generally, under the idea that they "will come in useful some day;" very likely setting it up as a kind of mild virtue, backed by that noxious old saying, "Keep it by you seven years, and you'll find a use for it." And so the shabby things get shabbier, and moth and dust doth corrupt, and the drawers and places get choked and crowded; and meanwhile all this, that is sheer rubbish to you, might be made useful at once, to a degree beyond what you would guess, to some poor person.

It would be a nice variety for the clever fingers of a lady's maid to be set to work to do up old things; or some tidy woman may be found in almost every locality who knows how to contrive children's things out of what seems to you only fit for the rag-bag, either for her own little ones or those of her neighbors.

My sister trimmed seventy or eighty hats every spring, for several years, with the contents of friends' rubbish drawers, thus relieving dozens of poor mothers who liked their children to "go tidy on Sunday," and also keeping down finery in her Sunday-school. Those who literally

fulfilled her request for "rubbish" used to marvel at the results.

Little scraps of carpet, torn old curtains, faded blinds, and all such gear go a wonderfully long way towards making poor cottagers and old or sick people comfortable. I never saw anything in this "rubbish" line yet that could not be turned to good account somehow, with a little *considering* of the poor and their discomforts.

I wish my lady reader would just leave this book now, and go straight up-stairs and have a good rummage at once, and see what can be thus cleared out. If she does not know the right recipients at first hand, let her send it off to the nearest working clergyman's wife, and see how gratefully it will be received! For it is a great trial to workers among the poor not to be able to supply the needs they see. Such supplies are far more useful than treble their small money value.

Just a word of earnest pleading for needs, closely veiled, but very sore, which might be wonderfully lightened if this wardrobe overhauling were systematic and faithful. There are hundreds of poor clergymen's families to whom a

few old garments or any household oddments are as great a charity as to any of the poor under their charge. There are two Societies for aiding these with such gifts, under initials which are explained in the Reports: the P. P. C. Society—Secretary, Miss Breay, Battenhall Place, Worcester; and the A. F. D. Society—Secretary, Miss Hinton, 4 York Place, Clifton. I only ask my lady friends to send for a report to either of these devoted secretaries; and if their hearts are not so touched by the cases of brave and bitter need that they go forthwith to wardrobes and drawers to see what can be spared and sent, they are colder and harder than I give English women credit for.

There is no bondage in consecration. The two things are opposites, and can not co-exist, much less mingle. We should suspect our consecration, and come afresh to our great Counsellor about it, directly we have any sense of bondage. As long as we have an unacknowledged feeling of fidget about our account-book, and a smothered wondering what and how much we "*ought*" to give, and the hushed-up wishing the thing had not been put quite so strongly before us, depend

upon it we have not said unreservedly, "Take my silver and my gold." And how can the Lord keep what He has not been sincerely asked to take?

Ah! if we had stood at the foot of the Cross and watched the tremendous payment of our redemption with the precious blood of Christ—if we had seen that awful price told out, drop by drop, from His own dear, patient brow and torn hands and feet till it was ALL paid, and the central word of eternity was uttered, "*It is finished!*" should we not have been ready to say, "*Not a mite will I withhold!*"

MY JEWELS.

"Shall I hold them back—my jewels?
Time has traveled many a day
Since I laid them by forever,
Safely locking them away;
And I thought them yielded wholly,
When I dared no longer wear
Gems contrasting, oh, so sadly!
With the adorning I would bear.

"Shall I keep them still—my jewels?
Shall I, can I, yet withhold

From that living, loving Saviour
Aught of silver or of gold ?
Gold so needed, that His gospel
May resound from sea to sea ;
Can I know Christ's service lacketh
Yet forget His ' unto Me ? '

" No ; I lay them down—my jewels,
Truly on the altar now.
Stay ! I see a vision passing
Of a gem-encircled brow.
Heavenly treasure worn by Jesus,
Souls won through my gift outpoured ;
Freely, gladly I will offer
Jewels thus to crown my Lord."

—From *Woman's Work*.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR INTELLECTS KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.”

THERE are two distinct sets of temptation which assail those who have, or think they have, rather less, and those who have, or think they have, rather more than an average share of intellect ; while those who have neither less nor more are generally open in some degree to both. The refuge and very present help from both is the same. The intellect, whether great or small, which is committed to the Lord's keeping, will be kept and will be used by Him.

The former class are tempted to think themselves excused from effort to cultivate and use their small intellectual gifts ; to suppose they can not or need not seek to win souls, because they are not so clever and apt in speech as So-and-so ; to attribute to want of gift what is really want of grace ; to hide the one talent because it is not

five. Let me throw out a thought or two for these.

Which is greatest, gifts or grace? *Gifts* are given "to every man according to his several ability." That is, we have just as much given as God knows we are able to use and what He knows we can best use for Him. "But unto every one of us is given *grace* according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Claiming and using that royal measure of grace, you may, and can and will do more for God than the mightiest intellect in the world without it. For which, in the clear light of His Word, is likely to be most effectual the natural ability which at its best and fullest, without Christ, "can do *nothing*," (observe and believe that word!), or the grace of our Almighty God and the power of the Holy Ghost, which is as free to you as it ever was to any one?

If you are responsible for making use of your limited gift, are you not equally responsible for making use of the grace and power which are to be had for the asking, which are already yours in Christ, and which are not limited?

Also, do you not see that when there are great natural gifts, people give the credit to *them*,

instead of to the grace which alone did the real work, and thus God is defrauded of the glory? So that, to say it reverently, God can get more glory out of a feeble instrument, because then it is more obvious that the excellency of the power is of God and not of us. Will you not henceforth say, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me?"

Don't you really believe that the Holy Spirit is just as able to draw a soul to Jesus, if He will, by your whisper of the one word "*Come,*" as by an eloquent sermon an hour long? *I do!* At the same time, as it is evidently God's way to work through these intellects of ours, we have no more right to expect Him to use a mind which we are wilfully neglecting, and taking no pains whatever to fit for His use, than I should have to expect you to write a beautiful inscription with my pen, if I would not take the trouble to wipe it and mend it.

The latter class are tempted to rely on their natural gifts, and to act and speak in their own strength; to go on too fast, without really looking up at every step, and for every word; to spend

their Lord's time in polishing up their intellects, nominally for the sake of influence and power, and so forth, while really, down at the bottom, it is for the sake of the keen enjoyment of the process; and perhaps, most of all, to spend the strength of these intellects "for that which doth not profit," in yielding to the specious snare of reading clever books "on both sides," and eating deliberately of the tree of the knowledge of good *and evil*.

The mere mention of these temptations should be sufficient appeal to conscience. If consecration is to be a reality anywhere, should it not be in the very thing which you own as an extra gift from God, and which is evidently closest, so to speak, to His direct action, spirit upon spirit? And if the very strength of your intellect has been your weakness, will you not entreat Him to keep it henceforth really and entirely for Himself? It is so good of Him to have given you something to lay at His feet; shall not this goodness lead you to lay it *all* there, and never hanker after taking it back for yourself or the world? Do you not feel that in very proportion to the gift you need the special keeping of it? He may

lead you by a way you know not in the matter ; very likely He will show you that you must be willing to be a fool for His sake first, before He will condescend to use you much for His glory. Will you look up into His face and say, “ *Not willing?* ”

He who made every power can use every power—memory, judgment, imagination, quickness of apprehension or insight ; specialties of musical, poetical, oratorical, or artistic faculty ; special tastes for reasoning, philosophy, history, natural science, or natural history,—all these may be dedicated to Him, sanctified by Him, and used by Him. Whatever He has given, He will use if we will let Him. Often, in the most unexpected ways, and at the most unexpected turns, something read or acquired long ago suddenly comes into use. We cannot foresee what will thus “ come in useful ; ” but He knew, when He guided us to learn it, what it would be wanted for in His service. So may we not ask Him to bring His perfect foreknowledge to bear on all our mental training and storing ? to guide us to read or study exactly what He knows there will

be use for in the work to which He has called or will call us?

Nothing is more practically perplexing to a young Christian, whose preparation-time is not quite over, or perhaps painfully limited, than to know what is most worth studying, what is really the best investment of the golden hours, while yet the time is not come for the field of active work to be fully entered, and the "thoroughly furnishing" of the mind is the evident path of present duty. Is not His name called "Counsellor?" and will He not be faithful to the promise of His name in this, as well as in all else?

The same applies to every subsequent stage. Only let us be perfectly clear about the principle that our intellect is not our own, either to cultivate, or to use, or to enjoy, and that Jesus Christ is our real and ever-present Counsellor, and then there will be no more worry about what to read and how much to read, and whether to keep up one's accomplishments, or one's languages, or one's "*ologies!*" If the Master has need of them, He will show us; and if He has not, what need have we of them? If we go forward without His leading, we may throw away some talent,

or let it get too rusty for use, which would have been most valuable when other circumstances arose or different work was given. We must not think that "keeping" means not using at all! What we want is to have all our powers kept for His *use*.

In this they will probably find far higher development than in any other sort of use. I know cases in which the effect of real consecration on mere mental development has been obvious and surprising to all round. Yet it is only a confirmation of what I believe to be a great principle, viz., that *the Lord makes the most of whatever is unreservedly surrendered to Him*. There will always be plenty of waste in what we try to cut out for ourselves. But He wastes no material!

CHAPTER IX.

OUR WILLS KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my will, oh, keep it Thine,
For it is no longer mine.”

PERHAPS there is no point in which expectation has been so limited by experience as this. We believe God is able to do for us just so much as He has already done, and no more. We take it for granted a line must be drawn somewhere; and so we choose to draw it where experience ends, and faith would have to begin. Even if we have trusted and proved Him as to keeping our members and our minds, faith fails when we would go deeper and say, “Keep my will!” And yet the only reason we have to give is, that though we have asked Him to take our will, we do not exactly find that it is altogether His, but that self-will crops up again and again. And whatever flaw there might be in this argument, we think the matter is quite settled by the fact that some whom we rightly esteem, and

who are far better than ourselves, have the same experience, and do not even seem to think it right to hope for anything better. That is conclusive! And the result of this, as of every other faithless conclusion, is either discouragement and depression, or, still worse, acquiescence in an unyielded will, as something that can't be helped.

Now let us turn from our thoughts to God's thoughts. Verily, they are not as ours! He says He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Apply this here. We ask Him to take our wills and make them His. Does He or does He not mean what He says? and if He does, should we not trust Him to do this thing that we have asked and longed for, and not less, but more? "Is *anything* too hard for the Lord?" "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?" and if He gives us faith to believe that we have the petition that we desired of Him, and with it the unspeakable rest of leaning our will wholly upon His love, what ground have we for imagining that this is *necessarily* to be a mere fleeting shadow, which is hardly to last an hour, but is *necessarily* to be exhausted ere the

next breath of trial or temptation comes? Does He mock our longing by acting as I have seen an older person act to a child, by accepting some trifling gift of no intrinsic value, just to please the little one, and then throwing it away as soon as the child's attention is diverted? Is not the taking rather the pledge of the keeping, if we will but entrust Him fearlessly with it? We give Him no opportunity, so to speak, of proving His faithfulness to this great promise, because we *will* not fulfill the condition of reception, believing it. But we readily enough believe instead all that we hear of the unsatisfactory experience of others! Or, start from another word. Job said, "I know that Thou canst do everything," and we turn round and say, "Oh yes, everything *except* keeping my will!" Dare we add, "And I know that Thou canst not do that?" Yet that is what is said every day, only in other words; and if not said aloud, it is said in faithless hearts, and God hears it. What *does* "Almighty" mean, if it does not mean as we teach our little children, "able to do *everything*?"

We have asked this great thing many a time, without, perhaps, realizing how great a petition

we were singing in the old morning hymn, "Guard my first springs of thought and will!" That goes to the root of the matter, only it implies that the will has been already surrendered to Him, that it may be wholly kept and guarded.

It may be that we have not sufficiently realized the sin of the only alternative. Our wills belong either to self or to God. It may seem a small and rather excusable sin in man's sight to be self-willed, but see in what a category of iniquity God puts it! (2 Pet. ii. 10.) And certainly we are without excuse when we have such a promise to go upon as, "It is God that worketh in you both to *will* and to do of his pleasure." How splendidly this meets our very deepest helplessness,— "worketh in you to *will*!" Oh, let us pray for ourselves and for each other, that we may know "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe." It does not say "to usward who fear and doubt;" for if we will not believe, neither shall we be established. If we will not believe what God says He can do, we shall see it with our eyes, but we shall not eat thereof. "They *could* not enter in because of unbelief."

It is most comforting to remember that the grand promise, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power," is made by the Father to Christ Himself. The Lord Jesus holds this promise, and God will fulfill it to Him. He will make us willing because He has promised Jesus that He will do so. And what is being made willing, but having our will taken and kept?

All true surrender of the will is based upon love and knowledge of, and confidence in, the one to whom it is surrendered. We have the human analogy so often before our eyes that it is the more strange we should be so slow to own even the possibility of it as to God. Is it thought anything so very extraordinary and high-flown, when a bride deliberately *prefers* wearing a color which was not her own taste or choice, because her husband likes to see her in it? Is it very unnatural that it is no distress to her to do what he asks her to do, or to go with him where he asks her to come, even without question or explanation, instead of doing what or going where she would undoubtedly have preferred if she did not know and love him? Is it very sur-

prising if this lasts beyond the wedding-day, and if, year after year, she still finds it her greatest pleasure to please him, quite irrespective of what *used* to be her own ways and likings? Yet in this case she is not helped by any promise or power on his part to make her wish what he wishes. But He who so wonderfully condescends to call Himself the Bridegroom of His church, and who claims our fullest love and trust, has promised and has power to work in us to will. Shall we not claim His promise and rely on His mighty power, and say, not self-confidently, but looking only unto Jesus—

“ Keep my will, for it is Thine ;
It shall be no longer mine ! ”

Only in proportion as our own will is surrendered, are we able to discern the splendor of God's will.

For oh! it is a splendor,
A glow of majesty,
A mystery of beauty,
If we will only see ;
A very cloud of glory
Enfolding you and me.

A splendor that is lighted
At one transcendent flame,
The wondrous Love, the perfect Love,
Our Father's sweetest name ;
For His Name and very Essence
And His Will are all the same !

Conversely in proportion as we see this splendor of His will, we shall more readily or more fully surrender our own. Not until we have presented our bodies a living sacrifice can we prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God. But in thus proving it this continual presentation will be more and more seen to be our reasonable service, and becomes more and more a joyful sacrifice of praise.

The connection in Romans xii. 1, 2, between our sacrifice which He so graciously calls acceptable to Himself, and our finding out that His will is acceptable to ourselves, is very striking. One reason for this connection may be that only love can really understand love, and love on both sides is at the bottom of the whole transaction and its results. First, He loves us. Then the discovery of this leads us to love Him. Then, because He loves us, He claims us, and desires to

have us wholly yielded to His will, so that the operations of love in and for us, may find no hindrance. Then, because we love Him, we recognize His claim and yield ourselves. Then, being thus yielded, He draws us nearer to Him,* and admits us, so to speak, into closer intimacy so that we gain nearer and truer views of His perfections. Then the unity of these perfections becomes clearer to us. Now we not only see His justice and mercy flowing in undivided stream from the cross of Christ, but we see that they never were divided, though the strange distortions of the dark, false glass of sin made them appear so, but that both are but emanations of God's holy love. Then having known and believed this holy love, we see further that His will is not a separate thing, but only love (and therefore all His attributes) in action ; love being the primary essence of His being, and all the other attributes, manifestations and combinations of that ineffable essence, for God *is* Love. Then 'this will of God, which has seemed in old far-off

* " Now ye *have* consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come *near* " (2 Chron. xxix. 31).

days a stern and fateful power, is seen to be only love energized ; love saying, "I will." And when once we really grasp this (hardly so much by faith as by love itself), the will of God cannot be otherwise than acceptable, for it is no longer a question of trusting that somehow or other there is a hidden element of love in it, but of understanding that it *is* love ; no more to be dissociated from it than the power of the sun's rays can be dissociated from their light and warmth. And love recognized must surely be love accepted and reciprocated. So, as the fancied sternness of God's will is lost in His love, the stubbornness of our will becomes melted in that love, and lost in our acceptance of it.

" Take Thine own way with me, dear Lord,
Thou canst not otherwise than bless ;
I launch me forth upon a sea
Of boundless love and tenderness.

" I could not choose a larger bliss
Than to be wholly Thine ; and mine
A will whose highest joy is this
To ceaselessly unclasp in Thine.

" I will not fear Thee, O my God !
The days to come can only bring

Their perfect sequences of love,
Thy larger, deeper comforting.

“ Within the shadow of this love,
Loss doth transmute itself to gain ;
Faith veils earth's sorrows in its light,
And straightway lives above her pain.

“ We are not losers thus ; we share
The perfect gladness of the Son,
Not conquered—for, behold, we reign ;
Conquered and Conqueror are one.

“ Thy wonderful grand will, my God !
Triumphantly I make it mine ;
And faith shall breathe her glad ‘ Amen ’
To every dear command of Thine.

“ Beneath the splendor of Thy choice,
Thy perfect choice for me, I rest ;
Outside it now I dare not live,
Within it I must needs be blest.

“ Meanwhile my spirit anchors calm
In grander regions still than this ;
The fair, far-shining latitudes
Of that yet unexplored bliss.

“ Then may Thy perfect, glorious will
Be evermore fulfilled in me,
And make my life an answering chord
Of glad, responsive harmony.

“Oh! it is life indeed to live
 Within this kingdom strangely sweet;
And yet we fear to enter in,
 And linger with unwilling feet.

We fear this wondrous rule of Thine,
 Because we have not reached Thy heart;
Not venturing our all on Thee,
 We may not know how good Thou art.”

JEAN SOPHIA PIGOTT,

CHAPTER X.

OUR HEARTS KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my heart; it is Thine own;
It is now Thy royal throne.”

“IT is a good thing that the heart be established with grace,” and yet some of us go on as if it were not a good thing even to hope for it to be so.

We should be ashamed to say that we had behaved treacherously to a friend; that we had played him false again and again; that we had said scores of times what we did not really mean; that we had professed and promised what, all the while, we had no sort of purpose of performing. We should be ready to go off by next ship to New Zealand rather than calmly own to all this, or rather than ever face our friends again after we had owned it. And yet we are not ashamed (some of us) to say that we are always dealing treacherously with our Lord; nay, more, we own it with an inexplicable complacency, as if there

were a kind of virtue in saying how fickle and faithless and desperately wicked our hearts are; and we actually plume ourselves on the easy confession, which we think proves our humility, and which does not lower us in the eyes of others, nor in our own eyes, half so much as if we had to say, "I have told a story," or, "I have broken my promise." Nay, more, we have not the slightest hope, and therefore not the smallest intention of aiming at an utterly different state of things. Well for us if we do not go a step farther, and call those by hard and false names who do seek to have an established heart, and who believe that as the Lord meant what He said when He promised, "*No* good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly," so He will not withhold *this* good thing.

Prayer must be based upon promise, but, thank God, His promises are always broader than our prayers. No fear of building inverted pyramids here, for Jesus Christ is the foundation, and this and all the other "promises of God in Him are yea and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us." So it shall be unto His glory to fulfill this one to us, and to answer our prayer for

a "kept" or "established" heart. And its fulfillment shall work out His glory, not in spite of us, but "*by us.*"

We find both the means and the result of the keeping in the 112th Psalm: "His heart is fixed." Whose heart? An angel? A saint in glory? No! Simply the heart of the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in His commandments. Therefore yours and mine, as God would have them be; just the normal idea of a God-fearing heart, nothing extremely and hopelessly beyond attainment.

"Fixed." How does that tally with the deceitfulness and waywardness and fickleness about which we really talk as if we were rather proud of them than utterly ashamed of them?

Does our heavenly Bridegroom expect nothing more of us? Does His mighty, all-constraining love intend to do no more for us than to leave us in this deplorable state, when He is undoubtedly able to heal the desperately wicked heart (compare verses 9 and 14 of Jeremiah xvii.), to rule the wayward one with His peace, and to establish the fickle one with His grace? Are we not "without excuse?"

“Fixed, trusting in the Lord.” Here is the means of the fixing—trust. He works the trust in us by sending the Holy Spirit to reveal God in Christ to us as absolutely, infinitely worthy of our trust. When we “see Jesus” by spirit-wrought faith, we can not but trust Him; we distrust our hearts more truly than ever before, but we trust our Lord entirely, because we trust Him *only*. For, entrusting our trust to Him, we know that He is able to keep that which we commit (*i. e.*, entrust) to Him. It is His own way of winning and fixing our hearts for Himself. Is it not a beautiful one? Thus “his heart is established.” But we have not quite faith enough to believe that. So what is the very first doubting, and therefore sad thought that crops up? “Yes, but I am *afraid* it will not remain fixed.”

That is *your* thought. Now see what is God’s thought about the case. “His heart is established, he shall not be afraid.”

Is not that enough? What *is*, if such plain and yet divine words are not? Well, the Gracious One bears with us, and gives line upon line to His poor little children. And so He says, “The peace of God which passeth all understanding,

shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." And again, "Thy thoughts shall be established." And again, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

And to prove to us that these promises can be realized in present experience, He sends down to us through nearly 3,000 years the words of the man who prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," and let us hear twice over the new song put by the same Holy Spirit into his mouth: "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed" (Ps. lvii. 7, cviii. 1).

The heart that is established in Christ is also established for Christ. It becomes His royal throne, no longer occupied by His foe, no longer tottering and unstable. And then we see the beauty and preciousness of the promise, "He shall be a Priest upon His throne." Not only reigning, but atoning. Not only ruling, but cleansing. Thus the throne is established "in mercy," but "by righteousness."

I think we lose ground sometimes by parleying with the tempter. We have no business to parley with an usurper. The throne is no longer his

when we have surrendered it to our Lord Jesus. And why should we allow him to argue with us for one instant, as if it were still an open question? Don't listen; simply tell him that Jesus Christ *is* on the long-disputed throne, and no more about it, but turn at once to your King and claim the glorious protection of His sovereignty over you. It is a splendid reality, and you will find it so. He will not abdicate and leave you kingless and defenceless. For verily, "The Lord *is* our King; he will save us" (Isa. xxxiii. 22).

Our hearts are naturally—

Evil . . .	Heb. iii. 12
Desperately wicked . . .	Jer. xvii. 9
Weak . . .	Ezek. xvi. 30
Deceitful . . .	Jer. xvii. 9
Deceived . . .	Isa. xlv. 20
Double . . .	Ps. xii. 2
Impenitent . . .	Rom. ii. 5
Rebellious . . .	Jer. v. 23
Hard . . .	Ezek. iii. 7
Stony . . .	Ezek. xi. 19
Froward . . .	Prov. xvii. 20
Despiteful . . .	Ezek. xxv. 15
Stout . . .	Isa. x. 12
Haughty . . .	Prov. xviii. 12
Proud . . .	Prov. xxi. 4
Perverse . . .	Prov. xii. 8
Foolish . . .	Rom. i. 21

God can make them—

Clean . . .	Ps. li. 10
Good . . .	Luke viii. 15
Fixed . . .	Ps. cxii. 7
Faithful . . .	Neh. ix. 8
Understand- ing . . .	1 Kings iii. 9
Honest . . .	Luke viii. 15
Contrite . . .	Ps. li. 17
True . . .	Heb. x. 22
Soft . . .	Job xxiii. 16
New . . .	Ezek. xviii. 32
Sound . . .	Ps. cxix. 80
Glad . . .	Ps. xvi. 9
Established . . .	Ps. cxii. 8
Tender . . .	Ephes. iv. 32
Pure . . .	Matt. v. 8
Perfect . . .	1 Chron. xxix. 9
Wise . . .	Prov. xi. 20

CHAPTER XI.

OUR LOVE KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my love ; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.”

NOT as a mere echo from the morning-gilded shore of Tiberias, but as an ever-new, ever-sounding note of divinest power come the familiar words to each of us, “Lovest thou Me?” He says it who has loved us with an everlasting love. He says it who has died for us. He says it who has washed us from our sins in His own blood. He says it who has waited for our love, waited patiently all through our coldness.

And if by His grace we have said, “Take my love,” which of us has not felt that part of His very answer has been to make us see how little there was to take, and how little of that little has been kept for Him? And yet we *do* love Him! He knows that! The very mourning and longing to love Him proves it. But we want more than that, and so does our Lord.

He has created us to love. We have a sealed treasure of love, which either remains sealed, and then gradually dries up and wastes away, or is unsealed and poured out, and yet is the fuller and not the emptier for the outpouring. The more love we give, the more we have to give. So far it is only natural. But when the Holy Spirit reveals the love of Christ, and sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, this natural love is penetrated with a new principle, as it discovers a new Object. Everything that it beholds in that Object gives it new depth and new colors. As it sees the holiness, the beauty, and the glory, it takes the deep hues of conscious sinfulness, unworthiness, and nothingness. As it sees even a glimpse of the love that passeth knowledge, it takes the glow of wonder and gratitude. And when it sees that love drawing close to its deepest need with blood-purchased pardon, it is intensified and stirred, and there is no more time for weighing and measuring; we must pour it out, all there is of it, with our tears, at the feet that were pierced for the love of us.

And what then? Has the flow grown gradually slower and shallower? Has our Lord reason to say,

“My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as a stream of brooks they pass away?” It is humiliating to have found that we could not keep on loving Him as we loved in that remembered hour when “Thy time was the time of love.” We have proved that we were not able. Let this be only the stepping-stone to proving that He is able!

There will have been a cause, as we shall see if we seek it honestly. It was not that we really poured out all our treasure, and so it naturally came to an end. We let it be secretly diverted into other channels. We began keeping back a little part of the price for something else. We looked away from, instead of looking away unto, Jesus. We did not entrust Him with our love, and ask Him to keep it for Himself.

And what has He to say to us? Ah, He upbraideth not. Listen? “Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.” Can any words be more tender, more touching, to you, to me? Forgetting all the sin, all the backsliding, all the coldness, casting all that into the unreturning depths of the sea, He says He remembers that hour when

we first said, "Take my love." He remembers it now, at this minute. He has written it forever on His infinite memory, where the past is as the present.

His own love is unchangeable, so it could never be His wish or will that we should thus drift away from Him. Oh, "Come and let us return unto the Lord!" But is there any hope that, thus returning, our flickering love may be kept from again failing? Hear what He says: "And I will betroth thee unto Me forever." And again: "Thou *shalt* abide *for Me* many days; so will I also be for thee." Shall we trust His word or not? Is it worthy of our acceptance or not? Oh, rest on this word of the King, and let Him from this day have the keeping of your love, and He will keep it!

The love of Christ is not an absorbing, but a radiating love. The more we love Him, the more we shall most certainly love others. Some have not much natural power of loving, but the love of Christ will strengthen it. Some have had the springs of love dried up by some terrible earthquake. They will find "fresh springs" in Jesus,

and the gentle flow will be purer and deeper than the old torrent could ever be. Some have been satisfied that it should rush in a narrow channel, but He will cause it to overflow into many another, and widen its course of blessing. Some have spent it all on their God-given dear ones. Now He is come whose right it is; and yet in the fullest resumption of that right, He is so gracious that He puts back an even larger measure of the old love into our hand, sanctified with His own love, and energized with His blessing, and strengthened with His new commandment, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

In that always very interesting part, called a "Corner for Difficulties," of that always very interesting magazine, *Woman's Work*, the question has been discussed, "When does love become idolatry? Is it the experience of Christians that the coming in of a new object of affection interferes with entire consecration to God?" I should like to quote the many excellent answers in full, but must only refer my readers to the number for March, 1879. One replies: "It seems to me that He who is love would not give us an object for our love unless He saw that our hearts needed

expansion; and if the love is consecrated, and the friendship takes its stand in Christ, there is no need for the fear that it will become idolatry. Let the love on both sides *be given to God to keep*, and however much it may grow, the source from which it springs must yet be greater." Perhaps I may be pardoned for giving, at the same writer's suggestion, a quotation from "Under the Surface" on this subject. Eleanor says to Beatrice:

" I tremble when I think
How much I love him; but I turn away
From thinking of it, just to love him more :—
Indeed, I fear, too much."

" Dear Eleanor,
Do you love him as much as Christ loves us?
Let your lips answer me."

" Why ask me, dear?
Our hearts are finite, Christ is infinite."

" Then, till you reach the standard of that love,
Let neither fears nor well-meant warning voice
Distress you with ' too much.' For He hath said
How much—and who shall dare to change His measure?—
' That ye should love AS I have loved you.'
O sweet command, that goes so far beyond
The mightiest impulse of the tenderest heart!
A bare permission had been much; but He
Who knows our yearnings and our fearfulness

Chose graciously to *bid* us do the thing
That makes our earthly happiness,
A limit that we need not fear to pass,
Because we cannot. Oh, the breadth and length,
And depth and height of love that passeth knowledge;
Yet Jesus said 'As I have loved you.'"

"O Beatrice, I long to feel the sunshine
That this should bring; but there are other words
Which fall in chill eclipse. 'Tis written, 'Keep
Yourselves from idols.' How shall I obey?"

"Oh, not by loving less, but loving more.
It is not that we love our precious ones
Too much, but God too little. As the lamp
A miner bears upon his shadowed brow
Is only dazzling in the grimy dark,
And has no glare against the summer sky,
So, set the tiny torch of our best love
In the great sunshine of the love of God,
And, though full fed and fanned, it casts no shade,
And dazzles not, o'erflowed with mightier light."

There is no love so deep and wide as that
which is kept for Jesus. It flows both fuller and
farther when it flows only through Him. Then,
too, it will be a power for Him. It will always
be unconsciously working for Him. In drawing
others to ourselves by it, we shall be necessarily
drawing them nearer to the fountain of our love,

never drawing them away from it. It is the great magnet of His love which alone can draw any heart to Him ; but when our own are thoroughly yielded to its mighty influence, they will be so magnetized that He will condescend to use them in this way.

Is it not wonderful to think that the Lord Jesus will not only accept and keep, but actually *use* our love ?

“ Of Thine own have we given Thee,” for we love Him because He first loved us.”

Set apart to love Him,
And His love to know
Not to waste affection
On a passing show ;
Called to give Him life and heart,
Called to pour the hidden treasure,
That none other claims to measure,
Into His beloved hand ! thrice blessed “ set apart ! ”

CHAPTER XII.

OUR SELVES KEPT FOR JESUS.

“Keep my self, that I may be
Ever, only, all for Thee.”

“FOR THEE!” That is the beginning and the end of the whole matter of consecration.

There was a prelude to its “endless song”—a prelude whose theme is woven into every following harmony in the new anthem of consecrated life: “The Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself *for me*.” Out of the realized “for me,” grows the practical “for Thee!” If the former is a living root, the latter will be its living fruit.

“For *Thee!*” This makes the difference between forced or formal, and therefore unreasonable service, and the “reasonable service,” which is the beginning of the perfect service where they see His face. This makes the difference between slave work and free work. For Thee, my Redeemer; for Thee, who hast spoken to my heart; for Thee, who hast done for me—*what?* Let us each

pause, and fill up that blank with the great things the Lord hath done for us. For Thee, who art to me—*what?* Fill that up too, before Him! For Thee, my Saviour Jesus, my Lord and my God!

And what is to be for Him? My self. We talk sometimes as if, whatever else could be subdued unto Him, self could never be. Did St. Paul forget to mention this important exception to the "all things" in Phil. iii. 21? David said: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, *and all that is within me*, bless His Holy Name." Did he, too, unaccountably forget to mention that he only meant all that was within him, *except* self? If not, then self must be among the "all things" which the Lord Jesus Christ is able to subdue unto Himself, and which are to "bless His Holy Name." It is Self which, once His most treacherous foe, is now, by full and glad surrender, His own soldier—coming over from the rebel camp into the royal army. It is not some one else, some temporarily possessing spirit, which says within us, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," but our true and very self, only changed and renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost. And when we do that we would not, we know

that "it is no more *I* that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Our true self is the new self, taken and won by the love of God, and kept by the power of God.

Yes, "*kept!*" There is the promise on which we ground our prayer; or, rather, one of the promises. For, search and look for your own strengthening and comfort, and you will find it repeated in every part of the Bible, from "I am with thee and will keep thee," in Genesis, to "I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation," in Revelation.

And kept *for Him!* Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, when it is only the fulfilling of His own eternal purpose in creating us? "This people have I formed *for Myself.*" Not ultimately only, but presently and continually; for He says, "Thou shalt abide *for Me;*" and, "He that remaineth, even he shall be *for our God.*" Are you one of His people by faith in Jesus Christ? Then see what you are to Him. You, personally and individually, are part of the Lord's portion (Deut. xxxii. 9), and of His inheritance (1 Kings, viii. 53, and Eph i. 18). His portion and inheritance would not be com-

plete without you ; you are His peculiar treasure (Ex. xix. 5) ; “ a *special* people ” (how warm, and loving, and natural that expression is!) “ *unto Himself* ” (Deut. vii. 6). Would you call it “ keeping,” if you had a “ special ” treasure, a darling little child, for instance, and let it run wild into all sorts of dangers all day long, sometimes at your side, and sometimes out in the street, with only the intention of fetching it safe home at night ? If ye then, being evil, would know better and do better, than that, how much more shall our Lord’s keeping be true, and tender, and continual, and effectual, when He declares us to be His peculiar treasure, purchased (see 1 Pet. ii. 9, margin) for Himself at such unknown cost !

He will keep what thus He sought,
Safely guard the dearly bought ;
Cherish that which He did choose,
Always love and never lose.

I know what some of us are thinking. “ Yes, I see it all plainly enough in theory, but in practice I find I am not kept. Self goes over to the other camp again and again. It is not all for Jesus, though I have asked and wished for it to be

so." Dear friends, the "all" must be sealed with "only." Are you willing to be "*only*" for Jesus? You have not given "all" to Jesus while you are not quite ready to be "*only*" for Him. And it is no use to talk about "ever" while we have not settled the "only" and the "all." You can not be "for Him," in the full and blessed sense, while you are partly "for" anything or any one else. For "the Lord hath *set apart* him that is godly for Himself." You see, the "for Himself" hinges upon the "set apart." There is no consecration without separation. If you are mourning over want of realized consecration, will you look humbly and sincerely into *this* point? "A garden *enclosed* is my sister, my spouse," saith the Heavenly Bridegroom.

Set apart for Jesus!

Is not this enough?

Though the desert prospect

Open wild and rough?

Set apart for His delight,

Chosen for His holy pleasure

Sealed to be His special treasure!

Could we choose a nobler joy?—and would we if
we might? *

* Loyal Responses, p. 11.

But yielding, by His grace to this blessed setting apart for Himself, "The Lord shall *establish* thee an holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee." Can there be a stronger promise? Just obey and trust His word *now*, and yield yourselves *now* unto God, "that He may establish thee *to-day* for a people unto Himself." Commit the keeping of your souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator, being persuaded that He is ABLE TO KEEP that which you commit to Him.

Now, Lord, I give myself to Thee,
I would be wholly Thine.
As Thou hast given Thyself to me,
And Thou art wholly mine;
O take me, seal me for Thine own,
Thine altogether, Thine alone.

Here comes in once more that immeasurably important subject of our influence. For it is not what we say or do, so much as what we *are*, that influences others. We have heard this, and very likely repeated it again and again, but have we seen it to be inevitably linked with the great question of this chapter? I do not know any-

thing which, thoughtfully considered, makes us realize more vividly the need and the importance of our whole selves being kept for Jesus. Any part not wholly committed, and not wholly kept, must hinder and neutralize the real influence for Him of all the rest. If we ourselves are kept all for Jesus, then our influence will be all kept for Him too. If not, then, however much we may wish and talk and try, we cannot throw our full weight into the right scale. And just in so far as it is not in the one scale, it must be in the other; weighing against the little which we have tried to put in the right one, and making the short weight still shorter.

So large a proportion of it is entirely involuntary, while yet the responsibility of it is so enormous, that our helplessness comes out in exceptionally strong relief, while our past debt in this matter is simply incalculable. Are we feeling this a little? getting just a glimpse, down the misty defiles of memory, of the neutral influence, the wasted influence, the mistaken influence, the actually wrong influence which has marked the ineffaceable although untraceable course? And all the while we owed Him all that influence! It

ought to Have been all for Him! We have nothing to say. But what has our Lord to say? "I forgave thee all *that* debt!"

Then, after that forgiveness which must come first, there comes a thought of great comfort in our freshly felt helplessness, rising out of the very thing that makes us realize this helplessness. Just *because* our influence is to such a great extent involuntary and unconscious, we may rest assured that if we ourselves are truly kept for Jesus, this will be, as a quite natural result, kept for Him also. It can not be otherwise, for as is the fountain, so will be the flow; as the spring, so the action; as the impulse, so the communicated motion. Thus there may be, and in simple trust there will be, a quiet rest about it, a relief from all sense of strain and effort, a fulfilling of the words, "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." It will not be a matter of *trying* to have good influence, but just of *having* it, as naturally and constantly as the magnetized bar.

Another encouraging thought should follow. Of ourselves we may have but little weight, no particular talents or position or anything else to

put into the scale ; but let us remember that again and again God has shown that the influence of a very average life, when once really consecrated to Him, may outweigh that of almost any number of merely professing Christians. Such lives are like Gideon's three hundred, carrying not even the ordinary weapons of war, but only trumpets and lamps and empty pitchers, by whom the Lord wrought great deliverance, while He did not use the others at all. For He hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

Should not all this be additional motive for desiring that our *whole* selves should be taken and kept?

I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever. Therefore we may rejoicingly say "ever" as well as "only" and "all for Thee!" For the Lord is our Keeper, and He is the Almighty and the Everlasting God, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He will never change His mind about keeping us, and no man is able to pluck us out of His hand. Neither will Christ let us pluck ourselves out of His hand,

for He says, "Thou *shalt* abide for Me many days." And He that keepeth us will not slumber. Once having undertaken His vineyard, He will keep it night and day, till all the days and nights are over, and we know the full meaning of the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, unto which we are kept by His power.

And then, forever for Him ! passing from the gracious keeping by faith for this little while, to the glorious keeping in His presence for all eternity ! Forever fulfilling the object for which He formed us and chose us, we showing forth His praise, and He showing the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in the ages to come ! *He for us, and we for Him forever !* Oh, how little we can grasp this ! Yet this is the fruition of being "kept for Jesus !"

Set apart forever

For Himself alone !

Now we see our calling

Gloriously shown.

Owning, with no secret dread,

This our holy separation,

Now the crown of consecration *

Of the Lord our God shall rest upon our willing head.

* Num. vi. 7.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRIST FOR US.

“So will I also be for Thee.”—Hos. iii. 3

THE typical promise, “Thou shalt abide for Me many days,” is indeed a marvel of love.

For it is given to the most undeserving, described under the strongest possible figure of utter worthlessness and treacherousness,—the woman beloved, yet an adulteress.

The depth of the abyss shows the length of the line that has fathomed it, yet only the length of the line reveals the real depth of the abyss. The sin shows the love, and the love reveals the sin. The Bible has few words more touching, though seldom quoted, than those just preceding this wonderful promise: “The love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.” Put that into the personal application which no doubt underlies it,

and say, "The love of the Lord toward *me*, who have looked away from Him, with wandering, faithless eyes, to other helps and hopes, and have loved earthly joys and sought earthly gratifications,—the love of the Lord toward even me!" And then hear Him saying in the next verse, "So I bought her to me;" stooping to do *that* in His unspeakable condescension of love, not with the typical silver and barley, but with the precious blood of Christ. Then, having thus loved us, and rescued us, and bought us with a price indeed, He says, still under the same figure, "Thou shalt abide for Me many days."

This is both a command and a pledge. But the very pledge implies our past unfaithfulness, and the proved need of even our own part being undertaken by the ever-patient Lord. He Himself has to guarantee our faithfulness, because there is no other hope of our continuing faithful. Well may such love win our full and glad surrender, and such a promise win our happy and confident trust!

But He says more. He says, "So will I also be for thee!" And this seems an even greater marvel of love, as we observe how He meets every

detail of our consecration with this wonderful word.*

1. *His Life* "for thee!" "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Oh, wonderful gift! not promised, but *given*; not to friends, but to enemies. Given without condition, without reserve, without return. Himself unknown and unloved, His gift unsought and unasked, He gave His life for thee; a more than royal bounty—the greatest gift that Deity could devise. Oh, grandeur of love! "I lay down My life for the sheep!" And we for whom He gave it have held back, and hesitated to give our lives, not even *for* Him (He has not asked us to do that), but *to* Him! But that is past, and He has tenderly pardoned the unloving, ungrateful reserve, and has graciously accepted the poor little fleeting breath and speck of dust which was all we had to offer. And now His precious death and His glorious life are all "for thee."

* The remainder of this chapter is printed in a little penny book, entitled, *I also for Thee*, by F. R. H., published by Caswell, Birmingham, and by Nisbet & Co.

2. *His Eternity* "for thee." All we can ask Him to take are days and moments—the little span given us as it is given, and of this only the present in deed and the future in will. As for the past, in so far as we did not give it to Him, it is too late; we can never give it now! But His past was given to us, though ours was not given to Him. Oh, what a tremendous debt does this show us!

Away back in the dim depths of past eternity, "or ever the earth and the world were made," His divine existence in the bosom of His Father was all "for thee," purposing and planning "for thee," receiving and holding the promise of eternal life "for thee."

Then the thirty-three years among sinners on this sinful earth: do we think enough of the slowly-wearing days and nights, the heavy-footed hours, the never-hastening minutes, that went to make up those thirty-three years of trial and humiliation? We all know how slowly time passes when suffering and sorrow are near, and there is no reason to suppose that our Master was exempted from this part of our infirmities.

Then His present is "for thee." Even now

He "liveth to make intercession ;" even now He "thinketh upon me;" even now He "knoweth," He "careth," He "loveth."

Then, only to think that His whole eternity will be "for thee!" Millions of ages of unfoldings of all His love, and of ever-new declarings of His Father's name to His brethren. Think of it! and can we ever hesitate to give *all* our poor little hours to His service?

3. *His Hands* "for thee." Literal hands, literally pierced, when the whole weight of His quivering frame hung from their torn muscles and bared nerves; literally uplifted in parting blessing. Consecrated, priestly hands; "filled" hands (Ex. xxviii. 41, xxix. 9, etc., margin)—filled once with His great offering, and now with gifts and blessings "for thee. Tender hands, touching and healing, lifting and leading with gentlest care. Strong hands, upholding and defending. Open hands, filling with good and satisfying desire (Ps. civ. 28, and cxlv. 16). Faithful hands, restraining and sustaining. "His left hand is under my head and His right hand doth embrace Me."

4. *His Feet* "for thee." They were weary very often, they were wounded and bleeding once. They made clear footprints as He went about doing good, and as He went up to Jerusalem to suffer; and these "blessed steps of His most holy life," both as substitution and example, were "for thee." Our place of waiting and learning, of resting and loving, is at His feet. And still those "blessed feet" are and shall be "for thee," until He comes again to receive us unto Himself, until and when the word is fulfilled, "They shall walk with Me in white."

5. *His Voice* "for thee." The "Voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love;" the Voice that His sheep "hear" and "know," and that calls out the fervent response, "Master, say on!" This is not all. It was the literal voice of the Lord Jesus which uttered that one echoless cry of desolation on the Cross "for thee," and it will be His own literal voice which will say, "Come, ye blessed!" to thee. And that same tender and "glorious Voice" has literally sung and will sing "for thee." I think He consecrated song for us and

made it a sweet and sacred thing forever, when He Himself "sang an hymn," the very last thing before He went forth to consecrate suffering for us. That was not His last song. "The Lord thy God . . . will joy over thee with singing." And the time is coming when He will not only sing "for thee" or "over thee," but with thee. He says He will! "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." Now what a magnificent glimpse of joy this is! "Jesus Himself leading the praises of His brethren," * and we ourselves singing, not merely in such a chorus, but with such a leader! If "singing for Jesus" is such delight here, what will this "singing *with* Jesus" be? Surely song may well be a holy thing to us henceforth.

6. *His Lips* "for thee." Perhaps there is no part of our consecration which it is so difficult practically to realize, and in which it is therefore so needful to recollect—"I also for thee." It is often helpful to read straight through one or more of the Gospels with a special thought on

* See A. Newton on the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. ii., ver. 12.

our mind, and see how much bears upon it. When we read one through with this thought,—“His *lips* for me!”—wondering, verse by verse, at the grace which was poured into them, and the gracious words which fell from them, wondering more and more at the cumulative force and infinite wealth of tenderness and power and wisdom and love flowing from them, we cannot but desire that our lips and all the fruit of them should be wholly for Him. “For thee” they were opened in blessing; “for thee” they were closed when He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And whether teaching, warning, counsel, comfort, or encouragement, commandments in whose keeping there is a great reward, or promises which exceed all we ask or think—all the precious fruit of His lips is “for thee,” really and truly *meant* “for thee.”

7. *His Wealth* “for thee.” “Though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich.” Yes, “through his poverty” the unsearchable riches of Christ are “for thee.” Sevenfold riches are mentioned, and these are no unminted treasure or sealed reserve, but all ready coined for our use,

and stamped with His own image and superscription, and poured freely into the hand of faith. The mere list is wonderful. "Riches of goodness," "riches of forbearance and long-suffering," "riches both of wisdom and knowledge," "riches of mercy," "exceeding riches of grace," and "riches of glory." And His own Word says, "All are yours!" Glance on in faith, and think of eternity flowing on and on beyond the mightiest sweep of imagination, and realize that all "His riches in glory," and "the riches of His glory" are and shall be "for thee!" In view of this, shall we care to reserve anything that rust doth corrupt for ourselves?

8. *His "treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* for thee. First, used for our behalf and benefit. Why did He expend such immeasurable might of mind upon a world which is to be burnt up, but that He would fit it perfectly to be, not the home, but the school of His children? The infinity of His skill is such that the most powerful intellects find a lifetime too short to penetrate a little way into a few secrets of some one small department of His working. If we turn to Provi-

dence, it is quite enough to take only one's own life, and look at it microscopically and telescopically, and marvel at the treasures of wisdom lavished upon its details, ordering and shaping and fitting the tiny confused bits into the true mosaic which He means it to be. Many a little thing in our lives reveals the same Mind which, according to a well known and very beautiful illustration, adjusted a perfect proportion in the delicate hinges of the snowdrop and the droop of its bell, with the mass of the globe and the force of gravitation. How kind we think it if a very talented friend spends a little of his thought and power of mind in teaching us or planning for us! Have we been grateful for the infinite thought and wisdom which our Lord has expended upon us and our creation, preservation and redemption?

Secondly, to be shared with us. He says, "All that I have is thine." He holds nothing back, reserves nothing from His dear children, and what we cannot receive now He is keeping for us. He gives us "hidden riches of secret places" now, but by and by He will give us more, and the glorified intellect will be filled continually out of His treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

But the sanctified intellect will be, must be, used for Him, and only for Him, now !

9. *His Will* "for thee." Think first of the *infinite might* of that will ; the first great law and the first great force of the universe, from which alone every other law and every other force has sprung, and to which all are subordinate. "He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." Then think of the *infinite mysteries* of that will. For ages and generations the hosts of heaven have wonderingly watched its vouchsafed unveilings and its sublime developments, and still they are waiting, watching, and wondering.

Creation and Providence are but the whisper of its power, but Redemption is its music, and praise is the echo which shall yet fill His temple. The whisper and the music, yes, and "the thunder of His power," are all "for thee." For what *is* "the good pleasure of His will?" (Eph. i. 5). Oh, what a grand list of blessings purposed, provided, purchased, and possessed, all flowing to us

out of it! And nothing but blessings, nothing but privileges, which we never should have imagined, and which, even when revealed, we are "slow of heart to believe;" nothing but what should even now fill us "with joy unspeakable and full of glory!"

Think of this will as always and altogether on our side—always working for us, and in us, and with us, if we will only let it; think of it as always and only synonymous with infinitely wise and almighty love; think of it as undertaking all for us, from the great work of our eternal salvation down to the momentary details of guidance and supply, and do we not feel utter shame and self-abhorrence at *ever* having hesitated for an instant to give up our tiny, feeble, blind will to be—not crushed, not even bent, but *blent* with His glorious and perfect Will?

10. *His Heart* "for thee." "Behold He is mighty in heart," said Job (Job xxxvi. 5, margin). And this mighty and tender heart is "for thee!" If He had only stretched forth His hand to save us from bare destruction, and said, "My hand for thee!" how could we

have praised Him enough? But what shall we say of the unspeakably marvellous condescension which says, "Thou hast ravished (margin, *taken away*) my heart, my sister, my spouse!" The very fountain of His divine life, and light, and love, the very centre of His being, is given to His beloved ones, who are not only "set as a seal upon His heart," but taken into His heart, so that our life is hid there, and we dwell there in the very centre of all safety, and power, and love, and glory. What will be the revelation of "that day," when the Lord Jesus promises, "Ye shall know that I am in My Father, and *ye in Me?*" For He implies that we do not yet know it, and that our present knowledge of this dwelling in Him is not knowledge at all compared with what He is going to show us about it.

Now shall we, can we, reserve any corner of our hearts from Him?

11. *His Love* "for thee." Not a passive, possible love, but outflowing, yes *outpouring* of the real, glowing, personal love of His mighty and tender heart. Love, not as an attribute, a quality, a latent force, but an acting, moving, reaching,

touching and grasping power. Love, not a cold, beautiful, far-off star, but a sunshine that comes and enfolds us, making us warm and glad, and strong, and bright, and fruitful.

His love! What manner of love is it? What should be quoted to prove or describe it? First, the whole Bible with its mysteries and marvels of redemption, then the whole book of Providence and the whole volume of creation. Then add to these the unknown records of eternity past and the unknown glories of eternity to come, and then let the immeasurable quotation be sung by "angels and archangels and all the company of heaven," with all the harps of God, and still that love will be untold, still it will be "the love of Christ that passeth knowledge." But it is "for thee."

12. *Himself* "for thee." "Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us." "The Son of God . . . loved me and gave Himself for me." Yes, Himself! What is the Bride's true and central treasure? What calls forth the deepest, brightest, sweetest thrill of love and praise? Not the Bridegroom's priceless gifts, not the robe of His resplendent righteous-

ness, not the dowry of unsearchable riches, not the magnificence of the palace home to which He is bringing her, not the glory which she shall share with Him, but HIMSELF! Jesus Christ, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree;" "this same Jesus," "whom having not seen, ye love;" the Son of God, and the Man of Sorrows; my Saviour, my Friend, my Master, my King, my Priest, my Lord and my God. HE says, "*I* also for thee!" What an "*I!*" What power and sweetness we feel in it, so different from any human "*I,*" for all His Godhead and all His manhood are concentrated in it, and all "for thee!"

And not only "all," but "*ever*" for thee. His unchangeableness is the seal upon every attribute; He will be "this same Jesus" forever. How can mortal mind estimate this enormous promise? How can mortal heart conceive what is enfolded in these words, "I also for thee?"

One glimpse of its fulness and glory, and we feel that henceforth it must be, shall be, and by His grace *will* be our true-hearted, whole-hearted cry—

Take *myself*, and I will be
Ever, ONLY, ALL for Thee!

MY KING

OR

Daily Thoughts for the King's Children.

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MY KING.

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MY KING.

FIRST DAY.

The Source of the Kingship.

‘Because the Lord hath loved His people, He hath made thee king over them.’—2 CHRON. ii. 11, ix. 8.

CHRIST said to His Father, ‘Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.’¹ At that mysterious date, not of time, but of everlasting love, God ‘chose us in Him.’² Before the world began, God, that cannot lie,³ gave the promise of eternal life to Him for us, and made with Him for us ‘a covenant ordered in all things, and sure.’⁴ The leading provisions of that covenant were, a Lamb for our atonement, and a King for our government—a dying and a living Saviour. This God the Father did for us, and His own divine interest is strongly indicated in the typical words, ‘God will provide *Himself*

¹ John xvii. 24.

² Eph. i. 4.

³ Titus i. 2.

⁴ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

a Lamb,'¹ and 'I have provided *me* a King.'² So the Source of the Kingship of Christ is God Himself, in the eternal counsels of His love. It is one of the grand 'thoughts of God.'³

Having provided, He appointed and anointed His King: 'Yet have I set (margin, anointed) my King upon my holy hill of Zion.'⁴ What a marvellous meeting-place is thus found in the Kingship of Jesus for God's heart and ours! He says in His majestic sovereignty, 'I have set *my* King;' and we say in lowly and loving loyalty, 'Thou art *my* King.'⁵

God has appointed His King 'to be ruler over Israel *and* over Judah.' Thus He gives His children a great bond of union. For 'one King shall be King to them all,'⁶ and He shall 'gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.'⁷ 'Satan scatters, but Jesus gathers.' Shall we then let the enemy have his way, and induce us to keep apart and aloof from those over whom our beloved King reigns also? Let us try this day to recollect this, and make it practical in all our contact with His other subjects.

¹ Gen. xxii. 8. ² 1 Sam. xvi. 1. ³ Ps. cxxxix. 17. ⁴ Ps. ii. 6.

⁵ Ps. xliv. 4.

⁶ Ezek. xxxvii. 22.

⁷ John xi. 52.

Why has God made Jesus King? Who would have guessed the right answer? '*Because* the Lord loved His people.' So the very thought of the Kingship of Christ sprang from the everlasting love of God to His people.¹ Bring that wonderful statement down to personal reality,— 'His people,' that is, *you and me*. God made Jesus King over you, because He loved you, and that with nothing less than the love wherewith He loved Him.² Which is the more wonderful—the love that devised such a gift, or the gift that was devised by such love! Oh, to realize the glorious value of it! May we, who by His grace know something of God's gift of His Son as our Saviour, learn day by day more of the magnificent preciousness of His gift of His Anointed One as our King!

SECOND DAY.

The Promise of the King.

'I will be thy King,'—Hos. xiii. 10.

HE knows our need of a king. He knows the hopeless anarchy, not only of a world, but of a

¹ Jer. xxxi. 3.

² John xvii. 26.

heart, 'without a king.'¹ Is there a more desolate cry than 'We have no king?'²—none to reverence and love, none to obey, none to guide and protect us and rule over us, none to keep us in that truest freedom of whole-hearted loyalty. Have we not felt that we really want a strong hand over our hearts? that having our own way is not so good as another's way, if only that other is one to whom our hearty and entire confidence and allegiance can be and are given? Has there not been an echo in our souls of the old cry, 'Give me a king?'—a cry that nothing can still but this Divine promise, '*I will be thy king!*'³

But the promise has been given; and now, if the old desolate wail of a kingless heart comes up in an hour of faithless forgetfulness, His word comes like a royal clarion, 'Now, *why* dost thou cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee?'⁴ And then the King's gracious assurance falls with hushing power, 'I will be *thy* King.'

How glad we are that He Himself is our King! For we are so sure that He is able even to subdue

¹ Hos. iii. 4.

² Hos. x. 3.

³ Hos. xiii. 10.

⁴ Mic. iv. 9.

all things unto Himself¹ in this inner kingdom, which we cannot govern at all. We are so glad to take Him at His word, and give up the government into His hands, asking Him to be our King in very deed, and to set up His throne of peace in the long disturbed and divided citadel,² praying that He would bring every thought into captivity to His gentle obedience.³

We have had enough of revolutions and revolts, of tyrants and traitors, of lawlessness and of self-framed codes. Other lords (and oh, how many!) have had dominion over us.⁴ He has permitted us to be their servants, that now, by blessed and restful contrast, we know His service.⁵ Now we *only* want 'another King, one Jesus.'⁶ He has made us willing in the day of His power,⁷ and that was the first act of His reign, and the token that 'of the *increase* of His government and peace there shall be no end'⁸ in our hearts.

Lord, be Thou my King this day! Reign more absolutely in me than ever before. Let the increase of Thy government be continual and

¹ Phil. iii. 21.

⁴ Isa. xxvi. 13.

⁷ Ps. cx. 3.

² Rom. vii. 19.

⁵ 2 Chron. xii. 8.

⁸ Isa. ix. 7.

³ 2 Cor. x. 5.

⁶ Acts xvii. 7.

mighty in me, so that Thy name may be glorified in me now and forever.¹

Reign over me, Lord Jesus!
 Oh, make my heart Thy throne!
 It shall be thine forever,
 It shall be Thine alone!

THIRD DAY.

Allegiance to the King. .

‘Thou art my King.’—Ps. xlv. 4.

FIRST, *can* I say it?

Is Jesus in very deed and truth ‘my King’? Where is the proof of it? Am I living in His kingdom of ‘righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost’ now?² Am I speaking the language of that kingdom? Am I following ‘the customs of the people’³ which are not His people? or do I ‘diligently learn the ways of His people’?⁴ Am I practically living under the rule of His laws? Have I done heart homage to Him? Am I bravely and honestly upholding His cause, because it is His, not merely because those around me do so? Is my allegiance making any practical difference to my life to-day?

¹ 2 Thes. i. 12 ² Rom. xiv. 17. ³ Jer. x. 3. ⁴ Jer. xii. 16

Next, *ought* I to say it?

What! any question about that? The King, who came Himself to purchase me from my tyrant and His foe;¹ the King, who laid aside His crown and His royal robes, and left His kingly palace, and came down Himself to save a rebel;² the King, who, though He was rich, yet for my sake became poor, that I 'through His poverty might be rich,'³—*ought* I to acknowledge Him? is it a question of '*ought* I?' God has 'called me unto His Kingdom and glory;'⁴ He 'hath translated me unto the kingdom of the Son of His love;'⁵ and shall the loyal words falter or fail from my lips, 'Thou art my King'?

Lastly, *do* I say it?

God has said to me, 'He *is* thy Lord, and worship thou Him.'⁶ Do my lips say, 'My Lord and My God'?'⁷ Does my life say, 'Christ Jesus, *my* Lord,'⁸—definitely and personally, '*my* Lord'? Can I share in His last sweet commendation to His disciples, the more

¹ Acts xx. 28.

⁴ 1 Thess. ii. 12.

⁷ John xx. 28.

² Phil. ii. 7.

⁵ Col. i. 13.

⁸ Phil. iii. 8.

³ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

⁶ Ps. xlv. 11.

precious because of its divine dignity, 'Ye call me Master and Lord, *and ye say well*, for so I am' ?¹ Have I said, 'Thou *art my King*'² to Jesus Himself, from the depth of my own heart, in unreserved and unfeigned submission to His sceptre? Am I ashamed or afraid to confess my allegiance in plain English among His friends or before His foes?³ Is the seal upon my brow so unmistakable that always and everywhere I am known to be His subject? Is 'Thou art my King,'⁴ blazoned, as it ought to be, in shining letters on the whole scroll of my life, so that it may be 'known and read of all men?'⁵

Answer Thou for me, O my King! 'Search me and try me,'⁶ and show me the true state of my case, and then for Thine own sake pardon all my past disloyalty, and make me by Thy mighty grace from this moment totally loyal! For 'Thou *art my King*.'⁷

¹ John xiii. 13.

³ Matt. x. 32.

⁵ 2 Cor. iii. 2.

⁶ Ps. xxxviii. 15, P. B. V.; ib. cxxxix. 23.

⁷ Ps. xxv. 11.

² Ps. lxxxix. 15, margin.

⁴ Acts iv. 13.

FOURTH DAY.

Decision for the King.

‘Ye fought for David in times past to be king over you. Now, then, do it.’—2 SAM. iii. 17, 18.

‘IN time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.’¹ Chosen, anointed, given by God, continually leading and caring for us, yet not accepted, not crowned, not enthroned by us;² our real allegiance, our actual service, given to another!³ Self has been our Saul, our central tyranny; and many have been its officers domineering in every department.⁴

‘Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you.’ Well we might, for the bondage of any other lord was daily harder.⁵ Well we might, with even a dim glimpse of the grace and glory of the King who waited for our homage. We sought, first, only for something—we hardly knew what—restlessly and vaguely; then for some One, who was not merely ‘the Desire of all nations,’

¹ 1 Sam. v. 2.

³ Rom. vi. 16.

⁵ Isa. xiv. 3.

² Ps. lxxxix. 19, 20; Isa. lv. 4.

⁴ Rom. vii. 23.

but our own desire.¹ And yet we did not come to the point: we were not ready for His absolute monarchy, for we were loving and doing the will of our old tyrant.²

But 'the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will' of self—Satan—the world.³ We do not want 'to live the rest of our time' to any but One Will.⁴ We come face to face with a great NOW! 'Now, then, do it!' ⁵ 'Now, then,' let us, with full purpose of heart, dethrone the usurper and give the diadem to Him 'whose right it is,' a blood-bought and death-sealed right.⁶

He does not force allegiance,—He waits for it. The crown of our own individual love and loyalty must be offered by our own hands.⁷ We must 'do it.' When? Oh, now! *Now* let us come to Jesus as our King. *Now* let us, first in solemn heart-surrender, and then in open and unmistakable life-confession, yield ourselves to Him as our Sovereign, our Ruler.

What a glorious life of victory and peace opens before us when this is done! What a silencing

¹ Hag. ii. 7.

⁴ 1 Pet. iv. 2.

² 1 Kings xviii. 21.

⁵ 2 Sam. iii. 18.

⁷ 2 Sam. v. 3.

³ 1 Pet. iv. 3.

⁶ Ezek xxi. 26, 27.

of our fears lest the time to come should nevertheless be as the time past! 'Now, then, do it: FOR the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.'¹

Now, do not let us 'take away from the words'² of this promise, and merely hope that our King *may* save us from *some* of our enemies. The Lord hath said, '*will* save from *all*.' Let us trust our true David this day to fulfil the word of the Lord, and verily we shall not fail to find that according to our faith it shall be unto us.³

FIFTH DAY.

The First to Meet the King.

'For thy servant doth know that I have sinned; therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to meet my Lord the king.'—2 SAM. xix. 20.

YES, I have sinned. I *know* that I have sinned. Whether I feel it more or less does not touch the fact: I *know* it. And what then? 'THEREFORE, behold, I am come the first this day of all . . . to meet my Lord the King.'

¹ 2 Sam. iii. 18

² Rev. xxii. 19.

³ Matt. ix. 29.

Just because I *know* that I have sinned, I come to Jesus. He came to call sinners,¹ He came to save sinners,² so He came to call and to save me. 'This is all my desire.'³

Just because I know that I have sinned, I may and must come 'the first of all.' Thousands are coming, but the heart knoweth his own bitterness.⁴ So, not waiting for others, not coming in order, but 'first of all,' by the pressure of my sore need of pardon, I come. There is no waiting for one's turn in coming to Jesus.

'The first of all,' because it is against '*my* lord the King' that I have sinned. I am His servant, so I have the greater sin.⁵ 'The first of all, because I have so much to be forgiven, and have already been forgiven so much, that I must, I do, love much;⁶ and love, even of a sorrowing sinner, seeks nearness, and cannot rest in distance.'⁷

'Therefore,' also, 'I am come *this day*.' I dare not and could not wait till to-morrow. No need to wait, even till to-night! Now! He is passing by,⁸ and I must 'haste to meet' Him.⁹ 'While he is near,'¹⁰ I will tell Him all.

¹ Matt. ix. 13.

² 1 Tim. i. 15.

³ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

⁴ Prov. xiv. 10.

⁵ Ps. cxvi. 16.

⁶ Luke vii. 47.

⁷ Col. ii. 13.

⁸ Matt. xx. 30.

⁹ 2 Sam. xix. 16.

¹⁰ Isa. lv. 6.

I am come to *meet* Him, not merely to *go* to Him: ¹ for He is always coming to meet us. He was on His way before I had said, 'I will arise and go.' ² I come, because He comes to me.

Yet I could not come with this terrible knowledge that I have sinned, but that I know something more. I know that He hath said, 'Come unto me.' ³ I know that He hath said, 'Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.' ⁴ This is enough; therefore I am come to my Lord the King.

Not to His servants, but to Himself. Even those who stand near Him may accuse and condemn, but the King Himself will receive me graciously; ⁵ for with Him there is forgiveness, and mercy, and plenteous redemption. ⁶

And though the oath of an earthly sovereign may be broken, my King (in glorious contrast to the imperfect human type) 'keepeth His promise for ever.' ⁷ His covenant will He not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of His lips. ⁸ Therefore the eternal life which He had promised me is secured to me forever, for He hath

¹ Zech. ix. 9.

² Luke xv. 18.

³ Matt. xi. 28.

⁴ John vi. 37.

⁵ Hos. xiv. 2.

⁶ Ps. cxxx. 4, 7.

⁷ Ps. cxlvi. 5. (P. V. B.)

⁸ Ps. lxxxix. 34.

said,¹ 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.'²

SIXTH DAY.

The Condescension of the King.

'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.'—ZECH. ix. 9.

THAT our King should let us come to Him is condescension indeed. But have we praised Him for His still more wonderful condescension: 'Thy King *cometh unto thee*'?² Unto *thee*,¹ rebel, traitor, faithless subject, coward and cold-hearted follower; for where is the life that has not fallen under these charges, when seen in the double light of the King's perfect law and the King's great love? Yes, he cometh unto *thee*, and it is enough to break our hearts when we get one contrasted glimpse of this undeserved grace and unparalleled condescension.

His great promise has had its first fulfillment 'unto thee.' It is a finished fact of sevenfold grace. Thy King has come, and His own voice

¹ 1 John ii. 25.

² John x. 28.

³ Isa. xlviii. 8.

has given the objects of His coming,—‘to do Thy will, O God;’¹ ‘to fulfil’ the law;’² ‘to call sinners to repentance;’³ ‘to seek and to save that which was lost;’⁴ ‘that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly;’⁵ ‘a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.’⁶ What He came to do He has done, for ‘He faileth not.’⁷ On this we may and ought to rest quietly and undoubtingly, for the ‘Lord hath *done* it.’⁸

But you want a further fulfilment,—you want a present coming from your King. You have His most sweet word, ‘I will come to you;’⁹ and you respond, ‘Oh, *when* wilt Thou come unto me?’¹⁰ Are you ready to receive the King’s own answer now? Do you so desire His coming, that you do not want it postponed at all? Can you defer all other comers, and say in reality, ‘*Let* my Beloved come?’¹¹

He has but one answer to that appeal. Hush! listen! believe! for the King speaks to you: I am come to my garden, my sister, my spouse.’¹²

¹ Heb. x. 9.

⁴ Luke xix. 10.

⁷ Zeph. iii. 5.

¹⁰ Ps. ci. 2.

² Matt. v. 17.

⁵ John x. 10.

⁸ Isa. xlv. 23.

¹¹ Cant. iv. 16.

³ Matt. ix. 13.

⁶ John xii. 46

⁹ John xiv. 18.

¹² Cant. v. 1.

He *is* come. Do not miss the unspeakable blessing and joy of meeting Him and resting in His presence, by hurrying away to anything else, by listening to an outward call.¹ Stay *now*, lay the little book aside, kneel down at your King's feet, doubt not His word, which is 'more sure' than even the 'excellent glory'² that apostles beheld, and thank Him for coming to you. Commune with Him now of all that is in your heart,³ and 'rejoice greatly,' for 'behold, thy King cometh unto thee.'

' Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing,
 Bringing news of sin forgiven;
 Jesus comes in sounds of gladness,
 Leading souls redeemed to heaven.

' Jesus comes again in mercy,
 When our hearts are bowed with care;
 Jesus comes again, in answer
 To an earnest, heartfelt prayer.'

GODFREY THRING.

¹ Cant. ii. 3.

² 2 Pet. i. 19.

³ 1 Kings x. 2.

SEVENTH DAY.

The Indwelling of the King.

‘Is not her King in her?’—JER. viii. 19.

WAITING for a royal coming,—What expectation, what preparation, what tension! A glimpse for many, a full view for some, a word for a favored few, and the pageant is over like a dream. The Sovereign may come, but does not stay.

Our King comes not thus: He comes not to pass, but to ‘*dwell* in the midst of thee;’¹ not only in His Church collectively, but in each believer individually.² We pray, ‘Abide with us,’³ and He answers in the sublime plural of Godhead, ‘We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’⁴ Even this grand abiding with us does not extend to the full marvels of His condescension and His nearness, for the next time He speaks of it He changes the ‘with’ to ‘in,’ and thenceforth only speaks of ‘I *in* you,’ ‘I in him,’ ‘I in them.’⁵

Now do not let us say, ‘How can this be?’⁶ but, like Mary, ‘How shall this be?’⁷ This

¹ Zech. ii. 10.

⁴ John xiv. 23.

⁶ John iii. 9.

² 2 Cor. vi. 16.

⁵ John xv. 4, 5; ib. xvii. 23.

⁷ Luke i. 34.

³ Luke xxiv. 29.

means, though not the mode, of the mystery is revealed for our grasp of adoring wonder: 'That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith.'¹ It is almost too wonderful to dare to speak of. Christ Himself, my King, coming to me, into me! abiding, dwelling in my very heart! Really staying there all day, all night, wherever I am, whatever I am doing; here in my poor unworthy heart at this very moment! And this only because the grace that flowed from His own love has broken the bars of doubt, and because He has given the faith that wanted Him and welcomed Him. Let us pause a little to take it in!

The more we have known of the plague of our own heart,² the more inconceivably wonderful this indwelling of Christ will appear,—much more wonderful than that He chose a manger as His royal resting-place,³ for that had never been defiled by sin, and had never harbored His enemy. It is no use trying to comprehend this incomprehensible grace of our King,—we have only to believe His promise, saying, 'Amen; the Lord God of my Lord the King says so too.'⁴

¹ Eph. iii. 17.

² Luke ii. 7.

³ 1 Kings viii. 38.

⁴ 1 Kings i. 36.

There should be three practical results of this belief:—1. *Holiness*. We must see to it that we resolutely ‘put away’¹ all that ought not to be in His royal abode.² ‘Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.’³ 2. *Confidence*. What does this citadel fear when an invincible general is with it? ‘The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save’⁴ He is ‘the wall of fire round about,’ and ‘the glory in the midst of her;’⁵ and ‘he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.’⁶ 3. *Joy*. Yes! ‘Be glad and rejoice with all the heart,’⁷ ‘sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.’⁸

EIGHTH DAY.

Full Satisfaction in the King.

‘Yea, let him take all, for as much as my lord the king is come again in peace to his own house.’—2 SAM. xix. 30.

It is when the King has really come in peace to His own home in the ‘contrite and humble

¹ Eph. iv. 31. ² 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. ³ 2 Cor. vii. 1. ⁴ Zeph. iii. 17.
⁵ Zech. ii. 5. ⁶ Zech. ii. 8 ⁷ Zeph. iii. 14. ⁸ Zech. ii. 10.

spirit' ¹ (not before),—when He has entered in to make His abode there ² (not before),—that the soul is satisfied with Him ³ alone, and is ready to let any Ziba take all else, because all else really seems nothing at all in comparison to the conscious possession of the Treasure of treasures.⁴

Sometimes this is reached at once, in the first flush of wondering joy at finding the King really 'come in peace' ⁵ to the empty soul which wanted to be 'His own house.'⁶ Sometimes very gradually,—as year after year we realize His indwelling more and more, and find again and again that He is quite enough to satisfy us in all circumstances; that the empty corners of the 'house' are filled one after another; that the old longings have somehow gone away, and the old ambitions vanished; that the old tastes and interests in the things of the world are superseded by stronger tastes and interests in the things of Christ; that He is day by day more really *filling* our lives,⁷—we 'count' (because we really find) one thing after another 'but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,' ⁸

¹ Isa. lvii. 15.

⁴ Matt. xiii. 46.

⁷ Eph. i. 23.

² John xiv. 23.

⁵ Isa. xxxiii. 6.

⁸ Phil. iii. 8.

³ Ps. xxii. 26.

⁶ Heb. iii. 6.

till He leads us on to the rapturous joy of the 'Yea, doubtless,' and '*all* things!'

Now, have we got as far as saying '*some* things,' without being quite sure about '*all* things?' Do you see that it all hinges upon Jesus coming into the heart as '*His own* house,'—*altogether* '*His own*?'¹ For if there are some rooms of which we do not give up the key,—some little sitting-room which we would like to keep as a little mental retreat, with a view from the window, which we do not quite want to give up,—some lodger whom we would rather not send away just yet,—some little dark closet which we have not resolution to open and set to rights,—of course the King has not full possession; it is not all and really '*His own*;' and the very misgiving about it proves that He has *therefore* not yet '*come again in peace.*' It is no use expecting '*perfect peace,*'² while He has a secret controversy³ with us about any withholding of what is '*His own*'⁴ by purchase. Only throw open *all* the doors,⁵ '*and the King of Glory shall come in,*'⁶ and then there will be no craving for other

¹ Acts xxvi. 29.

⁴ Acts v. 2.

² Isa. xxvi. 3.

⁵ Rev. iii. 20.

³ Mic. vii. 2.

⁶ Ps. xxiv. 9.

guests. He will 'fill this house with glory,'¹ and there will be no place left for gloom.

Is it not so? Bear witness, tell it out, you with whom the King dwells in peace? Life is filled with bright interests, time is filled with happy work or peaceful waiting, the mind is filled with His beautiful words and thoughts, the heart is filled with His presence, and you 'abide satisfied'² with Him! Yes, 'tell it out!'

The human heart asks love : but now I know
 That my heart hath from Thee
 All real, and full, and marvellous affection,
 So near, so human ! yet Divine perfection
 Thrills gloriously the mighty glow !
 Thy love is enough for me !

There were strange soul-depths, restless, vast and broad,
 Unfathomed as the sea ;
 An infinite craving for some infinite stilling ;
 But now Thy perfect love is perfect filling !
 Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord my God,
 Then, Thou art enough for me.

¹ Hag. ii. 7.

² Prov xix. 23.

NINTH DAY.

The Sorrow of the King.

‘The king himself also passed over the brook Kidron,’¹
 2 SAM. xv. 23.

‘JESUS went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron.’² How precisely the Old Testament shadow corresponds with the New Testament fulfilment! The King, in sorrow and humiliation, is here brought before us, passing from his royal home, from all his glory and gladness,—passing over into exile and unknown distresses.³

There is no need for imagination in dwelling on His sorrows. The pathos of the plain words is more than enough; no pen has power to add to it. Let us listen to them just as they stand,—not hurrying over them because they are only texts, and we know them all beforehand; they are the Holy Ghost’s sevenfold testimony to the sorrow of the King.

‘A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,’⁴ ‘I am poor and sorrowful.’⁵ ‘The sorrows of death compassed me.’ ‘The sorrows of

¹ Kidron means ‘obscurity’; Cedron is ‘black’ or ‘sad.’

² John xviii. 1.

³ 2 Sam. xviii. 20.

⁴ Isa. liii. 3.

⁵ Ps. lxix. 29.

hell compassed me.'¹ 'Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.'² 'He began to be sorrowful and very heavy.'³ 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.'⁴ Oh, stay a little that you may take it in! hear Jesus saying to you, 'Hear, I pray you, and behold my sorrow?'⁵

'Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.'⁶ The sorrows of the past, the very sorrow that may be pressing heavily at this moment; all yours, all mine; all the sorrows of all His children all through the groaning generations; all that were 'too heavy'⁷ for them,—Jesus bore them all. 'Is it nothing to you?'⁸ It is when the Lord says, 'Now will I gather them' (the rebels and wanderers), that He adds, 'And they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the King of princes.'⁹ Have we this proof that He has indeed gathered us? For '*all* the people,' except the rebels, 'passed over with the king.'¹⁰ Do we know any thing of this passage over Cedron, the brook of sadness, with Him? Pos-

¹ Ps. xviii. 4, 5.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 38.

⁷ Ps. xxxviii. 4.

³ Lam. i. 12.

⁵ Lam. i. 18.

⁸ Lam. i. 12.

¹⁰ 2 Sam. xv. 23.

³ Matt. xxvi. 37.

⁶ Isa. liii. 4.

⁹ Hos. viii. 10.

sibly it seems presumptuous to think of sharing 'the fellowship of His sufferings,'¹ that mysterious privilege! But mark, it was not only the mighty Ittai and 'all his men,' the nobles and the veterans, that passed over, but 'all the little ones that were with him'² too. And so 'the little ones, the weak ones,'³ the least member of His body, may thus 'continue with'⁴ Jesus; and nothing brings one closer to another than a shared sorrow.

But look forward! Because He has drunk 'of the brook in the way, therefore shall He lift up the head.'⁵ Already the 'exceeding sorrowful'⁶ is exchanged for 'Thou hast made Him (the King) exceedingly glad;'⁷ and when the ransomed and gathered of the Lord shall return with everlasting joy,⁸ 'their King shall also pass before them.'⁹

¹ Phil. iii. 10.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27.

⁵ Ps. cx. 7.

⁷ Ps. xxi. 6.

² 2 Sam. xv. 22.

⁴ Luke xxii. 28.

⁶ Matt. xxvi. 38.

⁸ Isa. xxxv. 10.

⁹ Mic. ii. 13.

TENTH DAY.

Going forth with the King.

‘The king said, Wherefore wentest thou not with me?’—
2 SAM. xix. 25.

‘WITH me!’¹ To be with our King will be our highest bliss for eternity; and surely it is the position of highest honor and gladness now. But if we would always *be* with Him, we must sometimes be ready to *go* with Him.²

‘The Son of God goes forth to war’ now-a-days. Do we go with Him? His cross is ‘without the gate.’ Do we go ‘forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach’?³ Do we really go with Him every day and all day long, following ‘the Lamb whithersoever He goeth’?⁴ What about this week—this day? Have we loyally gone with our King wherever His banner, His footsteps, go before?⁵

If the voice of our King is heard in our hearts, ‘Wherefore wentest *thou* not with me?’—thou who hast eaten ‘continually at the King’s table’⁶—thou who hast had a place among ‘the King’s sons,’⁷—thou unto whom the King has shown

¹ John xvii. 24.

² 1 Thess. iv. 17.

³ Heb. xiii. 12, 13.

⁴ Rev. xiv. 4.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 21.

⁶ 2 Sam. ix. 13.

⁷ 2 Sam. ix. 11.

'the kindness of God,'¹ we have no 'because' to offer. He would have healed the spiritual lameness that hindered,² and we might have run after Him. We are without excuse.

It is only now that we can go with Jesus into conflict, suffering, loneliness, weariness. It is only now that we can come to the help of the Lord against the mighty³ in this great battle-field. Shall we shrink from opportunities which are not given to the angels? Surely, even with Him in glory, the disciples must 'remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said'⁴ to them, 'Ye are they which have continued *with me* in my temptations,'⁵ with a thrill of rapturous thanksgiving that such a privilege was theirs.

There will be no more suffering with Him in heaven, only reigning with Him;⁶ no more fighting under His banner, only sitting with Him on His throne.⁷ But to-day we may prove our loving and grateful allegiance to our King in the presence of His enemies, by rising up and going forth with Him,—forth *from* a life of easy idleness or selfish business,—forth *into* whatever form

¹ 2 Sam. ix. 3.

⁴ Acts xx. 35.

² 2 Sam. xix. 26.

⁵ Luke xxii. 28.

⁷ Rev. iii. 21.

³ Judges v. 23.

⁶ 2 Tim. ii. 12.

of blessed fellowship in His work, His wars, or, it may be, of His sufferings, the King Himself may choose for us.¹ We have heard His call, 'Come unto me.' To-day He says, 'Come *with* me.'²

True-hearted, whole-hearted! Faithful and loyal,
King of our lives, by Thy grace we will be!
Under Thy standard exalted and royal,
Strong in Thy strength we will battle for Thee.

ELEVENTH DAY.

The Smiting of the King.

'I will smite the king only.'—2 SAM. xvii. 2.

It may be that this futile threat of a wicked man against the king was like the saying of Caiaphas,—'not of himself,'³ but written for our learning 'more about Jesus.'⁴ A deadly stroke was to be aimed at 'the king only,' for he was 'worth ten thousand' of the people;⁵ if he were smitten, they should escape, Do the words of David in another place tell of his great Anti-type's desire that it should be so? 'Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, O Lord my God, be on me, . . . but NOT on Thy people.'⁶ 'For the

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 1; Phil. iii. 10.

² Cant. iv. 8.

³ John xi. 51.

⁴ Rom. xv. 4.

⁵ Cf. 1 Kings xxii. 31; 2 Sam. xviii. 3.

⁶ 1 Chron. xxi. 17.

transgression of my people was the stroke upon Him'¹ (*margin*); therefore not upon us, never upon us. The lightning that strikes the conductor instead of the building to which it is joined, has spent its fiery force and strikes no more.

Not the hand of an impotent foe, but the sharp sword of the omnipotent Lord of hosts, was lifted to smite His Shepherd,—our Shepherd-king,² The Great,³ The Chief,⁴ The Good⁵ (and The Beautiful, as the original implies). Think of the words, 'stricken, smitten of God,'⁶ with their unknown depths of agony, and then of Jesus, Him whom we love,⁷ fathoming those black depths of agony *alone!* '*Jesus, smitten of God!*'⁸ can we even *say* the words, and not feel moved as no other grief could move us? Do not let us shrink from dwelling upon it; let us rather ask the Holy Spirit, even now, to show us a little of what this awful smiting really was,—to show us our dear Lord Jesus Christ, in this tremendous proving of His own and His Father's love,—to whisper in our hearts as we gaze upon the Crucified One, 'Behold *your* King!'⁹

¹ Isa. liii. 8.

⁴ 1 Pet. v. 4

⁷ 1 Pet. i. 8.

² Zech. xiii. 7.

⁵ John x. 11.

⁸ Isa. lxiii. 3.

³ Heb. xiii. 20.

⁶ Isa. liii. 4.

⁹ John ix. 14.

‘The King *only*.’ For, ‘by Himself He purged our sins.’¹ Certainly we had nothing to do with it then! Certainly no other man or means had anything to do with it! and certainly nothing, and no one now can touch that great fact, so far out of reach of human quibbling and meddling, that Jesus, ‘His own self, bare our sins in His own body on the tree.’² Is not the fact that He ‘with whom we have to do,’³ *was smitten of God instead of us*, enough? What else can we want to guarantee our salvation?

‘The King *only*.’ For the sorrow of our King is shared with His people; but in the smiting we have no part. We can only stand ‘afar off,’ bowed and hushed in shuddering love, as the echoes of the awful stripes that fell on Him float down through the listening centuries, while each throb of the healed heart replies, ‘For me! for me!’⁵

‘I have trodden the wine-press *alone* and of the people there was none with me.’⁶

¹ Heb. i. 3.

³ Heb. iv. 13.

⁶ Isa. liii. 5.

² 1 Pet. ii. 24.

⁴ Matt. xxvii. 55.

⁶ Isa. lxiii. 3.

TWELFTH DAY.

The kinship of the King.

‘The king is near of kin to us.’—2 SAM. xix. 42.

NOT only in the Prophet raised up ‘from the midst of thee, of thy brethren,’¹ and in the High Priest, ‘thy brother’² ‘taken from among men,’³ do we see the kinship of Christ; but in the divinely chosen King the same wonderful link is given—‘One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.’⁴

How very close this brings us to our glorious Lord! And yet, when we have exhausted all that is contained in the very full and dear idea of ‘brother,’ we are led beyond, to realize One who ‘sticketh *closer* than a brother,’⁵ because no earthly relationship can entirely shadow forth what Jesus is. And whatever relationship we most value or most miss, will be the very one which, whether by possession or loss, will show us most of Him, and yet fall short of His ‘reality.’ For we always have to go beyond the type to reach the antitype.

¹ Deut. xviii. 15.

² Ex. xxviii. 1.

³ Heb. v. 1.

⁴ Deut. xvii. 15.

⁵ Prov. xviii. 24.

The King is so 'near of kin,' that we may come to Him as the tribes of Israel did, and say, 'Behold, we are Thy bone and Thy flesh;' ¹ finding many a sweet endorsement of the type in His word. So near of kin, that He is 'in all things' 'made like unto His brethren;' ² and whatever is included in the flesh and blood of which we are partakers, sin only is excepted. 'He also Himself likewise took part of the same.' ³

So 'near of kin to us,' and yet God! Therefore every good thing that we find in near human relationships, we shall find in Jesus the immeasurable proportion of the divine to the human. Is not this worth thinking out, each for ourselves?—worth seeking to enter into?

But will He acknowledge the kinship? He hath said, 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.' ⁴ 'How beautiful to be Christ's little sister'! said a young disciple. For of course He really means it. Will not this make our prayer more fervent, 'Teach me to do Thy will?' ⁵

¹ 2 Sam. v. 1.

⁴ Matt. xii. 50.

² Heb. ii. 17.

⁵ Ps. cxliii. 10.

³ Heb. ii. 14.

If the King is indeed near of kin to us, the royal likeness will be recognizable. Can it be said of us, 'As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king?'¹ Nor let us shrink from aiming at the still higher standard, 'The King's daughter is all glorious *within*.'²

We must not dwell only on a one-sided kinship. If 'He is not ashamed to call' us 'brethren,'³ shall we ever be ashamed to call Him Master? If He is ready to give us all that is implied or involved in near kinship, should we fail to reciprocate with all the love and sympathy and faithfulness which the tie demands on our side?

"Also, if we do realize this great privilege, let us prove our loyal love to our Brother-King by 'looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day'⁴ of His return. Let us not incur the touching reproach, 'Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the King?'⁵

Joined to Christ in mystic union,
 We Thy members, Thou our Head,
 Sealed by deep and true communion,
 Risen with Thee, who once were dead.

¹ Judges viii. 18.

² Ps. xlv. 13.

³ Heb. ii. 11.

⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 18.

⁵ 2 Sam. xix. 12.

Saviour, we would humbly claim
All the power of this Thy name.

Instant sympathy to brighten
All their weakness and their woe,
Guiding grace their way to lighten,
Shall Thy loving members know,
All their sorrows Thou dost bear,
All Thy gladness they shall share.

Everlasting life Thou givest,
Everlasting love to see;
They shall live because Thou livest,
And their life is hid with Thee.
Safe Thy members shall be found,
When their glorious Head is crowned!

THIRTEENTH DAY.

The Desire of the King.

‘So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.’—Ps. xlv. 11.

CAN this be for us? What beauty have we that the King can desire? For the more we have seen of His beauty,¹ the more we have seen of our own utter ugliness. What, then, can He see? ‘My comeliness which I had put upon thee.’² ‘The beauty of the Lord our God upon us.’³ For ‘He will beautify the meek with salvation.’⁴ And so the desire of the King is set upon us.

¹ Isa. vi. 5. ² Ezek. xvi. 14. ³ Ps. xc. 17. ⁴ Ps. cxlix. 4.

Perhaps we have had the dreary idea, 'Nobody wants me!' We never need grope in that gloom again, when the King Himself desires us! This desire is love active, love in glow, love going forth, love delighting and longing. It is the strongest representation of the love of Jesus,—something far beyond the love of pity or compassion; it is taking pleasure in His people;¹ delighting in them;² willing (*i. e.* putting forth the grand force of His will) that they should be with Him where He is, with Him now, with Him always.³ It is the love that does not and will not endure separation,—the love that cannot do without its object. 'So shall the King desire thy beauty.'

He gave us a glimpse of this gracious fervor when He said, 'With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.'⁴ With Gethsemane and Calvary in fullest view, His heart's desire was to spend those few last hours in closest intercourse with His disciples. 'So' did He desire them.

Now, if we take the King at His word, and

¹ Ps. cxlix. 4.

² Is. lxi. 4.

³ John xvii. 24; ib. xii. 26.

⁴ Luke xxii. 15.

really believe that He thus desires us, can we possibly remain cold-hearted and indifferent to Him? Can we bear the idea of disappointing His love,—*such* love,—and meeting it with any such pale, cool response as would wound any human heart, ‘I do not know whether I love you or not!’

Oh, do let us leave off morbidly looking to see exactly how much we love (which is just like trying to warm ourselves with a thermometer, and perhaps only ends in doubting whether we love at all), and look straight away at His love and his desire!¹ Think of Jesus actually wanting you, really desiring your love, not satisfied with all the love of all the angels and saints unless you love him too,—needing that little drop to fill His cup of joy! Is there no answering throb, no responsive glow?

‘Lord, let the glow of Thy great love
Through my whole being shine!’

Perhaps it is upon the emphatic ‘*so*,’ as pointing to the context, that the intensity of the emphatic ‘*greatly*’ hinges. It is when the bride

¹ Heb. xii. 22.

forgets her own people and her father's house,¹—that is, when her life and love are altogether given to her Royal Bridegroom,—that He 'shall *greatly* desire' her beauty. When His glorious beauty has so filled our eyes, and His incomprehensible love has so filled our hearts,² that He is first, and most, and dearest of all,—when we can say not merely, 'The desire of our souls is to Thy name,'³ but 'There is *none* upon earth that I desire beside Thee,'⁴—when thus we are, to the very depth of our being, really and entirely our Beloved's, then we may add, in solemn, wondering gladness, 'And His desire is toward me.'⁵

O love surpassing thought,

So bright, so grand, so clear, so true, so glorious;

Love infinite, love tender, love unsought,

Love changeless, love rejoicing, love victorious!

And this great love for us in boundless store;

Christ's everlasting love! What wouldst thou more?

FOURTEENTH DAY.

The Sceptre of the King.

'The king held out the golden sceptre.'—ESTH. viii. 4.

JESUS is He 'that holdeth the sceptre,'⁶—the symbol first of kingly right and authority, and

¹ Ps. xlv. 10.

² Eph. iii. 19.

³ Isa. xxvi. 8.

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 25.

⁵ Cant. vii. 10.

⁶ Amos. i. 5.

next of righteousness and justice. 'A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom,'¹— 'a right sceptre.'² And yet the golden sceptre was held out as the sign of sovereign mercy to one who, by 'one law of his to put him to death,' must otherwise have perished, 'that he may live.'³ Thus, by the combination of direct statement and type, we are shown in this figure the beautiful, perfect meeting of the 'mercy and truth' of our King, the 'righteousness and peace' of His kingdom.⁴

Again and again the Holy Ghost repeats this grand blending of seemingly antagonistic attributes, confirming to us in many ways this strong consolation.⁵

How precious the tiny word *and* becomes, as we read, 'He is just, *and* having salvation.'⁶ 'A merciful *and* faithful High Priest.'⁷ 'A just God, *and* a Saviour.'⁸ We do not half value God's *little* words.

"To 'the King's enemies' the sceptre is a 'rod of iron'⁹ (for the word is the same in Hebrew). They cannot rejoice in the justice which they

¹ Heb. i. 8.

² Ps. xlv. 6.

³ Esth. iv. 11.

⁴ Ps. lxxxv. 10; ib. lxxii. 2, 3.

⁵ Heb. vi. 18.

⁶ Zech. ix. 9. ⁷ Heb. ii. 17. ⁸ Isa. xlv. 21. ⁹ Ps. xlv. 5; ib. ii. 9.

defy. To the King's willing subjects it is indeed golden, a beautiful thing, and a most precious thing. We admire and glory in His absolute justice and righteousness; it satisfies the depths of our moral being,—it is so strong, so perfect.

His justice is, if we may reverently say so, the strong point of His atoning work. The costly means of our redemption were paid for 'at the full price.'¹ He fulfilled the law. There was nothing wanting in all the work which His Father gave Him to do. He finished it.² And His Father was satisfied. Thus He was just towards His Father, that He might be faithful and just to forgive us our sins.³ It is no weak compassion, merely wrought on by misery, but strong, grand, infinite, and equal justice and mercy, balanced as they never are in human minds. For only the ways of the Lord are thus 'equal.'⁴

And oh, how 'sweet is Thy mercy'! and just because of the justice, how 'sure'!⁵ Esther said, 'If I perish, I perish.'⁶ So need not we, 'for His mercy endureth forever.'⁷ And so, every time we come into the audience chamber of

¹ 1 Chron. xxi. 24; Matt. v. 17.

² John xvii. 4; Isa. xlii. 21.

³ 1 John i. 9.

⁴ Ezek. xviii. 25.

⁵ Ps. cix. 20, P. B. V; Isa. lv. 3. ⁶ Esth. iv. 16. ⁷ Ps. cxxxvi. 1.

our King, we know that the golden sceptre will be held out to us, first 'that we may live,'¹ and then for favor after favor. 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'² Not stand afar off and think about it, and keep our King waiting; but, like Esther, 'let us draw near,'³ and 'touch the top of the sceptre.'⁴

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Cleaving to the King.

'The men of Judah clave unto their king.'—2 SAM. xx. 2.

FOR it is not a matter of course that coming is followed by cleaving. Even when the King Himself, in His veiled royalty, walked and talked with His few faithful followers, 'many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.'⁵ There was no word of indignation or reproach, only the appeal of infinite pathos from His gracious lips, 'Will ye also go away?'⁶

Let this sound in our ears to-day, not only in moments of temptation to swerve from truest-hearted loyalty and service, but all through the

¹ Esth. v. 2; iv. 11; viii. 3, 4.

² Heb. iv. 16.

³ Heb. x. 22.

⁴ Esth. v. 2

⁵ John vi. 66.

⁶ John vi. 67.

business of the day; stirring our too easy-going resting into active cleaving; quickening our following afar off¹ into following hard after Him;² rousing us to add to the blessed assurance, 'Thine are we, David!' the bolder and nobler position, 'and *on Thy side!*'³

For this cleaving is not a mere terrified clinging for safety,—it is the bright, brave resolution, strengthened, not weakened, by the sight of waverers or renegades, to be on His side, come what may, because He *is* our King, because we love Him, because His cause and His kingdom are so very dear to us.

We cannot thus cleave, without loosening from other interests. But what matter! Let us be noble for Jesus, like the men of might who 'separated themselves unto David,' and who 'held strongly with him in his kingdom.'⁴ Shall we be mean enough to aim at less, when it is *our Lord Jesus* who would have us entirely 'with Him'?⁵

It is, after all, the easiest and safest course. The especial friends and 'the mighty men which

¹ Matt. xxvi. 58.

² Ps. lxiii. 8.

³ 1 Chron. xii. 18.

⁴ 1 Chron. xii. 8; 1 Chron. xi. 10, marg.

⁵ Cant. iv. 8.

King's question says nothing of some day, but of 'this day.' And the question *is* put to you: if never before, it is sounding in your ears now. Shall your service be His, 'this day,'¹ and henceforth? or *not?*

The result of willing consecration of ourselves and our service is always joy. 'The people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly;'² but was it not far more, far sweeter, that their king 'also rejoiced with great joy?' How they must have felt when He said, 'Now have I seen with joy Thy people which are present here, to offer willingly unto Thee!'³

For when a heart and life are willingly offered and fully surrendered to Him, He sees of 'the travail of His soul'⁴ in it; it is a new accomplishment of the work which He came to do: and what then? He 'is satisfied.' If motive were wanting to yield ourselves unto Him,⁵ would it not be more than supplied by the thought that it will be satisfaction and joy to Him 'who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood?'⁶ It seems just the one blessed opportu-

¹ Josh. xxiv. 15.

⁴ Isa. liii. 11.

² 1 Chron. xxix. 9.

⁵ Rom. vi. 13.

³ 1 Chron. xxix. 17.

⁶ Rev. i. 5.

nity given to us of being His true cup-bearers,¹ of bringing the wine of joy to our King; and in so doing He will make our own cups to run over.²

As our own hearts are filled with the intense joy of consecration to our Lord, a yet intenser glow will come as we remember that His joy is greater than ours, for He is anointed 'with the oil of gladness above' His 'fellows.'³

Shall not 'this day' be 'the day of the gladness of His heart?'⁴ Will you not consecrate your service to-day unto Him?⁵ For then 'He will save, He will rejoice over *thee* with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over *thee* with singing.'⁶

Take myself, and I will be,
Ever, *only*, ALL, for Thee!

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Rest on the Word of the King.

'The word of my lord the king shall now be for rest' (*margin*).—2 SAM. xiv. 17.

HERE is the whole secret of rest from the very beginning to the very end. The *word* of our

¹ 1 Kings x. 5.
[†] Cant. iii. 11.

² Ps. xxiii. 5.
⁵ 1 Chron. xxix. 5.

³ Ps. xlv. 7.
⁶ Zeph. iii. 17.

King is all we have and all we need for deep, utter heart-rest, which no surface waves of this troublesome world can disturb.¹ What gave 'rest from thy sorrow and from thy fear'² at the very first, when we wanted salvation and peace? It was not some vague, pleasing impression, some indefinable hush that came to us (or if it was, the unreality of the rest was soon proved), but some word of our King which we saw to be worthy of all acceptance;³ we believed it,⁴ and by it Jesus gave us rest.⁵

There is no other means of rest for all the way but the very same. The moment we simply believe any word of the King, we find that it is truly 'for rest,'⁶ about the point to which it refers. And if we would but *go on taking* the King's word about every single thing, we should *always* find it, then and there, 'for rest.' Every flutter of unrest may, if we look honestly into it, be traced to not entirely and absolutely taking the King's word. His words are *enough* for rest at all times, and in all circumstances; therefore we are sinning the great sin of unbelief when-

¹ Job xxxiv. 29.

⁴ 2 Thess. ii. 13.

² Isa. xiv. 3.

⁶ Heb. iv. 2, 3.

³ 1 Tim. i. 15.

⁶ Mark ix. 23.

ever we allow ourselves in any phase of unrest. It is not infirmity, but sin, to neglect to make use of the promises which He meant for our strong consolation and continual help.¹ And we ought not to acquiesce in the shadows which are only around us, because we do not hear, or hearing do not heed, God's call into the sunshine.

Take the slightest and commonest instances. If we have an entire and present belief in 'My grace is sufficient for thee,'² or, 'Lo, I am with you alway,'³ should we feel nervous at anything He calls us to do for Him? Would not that word be indeed 'for rest'⁴ in the moment of need—'rest from the hard bondage' of service to which we feel unequal?⁵ Have we not sometimes found it so, and if so, why not always? I see nothing about 'sometimes' in any of His promises. If we have an entire and present belief that 'all things work together for good,'⁶ or that He leads us 'forth by the right way,'⁷ should we feel worried when some one thing seems to work wrong, and some one yard of the way is not what we think straightest?

¹ Heb. vi. 18.

⁴ Phil. iv. 19.

² 2 Cor. xii. 9.

⁵ Isa. xiv. 3.

⁷ Ps. cvii. 7.

³ Matt. xxviii. 20.

⁶ Rom. viii. 28.

We lean upon the word of the King for everlasting life,¹ why not for daily life also? For it shall 'now be for rest;' only try it to-day, 'now,' and see if it shall not be so! When he says 'perfect peace,'² He cannot mean imperfect peace. 'The people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.'³ Just so simply let us rest upon the words of our King, Jesus!

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

The Business of the King.

'The king's business required haste.'—I SAM. xxi. 8.

AND yet there is no other business about which average Christians take it so easy. They 'must'⁴ go their usual round, they 'must' write their letters, they 'must' pay off their visits and other social claims, they 'must' do all that is expected of them; and then, after this and that and the other thing is cleared off, they will do what they can of the King's business.⁵ They do not say 'must' about that, unless it is some part of His business which is undertaken at second-hand, and

¹ 1 John ii. 25.

² Isa. xxvi. 3.

³ 2 Chron. xxxii. 8.

⁴ Luke xiv. 20.

⁵ Luke ix. 59, 61.

with more sense of responsibility to one's clergyman than to one's King. Is this being 'faithful and loyal and single hearted?'¹ If it has been so, oh, let it be so no more! How can 'Jesus *Only*'² be our motto, when we have not even said 'Jesus *first*?'³

The King's business *requires* haste. It is always pressing, and may never be put off. Much of it has to do with souls which may be in eternity to-morrow;⁴ and with opportunities which are gone for ever if not used then and there; there is no 'convenient season'⁵ for it but to-day.⁶ Often it is not really done at all, because it is not done in the spirit of holy haste. We meet an unconverted friend again and again, and beat about the bush, and think to gain quiet influence and make way gradually, and call it judicious not to be in a hurry, when the real reason is that we are wanting in holy eagerness and courage to do the King's true business with that soul, and in nine such cases out of ten nothing ever comes out of it; but 'As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.'⁷ Have we not found it so?

¹ Eph. vi. 5, 6.

⁴ Luke xii. 20.

² Matt. xvii. 8.

⁵ Acts xxiv. 25.

⁷ 1 Kings xx. 40.

³ Matt. vi. 33.

⁶ Heb. iii. 13.

Delay in the Lord's errands is next to disobedience, and generally springs out of it, or issues in it. 'God commanded me to make haste.'¹ Let us see to it that we can say, 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.'²

We never know what regret and punishment delay in the King's business may bring upon ourselves. Amasa 'tarried longer than the set time which he (the king) had appointed him,'³ and the result was death to himself. Contrast the result in Abigail's case, where, except she had hastened, her household would have perished.⁴

We find four rules for doing the King's business, in His word. We are to do it,—first, 'Heartily ;'⁵ second, 'Diligently,'⁶ third, 'Faithfully ;'⁷ fourth, '*Speedily.*'⁸ Let us ask Him to give us the grace of energy to apply them this day to whatever He indicates as our part of His business, remembering that *He* said 'I *must* be about my Father's business.'⁹

Especially in that part of it which is between Himself and ourselves alone, let us never delay. Oh, the incalculable blessings that we have al-

¹ 2 Chron. xxxv. 21.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxv. 34.

⁷ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12.

² Ps. cxix. 60.

⁵ Col. iii. 23.

⁸ Ezra vii. 21.

³ 2 Sam. xx. 5.

⁶ Ezra vii. 23.

⁹ Luke ii. 49.

ready lost by putting off our own dealings with our King! Abigail first 'made haste'¹ to meet David for mere safety; soon afterwards, she again 'hasted and arose and went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.'²

Thus hastening, we shall rise from privilege to privilege, and 'go from strength to strength.'³

What shall be our word for Jesus? Master, give it day by day;

Ever as the need arises, teach Thy children what to say.

Give us holy love and patience; grant us deep humility,
That of self we may be emptied, and our hearts be full of
Thee;

Give us zeal and faith and fervor, make us winning, make
us wise,

Single-hearted, strong and fearless;—Thou hast called us,
we will rise!

Let the might of Thy good Spirit go with every loving word;
And by hearts prepared and opened, be our message always
heard.

NINETEENTH DAY.

The Readiness of the King's Servants.

'Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.'—2 SAM. xv. 15.

THIS is the secret of steady and unruffled gladness in 'the business of the Lord, and the ser-

¹ 1 Sam. xxv. 18.

² 1 Sam. xxv. 42.

³ Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

vice of the King,'¹ whether we are 'over the treasures of the house of God,'² or, 'for the outward business over Israel.'³

It makes all the difference! If we are really, and always, and equally ready to do *whatsoever*⁴ the King appoints, all the trials and vexations arising from any change in His appointments, great or small, simply do not exist. If He appoints me to work there, shall I lament that I am not to work here?⁵ If he appoints me to wait indoors to-day, am I to be annoyed because I am not to work out-of-doors? If I meant to *write* His message this morning, shall I grumble because He sends interrupting visitors, rich or poor, to whom I am to *speak* them or 'show kindness'⁶ for His sake, 'or at least obey His command, 'Be courteous?'⁷ If all my 'members'⁸ are really at His disposal, why should I be put out if to-day's appointment is some simple work for my hands or errands for my feet, instead of some seemingly more important doing of head or tongue?

Does it seem a merely ideal life? Try it! be-

¹ 1 Chron. xxvi. 30.

² 1 Chron. xxvi. 20.

³ 1 Chron. xxvi. 29.

⁴ John ii. 5.

⁵ Josh. i. 16.

⁶ 2 Sam. ix. 3.

⁷ 1 Pet. iii. 8.

⁸ Rom. vi. 13.

gin at once ; before you venture away from this quiet moment, ask your King to take you 'wholly' into His service, and place all the hours of this day quite simply at His disposal, and ask Him to make and keep you *ready* to do just exactly what He appoints. Never mind about to-morrow ;¹ one day at a time is enough. Try it to-day, and see if it is not a day of strange, almost *curious* peace, so sweet that you will be only too thankful, when to-morrow comes, to ask Him to take it also,—till it will become a blessed habit to hold yourself simply and 'wholly at Thy commandment' 'for *any* manner of service.'²

Then will come, too, an indescribable and unexpected sense of freedom, and a total relief from the self-imposed bondage of 'having to get through' what we think lies before us. For, 'of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen.'³

Then, too, by thus being ready, moment by moment, for whatsoever He shall appoint, we realize very much more that we are not left alone, but that we are dwelling 'with the King

¹ Jas. iv. 14.

² 1 Chron. xxviii. 21.

³ 1 Kings ix. 22.

for His work.'¹ Thus the very fact of an otherwise vexatious interruption is transmuted into a precious proof of the nearness of the King.² His interference implies His interest and His presence.

The 'whatsoever' is not necessarily active work. It may be waiting (whether half an hour or half a lifetime), learning, suffering, sitting still. But, dear fellow-servants of 'my Lord the King,' shall we be less ready for these, if any of them are His appointments for to-day? 'Whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.'³

'Ready' implies something of preparation, - not being taken by surprise. So let us ask Him to prepare us for all that He is preparing for us. And may 'the hand of God give' us 'one heart to do the commandment of the King!'⁴

' Lord, I have given my life to Thee,
And every day and hour is Thine;
What Thou appointest let them be;
Thy will is better, Lord, than mine.

A. L. WARING.

¹ 1 Chron. iv. 23.

³ 2 Sam. iii. 36.

² Ps. cxxxix. 5.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxx. 12.

TWENTIETH DAY.

The Friendship of the King.

‘He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.’—PROV. xxii. 11.

‘Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure?’¹ Who must not despair of the friendship of the King if this were the condition?² But His wonderful condescension in promising His friendship bends yet lower in its tenderly devised condition. Not to the absolutely pure in heart,³ but to the perhaps very sorrowfully longing lover of that pureness, come the gracious words, ‘The King shall be his Friend.’

Yet there must be some proof of this love; and it is found in ‘the grace of His lips.’ ‘For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’⁴ Here, again, we stop and question our claim; for our speech has not always been ‘with grace;’⁵ and the memory of many a graceless and idle word rises to bar it.⁶ How then shall the King be our Friend? Another word comes to our help: ‘Grace is poured into *thy*

¹ Prov. xx. 9.² Hab. i. 13.³ Matt. v. 8.⁴ Matt. xii. 34.⁵ Col. iv. 6.⁶ Matt. xii. 36.

lips,'¹ — grace that overflowed in gracious words,² such as never man spake,³ perfectly holy and beautiful; and we look up to our King and plead that He has Himself fulfilled the condition in which we have failed,— that this is part of the righteousness which He wrought for us, and which is really unto us and upon us, because we believe in Him;⁴ and so, for the grace of His own lips, the King shall be our Friend.

Who has not longed for an ideal and yet a real friend,—one who should exactly understand us⁵ to whom we could tell everything,⁶ and in whom we could altogether confide,—one who should be very wise and very true,⁷ — one of whose love and unfailing interest we could be certain?⁸ There are other points for which we could not hope,— that this friend should be very far above us, and yet the very nearest and dearest, always with us,⁹ always thinking of us, always doing kind and wonderful things for us;¹⁰ undertaking and managing everything;¹¹ forgetting nothing, failing in nothing;¹² quite certain never to change and

¹ Ps. xlv. 2.

⁴ Rom. iii. 22.

⁷ Rev. xix. 11.

¹⁰ Ps. xl. 17.

² Luke iv. 22.

⁶ Ps. cxxxix. 2.

⁸ John xiii. 1.

¹¹ Isa. xxxvii. 14.

³ John vii. 46.

⁶ Mark vi. 37.

⁹ Matt. xxxviii. 20.

¹² Zeph. iii. 5.

never to die,¹—so that this one grand friendship should fill our lives, and that we really never need trouble about anything for ourselves any more at all.²

Such is our Royal Friend, and more; for no human possibilities of friendship can illustrate what He is to those to whom He says, “Ye are my friends.”³ We, even we, may look up to our glorious King, our Lord and our God, and say, ‘This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!’⁴ And then we, even we, may claim the privilege of being ‘the King’s companion’⁵ and the King’s friend.’⁶

TWENTY FIRST DAY.

The Light of the King’s Countenance.

‘In the light of the king’s countenance is life.’—PROV. xvi. 15.

BUT first fell the solemn words, ‘Thou hast set our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.’⁷ That was the first we knew of its brightness; and to some its revelation has been so terrible, that

¹ Mal. iii. 6.

² 1 Pet. v. 7.

³ John xv. 14.

⁴ Cant. v. 16.

⁵ 1 Chron. xxvii. 33.

⁶ 1 Kings iv. 5.

⁷ Ps. xc. 8.

they can even understand how the Lord 'shall destroy' the wicked 'with the brightness of His coming.'¹ Yet, though we feel that 'His eyes were as a flame of fire,'² we found also that our 'King that sitteth in the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with His eyes ;'³ and that it was when we stood in that light, that we found the power of the precious blood of Jesus, the Anointed One, to cleanse us from all sin.⁴

This gives new value to the promise, 'They *shall* walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance ;'⁵ for it is when we walk in the light that we may claim and do realize the fulness of its power and preciousness,—not for fitful and occasional cleansing, but for a glorious, perpetual, present cleansing from all sin. Do not let us translate it into another tense for ourselves, and read,⁶ '*did* cleanse last time we knelt and asked for it,' but keep to the tense which the Holy Ghost has written, and meet the foe-flung darts of doubt⁷ with faith's great answer, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth (*i. e. goes on cleansing*) us from all sin.'

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 8.

⁴ 1 John i. 7.

² Rev. i. 14.

⁵ Ps. lxxxix. 15.

⁷ Eph. vi. 16.

³ Prov. xx. 8.

⁶ Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Thus the light of His countenance shall save us. Look at Ps. xlv. 3, where we see it as the means of past salvation,¹ and then at Ps. xlii. 5, where the Psalmist anticipates praise for its future help;² while the two are beautifully linked by the marginal reading of the latter, which makes it present salvation: 'Thy presence *is* salvation.'

Then follows peace. The waves are stilled, and the storm-clouds flee away noiselessly and swiftly and surely, when He lifts up the light of His countenance upon us, and gives us peace.³ For this uplifting is the shining forth of His favor,⁴—the smile instead of the frown; and as we walk in the light of it, the peace will grow into joy, and we shall be even here and now 'exceeding glad with Thy countenance,'⁵ while every step will bring us nearer to the resurrection joy of Christ Himself, saying with Him, 'Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance.'⁶

So we shall find day by day, that in the light of the King's countenance is cleansing, salvation, peace, joy;—and do not these make up life, the

¹ Ps. xlv. 3.

⁴ 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

² Ps. xlii. 5.

⁵ Ps. xxi. 6.

³ Num. vi. 26.

⁶ Acts ii. 28.

new life, the glad life of the children of the King?

‘Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us’¹ this day, and in it let us have life, yea, ‘Life more abundantly.’²

‘He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.’³

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

The Tenderness of the King.

‘And the king commanded, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.’—2 SAM. xviii. 5.

Even with Absalom! Even with the heartless, deliberate traitor and rebel.⁴ We must recollect clearly what he was, to appreciate the exquisite tenderness of David in such a command to his rough war captains in such untender times. For the sake of his people and his kingdom, he must send them forth against him, but the deep love gushes out in the bidding, ‘Deal gently for my sake.’

It was no new impulse. When Amnon was murdered, the king ‘wept very sore,’ and

¹ Ps. iv. 6.

³ John viii. 12.

² John x. 10.

⁴ 2 Sam. xv. 2-11.

'mourned for his son every day,'¹ and yet, when the fratricide had fled, 'the soul of King David longed to go forth unto him,'² and 'the king's heart was toward Absalom.'³ And when God's own vengeance fell upon the wicked son, David's lamentation over him is perhaps unparalleled in its intensity of pathos among the records of human tenderness.⁴

Turn to the Antitype, and see the divine tenderness of our King. Again and again it gleams out, whether He himself wept, or whether He said, 'Weep not,'⁵—whether in the tender look, the tender word, or the tender touch of gentlest mercy. The Gospels are full of His tenderness. There is not room here even for the bare mention of the instances of it; but will you not give a little time to searching quietly for them, so that, reading them under the teaching of the Holy Spirit,⁶ you may get a concentrated view of the wonderful tenderness of Jesus, and yield your heart to be moved by it, and your spirit to be so penetrated by it, that you may share it and reflect it? Remember that in such a search we learn

¹ 2 Sam. xiii. 36, 37.

² 2 Sam. xiii. 39.

³ 2 Sam. xiv. 1.

⁴ 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

⁵ Luke xix. 41; ib. vii 13; ib. xxii. 61.

⁶ John xiv. 26.

not only what He did and said, nor only what He was, but what he *is*; and in all His recorded tenderness we are looking into the *present* heart of Jesus, and seeing what we shall find for ourselves as we have need. For He is 'this same Jesus' to-day.

Then let us glance at the volume of our own experience. Who that has had any dealings with Christ at all, but must bear witness that He has indeed dealt gently with us. Has not even suffering been sweet when it showed us more of this?² What if He had ever 'dealt with us after our sins'?³ But he never did, and never will.⁴ He hath dealt gently and will deal gently with us, for His own sake, and according to His own heart, from the first drawings of His loving-kindness, on throughout the measurless developments of his everlasting love.⁵ Not till we are in heaven shall we know the full meaning of 'Thy *gentleness* hath made me great.'⁶

May we not recognize a command in this, as well as a responsibility to follow the example of the gentleness of Christ'?⁷ Perhaps next time

¹ Acts i. 11.² Lam. iii. 32.³ Ps. ciii. 10.⁴ Job xi. 6.⁶ Jer. xxxi. 3.⁶ Ps. xviii. 35.⁷ 2 Cor. x. 1.

we are tempted to be a little harsh or hasty with an erring or offending one, the whisper will come, 'Deal gently, for My sake!'

Return!

O erring, yet beloved!

I wait to bind thy bleeding feet, for keen
And rankling are the thorns where thou hast been;
I wait to give thee pardon, love, and rest.
(Is not my joy to see thee safe and blest?)
Return! I wait to hear once more thy voice,
To welcome thee anew, and bid thy heart rejoice!

Return!

O chosen of my love!

Fear not to meet thy beckoning Saviour's view;
Long ere I called thee by thy name, I knew
That very treacherously thou wouldst deal;
Now I have seen thy ways,—yet I will heal.
Return! Wilt thou yet linger far from Me?
My wrath is turned away, I have redeemed thee!

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

The Token of the King's Grace.

'To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.'—2 SAM. xiv. 22.

AN answered prayer makes us glad for its own sake. But there is grace behind the gift which

is better and more gladdening than the gift itself. For which is most valued, the 'engaged ring,' or the favor of which it is the token? Setting aside judicial answers to unspiritual prayers,¹ which an honest conscience will have no difficulty in distinguishing, the servants of the King may take it that His answers to their requests are proofs and tokens of His grace and favor,²—of His real, and present, and personal love to themselves individually.

When they are receiving few or none, they should search for the cause, lest it should be some hidden or unrecognized sin.³ For 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;⁴ so *never* let us go on comfortably and easily when He is silent to us. And instead of envying others who get 'such wonderful answers,' 'let us search and try our ways.'⁵

Personal acceptance comes first. We must be 'accepted in the Beloved'⁶ before we can look to be answered through the Beloved. Is there a doubt about this, and a sigh over the words? There need not be; for now, at this moment, the

¹ Ps. cvi. 15; Hos. xiii. 11, etc. ² 1 John iii. 22. ³ Job x. 2.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxviii. 6; Ps. xix. 12; ib. lxvi. 18.

⁵ Lam. iii. 40.

⁶ Eph. i. 6.

old promise stands with its unchangeable welcome to the weary: 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'¹ Then, if you come, now, at this moment, on the strength of His word, you *cannot* be rejected; and if not rejected, there is nothing but one blessed alternative—'accepted!'

Then come the answers! As surely as the prayers go up from the accepted one, so surely will the blessings come down. When Esther had touched the golden sceptre, '*then* said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.'² But is there no 'half' in our King's promise. He says, 'All things' and 'whatsoever.'³ And He *does* 'do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,' and more than fulfils our little scanty requests.⁴

And *then*, by every fresh fulfilment we should receive ever new assurance of our acceptance,—*then* (shall it not be 'to-day?'), as we give thanks for each gracious answer, we may look up con-

¹ John vi. 37; Heb. vii. 25.

³ Matt. xxi. 22; John xiv. 13.

² Esth. v. 3.

⁴ Eph. iii. 20; 1 Kings x. 13.

fidingly and joyfully, and say, 'Thy servant *knoweth* that I have found grace in thy sight.' For He says, 'See, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.'¹

Accepted, Perfect, and Complete,²
 For God's inheritance made meet!³
 How true, how glorious, and how sweet!⁴

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

The Omniscience of the King.

'There is no matter hid from the king.'—2 SAM. xviii. 13.

THE very attributes which are full of terror to 'the King's enemies,'⁵ are full of comfort to the King's friends. Thus His omniscience is like the pillar, which was 'a cloud and darkness' to the Egyptians, but 'gave light by night' to the Israelites.⁶

The king's own General complained of a man who did not act precisely as he himself would have acted. In his reply he uses these words, 'There is no matter hid from the king.' The appeal was final, and Joab had no more to say. When others say, like Joab, '“*Why* didst thou not” do so and so?' and we know or find that full reasons

¹ 1 Sam. xxv. 35.

⁴ Col. ii. 10.

² Eph. i. 6.

⁵ Ps. xlv. 5.

³ Col. i. 28.

⁶ Ex. xiv. 20.

cannot be given or cannot be understood, what rest it is to fall back upon the certainty that our King knows all about it! When we are wearied out with trying to make people understand, how restful it is that no explanations are wanted when we come to speak to Him!¹ 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do ;² and the more we have to do with Him, the more glad and thankful we shall be that there 'is not anything' hid from the King.³

In perplexities,—when we cannot understand what is going on around us—cannot tell whither events are tending—cannot tell what to do, because we cannot see into or through the matter before us,—let us be calmed and steadied and made patient by the thought that what is hidden from us is not hidden from Him. If He chooses to guide us blindfold, let Him do it!⁴ It will not make the least difference to the reality and rightness of the guidance.⁵

In mysteries,—when we see no clue—when we cannot at all understand God's partial revelation—when we cannot lift the veil that hangs before

¹ Job xxiii. 10.

² Heb. iv. 13.

³ 1 Kings x. 3.

⁴ Isa. xlii. 16.

⁵ Ps. cvii. 7.

His secret counsel—when we cannot pierce the holy darkness that enshrouds His ways, or tread the great deep of His judgments where His footsteps are not known,¹—is it not enough that even these matters are not hid from our King? ‘My father will do nothing, either great or small, but he will show it me.’² ‘For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth.’³

Our King could so easily reveal everything to us, and make everything so clear! It would be nothing to Him to tell us all our questions. When He does not, cannot we trust Him, and just be satisfied that He knows, and would tell us if it were best? He has ‘many things to say’ unto us, but He waits till we can bear them.⁴

May we be glad that even our sins are ‘not hid’ from Him? Yes, surely, for He who knows all can and will cleanse all. He has searched us and known us,⁵ as we should shrink from knowing ourselves, and *yet* He has pardoned, and *yet* he loves! ⁶

¹ Ps. xcvi. 2; ib. xxxvi. 6; ib. lxxxvii. 19.

³ John v. 20.

⁵ Ps. cxxxix. 1.

² 1 Sam. xx. 2.

⁴ John xvi. 12.

⁶ Isa. xlvi. 8.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

The Power of the King's Word.

‘Where the word of a king is, there is power.’—ECCL. viii. 4.

THEN the question is, *Where* is it? ‘Let the word of Christ dwell *in you* richly,’¹ and ‘there,’ even ‘in you,’ will be power.

The Crowned One, who is now ‘upholding all things by the word of His power,’² hath said, ‘I have given them Thy word.’³ And those who have received this great gift, ‘not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God,’ know that ‘there is power’ with it, because it ‘effectually worketh also’ in them.⁴

They know its life-giving power, for they can say, ‘Thy word hath quickened me;’⁵ and its life-sustaining power, for they live ‘by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.’⁶ They can say, ‘Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee;’⁷ for in proportion as the word of the king is present in the heart, ‘*there* is power’⁸ against sin. Then let

¹ Col. iii. 16.

⁴ 1 Thess. ii. 13

⁷ Ps. cxix. 11.

² Heb. ii. 9; ib. i. 3.

⁵ Ps. cxix. 50.

⁸ John vi. 63.

³ John xvii. 14.

⁶ Matt. iv. 4.

us use this means of absolute power more, and more life and more holiness will be ours.

‘His word was with power’¹ in Capernaum of old, and it will be with the same power in any place now-a-days. His word cannot fail; it ‘shall not return void;’ it ‘*shall* prosper.’² Therefore, when our ‘words fall to the ground,’³ it only proves that they were not His words. So what we want is not merely that His power may accompany our word, but that we may not speak our own at all, but simply and only the very ‘word of the King.’ Then there will be power in and with it. Bows drawn at a venture⁴ hit in a way that astonishes ourselves, when God puts His own arrows on the string.’⁵

There is great comfort and help in taking this literally. Why ask a little when we may ask much? The very next time we want to speak or write ‘a word for Jesus’ (and of course that ought to be to-day),⁶ let us ask Him to give us not merely a general idea what to say, but to give us literally every single word, and ‘they shall be withal fitted in thy lips.’⁷

¹ Luke iv. 32.

⁴ 1 Kings xxii. 34.

² Isa. lv. 11.

⁶ Ps. xlv. 5.

⁷ Prov. xxii. 18.

³ 1 Sam. iii. 19.

⁶ Heb. iii. 13.

For He will not say, 'Thou hast asked a hard thing,'¹ though it is far more than asking for the mantle of any prophet. He says, 'Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth.'² This was not for Jeremiah alone, for soon after we read, 'He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully'³ (for we must not overlook our responsibility in the matter); and then follows the grand declaration of its power, even when spoken by feeble human lips; 'Is not My word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?'⁴ 'Behold, I will make My words in thy mouth fire.'⁵

If we are not even 'sufficient of ourselves to *think* anything as of ourselves,'⁶ how much less to *speak* anything! 'Have I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.'⁷ We would rather have it so, 'that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.'⁸ Our ascended King has said, 'All power is given unto Me. Go ye *therefore*.'⁹ That is enough for me; and 'I trust in thy word.'¹⁰

¹ 2 Kings ii. 10 ² Jer. i. 9. ³ Jer. xxiii. 28. ⁴ Jer. xxiii. 29.

⁵ Jer. v. 14.

⁶ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

⁷ Num. xxii. 38.

⁸ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

⁹ Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

¹⁰ Ps. cxix. 42

Resting on the faithfulness of Christ our Lord,
 Resting on the fulness of His own sure word,
 Resting on His power, on His love untold,
 Resting on His covenant secured of old.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

The Name of the King.

‘A King shall reign. And this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’—JER. xxiii. 5, 6.

WE cannot do without this most wonderful name. It can never be an old story to us. It is always a ‘new name’¹ in freshness and beauty and power. It is our daily need and our daily joy. For strength it is indeed ‘a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.’² For sweetness it is ‘as ointment poured forth.’³ In it we see at once the highest height and the deepest depth; Jehovah, God of God, Light of Light, and our need of a righteousness which is not our own at all, because we have none. We stand as upon an Alpine slope, face to face with the highest, grandest, purest summit above, and the darkest, deepest valley below, seeing more of

¹ Rev. iii. 12.

² Prov. xviii. 10.

³ Cant. i. 3.

the height because of the depth, and more of the depth because of the height.

Jesus our King 'hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name'¹ than angels, for His Father has given Him his own name,—'He shall be called Jehovah.'² 'But this alone would be too great, too far off for us; it might find echoes among the harpings of sinless angels, but not among the sighings of sinful souls. And so the name was completed for us, by the very word that expresses our truest, deepest, widest, most perpetual need, and the Holy Ghost revealed the Son of God to us as 'Jehovah our Righteousness.'

Do not let us be content with theoretically understanding and correctly holding the doctrine of justification by faith. Turn from the words to the reality, from the theory to the Person, and as a little, glad, wondering child, look at the simple, wonderful truth 'That 'the Righteousness of God' (how magnificent!) is 'unto all and upon all them that believe;'³ therefore, at this very moment, unto and upon you and me, instead of our own filthy rags,⁴ so that we stand clothed and

¹ Heb. i. 4.

² Jer. xxiii. 6, marg.

³ Rom. iii. 22.

⁴ Isa. lxiv. 6.

beautiful¹ in the very sight of God, *now*; and Jesus can say, 'Thou art all fair, my love,'² *now*! That it is not any finite righteousness, which might not quite cover the whole,—might not be quite enough to satisfy God's all-searching eye; not *a* righteousness, but *The* Righteousness of God;³ and this no abstract attribute, but a Person, real, living, loving,—covering us with His own glorious apparel,⁴ representing us before His Father, Christ Jesus Himself 'made unto us Righteousness!'⁵ This to-day and this for ever, for 'His name shall endure for ever.'⁶

It is in His kingly capacity that this glorious name is given to Him. For only by '*submitting* ourselves to the Righteousness of God,'⁷ can we have 'the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.'⁸ There can be no compromise,—it must be His only or ours only. He must be our King, or He will not be our Righteousness.

¹ Zech. iii. 4, 5.

³ Phil. iii. 9.

⁵ 1 Cor. i. 30.

⁷ Rom. x. 3.

² Cant. iv. 7.

⁴ Isa. lxiii. 1.

⁶ Ps. lxxii. 17.

⁸ Rom. iv. 6.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Working with the King.

‘There they dwelt with the king for his work.’—I CHRON. iv. 23.

‘THERE!’—Not in any likely place at all, not in the palace, not in ‘the city of the great king,’¹ but in about the last place one would have expected, ‘among plants and hedges.’² It does not even seem clear why they were ‘there’ at all, for they were potters, not gardeners,—thus giving us the combination of simple labor of the hands, carried on in out-of-the-way places; and yet they were dwellers with the king, and workers with the king.

The lesson seems twofold,—First, that anywhere and everywhere we too may dwell ‘with the King for His work.’ We may be in a very unlikely or unfavorable place for this,—it may be in a literal country life, with little enough to be seen of the ‘goings’³ of the King around us; it may be among hedges of all sorts, hindrances in all directions; it may be, furthermore, with our hands full of all manner of pottery for our daily

¹ Ps. xlvi. 2.

² I Chron. iv. 23.

³ Ps. lxviii. 24.

task. No matter! The King who placed us 'there' will come and dwell there with us; the hedges are all right, or He would soon do away with them,¹ and it does not follow that what seems to hinder our way² may not be for its very protection; and as for the pottery, why, that is just exactly what He has seen fit to put into our hands, and therefore it is, for the present, 'His work.'³

Secondly, that the dwelling and the working must go together. If we are indeed dwelling with the King, we shall be working for Him, too, 'as we have opportunity.'⁴ The working will be as the dwelling,—a settled, regular thing, whatever form it may take at His appointment. Nor will His work ever be done when we are not dwelling with Him. It will be our own work then, not His, and it will not 'abide.'⁵ We shall come under the condemnation of the vine which was pronounced 'empty,' because 'he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.'⁶

We are to dwell with the King 'for His work;' but He will see to it that it shall be for a great

¹ Job iii. 23.

² Matt. xxi. 33.

³ Mark xiii. 34.

⁴ Gal. vi. 10.

⁵ 1 Cor. iii. 14.

⁶ Hos. x. 1.

deal besides,—for a great continual reward according to His own heart and out of His royal bounty,—for peace, for power, for love, for gladness, for likeness to Himself.

‘Laborers together with God!’¹ ‘workers together with him!’² ‘the Lord working with us!’³ admitted into divine fellowship of work!—will not this thought ennoble everything He gives us to do to-day, even if it is ‘among plants and hedges!’ Even the pottery will be grand!

‘Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, FOR I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.’⁴

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

The Recompense of the King.

‘Why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?’—2 SAM. xix. 36.

BARZILLAI ‘had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim,’⁵ exiled from his royal city. When the day of triumphant return came, David said to him, ‘Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.’⁶ This was the ‘reward.’

¹ Cor. iii. 9.

² 2 Cor. vi. 1.

³ Mark xvi. 20.

⁴ Hag. ii. 4.

⁵ 2 Sam. xix. 32.

⁶ 2 Sam. xix. 33.

But what a privilege and delight it must have been to the loyal old man! And to come nearer, what a continual joy it must have been to the women who 'ministered' ¹ to the exiled King of heaven 'of their substance.' How *very* much one would have liked a share in that ministry!

Is there *any* loving wish which our King does not meet? Was it not most thoughtful of Him to appoint His continual representatives, so that we might always and every one of us have the opportunity of ministering *to Him*! These opportunities are wider than we sometimes think; some limit His 'gracious Inasmuch' ² to services for His sake to the poor only. Yet the 'strangers' ³ whom He bids us love, may be rich in all but the friendliness and kindness which we may show them; and the 'sick' may be those among our own dear ones who need our ministry. Why should we fancy it is only those who are *not* near and dear to us, to whom we may minister 'as unto Him' ⁴?

But oh, what little services are our cups of cold water! ⁵ and how utterly ashamed we feel of ever having thought any of them wearying or irksome,

¹ Luke viii. 3.

² Matt. xxv. 40.

³ Deut. x. 19.

⁴ Eph. vi. 7.

⁵ Mark ix. 41.

when we look at 'the recompense of the reward,'¹ — '*such* a reward!' Is there one of us whose heart has not thrilled at the mere imagining of what it will be to hear 'the King say, Come, ye blessed!'² Then what will it be to enter into the fulness of the reward, to 'come over with'³ Him, and dwell with Him always in 'the holy Jerusalem,' and 'go no more out.'⁴

'*Why* should the king recompense it me with such a reward?' '*Why* should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?'⁵ For there is such a tremendous disproportion between the work and the reward, though such a glorious proportion between His love and His reward.

And yet there is a beautiful fitness in it. The banquet of everlasting joy for those who gave Him meat;⁶ the river of His pleasures for those who gave Him drink;⁷ the mansions in the Father's home for those who took the stranger in;⁸ the white robes for those who clothed the naked;⁹ the tree of life and 'no more pain' for those who visited the sick;¹⁰ the 'glorious liberty'¹¹ for those

¹ Heb. xi. 26.

² Matt. xxv. 34.

³ 2 Sam. xix. 33.

⁴ Rev. xxi. 10; ib. iii. 12.

⁵ 1 Sam. xxvii. 5.

⁶ Matt. xxv. 35, etc.

⁷ Ps. xxxvi. 8.

⁸ John xiv. 2.

⁹ Rev. vii. 13.

¹⁰ Rev. xxii. 2; ib. xxi. 4.

¹¹ Rom. viii. 21.

who came unto the prisoner; the crown of all, the repeatedly promised 'with Me'¹ for those who were content to be with His sorrowful or suffering ones for His sake. *Why* all this? I suppose we shall keep on asking that forever!

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

The Salvation of the King.

'The Lord is our King; He will save us.'—ISA. xxxiii. 22.

THE thought of salvation is constantly connected with that of kingship. Type, illustration, and prophecy combine them. 'Thou shalt anoint him . . . that he may save my people.'² 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people.'³ 'The king saved us.' 'A King shall reign; in His days Judah shall be saved.'⁴ 'Thy King cometh, . . . having salvation.'⁵

Because Jesus is our Saviour, He has the right to be our King; but again, because He is King, He is qualified to be our Saviour; and we never know Him fully as Saviour till we have fully received Him as King. His kingship gives the strength to His priesthood. It is as the Royal

¹ John xvii. 24.

² 1 Sam. ix. 16. ³ 2 Sam. iii. 18; ib. xix. 9.

⁴ Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

⁵ Zech. ix. 9.

Priest of the order of Melchisedec that He is 'able to save.'¹ Thus He is 'a Saviour, and a Great One,' 'mighty to save.'²

Our King has not only 'wrought,' and 'brought,' and 'made known His salvation,'³ but He Himself *is* our salvation.⁴ The very names seem used interchangeably. Isaiah says, 'Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy *Salvation* cometh;'⁵ Zechariah bids her rejoice, for 'Behold, thy *King* cometh.'⁶ Again, Isaiah says, 'Mine eyes have seen the *King*;'⁷ and Simeon echoes, 'Mine eyes have seen thy *Salvation*,'⁸ as he looks upon the infant Jesus, the Light to lighten the Gentiles; reminding us again of David's words, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation.'⁹

It is because we need salvation, because we are surrounded by enemies and dangers, and have no power to help ourselves, and have no other help or hope, that He says, 'I will be thy King; where is any other that may save thee?'¹⁰ 'There is no other. 'He saw that there was no man,'¹¹ and He says, 'There is no Saviour beside me.'¹²

¹ Heb. vii. 1, 17; ib. vii. 25.

⁸ Isa. lxiii. 5.

⁴ Ps. xcvi. 2.

² Isa. xix. 20; ib. lxiii. 1.

⁵ Isa. lxii. 11.

⁶ Zech. ix. 9.

⁷ Isa. vi. 5.

⁸ Luke ii. 30.

⁹ Ps. xxvii. 1.

¹⁰ Hos. xiii. 10.

¹¹ Isa. lix. 16.

¹² Hos. xiii. 4.

What is our response? David begins a Psalm by saying, 'Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh my salvation;' ¹ but he quickly raises the key, and sings, 'He *only* is my salvation.'² Perhaps we have long been quite clear that He *only* is our salvation from 'everlasting destruction;' ³ but are we equally clear that He *only* is (not will be, but *is*) our present salvation from everything from which we want to be saved?—from every danger, from every snare,⁴ from every temptation,⁵ from 'the hand of *all* our enemies,'⁶ from our sins?⁷ In death we would cling to the words, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'⁸ Why not in life equally cling to, and equally make real use of, the promise, 'He shall save His people from their sins,'⁹—not merely from sin in general, but definitely 'from *their* sins,' personal and plural sins? 'Is my hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?' ¹⁰

His salvation is indeed finished, His work is perfect;¹¹ and yet our King is still 'working salvation in the midst of the earth,'¹² applying the

¹ Ps. lxii. 1.² Ps. lxii. 2.³ 2 Thess. i. 9.⁴ Ps. xci. 3.⁵ 2 Pet. ii. 9.⁶ 2 Sam. iii. 18.⁷ Titus ii. 14.⁸ 1 Tim. i. 15.⁹ Matt. i. 21.¹⁰ Isa. l. 2.¹¹ Deut. xxxii. 4.¹² Ps. lxxiv. 12.

reality of His salvation (if we will only believe His power) to the daily details of our pilgrimage and our warfare. We need it not only at last, but now—every hour, every minute. And the King ‘shall deliver the needy when he crieth,¹ ‘and shall save the souls of the needy.’²

May He say to your soul this day, ‘I am *thy* salvation.’³

Look away to Jesus,
 Look away from all!
 Then we need not stumble,
 Then we shall not fall.
 From each snare that lureth,
 Foe or phantom grim,
 Safety thus ensureth,
 Look away to Him!

THIRTIETH DAY.

Good Tidings to the King's Household.

‘We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace; if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us; now, therefore, come, that we may go and tell the king's household.’—2 KINGS vii. 9.

Just the last persons who would seem to need ‘good tidings,’⁴ and the last, too, who would

¹ Ps. lxxii. 12.

³ Ps. xxxv. 3.

² Ps. lxxii. 13.

⁴ 2 Kings vii. 2.

seem likely to have them to convey ! But oh, how true the figure is ! how many among the King's own household need the good tidings which these lepers brought ! For they are starving so near to plenty,¹ and poor within reach of treasure,² and thinking themselves besieged when the Lord has dispersed the foe for them. Is it not often the spiritual leper, the conscious outcast, the famine-stricken, possessionless soul, who takes the boldest step into the fullest salvation, and finds deliverance and abundance and riches beyond what the more favored and older inmate of the King's household knows anything about ?

It may be one of the enemy's devices,³ that we sometimes hold back good tidings, just because we shrink from telling them to the King's household. How many who do not hesitate to speak of Jesus to little children or poor people, or even to persons who openly say, ' We will not have this man to reign over us,'⁴ never say one word to their fellow-subjects about the blessed discoveries that the Holy Spirit has made to them of the fullness of His salvation,⁵ and the reality of His

¹ Ps. lxxxi. 10-16.

² 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

³ 2 Cor. ii. 11.

⁴ Luke xix. 14.

⁵ John xvi. 14, 15.

power, and the treasures of His word, and the satisfaction of His love, and the far-reaching fulfilments of His promises, and the real, actual deliverance, and freedom, and victory, which He gives,¹ and the strength and the healing that flow through faith in his name !²

Satan even perverts humility into a hinderance in this, and persuades us that of course our friend knows as much or more of this than we do, and that telling of what we have found in Jesus, may seem like or lead to talking about ourselves. Yet perhaps all the while that friend is hungering and feeling besieged, while we are withholding good tidings of plenty and deliverance.³ Verily, 'we do not well.'⁴ Have there not been days when the brightest of us would have been most thankful for the simplest word about Jesus, from the humblest Christian?—days when even 'the mention of His name' might have been food and freedom !

It does not in the least follow that members of Christian families need no such 'good tidings' because of their favoured position. They may

¹ Rom. viii. 37.

² Acts iii. 16.

³ Prov. xi. 24-26.

⁴ James iv. 17.

need it all the more, because no one thinks it necessary to try and help *them*. 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto *all* men, specially unto them who are of the household of faith.' ¹

And when? The constantly recurring word meets us here again, '*Now!*'

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

The Prosperity of the King.

'A King shall reign and prosper.'—JER. xxiii. 5.

IF we are really interested, heart and soul, in a person, how delighted we are to have positive assurance of his prosperity, and how extremely interested and pleased we feel at hearing anything about it! Is not this a test of our love to our King? Are we both interested and happy in the short, grand, positive words which are given us about His certain prosperity? If so, the pulse of our gladness is beating through to the very heart of God, for 'Jehovah hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.' ²

His prosperity is both absolute and increasing.

¹ Gal. vi. 10.

² Ps. xxxv. 27.

Even now, 'Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame that I heard.'¹ If we could get one glimpse of our King in his present glory and joy how we who love Him would rejoice for Him and with Him!² And if we could get one great view of the wide but hidden prosperity of His kingdom *at this moment*, where would be our discouragement and faint-heartedness! Suppose we could see how His work is going on in every soul that he has redeemed out of every kindred and tongue all over the world,³ with the same distinctness with which we see it in the last trophy of His grace for which we have been praising Him, would it not be a revelation of entirely overwhelming joy? Many Christians now-a-days are foregoing an immense amount of cheer, because they do not take the trouble to inquire, or read, or go where they can hear about the present prosperity of His kingdom. Those who do not care much, can hardly be loving much or helping much.

But we *do* care about it ; and so how jubilantly the promises of His *increasing* prosperity ring out to us ! 'He *must* increase.'⁴ He *must* reign,

¹ 1 Kings x. 7. ² 1 Pet. iii. 22. ³ Rev. v. 9. ⁴ John iii. 30.

till He hath put all enemies under his feet.'¹ Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be *no* end.'²

All our natural delight in progress finds satisfaction here,—no stagnation, no reaching a dead level; we are on an ever winning side, bound up with an ever-progressing cause. A typical light on this point flashes from the story of David. He 'went on and grew great,'³ or as the margin has it, 'going and growing;' which we cannot forbear connecting with the promise to ourselves, 'Ye shall *go* forth and *grow* up.'⁴ And then we are told that He 'waxed greater and greater' (marg.), 'went on going and *increasing*.'⁵

But we must not be merely on-lookers. Let us see to it, first, that there be increasing prosperity in His kindom in our hearts. Pray that He may not only reign but prosper in that domain. And next let us see to it that we are doing all we can to further His prosperity all around us. Translate our daily prayer, 'Thy kingdom come'⁶ into daily, burning, glowing action for its prosperity.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 25.

⁴ Mal. iv. 2.

⁷ Ps. xxiii. 5.

¹⁰ Cant. ii. 4.

² Isa. ix. 7.

⁶ 1 Chron. xi. 9.

⁸ 2 Sam. xix. 33.

¹¹ Cant. v. 1.

⁸ 2 Sam. v. 10.

⁶ Matt. vi. 10.

⁹ Gal. iv. 5

¹² Cant. i. 12.







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