

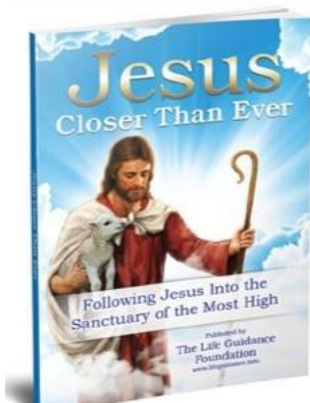
Finding Peace

in a Troubled World

An Adventure Into
the Secret Place
of the Most High

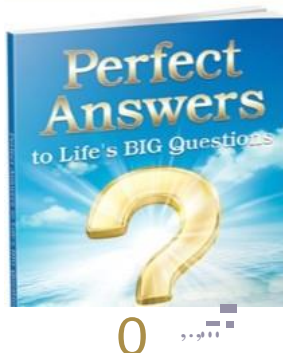


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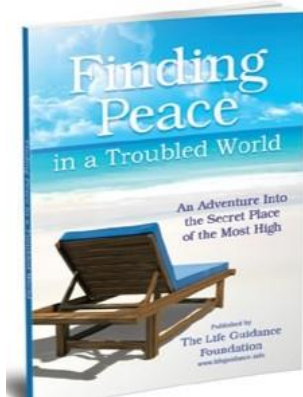
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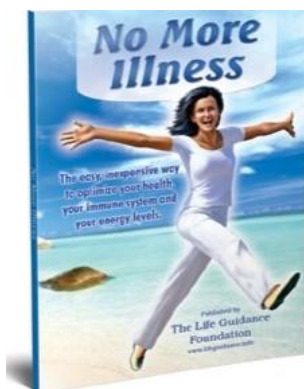
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In a Troubled World

An Adventure
into the Secret Place
of the Most High

Published By
The Life Guidance Foundation
www.lifeguidance.info

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Dedication

Dedicated to all
who are longing for
and/or needing a
closer walk with God.

Introduction

Planet Earth is in a state of agitation. Intensity and trial are burying their sharp claws deep into our lives. Ominous signs greet us with every new day as calamity follows calamity by sea, by land and by air. People everywhere are wondering where our planet is headed.

Whatever the future may hold, there is a place of refuge for all, a place where we can find shelter from even the most tempestuous of storms. This incredibly secure place is known as ***The Secret Place***.

Author's Notes

- Warm greetings to you dear reader. It is my sincere prayer that the message of this book will do for you and for yours what it has done for me and for mine.
- If you are discouraged, or if you would like to reach out to someone who is discouraged, please see the inside back cover of this book.
- This entire book may also be read as a free E-Book at www.fndingpeace.info.
- Throughout this book, all emphases have been added by the author. Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture passages are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).
- For the sake of those who are new to the faith, and for ease of reading, I have taken the liberty of changing all references to “Christ” to read as “Jesus.”
- Had I penned the thoughts that appear in this book as though they were my own thoughts, it would have been most difficult for the reader to accept as truth all that is contained herein. For this reason I have quoted freely from credible sources throughout this manuscript. A complete Table of References will be found at the website www.friendswhocare.org. Wherever possible, all quoted references should be considered in their original context.

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Chapter 1

The Secret Place of the Most High

Of all the places that you and I may visit, the “*secret place*” is undoubtedly the most wonderful, the most thrilling, and the most rewarding. It is my special pleasure and privilege to draw your attention to this most incredible place.

To introduce the subject of *the secret place*, let us consider the rendering of Psalm 91:1 as found in the King James Version of the Scriptures:

He that dwelleth in *the secret place* of the
Most High shall abide under the shadow of the
Almighty. (Ps 91:1 KJV)

What a promise! If we dwell in the “secret place,” we have the sure guarantee that the Almighty is in close proximity – so close, in fact, that His shadow is falling over us. This is obviously a very good place to be - and a very secure place indeed.

But what is the secret place?

- It is “the secret place of communion” with God. (AA564.2; CH362.2; Pr9.1)
- It is “the secret place of prayer.” (CC280.3)

In short, the secret place is that private, spiritual “place in time” where you and God meet. It is that place where you and God spend time alone together. It is that intimate, secluded, exclusive place where you and God commune together, and where your love relationship with Him develops and finds its deepest fulfillment. It is that spiritual meeting “place” where you share your life, your dreams, and your innermost secrets with your Maker. It is that ultra-special place where you can learn from Him and grow in your knowledge of Him.

In the simplest of terms, the secret place is the “soil” in which God nurtures and develops our spiritual person. It is, in a deep spiritual sense, that holy place, provided by grace, where fallen human beings may enter into “the secret place” of His Presence. (Psalms 31:20)

In ***the secret place*** of prayer, where no eye but God’s can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts. (AG290.4)

Surely, it is one of the greatest provisions of Divine Love that imperfect beings might have a precious, priceless, private and personal meeting place with the Most High – a hiding place for the soul.

The Keys to the Secret Place

Having contemplated the awesome significance of the secret place, let us now consider how we may gain access to this most incredible place.

- When we ***pray*** in private, we enter into the secret place with God.
- When we ***study the words of Inspiration*** in private, we enter into the secret place with the Most High. The book of Psalms is a brilliant secret place rendezvous.
- When we engage in private ***Christian meditation***, we enter into the secret place with the Almighty.
- When we ***talk about God*** it is good, but it is when we ***talk to God*** in private that we enter into the secret place.
- When we ***think about God*** it is good, but it is when we ***think with God*** that we enter into the secret place.
- When we ***sing about God*** it is good, but it is when we ***sing to God*** in private that we enter into the secret place.
- It is very good to ***work for God***, but how much better to turn our work into an exciting secret place adventure by ***working with God***.
- When music draws our attention to the singer/s, and/or to the instrument/s being played, it may well be good music, but it is when music draws our minds to God in a spirit

of quiet worshipful communion with Him, and respectful adoration of Him, that we enter the secret place.

- When we come away from a spiritual message full of praises for the speaker, it may well have been a good message, but when we come away from a message full of praises for God, we can rest assured that the message has contributed to our secret place experience.

In short, it is in the secret place that our spiritual nature reaches the highest summit of Christian experience and privilege – and it is here, alone with God, that our life is moulded, our characters are changed, and our future is determined.

In ***the secret place***, alone, the eye sees Jesus and the ear is opened to Jesus. (HP86.4)

Clearly, we have to rank our secret place experience as life's highest priority:

To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul hunger and living faith, ***avails nothing***. A nominal faith in Jesus, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth . . . It is not enough to believe ***about Jesus***; we must believe ***in Him*** . . . Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Jesus ***join themselves in covenant [binding] relation with God***. (DA347.1)

What food is to the body, Jesus must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Jesus is of no value to us if we do not ***know Him as a personal Saviour***. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated [for] it is the grace of Jesus that gives life to the soul. The divine grace which He alone can impart, is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul. (DA389.3; 181.2; 187.2)

In later chapters we will further develop the concepts of believing “***in Him***,” and of “***knowing Him***,” and we will be considering His incredible ***grace*** in far greater depth, but it is clear that the ultimate challenge that faces every one of us is to forge and to maintain a special one-on-one, friend-to-friend relationship with God, and *the secret place of the Most High* is the “place” appointed by God where this relationship of all relationships is to be rooted and nurtured.

A Personal, Open, 24/7 Invite

With a yearning that we will never comprehend, the Lord invites every one of us to come, ***just as we are***, and to dwell with Him, alone, in the secret place. This invite is etched in gold, it is personalized, and it calls on us to “dwell” ***with Him*** and ***in Him***. (Psalm 91:9 NASB)

Please take careful note that the invitation does not summons us to merely visit the secret place every now

and then. God invites us to “dwell” in the secret place. Where our homes are our temporal “dwellings,” the secret place is to be our spiritual dwelling. The word dwell as used in Psalm 91:1 implies “to settle in,” or “to remain in.” Thus the secret place is given us of God as our spiritual home address; it is the place where our spiritual person is to reside, and where our soul is to take root in God; it is that spiritually attractive, warm, cozy and exhilarating place where we meet with and confide in our very Best Friend.

By inviting us to “dwell” in the secret place, God is obviously urging us to enter into an experience with Him that embraces far more than a brief bible study in the morning and a sleepy prayer just before we fall into bed at night.

Through ***continual communion*** Jesus received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Ps. 46:10. ***Here alone can true rest be found.*** And this is the effectual preparation for all who labor for God. (DA363.1; 3)

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

## Chapter 2

# Blessings for the Secret Place Dweller

Having considered the wondrous significance of the secret place, and some of the various ways and means whereby we may dwell in this extraordinary meeting place, we are now in a position to give serious thought to the incredible benefits that God has promised to all who “dwell” in the secret place.

Psalm 91 must be one of the most encouraging chapters in Scripture. The promises that God makes to the secret place dweller are huge and almost unbelievable. In this age of intensity, trial, and uncertainty, it is extremely good to know that God has provided us with a spiritual retreat, a place of refuge where we may meet with Him in private, a secret place where we may enjoy shelter beneath His wings – snugly tucked into His warm and cozy feathers.

Psalm 91 was inspired of God just for you, and all of the promises in this Psalm are just for you. All of the benefits

mentioned below are yours – that is, if you will only accept Jesus as your very Best Friend, and if you will only use the secret place as the furrow into which you may safely sow the remainder of your life.

Please make Psalm 91 a subject of your earnest meditation – it is loaded with excellent heart medicine. More than this, it is a wonderful passage to commit to memory.

## If you dwell in the secret place of the Most High . . .

- You will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. (Psalm 91:1)
- You will have complete confidence in God as your refuge and your fortress, and you will have an unwavering trust in Him. (Psalm 91:2)
- God will deliver you from every hazard, peril and sickness. (Psalm 91:3)
- God will comfort you and cover you with His feathers. (Psalm 91:4)
- You will rest secure, nestled beneath the wings of the Most High. (Psalm 91:4)
- You will have an abiding confidence in the fact that God will faithfully keep all of His promises. (Psalm 91:4)
- You will not be afraid of anything – not of terror, nor of war, nor of plague, nor of catastrophe. (Psalm 91:5-6)
- Calamity may visit others, but calamity will not come near you. (Psalm 91:7)



- Evil will not befall you, and evil will have no hold over you. (Psalm 91:10)
- God's angels will watch over your every step. (Psalm 91:11)
- God's angels will carry you, not on their backs, but in their hands. (Psalm 91:12)
- God will set you securely on high. (Psalm 91:12)
- God will answer your prayers. (Psalm 91:15)
- God will rescue you. (Psalm 91:15)
- God will honour you. (Psalm 91:15)
- God will add years to your life, and He will add life to your years. (Psalm 91:16)
- God will save you from eternal death. (Psalm 91:16)

If this all sounds almost too good to be true, this is because it is almost too good to be true . . .

Psalm 91 is made up of two parts – God's part and our part. God's part comprises the remarkable series of blessings that are listed above. In order to receive of these incredible blessings, God has given us but a three-part responsibility:

1. Dwell in the secret place with Me. (Psalm 91:1, 9)
2. Get to know Me that you may develop an ever-deepening love for Me. (Psalm 91:14)
3. Make Me your refuge, put your trust in Me, and call on Me – anytime, anywhere. (Psalm 91:9)

This must surely be the offer of all offers, and the rewards are guaranteed – that is, if we will only make God our

constant companion; if we will only rank our friendship with Him as ***the*** highest priority in life:

While engaged in our daily work, we should lift the soul to heaven in prayer. These silent petitions rise like incense before the throne of grace; and the enemy is baffled. The Christian whose heart is thus stayed upon God ***cannot be overcome. No evil arts can destroy his peace***. All the promises of God's word, all the power of divine grace, all the resources of Jehovah, are pledged to secure his deliverance. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. And God was with him, a present help in every time of need. (MYP249.2)

Has life dealt you a bad hand? Are there no silver linings around your dark clouds? Are you fearful of the future? Are you haunted by something in your past?

Whatever your circumstances, dear reader, they will be greatly improved if you hold on to God as your closest Friend and Companion:

Are you tempted to give way to feelings of anxious foreboding or utter despondency? In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. Fear not that He will fail of fulfilling His promise. He is eternal truth. Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him. And He will bestow upon His faithful servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands. (PK164.3)

He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be open for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon your Burden Bearer. (LHU97.7)

However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Jesus. (DA297.1)

None are so vile, none have fallen so low, as to be beyond the working of [God's] power. (COL96.1)

Whether on the land or on the sea, if we have the Saviour in our hearts, there is ***no need of fear***. Living faith in the Redeemer will smooth the sea of life, and will deliver us from danger in the way that He knows to be best. (DA336.3)

Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Jesus does not leave us. (COL173.1)

Even if you feel that you are stumbling through an impenetrable fog, just keep holding on to God's strong hand, just keep fashing silent prayers to Him throughout the day. You can rest assured that changes for the good will come. God is a Master at turning negative circumstances into good. He knows exactly how to overturn the plans of the evil one. Nothing is too difficult for Him. You can trust Him – for He is faithful.

~~~~~

You crown the year with Your goodness, and Your paths drip with abundance. In Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me. What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me? (Psalm 65:11 NKJ; NASB; 16:11; 6; 116:12)

O may Your glorious name be blessed and exalted above all blessing and praise! (Nehemiah 9:5)

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Chapter 3

Transforming Knowledge

As alluded to previously, it is one thing to ***know about God***; it is another thing entirely to ***know God***. Hence the words of Paul:

I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of ***knowing Christ Jesus*** my Lord. (Philippians 3:8)

For I determined to ***know*** nothing among you except ***Jesus Christ***, and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2)

Knowing God is everything, and the only way that we can really get to know Him is by spending ***time alone with Him in the secret place***.

To support this hugely significant thought, let us consider how my wife would feel if I spent every spare moment attending seminars that teach about her, reading books that focus on her, participating in groups that sing about

her, and talking endlessly to others about her, and yet I never spent time alone with her? All of these activities would help me to get to **know about her**, but they would do nothing to help me to **know her**. Clearly, such a relationship would amount to no relationship at all.

Yet, all too often, this is just the kind of “relationship” so many of us have with God. We get deeply involved in good spiritual activities and entertainments, all of which may help us to **know about God**, but we spend so little time alone with Him in the secret place – speaking with Him as a friend to a friend, and getting to **know Him** on an intimate, personal level.

Jesus Himself tells us about “prominent Christians” who, to the surprise of many, will be excluded from the kingdom. These individuals will be prominent in that they will know how to cast out demons, they will know how to preach, they will know how to perform miracles, they will be rich in the knowledge of many things, but **they will not know Him**.

Then I will tell them plainly, says Jesus, ***I never knew you.*** (Matthew 7:23)

This is why our secret place experience is of such vital importance to every one of us, for it is here, alone with God, that we get to **know Him** – and it is here, as we learn of Him, that our love for Him develops.

The ***experimental knowledge of God*** and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its

possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasure of the universe. (COL114.2)

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character. This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon a right ***knowledge of God***. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come. (MH409.3)

Incredible! Amazing! Thrilling! When considered in this light, we can only marvel at the practical significance of the words of Paul:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness ***through our knowledge of Him***. (2 Peter 1:3)

~~~~~

*Precious Lord Jesus, thank you for your amazing love, thank you for the awesome privilege of being able to commune with you heart-to-heart. Please help me to take full advantage of this incredible opportunity and privilege.*

*So often I have tried to change myself and each time I have failed miserably, but thank you for*

*reminding me that my responsibility is to get to know you on a personal level – and what I learn of You will change me.*

*This being the case, please **fill** me with a sense of dire urgency as I contemplate the changes that I can make that will enable me to spend more time alone with you in the secret place - that I might **know** you better, that I might love you more, and that I may become more like you.*

~~~~~

*Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but **let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me.** (Jeremiah 9:23)*

*So let us know, let us press on to **know the LORD.** (Hosea 6:3)*

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Chapter 4

Glimpses of God

Part 1

As we continue our search for a better understanding of God and of His character, there are many voices that we can listen to, but there is One Voice that we absolutely ***have to*** listen to, and that is the voice of God Himself.

The following “letter” has been compiled directly from Scripture - only minor textual alterations have been made for the sake of continuity. I invite the reader to consider this letter as a personal communication from God to you – for this, in essence, is precisely what it is.

Please consider this letter prayerfully, and please do so in the knowledge that this exercise is loaded with “*secret place*” potential.

My Dear Child . . .

I am the LORD, the LORD God,
merciful and gracious, longsuffering,
and abounding in goodness and truth,

(Exodus 34:6-7)

(Psalm 50:15 NIV)

keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you.

I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

(Isaiah 48:17 NIV)
(Jeremiah 33:3)

I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up - the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, your Savior.

(Isaiah 41:13 NIV)
(Isaiah 41:10 NIV)
(Isaiah 43:1-3 LB)

I, even I, am He who comforts you. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you.

(Isaiah 51:12)
(Isaiah 66:13)

I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. I am merciful. I am with you to deliver you. With everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you. The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

(Isaiah 44:22)
(Jeremiah 3:12)
(Jeremiah 1:19)
(Isaiah 54:8, 10)
(Jeremiah 29:11)

Take courage, therefore, for my people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. Though hail fattens the forest and the city is leveled completely, how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain. I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler. No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise. The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for I will be your everlasting light, and I will be your glory. Your sun will never

(Isaiah 32:18 NIV)
(Isaiah 65:25 NIV)
(Isaiah 60:17-22 NIV)
(Hosea 2:18-20 LB)

set again, and your moon will wane no more; and your days of sorrow will end. At that time I will make a treaty between you and the wild animals, birds, and snakes, not to fear each other anymore; and I will destroy all weapons, and all wars will end. Then you will lie down in peace and safety, unafraid; and I will bind you to me forever with chains of righteousness and justice and love and mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness and love, and you will really know me then as you never have before.

I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters. I will take great delight in you, I will quiet you with my love, I will rejoice over you with singing. You shall be My people, and I will be your God. Even to your old age I will be the same, and even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; and I will bear you and I will deliver you.

(2 Corinthians 6:18)
(Zephaniah 3:17)
(Jeremiah 30:22)
(Isaiah 46:4)

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. Before you call I will answer; while you are still speaking I will hear. So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

(Matthew 21:22)
(Isaiah 65:24 NIV)
(Luke 11:9)
(John 16:24)

This is what the LORD says, He who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar - the LORD is his name. (Jeremiah 31:5)

~~~~~

- This is the gracious God who invites you and I to enter into a best-friend relationship with Him.
- This is the loving Creator who invites you and I to call Him Father.
- This is the caring God who offers to shepherd us through every moment of our lives.
- This is the kind King of the universe who extends His kingdom by taking up residence in our hearts.
- This is the compassionate Judge who took our punishment upon Himself in order that He might have the right to declare us innocent.
- This is the glorious High Priest who suffered infinite pain and shame in order to set us free.
- This is the Omniscient Physician who offers to heal our bodies, our minds, our hurts, and our relationships.
- This is the forgiving God who has removed our sins from us as far as the East is from the West. (Psalm 103:12)
- This is the amazing God who “has saved us and called us to a holy life.” (2 Timothy 1:9)
- This is the Lord and Master of creation, the Companion of all companions.

- This is the loving God who desires to enter into the closest relationship with the weakest of His children.
- This is the Omnipresent God who invites you and I to speak to Him, one-on-one, anywhere, anytime.

~~~~~

Never are we absent from the mind of God. Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. He is full of love, mercy, and compassion. He proposes to be our friend, to walk with us through all the rough pathways of life. He says to us, I am the Lord thy God; walk with Me, and I will fill thy path with light. (3SM338.1; LHU98.3; COL174.1)

~~~~~

***ONE THING*** *I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the delightfulness of the LORD and to meditate in His temple. For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His shelter; in the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock. (Psalm 27:4-5)*

## Chapter 5

# Glimpses of God

## Part 2

Our intention in this chapter is to again highlight the wonders of God's character and the limitless dimensions of His overwhelming kindness. This we will accomplish by drawing attention to a few priceless nuggets of truth – each of which will be discussed in greater depth in later chapters.

Is your God always looking for reasons to keep you out of heaven? Is your God a harsh, unfeeling, and judgmental taskmaster? Does your God have a low tolerance level for the weak and the erring? If this is the case, then I need to respectfully record that this is not the God who has revealed Himself in Scripture!

The following incredibly amazing truths persuade us that God is a wonderfully kind and gracious Father, and that He is One who has an insatiable longing to enter into the most intimate relationship with every one of us - a relationship that involves nothing less than Him living in us and us living in Him.

God would not have His children, for whom so great a salvation has been provided, act as though He were a hard, exacting taskmaster. He is their best friend, and when they worship Him, He expects to be with them to bless and comfort them and fill their hearts with joy and love. (TMK263.3)

When we are in terror of God, and overwhelmed with the thought of His glory and majesty, the Father points us to Jesus as His representative. What you see revealed in Jesus, of tenderness, compassion, and love, is the reflection of the attributes of the Father. Jesus represents the Sovereign of the universe as a God of love. (HP18.3)

We need to educate and train the mind so that we shall have an intelligent faith, and have an understanding friendship with Jesus. Unless we continually cherish friendship between God and our souls, we shall separate from Him, and walk apart from Him. If we have fellowship with Him, we must ever set the Lord before us, and treat Him as an honored Friend, giving Him the first place in our affections. (SD27.4)

God is attractive. He is full of love, mercy, and compassion. He proposes to be our friend, **to walk with us** through all the rough pathways of life. He says to us, I am the Lord thy God; **walk with Me**, and I will fill thy path with light. (LHU98.3)

This is the God who invites us to dwell with Him in the secret place. This is the God who gave us the ultimate



demonstration of His love on a very cruel cross. This is the God whose infinite grace will be the subject of our earnest study for all of eternity.

## Incredibly Amazing Grace

One of the best ways to get to know God is to come to an understanding of His grace.

God's grace is defined as ***unmerited favor***. It is the altogether unjustified kindness that God pours out in unlimited measure upon His altogether undeserving children.

Every facet of God's unfathomable grace speaks to us of a Divine Being whose character shines infinitely brighter than a trillion suns.

In order to illustrate some of the facets of God's amazing grace, let us consider just a few incredibly amazing truths that highlight the incredibly amazing character of our incredibly amazing Creator and Best Friend. To repeat, each of these truths is here presented as but a soul-watering sampling, and each will be dealt with in greater depth in later chapters:

**Incredibly Amazing Truth #1**: From the moment that you placed your faith in Jesus, (a) God cleared you of all guilt, and (b) He considered the righteousness of Jesus as though it were your own righteousness.

***The moment*** the sinner believes in Jesus, he stands in the sight of God ***uncondemned***; for the righteousness of Jesus is His: ***Jesus' perfect obedience is imputed to him.*** (FE429.3)

What incredibly amazing grace!

Incredibly Amazing Truth #2: In that moment when you placed your faith in Jesus, God made a special announcement ***to the entire universe*** to the effect that He is willing to accept you as though you are righteous and as though you always have been righteous. (SC62.2)

The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of ***justification***. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord *imputes* unto the believer the righteousness of Jesus and ***pronounces him righteous before the universe***. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner's representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Jesus He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. (1SM392.2 - also see OHC48.5)

Though guilty, [you are] looked upon as innocent. (12MR416.1, DA755.1)

What incredibly amazing love!

Incredibly Amazing Truth #3: From the moment that you placed your faith for salvation in the righteousness of Jesus ***alone***, and you accepted that you have no saving righteousness or merit of your own, God accepted you as His son/daughter, as His heir, and as a member of His royal family.

Those who accept Jesus as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family; He bids them call His Father their Father. (DA327.2)

For all who believe in Jesus a victory **WAS GAINED**. They would no longer be counted as sinners, sons of rebellion, but as ***sons and daughters of God***, through their acceptance of the righteousness of Jesus. (ST, June 17, 1897 par. 12)

Rejoice [therefore] that **YOU ARE** one with God, one with Jesus, and with the whole family of heaven. (DA493.3)

Incredibly Amazing Truth #4: Jesus loves you so much that He endured unimaginable shame and infinite pain, not only to secure your pardon, not only to take away your sins and to give you His righteousness, but that He might one day have the pleasure and the joy of sharing His throne with you. (Revelation 3:21)

Jesus asks for His people not only pardon and justification, ***full and complete***, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne. (FLB206.8)

This is grace in all of its glory, and such grace can only convince us that God's love is way beyond our comprehension.

In the light of the above, the reader is again reminded that you are not to think of yourself as a forgiven culprit who has been barely pardoned and released from captivity, or as one who is looked upon with suspicion and mistrust by the heavenly host. Right now, dear fellow believer, you are a child of the King of the universe, you are an heir to God's kingdom, you are one of the Royal bloodline, you are a sibling of Jesus, every person ever born is your brother or sister - and "all things belong to you." (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)

Please carry this thought with you wherever you go:

By His appointment [the Father] has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed with our nature. As our Intercessor, ***His office work is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters.*** (7ABC488.2)

Thus you may rejoice in the fact that your sins are all washed away. Thanks to Jesus, the Father accepts you as though you are sinless – Jesus has covered you with the perfect robe of His own righteousness, and God has declared to the entire universe that He accepts you as innocent.

More than this, please bathe your heart in the wondrous fact that . . .

He does not save you because you are perfect, but because you need Him and in your imperfection have trusted in Him. (DG218.3)

Right now, you may have absolute confidence in the fact that your name is engraved on the front door of your own private mansion in heaven – and, right now, the royal throne awaits your arrival – and it is all by grace, which, to repeat, is the altogether unjustified kindness that God pours out in unlimited measure upon His altogether undeserving children.

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*See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; **and such WE ARE.** Beloved, now **WE ARE** children of God. (1 John 3:1-2)*

You may cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Chapter 6

Incredibly Amazing News Indeed

In this chapter, we begin to dig a little deeper into the intricacies of God's plan of salvation. Once again, our overriding objective is to draw special attention to the glories of God's character and the wonders of His more than amazing grace.

With this objective in mind, let us again consider that one of the grand purposes of God's grace is to fill us with gratitude - and it is this gratitude that draws us into the secret place with Him in a spirit of excitement, enthusiasm, expectation and wonder.

God's grace is the living water of which we must drink. It quickens the whole being into spiritual life, the life of the Son of God. (1MR371.1)

This display of grace in the gift of salvation to the world fills the sinner with amazement. This love of God to man breaks every barrier down. (3SM194.1)

Perhaps one of the most thrilling allusions to God's grace is found in the Christian classic, *Steps to Christ* on pages 62 and 63. This brief passage constitutes a potentially life-changing adventure into the wonders of the gospel – which is the good news of God's grace.

This is undoubtedly one of the most encouraging passages ever penned. As such, the reader is urged to consider the following carefully and prayerfully, and preferably in the early morning on an empty stomach.

The extracts from the book *Steps to Christ* are included in the **bold, indented paragraphs**. My own comments are printed in this font.

[SC] = Steps to Christ

This adventure begins with a rather challenging statement, yet this statement should in no way discourage us because it lays out a perfect foundation for the good news that follows:

[SC] The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been, - just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents, - perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized. (SC62.1)

There is no doubt about it: Eternal life is critically dependant on perfect righteousness.

Yet this perplexing thought forces us to grapple with the question: Is it possible for fallen beings to possess so perfect a righteousness?

As we go in search of an answer to this all-important question, please read on carefully and please pay special attention to the underlined portions:

[SC] It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. WE HAVE NO RIGHTEOUSNESS of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. (SC62.2)

Clearly, all of our "commandment-keeping" and all of our "righteousness" will never and can never satisfy the demands of God's holy law – not even in the least degree. After all, what manner of "filthy rag" human righteousness could ever atone for our past mistakes and entitle us to stand faultless before God? (Isaiah 64:6; FW24.2; COL162.4)

Nevertheless, this humbling fact gives us no reason to despair for our incredibly amazing God has given us one incredibly amazing Saviour, and together they have formulated one incredibly amazing salvation plan.

[SC] But Jesus has made a way of escape for us.

Thank you precious Lord Jesus! We sense that we are in desperate need of a way of escape.

[SC] He [Jesus] lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. (SC62.2)

Can the good news be so incredibly good? Does Jesus really take away **ALL** of our sins? Is the writer here saying that God considers Jesus' righteousness as though it were our righteousness? Let's find out:

[SC] If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour,

That sounds easy enough!

[SC] Then, sinful as your life may have been,

Oh thank you dear Master, this means that there is hope for everyone . . .

[SC] For His sake you are accounted righteous,

What an amazing thought! In exchange for simple faith, God takes away our sin and He considers the righteousness of Jesus as though it were our righteousness and, marvel of all marvels, He does this regardless of how blemished our past may have been.

Surely this is grace in its most royal garb. Surely this is unmerited favor at its very best.

But, we may ask, how is this possible? How does this work?

The answer is profound in its simplicity . . .

[SC] Jesus' character stands in place of your character,

Can any news be more thrilling than this news? Can God really be so unbelievably gracious?

If the character of Jesus stands in place of our character, is there any reason why we should fear the judgment? (John 3:18; John 5:24; 1SM396.1; 2SM32.3; 1888-968.1)

[SC] and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned. (SC62.2)

This is absolutely astounding! This news is so good that it challenges our reasoning powers! In exchange for simple faith, God accepts us as sinless in the present and He writes the word “unblemished” against our past. What a God! What an incredible salvation plan! What kindness! What grace!

But hold on a minute - the amazing news continues:

[SC] More than this, Jesus changes the heart. (SC62.2)

Please notice that everything that is mentioned above takes place even before our hearts are significantly changed. As we saw in the previous chapter, God’s grace is poured out upon us from the very moment that we accept Jesus as our Saviour. (OHC52.5; Romans 5:1)

Yet the grand purpose of God’s grace is not to save us in our sin, but to save us from our sin. This being the case, let us briefly consider how our Infinitely kind God frees us from our sin:

[SC] He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Jesus by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20. Then with Jesus working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works - works of righteousness, obedience. (SC62.3)

Please notice that it is only as a result of Jesus working in us that we ever perform any acceptable act of righteousness. This translates into the fact that He alone must get **all** of the credit for any good thing that we ever do. In other words, the good that we do is only ever the fruit of His indwelling presence:

Of ourselves we can do ***nothing***; but through the grace of his Holy Spirit [living in us], life and light are imparted, and the soul is filled with longing, earnest desire for God, for holiness. Then it is that Jesus leads us to the throne of grace, and ***clothes us with His righteousness***; for the Lord God of heaven loves us. (ST, October 3, 1892 par. 6)

How comforting to know that that which we cannot do in and for ourselves, God does by living in us!

Man needs a power outside of and beyond himself, to restore him to the likeness of God, and enable him to do the work of God; but this does not make the human agency unessential. Humanity lays hold upon divine power, Jesus dwells in the heart by faith; and through co-operation with the divine, the power of man becomes efficient for good. (DA296.4)

Thus, instead of trying to find righteousness within ourselves, and instead of straining to keep the law in our own strength, which is an outright impossibility, our primary focus must be on maintaining a vital secret place connection with God, and this that He might live in us, fortify our spiritual resolve, cleanse us, and transform our characters.

This is the absolute truth, and it is an awe-inspiring truth indeed:

[SC] So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in . . .

[SC - PART 1] the righteousness of Jesus imputed to us

This is Jesus' perfect righteousness that God IMPUTES, or credits, or puts to our account from the moment that we place our faith in Him.

[SC - PART 2] and in that [righteousness which is] wrought by His Spirit working in and through us. (SC63.1)

This is also Jesus' righteousness that God IMPARTS to us through His Holy Spirit. This righteousness God engraves upon our hearts, and in so doing He changes our characters and fits us for life eternal.

Thus it is fairly obvious that Jesus must get ALL of the credit for ALL righteousness - regardless of whether it is *imputed* righteousness or whether it is *imparted* righteousness. (DA300.1; FLB116.2)

So, while we certainly do not have any justification for human pride, we most certainly do have every reason to rejoice and every reason to entertain a hope that is absolute. (COL154.4; SD124.2)

With these most encouraging thoughts in mind, let us now encapsulate all of this good news in a table.

In the light of the foregoing, the reader is urged to consider the following summary in the most serious light.

Back-drop	Understanding that I have no righteousness of my own, and regardless of my shady past . . .	
My 1 st Step	- If I receive Jesus as my Saviour and I give myself to Him . . .	Nothing hard about that . . .
Then by Grace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He takes away my sins . . . - The Father considers Jesus' righteousness as though it were my righteousness . . . - Jesus character stands in place of my character . . . - God accepts me as though I have never sinned . . . 	
My 2 nd Step	- Then, if I maintain a secret place connection with Him, . . .	This is the great challenge of life . . .
Then by Grace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jesus lives in my heart by way of His Holy Spirit, He changes my character, and He fits me for life in a universe that is governed by love . . . 	

There simply is no better news than this incredibly amazing news, and it is only in the context of this awe-inspiring and deeply encouraging news that we can find peace in Jesus:

The **ONLY** power that can create or perpetuate true peace is the grace of Jesus. (DA302.4)

In a world that is deeply entrenched in a system of rewards, and where grace is an almost forgotten concept, many would be inclined to believe that we have to earn God's justifying grace by living an obedient or sanctified life, but as we will see in later chapters, this thought has no basis in truth for the simple reason that grace that is earned is no grace at all.

If grace is defined as “unmerited favor,” how can we possibly earn it?

The divine favor, the grace of God bestowed upon us through Jesus Christ, is too precious to be given in exchange for any supposed meritorious work on the part of finite, erring man. Man has **NOTHING** in himself. The precious blood of Jesus is wholly efficacious. The sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf was everything that God required, ***perfect and complete***. (OHC118.2-3*)

In later chapters we will dig deeper into the completeness of God’s salvation plan, and we will marvel at the wonders of a complete Saviour who came to serve as a complete Sacrifice, but for now it is vitally important that we remind ourselves that God’s grace does not diminish our obligation to obey. On the contrary, ***it is God’s grace that lays the foundation for an obedient life*** – for it is His justifying grace that fills us with amazement, with admiration and with love for Him. This is what draws us into the secret place with Him, and this is what inspires us to open our hearts to Him that He might live in us and change us:

Nothing reaches so fully down to the deepest motives of conduct as a sense of the ***pardoning love [grace]*** of Jesus. (DA493.3)

The oil of ***grace*** gives to men the courage, and supplies to them the motives, for doing every day the work that God appoints to them. (RH, March 27, 1894)

In the very simplest of terms, God wants us to obey His all-wise laws, not because we fear Him, or because we

fear the consequences of disobedience, but because we love Him. In the final analysis, it is His gracious love *for us* that awakens love *in us* – and love, after all, is what true obedience is all about, for:

Love is the ***fulfilment*** of the law. (Romans 13:10 – also see 2 John 1:6, NIV)

It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Jesus to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love . . . and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholders. They hear His voice, and they follow Him. (DA480.3)

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of his hands shall love him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of his attributes. (4SP362.1)

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*Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? (Micah 7:18)*

*For You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. (Psalm 63:7)*

## Chapter 7

# Infnite Grace

As we continue our search for a deeper knowledge of God and His infnite grace, let us carefully consider a well-known verse from the book of Ephesians:

***In Him*** we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. (Ephesians 1:7)

There is much in this passage that can bless the hungry soul, but the greatest blessing comes our way when we are able to grasp the deeper significance of what it means to be “***in Him***.” In truth, it is our comprehension of this rather mysterious concept that enables us to appreciate the most brilliant facets of God’s awesome grace.

Thus the ultimate objective of this chapter is to answer the question:

What exactly does it mean to be  
“*in Jesus*,” or, in other words, to be “*in Him*.”

To open our study, the reader is invited to consider a simple, one-sentence summary of the gospel:

- Our sins were laid *on Jesus*,
- punished *in Jesus*,
- put away *by Jesus*,
- in order that His righteousness might be imputed to us. (7ABC468.2)

What a trade-off? Jesus took our sin upon Himself and, remarkably, He even took the full penalty for all the sin of all of humanity upon Himself. Then, as yet another sweet fruit of His incredible and all-encompassing sacrifice, He gives us His perfect righteousness in exchange for simple faith.

*What unfathomable grace!*

*Mysterious, marvelous, magnificent!*

Using the foregoing as a foundation for what follows, let us now consider a thought-provoking statement from the pen of Pastor David Vandenberg:

We must know that when Jesus died on the cross He didn't die alone; potentially [in theory] ***we died with Him***.

How did this work?

1. First, God put us *in Jesus* (1 Corinthians 1:30).
2. Then Romans six says that God dealt with us *in Jesus*.



- He crucified us *in Jesus*;
- He buried us *in Jesus*;
- He resurrected us *in Jesus*.
- Now we are seated in heavenly places *in Jesus* (Ephesians 2:6). (Collegiate Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1990)

In this light, let us again ask the question: What exactly does it mean to be *in Jesus*?

As we go in search of answers to this question, we will focus our attention on the two key thoughts that are underlined in the statement above:

## 1. God Put Us in Jesus

Note everything has been revealed to us about this somewhat baffling concept, but that which has been revealed is sufficient to have us standing back in breathless wonder as we contemplate the awesome dimensions of God's grace.

What we do know, and this with absolute certainty is that in various and seemingly mysterious ways we, as believers, live *in Jesus*:

*In Him* we live and move and exist. (Acts 17:28)

With reference to this statement, the reader's attention is drawn to three ways in which we live *in Him*.

- (1) Firstly, we live *in Him* in that we are totally dependent on Him for life. Every breath, every throb of the heart, is evidence of an ever-present, life-giving God. (6BC1062.5)

- (2) Secondly, and in an altogether different sense, we live ***in Him*** when we believe in Him, that is, when we give ourselves to Him and He is the central object of our affections. Thus we connect our life to His life and, in a deep spiritual sense, He lives in us, and we live ***in Him***. (Corinthians 13:3-5; 1 John 4:4,15-16; FLB141.4, OHC61.3, 2)
- (3) Thirdly, we also live in Him from a corporate perspective. As the representative of humanity, Jesus took all of humanity into Himself and, in this sense, all of humanity lives ***in Him***, or, to put that another way, we all, as humanity, have been given an extension to our existence ***in Him***.

With reference to point (3) above, let us now seek to answer two more rather puzzling questions:

Question: But why did Jesus take humanity into Himself? Why did God put us ***in Him***?

Answer: God put us ***in Him*** so that He could deal with us ***in Him***.

Question: But why would God want to deal with us ***in Him***?

Answer: Because if God dealt with us as we deserve to have Him deal with us, the outcome would have been nothing other than eternal death for all of fallen humanity.

This is why Jesus condescended to stand as the representative of humanity and, as our representative or substitute, He took ALL of humanity ***into Himself***. Then, remarkably, this arrangement enabled the Father to deal with humanity and with humanity's sin ***in Him*** - that is, ***in Jesus***.

As Pastor Vandenberg tells us:

- He crucified us ***in Him***;
- He buried us ***in Him***;
- He resurrected us ***in Him***.
- Now we are seated in heavenly places ***in Him***

At first this aspect of the good news may challenge our reasoning powers, yet it is rock-solid truth. We would even go so far as to say that this mystifying facet of truth is a major contributor to the very foundational layers of our faith.

In support of this claim, let us carefully consider the following passage:

By His obedience to all the commandments of God, Jesus wrought out a redemption for man. This was not done by going out of Himself to another, but by taking humanity into Himself. Thus ***Jesus gave to humanity an existence out of himself [or, out of itself]***. To bring humanity into Jesus, to bring the fallen race into oneness with divinity, is the work of redemption. Jesus took human nature that men might be one with Him as He is one with the Father, that God may love man as He loves His only begotten Son, that men may be partakers of the divine nature, and be complete ***in Him***. (RH, April 5, 1906 par. 15)

While we may grapple with the idea that we enjoy an existence outside of ourselves ***in Him***, this is a marvelous truth indeed, and it is a truth that should fill us with wonder and amazement, and with no small measure of hope, peace, courage and gratitude.

Jesus unites *in His person* the fullness and perfection of the Godhead and the fullness and perfection of sinless humanity. (FLB219.3)

This is a “wondrous union of man and God!” (17MR339.2)

Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. (DA25.3)

What manner of love is this, that the eternal God should adopt human nature in the person of his Son, and carry the same into the highest heaven! (YI, July 29, 1897 par. 7)

But how can this be? What made this union possible? On what basis did God adopt human nature? On what basis did Jesus take humanity into Himself?

The simple answer is that we do not know, and the reason we do not know is because . . .

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

What we do know, however, is that the Father put humanity in Jesus, that He accepted Jesus as the full and perfect representative and embodiment of humanity, and that He dealt with humanity and with humanity’s sin *in Him*.

***Marvel, oh heavens!***

***Be astonished, oh stars!***

***Let us stand aghast, oh fellow-believer!***

What we also know is that . . .

Jesus was invested with the right to give immortality. The life which he had laid down ***in humanity***, he again took up and gave ***to humanity***. [He] became one ***with humanity***, that humanity might become one in spirit and life ***with him***. By virtue of this union in obedience to the word of God, his life becomes their life. (YI, January 3, 1905 par. 5 & 7)

Please notice that Jesus took humanity into Himself, and that He became one with humanity that He might have the right to grant life eternal, not to just a few, but to all of humanity. (Romans 5:18)

*Amazing indeed!*

We are standing on the very edge of an infinite field of unexplained wonders, but this fact should never discourage us for there is an eternity beyond in which God will make clear all that it is expedient for us to know.

With these awe-inspiring thoughts in mind, let us now consider how Jesus opened wide the doors of salvation when He took humanity ***into Himself*** – and let us stand amazed as we allow the infinite grace of God to embrace our minds.

- When Jesus lived a perfect life on earth, He did so as the representative of humanity. This enabled the Father to consider Jesus' perfection as though it were our perfection. Thus we may rejoice in the fact that the Father accepts us as perfect, not because we are perfect, but because we have a perfect Substitute and Saviour, and because, as far as our infinitely gracious Father is concerned, we, humanity, are perfect ***in Him***.

His life stands for the life of men. Through the victory of Jesus, the human race was elevated in moral value, NOT BECAUSE OF ANYTHING THEY HAD DONE, but because of the great work that had been wrought out for them through the only begotten Son of God. (DA762.2; BEcho, December 1, 1893 par. 8)

*Truly, dear Father, you are more than amazing! Truly, dear Master, your love is astounding!*

- When Jesus died, He died as the representative of humanity. This enabled the Father to consider the substitutionary death of Jesus as though it were all of humanity dying in consequence of their sin. Thus we may rejoice in the fact that the debt for our sin has been paid in full, for, as far as the Father is concerned we, humanity, died ***in Him***.

Jesus, by the law of sympathetic love, bore our sins, took our punishment, and drank the cup of the wrath of God apportioned to the transgressor. He bore the cross of self-denial and self-sacrifice for us, that we might have life, eternal life. (TMK289.4)

- When the Father accepted Jesus as the victor over sin, He accepted Him as the representative of humanity. This enabled the Father to accept the victory of our Substitute as though it were the victory of all of humanity. Thus we may rejoice in the fact that we are accepted as victorious, not because we are victorious, but because our compassionate Father accepts humanity as victorious ***in Him***.

God “accepts humanity in the person of His Son,” thus “His victory is ours.” (DA111.6; DA123.1)

It is the righteousness of Jesus that makes the penitent sinner acceptable to God and works his justification. HOWEVER SINFUL HAS BEEN HIS LIFE, if he believes in Jesus as his personal Saviour, he stands before God in the spotless robes of Jesus' imputed righteousness. (FW106.1)

- When the Father declared that He was “well pleased” with His Son, He spoke these words to Jesus as the Representative of humanity. Thus we may rejoice in the fact that we have a glorious Substitute, and that we, humanity, though fallen, are pleasing to the Father - ***in Him***.

We stand in favor before God, NOT BECAUSE OF ANY MERIT IN OURSELVES, but because of our faith in “the Lord our righteousness.” The word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” embraces ***humanity***. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. The voice which spoke to Jesus says to ***every*** believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. “He hath made us accepted ***in the Beloved***.” Ephesians 1:6. (FW107.2; DA113.1)

This is the good news in all of its glorious splendor:

God put humanity ***in the Beloved***, He dealt with humanity ***in the Beloved***, and now that the Beloved has lived a perfect life on our behalf, and now that the Beloved has died for us the death that we deserve to die, the Father accepts us, humanity, ***in the Beloved!***

*What an amazing salvation plan!*

*What an amazing God!*

Surely thoughts such as these must soften even the hardest of hearts, for they are the substance of our hope and our courage, they are the foundation of our joy and our peace, and they are the springboard that enables us to leap with energy, enthusiasm, excitement, confidence and gratitude into the waiting arms of our incomprehensibly kind heavenly Father.

***In Jesus*** every provision has been made, every encouragement offered. (PK325.5)

God rejoices to bestow this grace upon everyone who hungers for it. To everyone He presents terms of mercy, NOT BECAUSE WE ARE WORTHY, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE SO UTTERLY UNWORTHY. ***Our need is the qualification which gives us the assurance that we shall receive this gift.*** (AG10.2)

## 2. God Dealt With Us in Jesus

As mentioned earlier, once the Father had put us ***in Jesus***, He was able to deal with us ***in Jesus***.

This fact presents us with a spiritual “pill” that is both bitter and sweet:

It is a bitter pill because of the pain and the shame that Jesus had to endure as a result of this arrangement. As sinners, we may accept it as an exceptionally sweet pill, however, for it is perhaps the most comforting and inspiring thought that could fall upon the guilt-ridden mind:

- *The Father dealt with MY sin in Jesus.*
- *The Father punished ME in Jesus.*

*(Isaiah 53:5)*



As a result of this incredible arrangement, we may rejoice in the fact that God's justice was satisfied, not by simply wiping away our penalty, which option would have resulted in universal ruin, but by allowing His Son to take our penalty upon Himself.

As man [Jesus] suffered the consequences of man's sin. As man He endured the wrath of God against transgression. (DA686.3)

Jesus was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. (RC45.4)

Though He was rich, yet for [our] sakes He became poor, so that [we] through His poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Surely the unlimited and unwarranted kindness that God has showered upon us must reach into the inmost recesses of our hearts and fill us with the deepest sense of awe - and with an ever-growing love for our Maker, Redeemer and Best Friend?

*Jesus, and shall it ever be,  
A mortal man ashamed of Thee?  
Ashamed of Thee, whom angels praise?  
Whose glories shine through endless days?*

But, again we must ask, what manner of Love is this that would allow an innocent Lamb to suffer infinite pain and shame on behalf of a people who are, by nature, indifferent to the things of God? How will we ever come to terms with the fact that . . .

It was the LORD'S will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer. (Isaiah 53:10 NIV)

How could a God of perfect justice and love subscribe to such absolute unfairness?

And the answer comes back to us:

It was for the joy that was set before Him, - that He might bring many sons [and daughters] unto glory, - that He endured the cross and despised the shame. (GC88-671.1)

This fact, in itself, proves beyond any doubt that God's love for us is stronger than the greatest fear imaginable. He chose infinite suffering rather than live forever without us:

- By His wounds we are *healed*. (Isaiah 53:5)
- The punishment that brought us **peace** was upon Him. (Isaiah 53:5)
- Since we have been justified through faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

In short, our *healing* and our **peace** could only be secured at the cost of infinite unfairness. This means that the measure of grace that has been poured out upon us is matched only by the measure of injustice that was heaped upon the innocent Lamb of God – *for us*.

What love, and oh what pity we must feel for our precious Savior! What sorrow should overcome us as we consider the incredible pain and shame that we brought upon the gentle, meek, lowly, innocent and altogether undeserving Lamb of God?

*See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love fōw mingled down,  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet?  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

We simply have to marvel at the thought that God would consider putting humanity ***in the Lamb***, and that He would then find it within Himself to deal with humanity ***in the Lamb*** – and this He did knowing all too well the measure of pain and horror that this arrangement would bring upon the Lamb - and upon Himself.

The anguish that sin has brought was poured into the bosom of the Sinless. (PK701.1)

Never was criminal treated in so inhuman a manner as was the Son of God. (DA710.1)

His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness. (Isaiah 52:14 NIV)

He suffered in proportion to the perfection of His holiness and His hatred of sin. (DA700.3)

Because His holiness is infinite, this means that His suffering was infinite, and this can only mean that His love for us is of infinite proportions.

**And this is why He was able to pour out upon us a measure of grace that is of infinite proportions.**

Are you, dear reader, rejoicing in the healing that God has secured for you at so inconceivable a price? Is the peace of God that surpasses all understanding guarding your heart and your mind? Are you enjoying that brand of faith that will always see a caring heavenly Father – even at those difficult times when you are engulfed in the darkest of clouds?

Jesus is ever ready to speak peace to souls that are burdened with doubts and fears. (DA803.3)

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*Loving Father, we are **f**iled with wonder as we consider the lengths to which you have gone in your quest to encourage us, to motivate us, to save us, and to instill in us a deeper love for you. Thank you for putting us **in the Beloved**, thank you for dealing with us **in the Beloved**, and thank you so much for accepting us **in the Beloved**. Truly Father, your ways are beyond **f**inding out. Surely, dear Master, you deserve our affections for your greatness, your goodness, and your grace are magni**f**cent beyond all measure. It will take a trillion eternities and more to even begin to understand the measure of love that persuaded you to stoop so very low so that we, the undeserving, might be lifted so very high – **in Him?***

~~~~~

## In The Beloved

Having considered the deeper significance of what it means to be **in Him**, let us now take a moment to focus our attention on some of the more prominent passages in Scripture where this term is used.

Please take note that the following information is not intended for casual review. It is suggested that the reader carefully consider each point in the light of the associated verse.

## For Your Meditation

- ***In Him***, humanity was chosen. (Ephesians 1:4)
- ***In Him***, humanity was circumcised. (Colossians 2:11)
- ***In Him***, humanity was crucified. (Romans 6:6)
- ***In Him***, humanity was buried. (Colossians 2:12)
- ***In Him***, humanity died to the law. (Romans 7:4)
- ***In Him***, humanity has redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Ephesians 1:7)
- ***In Him***, humanity became a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit. (Ephesians 2:22)
- ***In Him***, God HAS FORGIVEN us. (Ephesians 4:32)
- ***In Him***, humanity became a new creation. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- ***In Him***, we become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- ***In Him***, humanity was raised up and seated on the throne in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 2:6)
- ***In Him***, humanity was given perfection. (Colossians 2:10)
- ***In Him***, and thanks to Him taking our condemnation upon Himself, the finger of condemnation no longer points at humanity. (Romans 8:1)
- ***In Him***, and through His blood, humanity has been given citizenship of the Kingdom. (Ephesians 2:12-13)
- ***In Him***, humanity has peace. (John 16:33)

~~~~~

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Jesus**, just as He chose us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons **through Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us **in the Beloved**. (Ephesians 1:3-6)*

*Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession **in Jesus**. (2 Corinthians 2:14)*

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (Romans 11:33)

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Chapter 8a

The Fruit of Infnite Love – Part 1

Having devoted a number of chapters to our search for a deeper understanding of God and His grace, we now turn our attention to God's **love** - bearing in mind that God's grace is in fact one of the very brightest facets of God's **love**. (DA677:2)

It is our special privilege to live in a universe that is governed by **love**, where **love** is the ruling principle and the controlling power. (SD49.5, OHC73.3)

The law of self-renouncing **love** is the law of life for earth and heaven. (RC15.4)

This **love** is pure **love**; it is not a "strong, fery, impetuous passion," or a "ftful feeling," but a calm, deep, abiding, holy and living principle. (AA516.1; AH50.1; 51.2)

The absolute truth assures us that this form of purest love is the very cornerstone and foundation of life:

Love is life. (COL258.3)

As can be expected, the maker of this universe of **love** is a God of infinite **love**. His nature is **love** and His character is **love**. (AA551.2, RH, September 13, 1906 par. 14)

[His **love** is] so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. (COL386.2)

When we seek for appropriate language in which to describe the **love** of God, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen and say, "No, it cannot be described." We can only do as did the beloved disciple, and say, "Behold, what manner of **love** the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [and daughters] of God." (CE77.1)

Knowing that God's **love** is endless, unchangeable and immeasurable, we may find great comfort in the fact that His **love** for His children is of proportions that the human mind will never begin to comprehend.

The **love** that the Lord has for His children passeth knowledge. No science can define or explain it. No human wisdom can fathom it. (OHC173.2)

This, the most perfect **love** of God, is represented by His perfect law of **love** which, in itself, is a perfect word-portrait of His character of **love**.

The law, as well as the gospel, is a mirror reflecting the true character of God. (GC88 465.2)

It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and **love**. It presents to fallen

humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man. (FLB86.3)

His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of ALL character. The life of Jesus on earth was a perfect expression of God's law. (COL315.1)

Clearly, God's law is not merely a list of cold and lifeless rules. On the contrary, it is a failsafe measure of character.

The law of God is an expression of that which the Creator wishes his children to become. (YI, September 11, 1902 par. 3)

Where some will be inclined to see no more than the letter of the law enslaving us to a human interpretation of that law, the truth is that God is calling on us to discern the spirit of His law as it challenges us to rise above the widespread notion that the law is all about ***what we must do*** when, in truth, the law is all about ***what we can be*** - with God living in us:

The followers of Jesus are to become like Him - by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. (AG20.6)

Jesus character reveals the true significance of the law. (DA505.1)

He served all, ministered to all. Thus He lived the law of God, and by His example showed how we are to obey it. (DA 649.4)

Thus, the law does not merely represent something that we are expected to “keep,” but something that we are expected to be and to live.

This being the case, we may confidently conclude that true obedience is not merely a matter of performance, action, or behaviour, but a matter of what we are - a matter of character.

In other words, true obedience is not so much a matter of doing right as it is a matter of being right with God. Then, when our hearts beat in harmony with His great heart of love, we will think right, and thinking right will always lead to right doing or righteousness.

This is why Paul assures us that:

It is God who works ***IN YOU*** to will and to act according to his good purpose. (Philippians 2:13)

First God changes us within, and this change within brings about a change without – for only a changed heart can produce genuinely changed behaviour.

All of which confirms the point that true obedience is the fruit of a heart that overflows with love for God and for our fellow man.

Nothing short of **obedience** to every precept -nothing less than supreme **love to God** as well as **equal love to our fellow man** - can satisfy the claims of the divine law. (2BC1011.7)

In summary, . . .

**True obedience =
Love to God + Love to our fellow man**

To emphasize this all-important fact, let us carefully consider the following:

If there is within us a yearning to commit a particular sin and, through the strenuous exercising of the will we only just manage to refrain from committing that sin, is this true obedience? (1 John 5:3)

Or does true obedience run far deeper than this? Would God not be infinitely more pleased if we were graced with a character that is repulsed by the very thought of sin - a character that finds its highest delight in pleasing God?

In short, the obedience that God is looking for is not merely a matter of externals – not merely a matter of what we do, what we eat, what we drink, and what we wear, etcetera (all of which are not unimportant).

In order to expand on this pivotal point, let us take a moment to carefully and prayerfully analyze a most fascinating and encouraging statement from the all-time classic on the life of Jesus, *The Desire of Ages*:

Desire of Ages	Commentary
All true obedience <u>comes from the heart</u> . It was heart work with Jesus.	True obedience is not a matter of <i>what the hand does</i> , but a matter of <i>what the heart is</i> .
And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out <u>our own impulses</u> .	True obedience is the result of Jesus living in us. It is not merely the product of an overstrained will, but the fruit of a sincere love relationship with the Lamb of God, a love relationship that sanctifies the will.

<p>The will, refined and sanctified, will find its <u>highest delight</u> in doing His service.</p>	<p>True obedience is not a matter of an endless struggle to obey – it is our delight-filled response to God’s love.</p>
<p>When we <u>know God</u> as it is our privilege to know Him, our life <u>will be</u> a life of continual obedience. <u>Through an appreciation of the character of Jesus, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.</u> (DA668.3)</p>	<p>True obedience is not the outcome of our single-handed efforts to obey, but the fruit of our sincere efforts to get to know God and His love – for it is only by beholding Him and His incredible love that we can become more like Him.</p>

Thus the good news assures us that we can stop trying to fight a lonely battle with our carnal yearnings. Such efforts, as sincere as they may be, can and will never bring about the desired results, and this for the simple reason that . . .

Man cannot transform himself by the exercise of the will. In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. (COL96.2; DA122.3)

When we try to stand in our own strength, we shall become a prey to [the evil one’s] devices. (DA130.4)

What we need, rather, is a secret place friendship with God, and the more we get to know of His amazing character, and the more we get to appreciate the wonders of His unfathomable **love**, the more we will love Him, and the more we grow to love Him, the more “sin will become hateful to us.”

This is the only safe and sure pathway to *true* obedience!

While *the claims of the law* of God are to be presented to the world, we should never forget that **love**, the *love* of Jesus, is the **ONLY POWER** that can soften the heart and lead to obedience. (Ev57.3)

If space only allowed, we would repeat the last sentence a thousand times:

The *love* of Jesus is the **ONLY POWER** that can soften the heart and lead to obedience. (Ev57.3)

If a man is to be connected with God he needs to cleave close to the **ONLY POWER** which can give him the victory, and that power is Jesus Christ. *Love* for Jesus Christ leads us to obey God's commandments. (MR380.3; SD194.4; 1 John 5:2-3)

Hence the words of Paul:

I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of *knowing* Christ Jesus my Lord. (Philippians 3:8)

Thus everything in life is to be secondary to our quest for a deeper knowledge of God:

This is the *knowledge* which God is inviting us to receive, and BESIDE WHICH ALL ELSE IS VANITY AND NOTHINGNESS. (8T335.5)

By the *knowledge* of His *love* expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued. (RC73.3)

What could be more encouraging! What could give us more hope! What an amazing God we serve!

How comforting to know that we are not expected to engage in a single-handed and vain battle against sin. Instead, Jesus holds out His nail scarred hands and He gently and longingly beckons, “Come and ***learn of me***” all you who are wearied and weighed down by sin, and I will live in you and I will do for you what you can never do for yourself. (Matthew 11:28-29 KJV)

Please notice that this invitation does not call on us to merely learn ***from Jesus***, as some translations have rendered this verse, but to learn ***of Jesus***. (3MR72.3)

Is it really that simple? If so, how does this work?

It works by the softening and transforming power of God’s ***love***. When we love Him as He deserves to have us love Him, works of righteousness will be the spontaneous fruit of that love. (FLB 217.3). Our part is to get to know Him – His part is to transform our hearts:

Love begets ***love***; and thus the ***love*** of Jesus displayed upon the cross woos and wins the sinner, and binds him repenting to the cross, believing and adoring the matchless depths of a Saviour’s ***love***. (2Red73.3)

[As such, we will appreciate that] in order to keep the law it is necessary to have a knowledge of God; for the law is a transcript of his character, and his character is ***love***. (RH, September 13, 1906 par. 14)

And this is why . . .

Our souls should be enlivened, elevated, and enraptured with the theme of ***the love of the Father and the Son*** to humanity. (BLJ 19.6)

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*His divine power has given us everything we need  
for life and godliness through our **knowledge of**  
**Him.** (2 Peter 1:3, NIV)*

*They have escaped the defilements of the world  
by the **knowledge of the Lord** and Savior Jesus  
Christ. (2 Peter 2:20)*

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## Chapter 8b

# The Fruit of Infnite Love – Part 2

In the previous chapter, we confrmed that God's Ten Commandment law is a perfect word-picture of love. This being the case, we would expect the majority of believers to be well aware of this all-important fact. The truth, however, is that God's children have long been divided into two camps over the nature of God's law.

With this fact in mind, let us turn our attention to these two camps which, for the sake of clarity, we will simply refer to as "the legalist camp," and "the lovealist camp."

### The Legalist Camp

The legalist is one who struggles to discern the deeper significance of God's law. Typically, he will fail to see beyond the letter of the law and, as such, he will consider the law, not as "a life-giving code of principles expressing mercy, goodness and love," but as little more than a cold and lifeless standard for human behaviour.

Having so shallow an appreciation of the spiritual significance of God's law of love, the legalist will be

inclined to believe that he, in his own strength, can keep the law. As such, he will be inclined to believe that there is saving merit in his so-called “law-keeping.”

Typically, the legalist will strain the will in an effort to bring his life into harmony with his all-too-human, all- too-shallow and all-too-narrow interpretation of God’s law. Then, with every little “victory” gained, he will be more and more inclined to look down upon those who do not do as he does, eat as he eats, and dress as he dresses, etcetera. Typically, his little outward victories will have a strong tendency to contribute towards a strange brand of spiritual egotism otherwise known as “will worship.”

There is in the religious world a theory of sanctification which is false in itself and dangerous in its influence. In many cases those who profess sanctification do not possess the genuine article. Their sanctification consists in talk and will worship. (SL7.2, also see DA599.4)

Sadly, the legalist’s perception of God’s law of love will find him drawing away from others over matters of performance, instead of drawing nearer to others in the light of God’s forgiving grace.

Standing on his self-made platform, the legalist will feed on the faults of others. Though he claims to serve a loving God, he will usually manifest an unloving spirit as he goes about correcting and discussing the faults of others.

Yet this is only the beginning of this woeful story:

The power and the uniqueness of Christianity lies in the fact that the Christian can only rise if he falls, and when

he rises, he can only ever do so in the strength and the merits of His Saviour. (DA56.5). Legalists, however, are generally of the opinion that they can rise without first falling. This is one reason why it is so difficult to find a humble and a teachable legalist.

If not appropriately checked, legalism will usually leave behind it a trail of broken families, broken friendships and broken churches. With time, the legalist may even resort to “spiritual terrorism” – killing faith through false teachings, killing reputations through evil speaking, and killing self-respect through fault-finding and criticism.

As the situation in our present-day world testifies, legalists may even resort to the most gruesome forms of manslaughter - and all this, supposedly, in the name of a God of infinite love. (John 16:2)

The sad part, however, is that this horror story will usually be traced back to a religious system that failed to teach its adherents, . . .

- a) That the law of God is an embodiment of the great principle of love. (SC60.2)
- b) That the law of God is an expression of God’s very nature. (SC60.2)
- c) That true **obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love.** (SC60.2; DA668.3; Romans 6:17)
- d) That any works that man can render to God are worth “far less than nothingness.” (FW24.2 – also see Chapter 15)

- e) That a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law - for God credits righteousness apart from works. (Romans 3:28; 4:6)
- f) And, contrary to the first lie ever told, that man, in His own strength, has no hope whatsoever of becoming more like God, or of satisfying the demands of God's holy law. (Genesis 3:5)

## The Lovealist Camp

Then there is the lovealist camp. These are they who discern the deep spiritual nature of God's law of love – for they are able to see beyond the letter of the law to the spirit of the law. These are they who see in God's law a high and holy representation of God's own character.

With this understanding, the lovealist is able to appreciate that there cannot be a genuine change in ***behaviour*** unless God first brings about a genuine change in ***character*** – for ***what we do or desire to do***, good or bad, is only ever a measure of ***what we are***.

Our thoughts, our words, our actions, are the result of ***what we are***. (ST, November 21, 1892 par. 5)

Realizing this, the lovealist will appreciate that sin is not merely a matter of wrong thoughts, or of bad behaviour, but a matter of a spiritually ailing heart.

- As such, he will know that, ***in himself***, he cannot overcome sin, for he cannot change his heart.
- As such, he will also know that ***in his own strength*** he has absolutely no hope of living up to the demands of God's holy law.

Thus the lovealister will be acutely aware of the fact that...

The most rigid obedience to the mere letter of the law as applied to the outward life will entitle no man to enter the kingdom of heaven. (DA174.2 - also see FLB204.4; COL314.4)

Yet this awareness does not leave the lovealister in a hopeless condition. On the contrary, this most humbling awareness actually paves the way for God's law of love to fulfill one of its highest and noblest functions - that being to serve as a mirror in which we may see a perfectly accurate reflection of our true selves. This reflection, when viewed through teachable eyes, will always convict the humble believer . . .

- a) that he has a desperate need of a Saviour, and
- b) that he has a desperate need of a righteousness that he does not and cannot possess.

Thus we will appreciate why it is that . . .

The law was put in charge to lead us to Jesus that we might be justified by faith. (Galatians 3:24; also see Romans 7:7)

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8)

Rightly understood, the law of God leads us to Jesus and, as we fall at His feet, all broken by the realization of our "lostness", He rejoices and all of heaven sings, for He is the great Heart Surgeon, and He is always more than eager to operate on the heart of anyone who acknowledges that he has a heart problem:

This is why, contrary to what many believe, . . .

Jesus' heart is cheered by the sight of those who are poor in every sense of the term; cheered by His view of the ill-used ones who are meek; cheered by the seemingly unsatisfied hungering after righteousness, by the inability of many to begin. He welcomes, as it were, the very condition of things that would discourage many ministers. (Ev49.1)

Is it not reassuring knowing that the realization of our true condition brings us to the feet of ***a happy Jesus*** – a happy Jesus who is thrilled at the opportunity of working on our sin-sick hearts with His ever-sharp scalpels – these being the scalpels of empowering grace, transforming love, endearing mercy, and edifying truth?

Having this reassurance, let us turn our backs on the snares of legalistic thinking, and let us expose our hearts to the Master Heart Surgeon as we contemplate the passage below. Yes, and let us stand aghast as we consider the lengths to which God has gone in order to set us free.

By His perfect obedience ***He has satisfied the claims of the law***, and my only hope is found in looking to Him as my substitute and surety, ***who obeyed the law perfectly for me***. By faith in His merits I am free from the condemnation of the law. ***He clothes me with His righteousness***, which answers all the demands of the law. ***I am complete in Him*** who brings in everlasting righteousness. He presents me to God in the spotless garment of which NO THREAD was woven by any human agent. (1SM396.1)

What manner of heart-healing **love** is this, that Jesus would clothe us in the garment of His righteousness?

What manner of heart-healing **love** is this, that Jesus would release us from our guilt and rescue us from our dilemma by perfectly obeying the law on our behalf? (Romans 8:1)

What manner of heart-healing **love** is this that Jesus would excitedly present us to the Father - not because we are complete in ourselves, not because we possess as much as a thread of anything that gives us any merit, but only because our faith in Him renders us complete **in Him**? (1MR37.3; DA389.3)

What manner of heart-healing **love** is this, that the law-maker would perfectly obey the law on behalf of the law-breaker?

What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Jesus He gave **all** the resources of heaven, that **nothing** might be wanting in the plan for man's uplifting. Here is love - the contemplation of which should fill the soul with inexpressible gratitude! Oh, what love, what matchless love! **The contemplation of this love will cleanse the soul from all selfishness.** It will lead the disciple to deny self, take up the cross, and follow the Redeemer. (PH148-5.3)

So where the legalist will spend a frustrated lifetime trying to comply with his all-too-mistaken interpretation of God's law, the lovealist will fall on his knees in gratitude and wonder as he revels in the marvels of God's redeeming and transforming love.

In summary, God's law of **love** leads us to the Lamb of **Love**, that we might behold His **love** and that we might become more **loving** in character.

We **love** because he first **loved** us. (1 John 4:19)

Thus the love of God fills us with love – love for Him, and love for all that He has made - and this, after all, is the essence of true obedience. Where the legalist will believe that obedience involves rigid compliance with the law, the lovealist will be ever aware of the fact that . . .

**Love** is the **fulfilment** of the law. (Romans 13:10)

And this is **love**: that we walk in **obedience** to his commands. (2 John 1:6, NIV)

This is why both the Old and the New Testament confirm that **love** and **obedience** are inseparable:

- God keeps His covenant with those who **love Him** and **keep His commandments**. (Deuteronomy 7:9)
- By this we know that we **love** the children of God, when we **love God** and **keep His commandments** (1 John 5:2)
- But showing **love** to a thousand generations of those who **love Me** and **keep my commandments**. (Exodus 20:6)
- **Love the LORD** your God and **keep his requirements**, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. (Deuteronomy 11:1)
- I command you today to **love the Lord** your God, to walk in His ways, and to **keep His commandments**. (Deuteronomy 30:16)



## Through the Eyes of Love

The law that we see will usually depend on the God that we see. If we see God as a hard and dictatorial judge, we will be inclined to see His law as little more than a list of standards or prohibitions, all of which begin with the words, “***Thou shalt (not) . . .***”

When we see God as a kind, patient and merciful Redeemer, however, we will see His law through altogether different eyes, and we will recognize (a) that each commandment highlights a vital facet of love, (b) that each commandment is a promise, and (c) that each commandment could well begin with the reassuring words, “***Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will [not] . . .***”

The following is a humble attempt to present God’s law through the eyes of love. Please bear in mind that this representation is but a weak human interpretation of something that is altogether Divine:

### **The 10 Commandments - Through The Eyes of Love**

|          |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> | Love is Faithful | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will have no desire to worship other gods. That is a promise!                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>2</b> | Love is True     | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will not be attracted to idols. We will have a personal relationship, our communication will be meaningful and real, and your love for Me will overshadow all else in your life. That is a promise! |

|          |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3</b> | Love is Respectful | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will recognize that I am holy, and that I am the source and sustainer of all life. As such, you will respect Me, and you will find it impossible to use my holy name in a fippant manner. That is a promise!                                                                                                                                |
| <b>4</b> | Love is Devoted    | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will treasure the Sabbath as the day that I have set aside to be devoted to our love relationship. You will recognize the seventh day of every week as a day in which you and I are to spend quality time together - unencumbered by the things of the world. That is a promise!                                                            |
| <b>5</b> | Love is Grateful   | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will honor and respect your parents, for you will recognize that you are the product of their love for one another. Just as the creation was an expression of My love, so it is that you are an expression of your parent's love. As such, you will love and appreciate them as the instruments that I used to make you. That is a promise! |
| <b>6</b> | Love is Life       | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will recognize that I am the Creator of all things. As such you will have no desire to hurt or to destroy anything that I have created. You will be acutely aware of the fact that homicide begins in the mind; that anger is the first step toward murder; and that words can destroy by degrees. That is a promise!                       |

|   |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7 | Love is Responsible | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will be settled in the fact that I am the author of life, that life is the fruit of My love, and that procreation is but the continuance of My creation. As such, you will recognize the sacredness of life and the sanctity of marriage, and you will only ever enter into intimate relations that carry My personal blessing. That is a promise!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 8 | Love is Kind        | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will know that I am the Giver of all good things. As such, you will not take anything that I have given to another . . . not his belongings, not his reputation, or his self-image; nor will you deprive him of his right to your love, your respect, and your ongoing support. That is a promise!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 9 | Love is Protective  | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will know that I have an intense and unconditional love for <b><i>all</i></b> people. As such you will be as protective of the image of others as you are of your own image. You will always find a valid reason for another's weaknesses, and you will always place the most favourable motive on another's mistakes. No matter how faulty others may be, you will only see, speak, think and hear about the good in their lives. You will understand that it is as much a duty to desist from hearing evil as it is from speaking evil - for where there are no hearers of evil, there will be no speakers of evil. That is a promise! |

|    |                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 | Love is Contented | Knowing Me, loving Me, and having Me in your heart, you will have an abiding trust that I will supply all that you need for life and for godliness. As such, you will find it impossible to set your heart on anything that I have given to another. That is a promise! |
|----|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

When the law is presented as it should be, it reveals the love of God. But it is no wonder that hearts are not melted even by truth when it is presented in a cold, lifeless manner; no wonder that faith staggers at the **promises of God**, when ministers and workers fail to present Jesus in His relation to the law. (GW157.2; also see 1888-674.2)

The first four commandments of the law grow out of our relation to God, and demand the loving loyalty of our whole hearts. The last six grow out of our relation to our fellow-man, and require us to regard his interests as our own. (ST, November 24, 1887 par. 2)

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*Whoever has my commands and **obeys** them, he is the one who **loves** me. (John 14:21)*

*If you **love** Me, you will **keep** My commandments. (John 14:15)*

*If you **obey** My commands, you will remain in My **love**. (John 15:10)*

Chapter 9

True Success

Knowing that it is a kind, gracious and compassionate God who longs to enjoy a loving relationship with us, knowing that we have no righteousness of our own that can save us, knowing that His perfect righteousness is put to our account in exchange for simple faith, knowing that it is His righteousness alone that saves us, knowing that we have no power to change our own characters, and knowing what we know about our personal weaknesses, we now turn our attention to three critical questions:

1. How should we respond to God's redeeming love?
2. To what should we bend our energies as we consider the future?
3. Where should our focus lie as we ask God to order our lives in the light of His overwhelming grace?

These are vitally important questions and, as the remainder of this chapter confirms, they all find answers in a right understanding of the matter of ***true success***.

So what is *true success*?

Before we attempt to answer this question, let us first of all remind ourselves that the world's idea of success does not always sit comfortably beneath the banner of truth:

The secret of success is not in learning, not in our position, not in our numbers, nor the greatness of our talents; it is not in the will of man. (SpM89.5)

While human achievement certainly does have its rightful place in the scope of life, we nevertheless need to bear in mind that God does not always applaud that which the carnal heart may be inclined to applaud.

In God's sight, profession is nothing, position is nothing. (RH, July 7, 1904 par. 1)

When the Spirit of God, with its marvelous awakening power, touches the soul, it abases human pride. Worldly pleasure and position and power are seen to be worthless. Then ***humility*** and ***self-sacrificing love***, so little valued among men, are exalted as ***alone of worth***. (DA135.1)

Whatever else true success may entail, it walks on two sturdy legs, ***humility*** and ***self-sacrificing love***.

This being the case, it is more than obvious that true success is not a matter of fate? Not at all!

Success is not the result of chance or of destiny; it is the outworking of ***God's own providence***, the reward of ***faith*** and ***discretion***, of ***virtue*** and ***persevering effort***. (COL353.1)

Please notice that there is a strong spiritual dimension attached to true success:

1. ***God gives it,***
2. ***Faith, discretion, virtue and persevering effort*** take hold of it, and . . .
3. It is supported and propelled by ***humility*** and ***self-sacrificing love***.

Thus the pathway to true success is not paved with worldly ambition - nor is it an easy pathway to follow:

The road to success is not a smooth way over which we are borne in palace cars, but it is a rugged path filled with obstacles which can be surmounted only by **patient toil**. (5T552.1)

With these thoughts in mind, let us bring this subject a little closer to home by again asking the million-dollar question:

How can I be truly successful?

Our first clue is found in Jesus' response to Martha when she expressed concern in that she alone was busy with the meal-time chores while Mary remained seated at the feet of Jesus.

Martha, Martha, [Jesus answered,] you are worried and bothered about so many things; but ***one thing is necessary***. (Luke 10:40-42)

Amidst all the hustle and bustle of life, amidst all of our striving for temporal success, the One who knows all things assures us that but ***one thing is necessary***, and that one thing is to sit humbly at His feet.

Jesus referred to this one thing as the “good” or “better” part:

What was that better part? ***To learn of Jesus, to appreciate His words.*** (OHC281.3-4)

When daily time alone with Jesus is our highest priority in life, and we are abiding in Him, we are on the pathway to true success - for this is the only way to establish a dependable foundation for all else that is encompassed in being a human on a fallen planet.

According to the sure word of Scripture, God can do all things, and Jesus assures us that we can do all things together with Him. (Job 42:2; Philippians 4:13)

Thus, true success is well within our grasp for, quite simply, it is the fruit of our daily connection with Jesus. In other words, it is the product of our earnest search for a deeper knowledge of Him.

I would that all could realize what possibilities and probabilities there are for all who make Jesus their sufficiency and their trust. The life hid with Jesus in God ever has a refuge; he can say, “I can do all things through Jesus who strengthens me.” (CL28.2)

To repeat: When it comes to true success, but ***one thing is necessary***. Like Martha, human nature will tend to worry about the “many things,” but Jesus assures us that if we will but attend to this one thing, ***that being our ongoing secret place relationship with Him***, He will lighten the burdens that are so often associated with the “many things,” and He will pave the pathway that stretches out before us.

Your ***abiding with Jesus*** makes every necessary duty light, for He bears the weight of every burden. He will freely bestow all blessing connected with Himself upon all who ***come to Him*** for life. (HP55.2)

Is this not precisely what Jesus is inviting us to do in the following words?

Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But ***seek first His kingdom*** and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:32-33)

God promises that if we make it our highest priority to search for the kingdom, and this by searching for the King, He will add His own personal blessing to all the “other things.”

Thus the advice that Jesus is here presenting is precisely the same advice that He gave to Martha - ***this one thing is necessary – sit at My feet.***

Without this ***daily*** communion with God, no human being can gain power for service. Jesus alone can direct the thoughts aright. He alone can give noble aspirations and fashion the character after the divine similitude. (CT323.2)

For the health and vitality of the soul, the divine Physician has prescribed ***communion with Himself***. We are to sit at His feet and learn of Him ***how to be meek and lowly in heart.*** (UL174.2)

Thus true success begins at the feet of the Master. It simply cannot be otherwise, for this is where spiritual life

begins - and what is the value of all else in life when this vital spiritual component is missing?

This is why . . .

The greatest victories to the church of Jesus or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained ***in the audience chamber with God***, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power. (CC69.5)

It is by the invisible union of the soul with Jesus, through faith, that the spiritual life is nourished. (COL47.1)

Thus, we have the assurance that true success is not measured by worldly standards, but by the level of our intimacy with God – that is, by the depth of our personal relationship with Him and by the strength and constancy of our connection to Him.

This all-important fact is alluded to in the book of John. Here we read that:

They were willing to receive Jesus into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. (John 6:21, See DA382.4-5)

This passage teaches us that when we take Jesus into our lives, when we allow Him to take up residence in our hearts, when we set self aside and we surrender the helm of our boat to Him, there will be life after this life. After all, eternal life is the ultimate evidence of true success:

All of which boils down to one climactic fact:

Success is the recognition of God's ownership.
(AH367.2)

When we revere Him as our Master, when we permit Him to steer us into each new day, when we are daily sitting at His feet, learning of Him, when we have Him living in our hearts, we are in partnership with One whose plans simply cannot fail.

The Lord's workers must feel their inefficiency, must contemplate Jesus, and conquer through Him who is the thought of all thought, the strength of all strength. Grasp the hand of Jesus, and say, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. He will respond, ***KEEP NEAR TO ME; I will hold your hand. My grasp shall never relax.*** (SpM89.5)

Sure, we do have a part to play; sure, we do need to exercise our will; sure, we do need to make decided efforts to abandon all that is out of harmony with truth and righteousness, but unless we are connected to Jesus as the branch is connected to the vine, our singlehanded efforts will never bear fruit. (DA296.4)

The Process

The truth, however, is that we will only allow God to take control of our lives when we trust Him, and we will only trust Him when we know Him - and when we know Him, we will love Him, for He is love.

To know God is to ***love*** Him. (DA22.1)

Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7)

When we love Him as He deserves to have us love Him, and

we are enjoying a deep and meaningful daily relationship with Him, we will become more and more like Him, for ...

It is by *loving Him*, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness. (AG293.4)

Sinful men can become righteous ***ONLY*** as they have faith in God and ***maintain a vital connection with Him***. (DA310.1)

Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with satan; but ***without a vital connection with God***, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a ***personal acquaintance*** with Jesus, and a ***continual communion***, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end. (DA324.1)

Loving Him is undoubtedly our ultimate goal in life, and the only way that we can achieve this goal is by sitting at His feet, holding His hand, hearing His voice, and growing in appreciation of His incredible character of love. ***When everything else in life is of secondary importance to our relationship with Him, we can look to the future with confidence:***

We need not seek to quench our thirst at shallow streams; for the great fountain is just above us, of whose abundant waters we may freely drink, if we will rise a little higher on the pathway of faith. (MB19.4)

As drowning men [and women], have you clung to Jesus, who is your refuge? Are you obeying Him, living for Him, ***loving Him?***" (5T481.4)

Come One, Come All

Thus true rest and peace are accessible to even the lowliest of sinners. All that it takes is for us to respond to the call of Jesus, "***Come*** to Me, ***all*** who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Come just as you are ***and learn of Me***. (Matthew 11:28)

That which even the greatest and wisest cannot earn, the weakest and most humble may receive. Heaven's golden gate opens not to the self-exalted. It is not lifted up to the proud in spirit. But the everlasting portals will open wide to the trembling touch of a little child. Blessed will be the recompense of grace to those who have wrought for God in the simplicity of faith and love. (COL404.2)

It is just so simple, yet the evil one has used his agents to make it seem so very complicated. ***Just come*** to the Great Physician, learn of Him, lean on Him, and allow Him to direct.

Jesus created human beings, and then, by a life of suffering and humiliation, and a death of agony and shame, He redeemed them from sin. O sinner, the Saviour endured all this for you. He died that you might be led to see the sinfulness of sin, and ***by coming to Him*** have eternal life. (RH, February 12, 1901 par. 23)

As with earnestness and assurance you ***come to God***, tell him all about your necessities. Claim his promises. He has given us the privilege of ***coming to Him***, and we need have no fears of wearying him. Do not doubt His word of promise. (SW, June 4, 1903 par. 2)

In truth, if but one thing is necessary, that being to sit at the feet of Jesus, then there is but one resolution that is worth making. If we can abide by this one resolution, He will live in us and He will partner with us as we attend to the “other things.”

It should be ***the first business*** of your life to seek the kingdom of Heaven and the righteousness of God; then you have the promise that all things shall be added. (PH085-14.1)

If we ***even once*** omit our ***DAILY*** duty of calling upon God for His divine aid, His care and protection, WE LOSE ONE DAY’S ENJOYMENT. We have not the sweet, melting influence of God’s Holy Spirit attending us through the day, but we feel cast down and easily discouraged. (1SAT7.1)

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*I will not enter my house or go to my bed - I will allow no sleep to my eyes, no slumber to my eyelids, till I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling for the mighty One of Israel. (Psalm 132:3-4)*

*Let us go into His dwelling place; let us worship at His footstool. (Psalm 132:7)*

## Chapter 10

# Unlimited Opportunities

In an earlier chapter we considered how it is that we, humanity, live ***in Him***. We now return our attention to the equally mysterious subject of ***God living in us***.

Do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is ***in you***? (2 Corinthians 13:5)

He abides with you and will be ***in you***. (John 14:17)

This is the privilege of ***EVERY*** believer today. It is man dwelling with God, and ***God taking up His abode with man***. It is not only the privilege but the duty of every follower of His to have ***Jesus enshrined in the heart, to carry Him with them in their lives***; and they will indeed be fruit-bearing trees. (UL228.4)

Jesus enshrined in the heart? What an honor! God living in us by His Spirit? What a responsibility! What grace! What a challenging thought!

We are to be brought into a sacred nearness with the world's Redeemer. We are to be ***one with Jesus as He is one with the Father.*** (ML252.3)

Here again there is the realization of a personal, living influence ***dwelling in our hearts*** by faith. (LHU186.3; See DA161.1)

He jealously desires ***the Spirit to dwell in us.*** (James 4:5)

*Remarkable! Magnificent! Astounding!* What manner of grace is this that the Most High would be willing to live in the hearts of the most lowly and undeserving?

The radical, shocking truth of the gospel, so powerful that it is often left unsaid and unclaimed, is that every Christian believer is called to have God's Son incarnated in him or her. In a sense, all have been invited to the same awesome responsibility that the angel placed on Mary. Perhaps the present opportunity is even more magnificent and astounding, for while the Messiah was formed physically in Mary's womb, He now asks you to allow Him to be formed ***spiritually in your soul!*** (Douglas Cooper, *Stranger to the World*, pp.28-29 – also see DA161.1)

*What a privilege! What a mystery!*

Yet, as mysterious as this concept may be, we may find rejoicing in the fact that . . .



A knowledge of this mystery furnishes a key to every other. ***It opens to the soul the treasures of the universe, the possibilities of infinite development.*** (Ed172.1)

Wow!

In the next chapter we will attempt to answer some of the more obvious questions that arise out of this mystery. For now, however, let us turn our attention to some of the almost unbelievable doors of opportunity that open to all who have living within them the One in whom are hidden ***all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*** (Colossians 2:3)

God expects us to get extremely excited about what He can accomplish in and through us. If we have “***all the treasures of the universe***” available to us, is there any limit to what can be achieved? Just imagine what plans can be entertained, with God, knowing that He has made available to us ***all “the possibilities of infinite development.”***

He in whom Jesus dwells has within himself ***the fountain of blessing***, - “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs. (DA187.3)

***All heaven is at the command of those who, realizing their lack of wisdom, come directly to the source of wisdom.*** (HP294.4)

This being the case, we may confidently believe that, . . .

***The time has come when we must expect the Lord to do great things for us.*** Our efforts must not flag or weaken. (1SM111.3)

If God is willing to live in us, if all of heaven is at our command, and if all “the possibilities of infinite development” are ever before us, do we not have every justification for thinking big about all that God can do in and through and with us? What can limit us when we have abiding in our hearts an all-knowing, all-powerful God who promises to direct us at every step of the way?

Why should our dreams not reach to the heavens; why should our plans not embrace the stars . . .

- When there is no limit to *the height you may reach*? (TMK135.4)
- When there is no limit to the *good* you may do? (LHU129.5)
- When there is no limit to the *blessings* that the children of God may receive? (AA471.2)
- When there is no limit to the *help* that the Saviour is willing to bestow on us? (HP275.5)
- When there is no limit to the *influence* of the human agent who wears the yoke with Jesus? (OHC279.6)
- When there is no limit to the *power* that may be [given] to the worker for God? (ST, August 1, 1892 par. 12)
- When God fixes no limit to the *advancement* of those who desire to be “filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding?” (AA478.3)
- When there is no limit to the *usefulness* of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon the heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God? (HP283.7)

If our partnership with God presents us with so many unlimited opportunities, and with all the treasures of the universe, how dare we plan anything from a merely human perspective, how dare we put forward any idea without first consulting Him, how dare we entertain any plan without first seeking His counsel as to the global prospects of that plan, how dare we hesitate to implement that which He is laying upon our hearts,?

We claim little, when we might claim much; for there is no limit to the *promises* of God. (Ev598.4)

He who with sincere and teachable spirit studies God's word, seeking to comprehend its truths, will be brought in touch with its Author; and, except by his own choice, there is no limit to the *possibilities* of his development. (CCh207.7)

The Lord Jesus is our example and our efficiency in all things. OUR MEANS OF DOING GOOD ARE NEVER EXHAUSTED. Our source of power is the fullness of Jesus. Upon this we may draw, and draw again. There is no limit to the *supply*. (ST, March 7, 1892.14)

Whatever the endeavor, God is eager and willing to partner with us.

But, we must ask, why would God be so eager to bless a people who have caused Him so much pain? The simple answer to this altogether reasonable question lies in the fact that . . .

**It would not satisfy the heart of the infinite One to give those who love His Son a lesser blessing than He gives His Son. (MYP109.2)**

If the Father is willing to bless us as He blesses Jesus, how can we possibly entertain thoughts of failure?

When we give ourselves wholly to God, and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. ***Not once should we even think of failure.*** We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure. (ChS261.4)

What an amazing God? With Him living in our hearts, there are no limits, there is no possibility of failure and, of course, there is no reason to fear.

Not one soul who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Jesus permit to pass under the enemy's power. ***Angels of God will walk on either side of them***, even in this world, and they will stand at last among the angels that surround the throne of God. (PK587.1)

They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down. (Psalm 91:12-13)

With all of this encouraging news to motivate us, what is there in this universe that can dissuade us from setting our sights even on the seemingly unachievable – for nothing is impossible for the omniscient and omnipotent God who delights to live in us.

Natural impossibilities cannot prevent the work of the Omnipotent One. (DA535.2)

In summary, we may confidently order our lives around one MASSIVE and extremely motivating thought:

***With God living in our hearts,  
there are no limits,  
there can be no failure,  
and there is no reason to fear.***

In fact, all that Jesus received from the Father we too may enjoy - provided we never forget that . . .

It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. ***He longs to have you expect great things from Him.*** He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you. (COL146.4)

The life of Jesus has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. ***ALL that Jesus received from God we too may have.*** Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself ***ALL*** that God has promised. (COL149.2)

***God did not design that His wonderful plan to redeem men should achieve only insignificant results.*** (DA667.2)

*May God bless you, dear reader, as you think big with the Master, keeping in mind that even your biggest of plans are small plans to the One whose infinite love is cradled in an eternal time-frame and an endless universe! There is nothing that can stop you from getting excited about the boundless prospects that He has laid out before you.*

God in His providence is calling His people out from their limited sphere of action to enter upon greater enterprises. (3T405.1)

***IF YOU ABIDE IN ME***, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)

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*With God **all things** are possible.* (Matthew 19:26)

*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us **all**, how will He not also with Him freely give us **all things**?* (Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 3:21)

*Now to Him who is able to do **far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think**, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.* (Ephesians 3:20)

*I can do **all things** through Him
who strengthens me.
(Philippians 4:13)*

Chapter 11

Love That Will Not Let Us Go

Words can only fail hopelessly to portray the magnificence and the glory of God. Nevertheless, our focus in this chapter turns to a very special word, one that describes a more than wonderful attribute of God's character. This is the word *lovingkindness*.

This word appears 175 times in the New American Standard version of the Scriptures; yet, strangely, it has disappeared from many of our modern-day dictionaries and Bible versions, and it has all but disappeared from our modern-day vernacular.

So what is *lovingkindness*?

Lovingkindness is that manner of kindness that finds its source in the heart of God. Where human kindness is so often driven by a need for acknowledgment or return, or by guilt or obligation, lovingkindness is not driven by any ulterior motive - it is the spontaneous outflow from deep within a heart that is overwhelmed with love for another; it

is the impulsive and unaffected fruit of genuine, heartfelt love. (Philemon 1:14)

The *Wikipedia* describes lovingkindness as “acts of kindness, motivated by love.”

Shall we not rejoice knowing that the kindness that God showers upon us is not merely a concession, or simply a product of His sympathy, but the natural plant that grows out of His unquenchable and unchangeable love for us?

Your ***lovingkindness*** is great to the heavens and Your truth to the clouds. Be exalted above the heavens, O God; let Your glory be above all the earth. (Psalm 57:10-11)

For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in ***lovingkindness*** to all who call upon You. (Psalm 86:5)

The most wondrous aspect of God’s lovingkindness lies in the fact that it is not reserved for “the saints.” God sends rain on the good and the bad and, in like fashion, He lavishes His lovingkindness on the good and the bad.

Where all too many of us have grown up believing that God distances Himself from us when we do wrong, the truth is that we become “only the more the objects of His compassion” when we do wrong. (COL186.2)

While we may well expect the legalist to have a great struggle with this thought, it is nevertheless a soul-watering fact, and it is one that allows us to keep God’s outstretched arms and His nail-scarred hands ever in view - even at those times when we stumble and we disappoint Him.

Would God pay such a dear price for our redemption only to turn His back on us when we fail Him? Never! Do earthly fathers turn their backs on their children when they fall? If God's love for us persuaded Him to endure the terrors and the agony of the cross, how dare we entertain the thought that He would desert us in our moments of greatest need?

The absolute truth assures us that . . .

Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, and dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity. (SC52.2)

Such is the love of God, that even the most heinous of sinners has a VERY special place in His heart:

The veriest [most grievous] sinners are the objects of His deep, earnest pity and love. He sends His Holy Spirit to yearn over them with tenderness, seeking to draw them to Himself. (COL225.3)

While the heart of God is most certainly pained when we err, we may rest assured that He does not abandon us when we are most in need of His help.

Although by our disobedience we have merited God's displeasure and condemnation, yet He has not forsaken us, leaving us to grapple with the power of the enemy. (HP34.2)

Thus it is a distortion of truth to state that God's lovingkindness is "**even**" showered upon the lowliest of sinners. In truth, God's lovingkindness is "**especially**" showered upon the lowest of the low.

In fact, the startling truth assures us that . . .

His pleasure is **more** in His people, struggling with temptation in a world of sin, than in the host of angels that surround His throne? (COL176.1)

How comforting to know that no fallen soul lies beyond the reach of His infinite lovingkindness.

As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love **EVERY OUTCAST SOUL**. (COL187.1)

Our Redeemer has opened the way so that the **most** sinful, the **most** needy, the **most** oppressed and despised, may find access to the Father. **ALL** may have a home in the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare. (DA113.2)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to **all** men. (Titus 2:11)

What amazing mercy! What amazing grace! What comfort and hope is ours! Even today . . .

The blood of Jesus is pleading with power and efficacy for those who are backslidden, for those who are rebellious, for those who sin against great light and love. Satan stands at our right hand to accuse us, and our Advocate stands at God's right hand to plead for us. ***He has never***

lost a case that has been committed to Him. We may trust in our Advocate; for HE PLEADS HIS OWN MERITS IN OUR BEHALF.

He is making intercession for the **most** lowly, the **most** oppressed and suffering, for the **most** tried and tempted ones. With upraised hands He pleads, 'I have **graven** thee upon the palms of my hands.' Isaiah 49:16 (OHC49.4)

Regardless of our past, regardless of our present condition, Divine lovingkindness simply cannot shun the wrongdoer.

The Saviour cannot withdraw from the soul that clings to Him, pleading its great need. (DA198.5)

To prove the point, let us turn to the Scripture record:

The psalmist tells us of a people who "sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons, and **shed innocent blood** - the blood of their sons and daughters." Yet, remarkably, God did not turn his back on these people: (Psalm 106:37-38)

Nevertheless He looked upon their distress. When He heard their cry; He relented according to the greatness of His lovingkindness. **He also made them objects of compassion.** (Psalm 106:44-46)

This is most difficult to believe! These people shed the blood of their own children, and yet God made them objects of His compassion? What amazing lovingkindness!

Then there is the case of the vile king Manasseh who "made his son pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and used divination, and dealt with mediums and spiritists.

He did much evil in the sight of the LORD” and he “**shed very much innocent blood.**”

Yet, when Manasseh was taken into cruel captivity “he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers” – and God responded graciously to the pleadings of this mass murderer? (2 Kings 21:6 ;16; 2 Chronicles 33:12)

He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. (2 Chronicles 33:13)

It would be most difficult to find an individual who has done more evil than King Manasseh, yet when he humbled himself and pled for mercy, God brought him back from captivity and restored him to the throne?

What does this tell us about God’s lovingkindness?

Thus we may confidently conclude that our acceptance with God is not limited by, or altered by the degree to which we have sinned. Our difficulty, however, lies in believing that God can accept us in spite of our sin.

Are you weak? Are you tempted? Is unsanctified desire tainting your spiritual experience? Are you slipping into wrong patterns of thought? Are you painfully aware of the fact that your character falls far short of the mark? Please be encouraged by the fact that your name is not merely written upon the hands of Jesus; your name is **engraved** upon His palms. His lovingkindness cannot and will not let you go.

Thus we may rejoice in the fact that God’s eagerness to gain access to our hearts is not in any way affected by what we have or have not done. No matter what

the circumstances surrounding our lives, we may find consolation, courage and peace knowing that . . .

NONE are so sinful that they cannot find strength, purity, and righteousness in Jesus, who died for them. (FLB134.4)

This said, let us take a thoughtful moment to gaze up into the soft, tender, sympathetic and tear-stained eyes of our Master, and let us bask in His words of reassurance:

With everlasting ***lovingkindness*** I will have compassion on you, for the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, but My ***lovingkindness*** will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken. (Isaiah 54:8; 10)

Once we appreciate the unfathomable dimensions of God's love, as with His lovingkindness, we can appreciate better the words of Paul:

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

If our sins cannot separate us from God's love, what in this world can do so? This is why . . .

No circumstance of birth or nationality, ***no condition*** of life, can turn away His love from the children of men. (DA194.1)

Human love may change, but God's love knows no change. Circumstances may separate friends; the broad waters of the ocean may roll between them; but ***no circumstance, no distance***, can separate us from the love of God.
(ST, July 13, 1904 par. 7)

Thus we can find endless rejoicing and unquenchable hope in the knowledge that God cannot love us more than He does – nor can He love us less than He does, for perfect love is a constant.

This is why the final destruction of the wicked is going to be such a very “strange” and infinitely painful exercise for God, for at that time, when the curtain closes on this world of sin, His love for the impenitent will be as strong as His love for His very own Son – and we have every reason to believe that He will continue to love and to yearn for His lost children right on unto eternity.

In this light, please notice below how God agonized over the impending fate of Israel. Who can even begin to imagine the pain and the anguish that He will experience when the time comes for the final destruction of those who refused to find peace and forgiveness in the shadow of His infinite grace and His limitless ***lovingkindness***?

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How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah\*? How can I treat you like Zeboiim\*? My heart is turned over within Me, all My compassions are kindled. (Hosea 11:8)

\* Cities destroyed along with Sodom & Gomorrah.

## Chapter 12

# The Hope of Glory

In this chapter, we again turn our attention to the mysterious concept of *God living in us*. Having reflected on the substantial and almost unbelievable benefits that accrue to all who have an indwelling Saviour, let us reintroduce this subject by asking a question that has perplexed the mind of many a truth seeker:

***How good must I be  
to have God live in me?***

In a world that is entrenched in a nothing-for-nothing economy, an economy that shapes our thinking from infancy, one would expect that we would have to at least reach a certain standard of perfection before we could expect a holy God to live in unholy hearts - but this is not the case. In reality:

***God does not live in us because we are good.  
He lives in us so that He can make us good.***

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?  
Did you **receive** the Spirit by the works of the  
Law, or **by hearing with faith**? (Galatians 3:1-  
2 – read together with Romans 8:13)

Obviously God will not live in us while we are cherishing sin, and/or while we are unwilling to be emptied of self, and/or while we are reluctant to surrender ourselves to Him. Obviously we are expected to sweep the doorway of our hearts that He might come in, for . . .

Many have so much rubbish piled up at the door of the heart that they cannot admit Jesus. ***Some have difficulties between themselves and their brethren to remove***; others have evil tempers, pride, covetousness; with others, love of the world bars the entrance. All this must be taken away, before they can open the door and welcome the Saviour in. (OHC352.4)

Yet, if we will but clear away the “rubbish,” and if we will but humbly come to God confessing that He is Lord, that we are helpless without Him, and that we have a desperate need of His indwelling presence, . . .

The Lord Jesus Christ will dwell in our innermost being, ennobling and sanctifying our human nature by His divine attributes. (HP283.2)

This being the case, we may rejoice in the fact that it is by grace and by grace alone that God takes up residence in our hearts. We do not and we cannot earn or merit His indwelling presence. We can only open the doorway of our hearts and let Him in:



If the door of the heart is open to Jesus, ***He will come in***, and His presence will expel every unholy thought, and by faith we may hold sweet communion with God. (PH149-54.2)

Indeed, we have to grapple with the idea that He who “possesses immortality,” He who “dwells in unapproachable light,” He who is “exalted over all the nations,” He whose glory is “above the heavens,” is willing, eager and able to dwell in the hearts of His fallen children - yet this is the absolute truth.

Just as a caring earthly father has a special place in his heart for his errant child, so it is that God has a special place in His heart for every one of us. Though He knows all about our frailties, our perplexities, our secret sins and our ungodly thoughts, He does not turn His back on us:

You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. ***He turns no weeping, contrite one away***. Freely will He pardon ***ALL*** who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. (DA568.3)

This is our incredibly gracious God. This is the One who does not forsake us when we err:

Though you may be weak, erring, imperfect, and sinful, the Lord holds out to you the offer of ***partnership with Himself***. (Mar111.6; ChS259.3)

Thus we may find great comfort in the fact that our kind heavenly Father does not leave us to battle alone with sin. As our Great Physician, Jesus offers to operate on our hearts, not from without, but from within.

This being the case:

Do not listen to the enemy's suggestion to stay away from Jesus until you have made yourself better; until you are good enough to come to God. If you wait until then, you will never come. When satan points to your filthy garments, repeat the promise of Jesus, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37 (COL205.2)

Here we are again reminded of the fact that God loves us – regardless. He is love, and our condition does not and cannot alter this fact. While our bad behaviour does cause Him great sadness, we have to realize that our behaviour, good or bad, does not alter His love for us.

This is why Jesus invites us to come to Him "*just as we are.*" When we are sensitized to our lost condition, and we come to Him, looking to live a better life, He immediately enfolds us in His great arms of love, He takes up residence in our hearts, and He does for us all that we cannot do for ourselves.

It is through the Spirit that Jesus dwells in us. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. (DA388.1; 107.4)

When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. (DA173.1)

Those who see Jesus in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. (DA388.1)

Thus, to repeat, we may find lasting rest and absolute peace knowing that God does not deal with our sin problem from a far-away place. He does not watch over us “from a distance,” nor is He seeking an arms-length relationship with us. On the contrary, He overcomes the sin in us by living in us.

There is ***no power in you*** apart from God, but it is your privilege to have Him ***abiding in your heart*** by faith, and ***He can overcome sin in you,*** when you cooperate with His efforts. (OFC94.3)

If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells ***in you***, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead ***will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*** (Romans 8:11)

While the wonderful truth guarantees us that we are purified by His indwelling presence, we may rest assured that He who laid His hands upon lepers is in no way polluted by our sin.

Jesus, coming to dwell in humanity, receives ***no pollution***. His presence has healing virtue for the sinner. Whoever will fall at His feet, saying in faith, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,” shall hear the answer, “I will; be thou made clean.” (DA266.1)

Without exaggeration, it will take all of eternity to even begin to comprehend the infinite and unchangeable nature of God’s forgiving love.

What sins are too great for Him to pardon?  
What soul too dark and sin-oppressed for

Him to save? He is gracious, **NOT LOOKING FOR MERIT IN US**, but of His own boundless goodness healing our backslidings and **loving us freely, while we are yet sinners**. (5T649.1)

What manner of grace could this be? Is this not a love that is infinitely higher than the most distant star?

With the deepest yearnings of indescribable compassion, God has considered our plight and He has concluded that our only hope of cleansing, and of salvation, lies in His willingness to live in our hearts.

By the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again his temple. (RH, December 31, 1908 par. 2)

Jesus in the heart will bring the whole man, soul, body, and spirit into captivity to the obedience of righteousness. (RH, March 9, 1897 par. 2)

According to the apostle Paul, this is a mystery, and it is a high-order mystery indeed:

This mystery . . . which is ***Jesus in you***, the ***hope of glory***. (Colossians 1:27)

What good news! Jesus in us is the hope of glory!

But what is glory? It is character. (SD337.5)

Paul is here telling us that our only hope of a changed character, our only hope of being fitted for a future life, is to keep our minds focused on an ever-so-gracious God who delights to live in the hearts of His ever-so-undeserving children.

The life of God *in the soul* is man's only hope.  
(RY131.1)

Yes, and what a great hope this is, that God would offer to etch a portrait of His own character on the naked and tattered canvas of our fallen and broken lives?

Where the evil one would persuade us to think of ourselves as failures, and as of little value in the estimation of God, the Lord's relentless love convinces us that we may entertain great expectations as we contemplate a thrilling partnership with the Most High:

Our standard has been too low; our expectations have been too limited. We must make our aims higher than we have made them in the past; for *it is possible for us to be filled with all the fullness of God, to have Jesus abiding in our hearts by faith*. Jesus has died for us, and we are not to think that we are of no value before the Lord; for the cross of Calvary reveals the fact that ***WE ARE VALUED BY THE INFINITE SUFFERINGS OF THE SON OF GOD***. (RH, July 5, 1892 par. 2)

[Therefore the question for us is:] How shall I, claiming to be a Christian, treat the habitation God has given me? Shall I work for my highest temporal and spiritual good by keeping my body as a temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or shall I sacrifice myself to the world's ideas and practices? (CCh215.7)

He is knocking, knocking at your heart. Open the door and let Him in. Empty the heart of all selfishness, by living right, eating right,

thinking right. Enthroned the Saviour in the heart. (2SAT155.2)

Yes, indeed, this is an exciting and an awesome responsibility, but it is not a daunting responsibility - provided we always remember that but ***one thing is necessary:***

More about Jesus I would know,  
More of His grace to others show.  
More about Jesus let me learn,  
More of His holy will discern.  
More about Jesus, in His Word,  
Holding communion with my Lord.  
More about Jesus on His throne,  
Riches in GLORY ALL HIS OWN.

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*I pray that you will understand how **incredibly great** his power is to help those who believe Him. (Ephesians 1:19 TLB)*

*For it is God who is at work **in you**, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13)*

*Truly He is good, truly His **lovingkindness** is everlasting. (2 Chronicles 7:3)*

*Come and see the works of God, who is **awesome** in His deeds toward the sons of men. (Psalm 66:5)*

Chapter 13

Glimpses of God

Part 3

Besides all else that Jesus achieved during His brief stay on earth, one of His most significant accomplishments revolves around what He revealed to humankind of the true character of God.

That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Jesus took our nature and dwelt among us. (COL17.1)

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God. (SD21.5)

The importance of this particular aspect of Jesus' multifaceted mission lies in the fact that it is our knowledge of God's character, above all else, that draws us into His arms and that persuades us to open our hearts to Him. In simple terms, the more we discover of His wondrous persona, the more we will be inclined to allow Him to live in our hearts and hand Him the reins of our life.

With this hugely significant thought in mind, let us now turn our attention to the Wonder of all wonders – that being the Character of all characters.

If we were to meet Jesus face to face, we would be surprised indeed. There would be no costly carriage, no expensive clothing, no pomp and no fanfare; there would be nothing other than His meek and lowly character that would draw attention to Him.

Like a root out of dry ground, He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. (Isaiah 53:2)

In His life no self-assertion mingled. The homage which the world gives to position, or wealth, or talent, was foreign to the Son of man. None of the means that men employ to win allegiance or command homage did Jesus use. In that life no noisy disputation, no ostentatious worship, no act to gain applause, was ever witnessed. (DA260.3; 261.2)

He did not claim a position among the leaders of the nation. He dwelt among the lowly. He reduced to nothing the artificial distinctions of society. The aristocracy of birth, wealth, talent, learning, rank, He ignored. (MH197.2)

He shunned all outward display. Jesus purposed that no attraction of an earthly nature should call men to His side. (DA87.3)

He was not distinguishable among the throng. (DA136.3)

Yet He is God – the All-Powerful, the Almighty; He is the Holy One who is meek; He is the Omnipotent One who is as docile as a lamb.

The greatest and holiest of men was also the meekest. In his character, majesty and humility were blended. In the cluster of Christian graces, he made meekness and humility prominent. (CTBH93.2)

In the character of Jesus was blended such majesty as God had never before displayed to fallen man and such meekness as man had never developed. Never before had there walked among men one so noble, so pure, so benevolent, so conscious of His godlike nature; yet so simple, so full of plans and purposes to do good to humanity. While abhorring sin, He wept with compassion over the sinner. He pleased not Himself. The Majesty of heaven clothed Himself with THE HUMILITY OF A CHILD. This is the character of Jesus. (5T422.1)

And this is the character of the God who weeps over us and who longs for a closer friendship with every one of us. He yearns for our attentions. This is the One who is delighted when we ask Him a favor or when we seek His blessing. This is the altogether attractive Jesus.

Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His lap and to kiss that pensive face, benignant with love. (3T422.1)

He was the Creator of all things, sustaining worlds by His infinite power . . . yet He could listen to the prattle of the infant and accept

its lisping praise. He took little children in His arms and pressed them to His great heart of love. They felt perfectly at home in His presence and reluctant to leave His arms. Never before had there walked among men one so noble, so pure, so benevolent. (5T421.1)

Such is the character and the appeal of the awesome God who delights to live in our hearts. He is infinitely great and holy, yet even the weakest of the weak would feel perfectly comfortable in His presence:

His life was as the garden of the Lord in which grew every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. His sensibility, courtesy, and love brought Him into close sympathy with humanity. (5T421.1)

He passed by no human being as worthless. (DA91.1)

This is why . . .

The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. (3T422.1)

All who labor and are heavy-laden [with sin] may come unto Him. He invites us to cast all our care upon Him; for He carries us upon His heart. (DA328.2; 5)

Surely we must stand in wonder as we consider that One so holy would condescend to abide in the hearts of creatures so lowly.

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit." (Isaiah 57:15)

Shall we not marvel at the thought that One so exalted and illustrious would offer His hand of friendship to even the most depraved of sinners? Shall we not stand aghast as we consider that our Maker has made provision for the pardoning of even the most heinous of transgressions? Shall we not bow in awe and wonder as we reflect on the tenderness with which He treated a woman who was taken in adultery?

In His act of pardoning, and encouraging this fallen woman to live a better life, the character of Jesus shines forth in the beauty of a perfect righteousness. Knowing not the taint of sin Himself, He pities the weakness of the erring one, and reaches to her a helping hand. While the self-righteous and hypocritical Pharisees denounce, and the tumultuous crowd is ready to stone and slay, and the trembling victim waits for death - Jesus, ***the Friend of sinners***, bids her, "Go, and sin no more." (1Red99.1)

Such compassion! Such affection! Such mercy! Such grace! In spite of the dark spots in our lives, in spite of our past, in spite of our ongoing failings, our infinitely compassionate God hankers over us with a longing that pains His ever-caring heart.

The Saviour regards with infinite tenderness the souls whom He has purchased with His own blood. They are the claim of His love. He looks upon them with unutterable longing. His heart is drawn out, not only to the best-behaved children, but to those who have by inheritance objectionable traits of character. (DA517.5)

What a God! What a Great Comforter! He will stop at nothing to secure the comfort of His children. Even when He was on earth He often denied Himself in order to comfort others.

Jesus often denied Himself of food in order to relieve those who appeared more needy than He. To those who were in need He would give a cup of cold water, and would quietly place His own meal in their hands. (DA87.1)

His work was always of a character to relieve suffering. (DA473.1)

He weeps with those that weep, and rejoices with those that rejoice. (DA533.3)

Such is the magnificent character of the magnificent God whose greatest pleasure, always, is to bring happiness, joy and peace to His children.

Even dumb animals are never beneath His notice and His attentions.

His life flowed out in currents of sympathy and tenderness. The aged, the sorrowing, and the sin-burdened, the children at play in their innocent joy, the little creatures of the groves, the patient beasts of burden, - all were happier for His presence. He whose word of power upheld the worlds would stoop to relieve a wounded bird. There was nothing beneath His notice, nothing to which He disdained to minister. (DA74.1)

He could not witness a wrong act without pain which it was impossible to disguise. (DA88.1)

He was kind and courteous, compassionate and tender. (HP46.3)

His heart, that loved and pitied, is a heart of unchangeable tenderness. (DA319.1)

What a beautiful Saviour! Majestic yet meek; high and holy yet humble, glorious yet gentle, exalted yet lowly. He left the splendors of heaven that He might commune with us, and that He might better relate to our plight.

This is our sympathetic God; this is the One who finds great pleasure in giving His undivided attention to the least gifted and to the least attractive. His heart never stops bleeding for the so-called outcasts of society:

He has an equal care for **ALL** the souls He has created. (DA639.1)

Harmless and **undefiled**, He walked among the thoughtless, the rude, the uncourteous; amid the unjust publicans, the reckless prodigals, the unrighteous Samaritans, the heathen soldiers, the rough peasants, and the mixed multitude. (DA90.3)

This is the Lord of Life. This is the One who made all things. This is the One who knows all about our big dreams. This is the One who hurts with us over our smallest disappointments and sorrows:

Nothing is so great or so exalted that it is above his direction and control. **Nothing** is so small and obscure that it is beneath his notice. (SpTB06 37.1)

This is our Maker. This is the character of the holy and all-powerful One who offers to partner with us. This is the One who condescended to become a man knowing full well that He would one day hang naked and dying before His shocked, heartbroken, and fainting mother? This is the One who was altogether selfless – even during His most agonizing moments:

With amazement the angels beheld the infinite love of Jesus, who, suffering the most intense agony of mind and body, thought only of others. O pitiful, loving Saviour; amid all His physical pain and mental anguish, He had a thoughtful care for His mother! (DA752.1-2)

He became nothing that we might become something. He became poor that we might be made rich. He suffered the most horrendous death that we might enjoy the most glorious life. He chose to be punished that we might have peace. He chose to be wounded that we might be healed. Yet never once did He complain about the injustice of it all.

This is Jesus, this is God, and all this He endured because He loves us. This is the One who stooped to the lowest depths of human suffering and shame that we might one day enter the portals of glory. This is the One whose character cannot change – and whose character did not change even when He was subjected to what surely must rank as the most horrifying of all horrifying moments. Even as men possessed by demons tore at His heart, . . .

The Saviour made no murmur of complaint. His face remained calm and serene, but great drops of sweat stood upon His brow. There was

no pitying hand to wipe the death dew from His face, nor words of sympathy and unchanging fidelity to stay His human heart. (DA744.2)

Every [facial] feature expressed gentleness and resignation and the tenderest pity for His cruel foes. In His manner there was no cowardly weakness, but the strength and dignity of long-suffering. (DA735.4)

Truly, Lord Jesus, You are our hero. Truly, You are worthy to receive all adoration, all admiration, all authority, all applause, all honor, all dominion, all power, all glory, all blessing, all thanks, all praise, all majesty, all might, all wisdom, all wonder and all worship. Truly you are infinitely more than wonderful.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that One Solitary Life. (Helen Steiner Rice)

This is the Messiah. This is the Oh so beautiful Son of God. This is our best Friend.

Jesus is attractive. He is full of love, mercy, and compassion. He proposes to be our friend, to walk with us through all the rough pathways of life. He says to us, I am the Lord thy God; walk with Me, and I will fill thy path with light. Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, proposes to elevate to companionship with Himself those who come to Him with their burdens, their weaknesses, and their cares. He will count them as His children

and finally give them an inheritance of more value than the empires of kings, a crown of glory richer than has ever decked the brow of the most exalted earthly monarch. (LHU98.3)

Today the same tender, sympathizing heart is open to all the woes of humanity. Today the hand that was pierced is reached forth to bless more abundantly His people that are in the world. "And they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." The soul that has given himself to Jesus is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon ONE for whom He has died. ***Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast.***

Because we are the gift of His Father, and the reward of His work, Jesus loves us. He loves us as His children. Reader, He loves you. Heaven itself can bestow nothing greater, nothing better. (ST, January 13, 1909 par. 11)

Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Saviour. (DA327.3)

He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. (LHU97.6)

The love of Jesus - who can comprehend it? Infinitely more tender and self-denying than a mother's love. (SL93.3)

This is the wondrous Lily of the Valley; this is the Bright and Morning Star, and all that He asks is that we allow our great need of Him to draw us into loving relationship with Him.

We have nothing to recommend us to God; but the plea that we may urge now and ever is our utterly helpless condition that makes His redeeming power a necessity. (DA317.1)

Bringing our nothingness to God is, in fact, *the* giant leap of all giant leaps. Once we find within ourselves the ability to fee, empty-handed, into His great arms of love, we leave behind us the vanities of our “do-it-yourself” world, and we enter, hat in hand, into a world where we will never walk alone, a world where the Master Heart Surgeon will never stop working on our characters – from within.

Will you open the door of the heart, and let the light of heaven in? Will you just now invite Jesus as a welcome guest to take possession of your heart? We should desire His presence above everything else on the earth. We should regard him as the one altogether lovely, the chief among ten thousand. Why do we keep the door of the heart closed, when he has given us such a gracious invitation to open the door and let him in? (ST, March 3, 1890 par 5)

Jesus will forgive you, and make your character like His own pure character, ***IF*** you will open the door of your heart and let Him in. He wants to give you His peace, His joy, His comfort. If you will let Him do this, He will cause you to triumph gloriously. (Letter 135, 1899, pp. 1, 9)

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***Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created. (Revelation 4:11)***

***Worthy are You; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. (Revelation 5:9)***

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Be glad in the LORD and rejoice. For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him? (Psalm 32:11; Ecclesiastes 2:25)

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Chapter 14

The Ultimate Battle

Our world is a spiritual battlefield. The battle that is playing out on this battlefield is the battle of all battles - it is the battle of life. (UL110.2)

At one end of this battlefield there is a loving General - He is the Prince of Peace, the Lamb of God, the Lord of Glory, the King of Love, the Champion of Truth, and the Master of Mercy. He is the humble, meek, kind, considerate, compassionate, tender, loving, gracious, self-sacrificing, and altogether wonderful Jesus.

At the other end of this battlefield there is an evil general - he is the prince of the powers of darkness, the originator of sin, the great usurper, the shameful deceiver, the jealous tyrant, and the accuser of the brethren. He squeals with delight when a baby is bashed, he gurgles with glee when an infant is raped, he feels deep satisfaction when an orphan weeps for parental love, he finds his greatest

enjoyment watching a creature being mauled to death, he shouts in triumph when an unbeliever dies, and he calls for a celebration whenever lives are snatched away by any and every disaster.

Satan's hatred against God leads him to hate every object of the Saviour's care. He seeks to mar the handiwork of God, and he delights in destroying even the dumb creatures. (8T273.1)

The more gory, gruesome and pain-filled the outcome of his evil designs, the more he rejoices with demonic excitement and satisfaction.

Where the tender, pitying heart of the Loving General is ever awakened to sympathy by suffering, the evil general rejoices whenever a child of God experiences hurt, heartache, sorrow or disappointment. (DA533.3)

Where the Loving General holds out to the world a cross, the truth, and a meek and lowly character, the evil general disguises himself as an angel of light and he presents the masses of humanity with nothing but lies, deception and delusion. (2 Corinthians 11:14)

The evil one's influence is constantly exerted upon men to distract the senses, control the mind for evil, and incite to violence and crime. He weakens the body, darkens the intellect, and debases the soul. (DA341.1)

He will seek to annoy, to harass, to falsify, to accuse, and misrepresent all whom he cannot compel to give him honor and help him in his work. His great success lies in keeping men's minds confused, and ignorant of his devices, for then he can lead the unwary as it were, blindfolded. (3SM423.1)

He will misrepresent, misapply, and pervert everything he possibly can, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. (TM411.2; DA636.2)

This is the master of malevolence. Even this brief glimpse of his hateful character must make us wonder why any thinking being would pay homage to one whose disposition is so disgusting, so repelling, so revolting, so sickening, so depraved, and so nauseating. Who in his right mind would choose as their leader one who is fixated with the idea of hurting and incapacitating innocent little children?

The sad truth, however, is that the whole world lies in the power of this evil general (1 John 5:19). As a result of the fall of our first parents, every human heart is infected, at conception, with his self-seeking spirit; every child of humanity is enlisted, at birth, into his army of evil; and, like it or not, every one of us, by nature, is strangely attracted to his sordid allurements.

While some would be inclined to deny this fact, the sobering truth reminds us that every time we think a wrong thought, every time we take a wrong step, every time we entertain a pride-filled moment, every time we are unkind or insensitive, every time we strive for the supremacy, and every time we entertain a negative sentiment, we applaud the prince of evil, we endorse his wicked deeds, we register a rock-solid vote in his favour, and we reject and we crucify afresh the Loving General.

Every failure or defeat on our part gives occasion for the devil to reproach Jesus. (2MCP420.2)

As mentioned in a previous chapter, one of the evil general's most successful deceptions revolves around the debilitating fallacy that persuades us to believe that our

ultimate battle is a battle against our sins. This fallacy has been spread far and wide, even at times by well-meaning preachers, and the end result is a multitude of disheartened people who have all but given up on the idea of following the Lamb of love.

Yet the truth assures us that if our ultimate battle is a battle against our sins, then every one of us is without hope, for . . .

We have no power of ourselves to cleanse our souls from one spot or stain of sin. (ST, September 2, 1889 par. 4)

We have no power to free ourselves from satan's control. (DA466.4; 605.1)

If God did not endow us with the ability to extricate ourselves from the claws of evil, our ultimate battle cannot possibly be a personal battle against the evil within.

The reason we sin is because we are sinful. This means that our overriding problem is not with our sins, but with our sinfulness. Sins relate to *what we do*, sinfulness relates to *what we are*, and, as previously mentioned, we only do what we do because we are what we are. Thus our real problem is not with what we do, but with what we are and, as mentioned above, we have nothing within us that can change what we are.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil. (Jeremiah 13:23)

Yet the incredibly amazing news assures us that God has not abandoned us in our helplessness. While we cannot change what we are, we can respond to the gracious

invitation of the One who most certainly can change what we are. This invitation echoes down the portals of time and it is extended to every child of humanity:

COME UNTO ME, all ye that labour and are heavy laden [with sin], and I will give you **REST**. Take my yoke upon you, and **LEARN OF ME**; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find **REST** unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30, KJV)

Here Jesus does not simply invite us to learn of Him, He urges us to **come to Him** that we might learn of Him. Here again the Master is reminding us that our highest objective in life is to sit at His feet, and once again the lesson comes home to us that it is one thing **to know about God**, but another thing entirely **to know God**. Where all the colleges in the world can help us to know about God, it is only as we sit at His feet in the secret place in private communion with Him that we actually get to know Him.

This, then, is how we find true rest, and this is how we take His yoke upon us - by maintaining a constant, personal, intimate friendship with Him (ChS232.4). This yoke is always easy and this burden is always light because when we are yoked up to Him, we are yoked up to the Eternal Source of infinite love, power and wisdom.

Please notice that the above invitation does not bid us to come to Him that we might squirm under feelings of guilt, remorse and shame. Rather, Jesus' invitation urges us to come to Him and to learn of Him that we might find **REST**. Regardless of our guilt, regardless of how much we may regret our past, and regardless of the extent to

which we have shamed the name of our Maker and our Redeemer, He has paid an infinite price that we might find **REST** in His gracious friendship:

Jesus gives all a blessed invitation who are burdened, and laden with sin, to come to Him,
the sinner's friend. (ApM31.2)

Thus our infinitely gracious Saviour is holding out to every one of us an invitation that is pregnant with promises – and each promise brings with it the promise of spiritual **REST**.

With this massively significant thought in mind, let us spend a few moments in prayerful consideration as we take the liberty of expanding on this invitation in the light of what has been revealed to us:

- Come to Me, come just as you are. (2MCP803.2)
- Come to Me, for without Me “you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)
- Come to Me and learn of Me. (DA389.3)
- Come to Me and I will live in you. (OFC94.3)
- Come to Me and find rest and assurance as you contemplate the fact that your ever-growing knowledge of Me, My grace and My love, can change your heart to the extent that you will abhor the corrupting allurements of this world. (John 1:29; HP283.2; DA523.1; ApM33.1)
- Come to Me and find rest in the fact that the Father accepts all who believe in Me as though they had never sinned. (SC62.2)

- Come to Me, and find rest in the fact that from the moment you accepted Me as your Saviour, you were granted a full and complete pardon. (Colossians 2:13; 6BC1071.8)
- Come to Me and find rest in the knowledge that your sinful past does not alter the fact that today, even this very day, all the children of faith stand faultless and complete before the Father “*in Me*.” (Colossians 2:10; 6BC1070.7; 7BC907.7; 1SM396.1)
- Come to Me and find rest knowing that your imperfections are hidden from the Father because you stand, by faith, in the spotless robe of My righteousness. (FW106.1)
- Come to Me and find rest in the fact that I have perfectly obeyed the moral law on your behalf and, as a result, the Father rewards your faith by placing My obedience to your account. (1SM396.1)
- Come to Me and find rest in the knowledge that your faith in Me and My merits has freed you from the condemnation of the law. (Romans 8:1; 1SM367.1; 396.1)
- Come to Me and find rest in the fact that your salvation does not depend in any way on your own righteousness, but rather on your appreciation of the fact that you possess no righteousness whatsoever that can save you. (Titus 3:5; 1SAT218.1)
- Come to Me and find rest in the fact that when your name comes up in the judgment, I will stand as your representative and substitute, and I will reward your faith in Me by holding up before an on-looking universe

My character and My merits as though they are your character and your merits. (John 5:24; 1 John 2:1-2; 4:17; Jude 1:24; 5MR13.2; RH, Aug. 15, 1893.7; PP357.6; ST, October 3, 1895 par. 6)

- Come to Me and find rest in the fact that if you enter into a meaningful, intimate, and ongoing friendship with Me, I will steer you through the remainder of your life. (1 Thessalonians 1:10)
- Come to Me and find rest and confidence in the knowledge that the evil one trembles and fees before the weakest soul who finds refuge in My name. (DA130.4)
- Come to Me and find rest in the fact that My love for you is infinite and unchangeable. (John 15:9)
- Come to Me and find rest in the fact that I would have died for you even if you were the only sinner in the world. (COL187.2)
- Come to Me and find rest in the fact that you are of such value to Me that, by comparison, entire worlds sink into insignificance. (2SP394.1)
- Come to Me so that you may have life. (John 5:40)

To repeat, the battle of life is not a battle against our sins, but a battle against everything that keeps us from coming to Him, and this that we might learn of Him and find **REST in Him**. The battle of life is a battle against everything that keeps us from getting to know Him on a personal level, and this that He might impregnate our minds with an ever-deepening knowledge of His love and His grace – for this is the knowledge that changes us, that frees us from our sinfulness, and that keeps us coming to Him in a spirit of great excitement.

The power of God's love and grace constrains us to come. (COL235.1)

In dying for sinners, Jesus manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul. (SC26.4)

Acquaintance with Jesus makes you want to abide in Him, and to have Him abide in you. (GH, April 23, 1902 par. 9)

His love for us and the unmerited kindness that He showers upon us, these are the spiritual magnets that draw us into that warm, cozy, secure, secret place of rest beneath His wings.

This is the only way in which sinners can be saved. Knowing that no one can [take His yoke upon them] in his own strength, Jesus tells us not to be worried nor afraid, but to remember what He can do *if we come to Him*, trusting in His strength. He says, If you yoke up with Me, your Redeemer, I will be your strength, your efficiency. (HP53.2)

What a gracious Saviour! What a simple salvation plan!

It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness. (AG293.4)

By beholding Him we become changed into His likeness. (CH590.2)

Thus, to repeat, it is our highest priority in life to come to Him and to learn of Him, for it is our knowledge of

Him that helps us to escape the evil of the world, it is our knowledge of Him that transforms our hearts and that lifts our minds to a higher level of thinking, and it is our knowledge of Him that gives us “everything we need for life and for godliness.” (2 Peter 2:20; 1:3)

Let none, then, regard their defects as incurable.
God will give faith and grace to overcome them.
(CCh348.4)

But surely it cannot be so simple? Does the ultimate battle of life really revolve around my intimate connection with God? Is the time that I spend alone with Him in the secret place really my highest quest and my greatest honor in life?

These questions can only be answered with a resounding **YES!** (2 Corinthians 11:3; AA28.3)

Daily communion with God will refine, ennoble, and elevate the entire being. (RH, April 23, 1889 par. 7)

Without this daily communion with God, no human being can gain power for service. (RH, November 10, 1910 par. 10)

ONLY as we hold this communion with him shall we be kept from making shipwreck of faith. (SW, March 1, 1904 par. 29)

The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Jesus. (DA466.5)

Our Spiritual Eyeglass

In order to gain a true conception of the character of God, we have to look at God through the correct lens. If we look at Him through the lens of pride, we will gain only a dim view of His awesomeness, but if we are able to look at Him through the lens of our own sinfulness, and our dire need, the contrast between His character and ours will be clearly discernable, and we will be in a far better position to appreciate His magnificence.

In this light we can understand why it is that . . .

No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not see and realize its own sinfulness. (OHC27.3)

ONLY he who seeshisownsinfulnessand discern the preciousness of the Saviour. (DA494.3)

This being the case, we need to enquire as to what it is that will help us to realize our own sinfulness. What is it that enables us to see ourselves as we really are?

Once again the words of Jesus come back to us: “***But one thing is necessary***” - and that one thing is to sit at His feet and to learn of Him - and the more we learn of His splendor and majesty, the more readily we will be able to discern our own depravity:

The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. (OHC27.2)

As we behold Him in His purity, we discern more clearly our own faults of character. (LHU266.4)

We conclude, therefore, that if our growing awareness of God's character leads to an ever-growing awareness of our own sinfulness and need, there will never come a time on this earth when we will be in a position to confidently declare that we have "arrived" on the strength of what we are, or on the strength of anything that we might or might not have done.

With these incredibly significant thoughts in mind, let us conclude this chapter with three hugely important questions:

- What is our ultimate battle?
- What is our highest goal in life?
- What objective in life supersedes all other objectives by infinite degrees?

The answer, . . .

Life's ultimate battle is to keep coming to God - daily, hourly, moment by moment, and in every possible way - that we might be healed by our ever-growing knowledge of His person, His preciousness, His loveliness, His delightfulness, and His excellence.

A daily, earnest striving to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, would bring power and efficiency to the soul. (DA355.2)

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*Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders? (Exodus 15:11)*

*For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You. (Psalm 86:5)*

## Chapter 15

# Works and Salvation

Human reasoning can be seriously challenged by the goodness of the good news - this is because the good news is so good that it can lead some to wonder whether God can in fact be so incredibly gracious.

One aspect of the good news that often troubles the human psyche revolves around the place of works or good deeds in the plan of salvation - and this is the primary focus of this chapter.

To introduce our subject, let us carefully consider the statement below:

While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works. (1NL63.1)

This statement of fact surely deserves our prayerful consideration for it presents us with two very important and yet seemingly conflicting truths:

**1<sup>st</sup> Truth:** We cannot be saved by our good deeds.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Truth:** We cannot be saved without good deeds.

Knowing that truth cannot contradict truth, the responsibility rests on us to uncover a framework of understanding that dismisses the apparent confusion surrounding these two truths?

To this end, let us carefully consider each of these truths in their turn:

**1<sup>st</sup> Truth: We cannot be saved by our good deeds**

This is a most challenging truth indeed. Yet, rightly understood it is also one of the most comforting and encouraging of all truths - provided we are humble enough to accept it.

In order to fasten this truth in a plausible setting, let us consider a simple analogy.

A light bulb is a wonderful means of illumination, but it only ever produces light when it is connected to a live power source. Without the power source, even the best of light bulbs is virtually worthless.

Now for the analogy:

Human beings were created to be a constant source of love and good deeds (light), but unless we are vitally connected to Jesus (our Power Source), and this through a personal and loving faith relationship with Him (the power connection), we are powerless to do any good thing - that is, with pure motives. (2T24.4)

Without Me, says Jesus, you can do nothing.  
(John 15:5)



So, where the light bulb is an instrument that converts energy into a visible form, we were created by God to serve as instruments that are specifically designed to convert His lovingkindness into a visible form.

Now, with these thoughts in mind, let us draw a critical conclusion:

Just as the light bulb cannot take any credit for the light that it emits, so you and I cannot take any credit for the light (works or goodness) that we emit. Jesus is the source of all power, and any light shining through us is only ever the result of our personal connection with Him. In short, all light is His light, it is never our light:

It is His light that shines through His agencies.  
(RC198.3)

The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works - in words of truth and deeds of holiness. (COL416.1)

Constantly our light is to increase in brightness because we are constantly receiving light from the Source of all light. (RC197.3)

In truth, all of our good deeds are actually His good deeds - for they are only ever the result of our being connected to Him - they are only ever the consequence of Him living out His life in us. (SC62.3; DA300.1; FLB116.2; Matthew 5:16)

This being the case, if all light is His light, and if we have no light of our own whatsoever, it follows that we cannot possibly be saved by our good deeds. In other words, we have absolutely nothing that we can offer to God in exchange for our pardon and our salvation.

In this context, the sobering truth assures us that . . .

If you would gather together everything that is good and holy and noble and lovely in man and then present the subject to the angels of God as acting a part in the salvation of the human soul or in merit, the proposition would be rejected as treason. ***Any works*** that man can render to God will be ***far less than nothingness***. My requests are made acceptable only because they are laid upon Jesus' righteousness. ***The idea of doing anything to merit the grace of pardon is fallacy from beginning to end.*** (FW24.1-2)

Let no one take the limited, narrow position that ***any of the works of man*** can help in the least possible way to liquidate the debt of his transgression. This is a fatal deception. (6BC1071.4)

Thus we can understand why it is that Jesus had to pay the ***FULL*** price for the salvation of ***ALL*** people for ***ALL*** time.

*He had to pay it ALL  
for the simple reason that  
we have "less than nothingness" to pay with.*

Hence the humbling words of the famous hymn, *Rock of Ages*:

**Nothing** in my hand I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling.  
**Naked**, come to Thee for dress,  
**Helpless**, look to Thee for grace.

In terms of saving righteousness, we stand before the Judge of the universe, ***empty-handed, naked, helpless,*** and ***in desperate need of a Saviour:***

Our great need is our ***ONLY*** claim on God's mercy. (DA316.4)

The celebrated poem by the eminent poet and hymn writer, Frances Ridley Havergal, says it precisely as it is:

Hear the voice of Jesus say,  
"Verily thou hast ***nothing*** to pay!  
All has been put to My account,  
I have paid the full amount."

***Nothing*** to pay; yes, ***nothing*** to pay!  
Jesus has cleared all the debt away;  
Blotted it out with His bleeding hand!  
Free and forgiven and loved you stand.

Hear the voice of Jesus say,  
"Verily thou hast ***nothing*** to pay!  
Paid is the debt, and the debtor free!  
Now I ask thee, lovest thou Me?"

Thus the merit that earns our pardon and our salvation is not a blend made up of Jesus' righteousness mixed together with our own righteousness. Not in the least! We are pardoned and saved on the strength of our faith in His righteousness ***alone*** – for, in the simplest of terms, ***His righteousness is the only righteousness that has any worth.***

His righteousness ***alone*** will the Father look upon and accept in our behalf; for [only] with his righteousness we shall be righteous as He is righteous. ***We shall not have our***

*own righteousness, it is WORTHLESS.* It is of no use to go about to establish our own righteousness, for *we have none to establish.* (1888-968.1)

*We are not to be anxious about what Jesus and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Jesus, our Substitute. Ye are accepted in the Beloved.* (2SM32.3)

This is why . . .

Jesus is able to save to the uttermost. **ALL** that man can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life **freely**.” Revelation 22:17. (OHC122.4)

In short, . . .

***The price of heaven is Jesus.*** (PH118-11.1)

Through that one great and all-encompassing Sacrifice, our dear and wonderful Saviour paid the full redemption price – for you, for me, and for all of humanity.

So let us be comforted by the fact that though we have nothing to pay with, we do have one amazing Saviour whose love for us compelled Him to **pay it all** on our behalf – and this at an infinite price. (Colossians 1:28)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Truth:** We cannot be saved without good deeds.

While it is altogether true that the saved cannot be saved by “their” good deeds, Scripture reveals in no uncertain terms that the lives of God’s true children will overflow with good deeds. Jesus Himself tells us that at the end of time, our world will be divided into but two groups, “the

sheep” - these being the ones who loved and cared for others, and “the goats” - these being they who had little regard for others: (Matthew 25:31-46)

Jesus on the Mount of Olives pictured to His disciples the scene of the great judgment day. And He represented its decision as turning upon ***one point***. When the nations are gathered before Him, there will be but ***two classes***, and their eternal destiny will be determined by what they have done or have neglected to do ***for Him*** in the person of the poor and the suffering.

In that day Jesus does not present before men the great work He has done for them in giving His life for their redemption. He presents the faithful work they have done for Him. (DA637.1)

This is remarkable indeed, but just how do we make sense of it all? On the one hand we are told that we cannot be saved by our good deeds, on the other hand we have the assurance that the lives of the saved will overflow with love and good deeds.

In order to unravel this apparent anomaly, let us again turn our attention to the analogy of the light bulb.

As discussed earlier, when a light bulb is disconnected from the power source, it cannot emit light, but when the light bulb is in good working order, and it is connected to the power source, it will always emit light.

Thus it is with God’s children: We may profess to love Him, but if we do not have an intimate connection with Him, we cannot possibly emit light. When we are in connection with Him, however, we cannot help but to shine, for He will shine out through us.

He in whose heart Jesus abides cannot help shining. (1NL106.4)

So while it is true that nobody will be saved by their works, the saved will have an intimate connection with God, and He will work in and through them, and He will shine out through them.

Thus we can understand why it is that in the day of judgment God will identify those who have faith (that saves them) by their good deeds (that do not save them); for it is an unchangeable law that all who have a meaningful faith connection with Jesus will be instruments of light – that is, instruments of *His light*.

Hence the words of James:

Show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works. For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. (James 2:18; 26)

Saving faith does not imply a casual endorsement of truth, or a mere acceptance of the Saviour. Saving faith always implies a personal and a deeply intimate relationship with the most kind and loving Being in the universe, and such faith is never a do-nothing faith.

This is why:

Genuine faith *always* works by love. When you look to Calvary it is not to quiet your soul in the nonperformance of duty, not to compose yourself to sleep, but to create faith in Jesus, *faith that will work*, purifying the soul from the slime of selfishness. When we lay hold of Jesus by faith, our work has just begun. (AG282.4)

Thus, there is a battle that we all must fight, there are resolute decisions that must be made, we most certainly have to guard ourselves against temptation and sin, but let us never forget the light bulb. If we are not connected to the Power Source, if we are not enjoying a secret place encounter with Jesus, if we are not in a personal loving relationship with Him - a relationship that takes up our time - we are in a state of spiritual disconnect. In such a state, He cannot shine through us, He cannot sanctify our will, He cannot strengthen our resolve, He cannot guide our thinking, and He cannot fill us with high and holy yearnings. In fact, in such a state of spiritual detachment we are about as useful to the world as is a light bulb in the cupboard - bursting with potential, instruments of light - but languishing in darkness.

Thus we can appreciate why it is that God has spared no effort to draw us into loving relationship with Him, for He yearns to live out His life in us and He longs to shine out His light through us. Calvary, His grace, His word, nature, His character, etcetera, all speak to us of a love that is unfathomable, and all beckon to us to come into an ever closer relationship with Him – that we might reveal His character to the world.

In summary, . . .

- 1) We cannot be saved by our good deeds because our own goodness or righteousness is worth less than nothing. God, and God alone, gets all the credit for any good that we might ever do.
- 2) We cannot be saved without good deeds for genuine saving faith cannot exist in the absence of good deeds. True faith always implies an indwelling Saviour, and

wherever He is, in heaven or in our hearts, He never stops performing good deeds.

Either way, God gets all of the credit for any good that we might ever do. We get no credit whatsoever.

In light of the above, let us again wrap our minds around the statement that we shared at the beginning of this chapter:

While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works. (1NL63.1)

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I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light. (John 12:46; 36)

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*Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. (Psalm 43:3)*



## Chapter 16

# Resting In Jesus

One of life's most significant milestones is that which we pass when we finally discover and accept that our own righteousness is "worth less than nothingness."

The prophet Isaiah likens human righteousness to filthy rags. Strong's Concordance lays it on the line, however. According to this highly respected publication, the filthy rags that Isaiah is here referring to are actually used menstrual cloths? (Isaiah 64:6)

*Is there anything that has less value than a used menstrual cloth? This is the value that heaven places on all human righteousness - it only ever has a negative value!*

While this is a humbling truth indeed, once we accept it, it opens to us a whole new vista of understanding – firstly because it helps us to realize just how much we need a Saviour, and secondly because it is only those who understand their great need who can appreciate the magnitude of God's more than amazing grace.

The foundation of our hope in Jesus is the fact that we recognize ourselves as sinners in need of restoration and redemption. It is because we are sinners that we have courage to claim Him as our Saviour. (HP291.3)

When we begin to realize that we are sinners, and fall on the Rock to be broken, the everlasting arms are placed about us, and we are brought close to the heart of Jesus. Then we shall be charmed with His loveliness, and disgusted with our own righteousness. (1SM327.1)

In truth, the realization of our lost condition is a pathway that must be walked by all who seek for salvation, for it is upon this pathway that we gain the clearest view of God and His character, and it is on this pathway that our growth in grace begins.

Please notice below how the true seed of Christianity germinates in “the soil of our lostness,” and please notice how this seed develops as the awareness of our fallen condition brings us ever closer to Jesus:

We can do ***nothing***, absolutely ***nothing***, to commend ourselves to divine favor. We must not trust at all to ourselves or to our good works; but when as erring, sinful beings we come to Jesus, we may find ***rest*** in His love. God will accept every one that comes to Him ***trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Saviour***. Love springs up in the heart. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there is an abiding, peaceful ***trust***. Every burden is light; for the yoke which Jesus imposes is easy.

Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. This is walking in the light as Jesus is in the light. (CCh49.3)

One of the greatest blessings that comes the way of those who realize that their works of righteousness are worthless is the blessing of being able to accept Jesus as our ***complete Saviour*** – that is, as the One who made a complete atonement for ***all*** sin, for ***all*** people, for ***all*** time. (1 John 2:2)

For some, however, this is a rather bitter pill to swallow:

There are many who seem to feel that they have a great work to do themselves before they can come to Jesus for His salvation. They seem to think that He will come in at the very last of their struggle, and give them help by putting the finishing touch to their lifework. It seems difficult for them to understand that ***Jesus is a complete Saviour***, and able to save to the uttermost ***all*** that come unto God by Him. (3SM181.3)

If Jesus is ***a complete Saviour*** there is just no way that we can entertain the idea that there is any manner of saving merit in human righteousness:

This is a fatal deception. If you would understand it, you must . . . with humble hearts survey the atonement. This matter is so dimly comprehended that thousands upon thousands claiming to be sons of God are children of the wicked one, ***because they will depend on***

**their own works**. God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were **valueless**, Jesus' righteousness **alone** can avail. (OHC122.2)

With these humbling truths in mind, let us now consider a few soul-watering facts:

1. The righteousness that saves us is **all His** and none of our own.
2. The faith that saves us is a faith that places its **complete** trust and belief in a **complete Saviour**.
3. Because Jesus is a **complete Saviour**, and because He puts His perfect righteousness to our account, we may find great comfort in the fact that we are **complete in Him**. (Colossians 2:10; 7BC907.7)
4. Because He is a **complete Saviour**, and because we are **complete in Him**, we may find total rest and confidence in the fact that the work for our salvation is **complete**. (OHC117.4)

The Father beheld the sacrifice of His Son, He bowed before it in recognition of its perfection. **"It is enough,"** He said. "The Atonement is **complete**." (7ABC459.6)

Nothing can be added to it, nothing can be taken from it. It is **complete**, perfect. (YI, December 6, 1900 par. 7)

This is why . . .

The Lord would have His people sound in the faith. They are not to look forward thinking

that at some future time a great work is to be done for them; for ***the work is now complete.*** (1SM394.3)

## The Ultimate Rest

What could be more encouraging than knowing that Jesus is a ***complete*** Saviour, that He has ***completed*** the work for our salvation, and that we are ***complete*** in Him?

And when before the throne,  
I stand ***in Him complete,***  
I'll lay my trophies down,  
All down at Jesus' feet.

Behind these incredibly amazing facts, however, there is an infinitely kind Father who hurts with us, who weeps with us, and who longs for us to find spiritual ***rest*** in the shadow of His ***completed*** salvation plan. He longs for His weary, heavy-laden children to find ***rest in Him.***

All are weary and heavy-laden. All are weighed down with burdens that only Jesus can remove. The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He has born the burden of our guilt. He will take the load from our weary shoulders. ***He will give us rest.*** (LHU97.5)

This is the deep spiritual rest that is spoken of in the book of Hebrews:

For the one who has entered His ***REST*** has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. (Hebrews 4:10)

This is the ultimate, life-changing rest that our complete Saviour holds out to every child of humanity:

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden [with sin] and I will give you **REST**. (Matthew 11:28)

This is the ultimate rest that is promised to all who have a secret place relationship with God:

He who dwells in the [secret place] of the Most High will **REST** in the shadow of the Almighty. (Psalm 91:1 NIV)

This is the ultimate and oh-so-sweet rest that God holds out to every one of us:

In **RETURNING** and **REST** shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. (Isaiah 30:15)

In the blessed state of quietness and confidence we may bask in the knowledge that salvation revolves around returning and resting - **returning** to Jesus daily, hourly, and moment by moment, learning of Him, leaning on Him, and **resting entirely in His merits.**

For the sake of those who may be entertaining doubts as to the completeness of God's salvation plan, let us turn our attention to the thief who was crucified alongside Jesus:

Having only met the Saviour a little while earlier, and with his hands and his feet securely nailed to a cross, this thief surely could not have done much to earn his salvation – yet he fulfilled all the conditions for salvation. His affections went out to his Maker, and He placed his full confidence for salvation in the righteousness of his

Saviour, following which Jesus gave Him the absolute assurance that they would meet again in the kingdom of glory.

In quietness and confidence the thief placed His full trust in His **complete** Saviour - and He found **rest**.

Now if that penitent thief died in a state of **rest**, is there not an abundance of hope for you and I?

## Two Cautions

- 1) The fact that salvation is a gift does not imply that everyone will be saved. Those who accept the Gift, as the thief accepted the Gift, will be saved. On the other hand, a heartbroken heavenly Father will respect the choice of all who reject the Gift and who, in so doing, reject salvation.
- 2) The fact that salvation is a gift does not suggest that we can expect to march into heaven with our bad characters. Nevertheless, we may certainly find courage in the fact that the thief who died on the cross will be in heaven – even though his life was only briefly exposed to the transforming power of Divine Love.

Of this we may be sure, however:

Those who enter heaven will be a changed people, but they will not be there as a result of the change, they will be there because they accepted their complete Saviour – whose love changed them. In other words, the change in their character will be the fruit of their salvation, not the cause of their salvation; the change will be their response to what they discovered of God's saving love, not the human merit that earned His saving love or His saving grace.

And so, dear reader, are you resting in the knowledge that you have a **complete** Saviour who has **completed** the work for your salvation? Are you rejoicing in the fact that you are **complete** in Him?

To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, **AND that we are complete in Him.** (DA389.3)

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*Dear Jesus, it is our special privilege to accept You, not only as our Saviour, but as our complete Saviour. Thank You so much dear Master for finishing the work for our salvation, and thank You so much for treading the winepress alone – for us. Thank You for enduring such an incredible level of rejection so that we might enjoy such an incredible and altogether unmerited level of acceptance – **in You**. As we consider Your great sacrifice, please help us to experience the joy, the hope, the peace, the rest, and the courage that You bought for us at the cost of infinite pain and sorrow, and please help us to better appreciate the love that drove You to do what you have done for us – that our awareness of Your love for us might awaken in us greater love for You.*

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*O sing to the LORD a new song, for **He has done wonderful things.** (Psalm 98:1)*

*Great are the works of the LORD; **splendid and majestic is His work.** (Psalm 111:2-3)*



*Return unto thy **rest**, O my soul; for **the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.** (Psalm 116:7)*

*He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and **awesome things** for you. (Deuteronomy 10:21)*

*You, O LORD, have made me glad by what You have done. (Psalm 92:4)*

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Should the reader still not have peace over the completeness of God's salvation plan, then please consider all that is stated above in the light of the highlighted portions of the passages of Scripture that follow – and please find absolute **rest** in the fact that the work for our salvation is indeed **a completed work**:

For Your Prayerful Meditation

- ***I have wiped out your transgressions** like a thick cloud and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for **I have redeemed you.** (Isaiah 44:22)*

Please notice above that although Israel had not even returned to God, the Lord assured them that He had redeemed them and that He had wiped out their sins.

- ***He has** visited us and **accomplished redemption** for His people. (Luke 1:68)*
- For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified **as a gift** by His grace through **the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.** (Romans 3:23-24)

- While we were enemies ***we were reconciled*** to God through the death of His Son. (Romans 5:10)
- Through one act of righteousness ***there resulted justification of life to ALL men.*** (Romans 5:18)
- The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus ***has set you free*** from the law of sin and of death. (Romans 8:2)
- In hope ***we have been saved.*** (Romans 8:24)
- ***God reconciled us*** to Himself through Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:18)
- ***You are sons***, . . . therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:6-7)
- In Him ***we have redemption.*** (Ephesians 1:7)
- ***We have obtained an inheritance.*** (Ephesians 1:11)
- Even when we were dead in our transgressions, ***God made us alive together with Jesus***, and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places ***in Christ Jesus.*** (Ephesians 2:5-6)
- By grace ***you have been saved.*** (Ephesians 2:8)
- ***The Father has qualified us*** to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For ***He rescued us*** from the domain of darkness, and ***transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son*** in whom ***we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*** (Colossians 1:12-14)
- ***Having made peace*** through the blood of His cross; ***He has now reconciled you*** in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach. (Colossians 1:20; 22)

- ***You have been made complete . . . He made you alive*** together with Him, ***having forgiven us ALL our transgressions.*** (Colossians 2:10; 13;)
- ***You have died*** and ***your life is hidden with Jesus in God.*** (Colossians 3:3)
- ***God has saved us*** and called us with a holy calling. (2 Timothy 1:9)
- He entered the holy place once for all, ***having obtained eternal redemption.*** (Hebrews 9:12)
- ***We have been sanctified*** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. For by one offering ***He has perfected*** for all time those who are [being] sanctified. (Hebrews 10:10; 14)
- ***He Himself is the propitiation for our sins;*** and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)
- See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and ***such we are.*** Beloved, ***now we are children of God.*** (1 John 3:1)
- ***God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*** (1 John 5:11)

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## Chapter 17

# Dressed For Victory

Having the assurance that Jesus has conquered the evil one, having the comfort of knowing that God's plan for our salvation is complete, and having positively concluded that our *ultimate battle* is to discover the love, the preciousness, the loveliness, the delightfulness, and the excellence of God, we now turn our attention to the question of all questions:

**What part must we play to ensure that  
we are victorious in this the ultimate battle?**

As we go in search of an answer to this question, let us first of all consider the battle charge that comes our way via the pen of the apostle James:

***Resist*** the devil and he will flee from you.  
(James 4:7)

Please notice that James does not instruct us to aggressively engage the devil, but to ***resist*** him.

This being the case, we need to ask ourselves, and this with urgency, just how do we **resist** the evil one?

The question is often asked, How can I resist the evil one? There is only one way by which you can do this, and that is by faith, taking Jesus as your helper and pleading with Him for strength. When the evil one suggests doubt to your soul, when he tells you that you are too unworthy, too sinful, to realize the blessing of God, present Jesus before him as your Advocate and Saviour. Tell him you know that you are a sinner, but that Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. He came “not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” Mark 2:17. (TMK245.3)

When the evil one comes to you, and tells you that because you are unhappy, perplexed, and troubled you are not a child of God, do not become discouraged for one moment, but gird up the loins of your mind. Let your heart repose [rest] in God. He has promised that **if you come to Him**, you shall find rest to your soul; and if you have done this, rest assured that He will fulfil His word in you. (TMK245.4)

In practical terms, we resist the devil by coming to Jesus, by learning of Him, by depending on Him, and by pursuing a secret place experience with Him. This is the only way to resist the evil one, and this is the only “place” where we can find safety and reassurance.

Unless we become ***vitaly connected with God***, we can never **resist** the unhallowed effects

of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. (DA324.1; Proverbs 16:6)

Please notice from the above that there is an enemy without and an enemy within. Jesus has overcome the enemy without, and we can rest in His victory. As for the enemy within, only God, through His indwelling Spirit, can overcome this enemy – but we do have a part to play:

### **So what is the part that we are to play?**

Where James has given us the battle charge, Paul has given us the battle plan. He tells us precisely what part it is that we are to play:

- 1) [I pray, said Paul, that you might be] strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,
- 2) so that Jesus may dwell in your hearts through faith;
- 3) and ***THAT*** you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- 4) may be able ***to comprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and TO KNOW THE LOVE OF JESUS which surpasses knowledge,***
- 5) ***THAT*** you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:14-19)

In summary, our part is to do whatever we can to better comprehend the “love of Jesus.” This will fill us “up to all the fullness of God,” and His indwelling Presence will drive out the enemy within.

Thus, Paul's battle plan is profound in its simplicity. As such, we would do well to carefully analyze this plan in the light of the paragraphs above and below which are correspondingly numbered 1-5 for ease of comparison:

### **HOW DOES GOD EQUIP US FOR THIS BATTLE?**

- 1) He gives us power through His Spirit. (v.16)
- 2) He gives us Jesus in the heart. (v.17; DG81.4)
- 3) He gives us a field of love in which to grow. (v.17)

### **WHY DOES GOD SO EQUIP US?**

- 4) THAT WE MIGHT COMPREHEND HIS LOVE.  
(v.18-19)

### **BUT WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO COMPREHEND HIS LOVE?**

- 5) That we might be "filled up to all the fullness of God." (v.19)

It is clear; it is simple; it is straightforward:

- With reference to Paul's battle plan as a whole, please notice that he does not focus our attention on our weaknesses and sins, but on the factors that make us strong. Unlike many a preacher of our day, Paul does not launch into a scathing attack on our character flaws – rather, he presents us with the solution to our character flaws; he does not focus our attention on the darkness, he tells us how to switch on the light – for He knows full well that only light can dispel darkness.
- With reference to points 1-3 above, please notice and please be encouraged by the fact that God never leaves us to battle alone with our weaknesses and sins. He



has made abundant provision to ensure that we may be victorious *in Him*.

- With reference to point 4, please notice once again that our ultimate objective is to comprehend the love of God as it is so perfectly manifested in the heart and the life of Jesus. Paul presents this as the central objective in his battle plan because he fully understood that it is what we get to know of God's love, and of His preciousness, loveliness, delightfulness, and excellence (a) that encourages us to open our hearts to Him, (b) that enables God to fill us up with all His fullness, (c) and this that we might have power to *resist* the devil – through Him:

*He who beholds the Saviour's matchless love* will be elevated in thought, purified in heart, transformed in character. (DA661.3)

As the mind dwells upon Jesus, the character is molded after the divine similitude. (FLB150.2)

*The love of Jesus*, glowing in our hearts, makes us self-forgetful and self-denying. (OFC106.3; also see DA761.5)

All of which brings us back to the question of all questions:

**What can we do to comprehend more and more of the love, the preciousness, the loveliness, the delightfulness, and the excellence of God?**

Here again, Paul gives us the answer - he tells us that God has given us a very special battle dress – a battle dress that is specially tailored to reinforce the mind.

Take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to **resist** in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (Ephesians 6:13)

Paul is not pulling any punches here. If we are to **resist** the devil, and if we are to stand firm under the banner of the Lord Jesus, we must put on the “full” armour of God and we must do “everything” that he urges us to do.

So just how do we prepare ourselves for this battle? To this end, Paul counsels us to put on five pieces of armour and he urges us to take up one very powerful weapon:

Stand firm therefore, [a] having girded your loins with **truth**, and [b] having put on the breastplate of **righteousness**, and [c] having shod your feet with the preparation of the **gospel** of peace; in addition to all, [d] taking up the shield of **faith** with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And [e] take the helmet of **salvation**, and [f] the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**. (Ephesians 6:14-17)

As we consider the nature of this, our ultimate battle, it follows that each of these pieces of armour, besides any other associated significance, will help us to become better acquainted with Jesus – and with God.

The following statement by John Wycliffe reveals that this thought has travelled a long road:

All of these things speak in a certain sense of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is our defense. (Wycliffe Commentary on Ephesians 6:14-15)

Rightly understood, each of “these things,” as they are referenced in [a] to [f] ***on the previous page and below***, will help us to discover the love, the preciousness, the loveliness, the delightfulness, and the excellence of Jesus - who “is the express image of God.” (Hebrews 1:3)

In the simplest of terms, . . .

- a) We will discover the love, the preciousness, the loveliness, the delightfulness and the excellence of Jesus as we go in search of ***truth***. After all, He is the very embodiment of truth. (John 14:6; Eph 4:21)
- b) We will discover the love, the preciousness, the loveliness, the delightfulness and the excellence of Jesus as we accept, by faith, that it is His ***righteousness alone*** - imputed and imparted - that saves us. (16MR224.1)
- c) We will discover the love, the preciousness, the loveliness, the delightfulness and the excellence of Jesus in the ***gospel*** message which, in a nutshell, is the priceless story of how He suffered the death that only we deserve to die, that we might live the life that only He deserves to live.
- d) We will discover the love, the preciousness, the loveliness, the delightfulness and the excellence of Jesus as our ***faith*** rests in the fact that we are saved by grace ***alone*** through His merits ***alone***. (2MCP541.2)
- e) We will discover the love, the preciousness, the loveliness, the delightfulness and the excellence of Jesus as we dig ever deeper into God’s plan of ***salvation***, and as the wonder of it all draws us ever nearer to the humble, lowly and altogether beautiful

Lamb of God who stands meekly at the center of God's throne – "looking as though He were slain."

- f) We will discover the love, the preciousness, the loveliness, the delightfulness and the excellence of Jesus in the ***word of God*** which, from cover to cover, is a revelation of the Most High, and a revelation of His most lovely Son. (ST, September 3, 1894 par. 4)

Quite simply, our ultimate responsibility is to put on our battle dress - daily. This means, in every day terms, that victory in the Christian warfare boils down to our willingness and our ability to order our lives around a few practical choices:

- The all-important daily choice of getting to bed early enough so that we can get up early enough to spend the most spiritually productive time of each day in the secret place with Him.
- The all-important daily choice of studying His word, not merely as a duty, or as a routine exercise, but as a means of hearing His voice, basking in His presence, and gaining a deeper knowledge of His love and His person.
- The all-important choice of praying – not just as a predictable once or twice a day formality, but as an all-day, anywhere, anytime, means of walking and talking with our very Best Friend.
- The all-important choice of frequently setting aside special times in which to contemplate sacred themes – alone with Him.
- The all-important choice of regularly spending time with Him as He presents Himself in the person of the disadvantaged and the afflicted. (CSA61.2)

- The all-important choice of memorizing even one verse of Scripture a week – and this that He who is the Bread and the Water of Life may be assimilated into our spiritual flesh.
- The all-important and ongoing choice of shunning everything in this life that keeps us from enjoying a secret place experience with the King of all kings.

These are the anchors that hold our Christian experience in place; these are the building blocks of the faith that saves; these are the sturdy ropes that keep us from slipping into a life of meaninglessness and fear; these are the God-given safety nets for the soul.

In practical terms, this is the hands-on simplicity of the challenge that we all face, this is how we gain power to **resist** the devil, and this is what enables God to secure the victory through us – and it's all about forging an intimate daily relationship with Him, that we might know Him better, that we might discover more and more of His love, His preciousness, His loveliness, His delightfulness, and His excellence and, ultimately, that we might love Him with an ever-deepening love and be filled with His fullness.

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*You will **SEEK ME** and find me when you seek me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:13)*



Chapter 18

The Ultimate Invitation

God holds out many gracious invitations to His children. Each of these invitations originates in an aching Heart that longs to heal the separation that has been caused by sin. As our infinitely kind Friend, God longs for us, as individuals, to draw nearer to Him, that we might find rest in His shadow, that He might cover us with His soft and warm feathers, and that we might feel loved, comforted and absolutely secure beneath His wings.

With a heart that has suffered infinitely more than any heart has suffered, God yearns for a very special closeness with each one of us, and this intense yearning lies behind every one of His invitations.

This being the case, we may find great encouragement knowing that . . .

The way to the throne of God is ***always open***.
You cannot always be on your knees in prayer,
but your silent petitions may ***constantly***

ascend to God for strength and guidance. When tempted, as you will be, you may fee to the secret place of the Most High. His everlasting arms will be underneath you. (HP86.2)

Contrary to the words of a well-known song, God is not a *far-away God* who aloofly “watches over us from a distance:”

We come to God by special invitation, and He waits to welcome us to His audience chamber. We may be admitted into ***closest intimacy*** and communion with God. (HP86.3)

[We] are to live constantly in ***the most intimate vital relationship*** with the Saviour. (MM318.2)

Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Saviour. (DA327.3)

In fact, the absolute truth assures us that . . .

In Jesus we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. (DA25.3)

This intimate, deep, and vital relationship is fittingly represented in the parable of the branch and the Vine.

If we are so precious to Jesus, shall we not seek to come into ***as close relation*** to Him as is the branch to the vine? Shall we not ***abide*** in Him as he has commanded us to do? (ST, April 11, 1892 par. 5)

Can we conceive of ***a closer, more intimate relation to Jesus*** than is set forth in the words: “I am the Vine, ye are the branches”? The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of

the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer's relation to Jesus. He ***abides in*** Jesus and draws his nourishment from Him. (5T229.1)

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye ***abide*** in Me. (John 15:4). Jesus would not tell us this if it were impossible for us to ***abide*** in Him. He shows us the possibility and the importance of a close relation with Himself. (1SAT398.1)

You are to be conscious of an ***abiding*** Jesus, that you are continually with Jesus, where your mind is encouraged and strengthened. (HP55.2)

If [we] ***abide*** in Him, [we] can draw sap and nourishment from Him, be imbued with His Spirit, walk even as He walked, overcome as He overcame, and be exalted to His own right hand. (Mar53.5)

Thus the level of personal intimacy that God longs to enjoy with us goes way beyond mere acquaintance or arms-length friendship - as the branch lives in and draws life from the vine, so God wants us to live ***in Him*** that His life might be infused into our life.

Have you, have I, fully comprehended the gracious call, "Come unto me"? He says, "Abide ***IN*** me," not Abide ***WITH*** Me. (HP55.4)

Jesus must be the central object of our affections, and then we shall **live in Him**, then we shall have His Spirit. (OHC61.3)

Live in the Lord, walk with God, if you would die in the Lord, and enter by and by where the Lord abideth forever. (TM430.1, also see 11MR139.4)

We abide or live in Him by way of an intimate, loving relationship with Him – and here we are not speaking of a general relationship that God nurtures with His children at large, but of a deep, tender, loving, personal and private relationship that we forge with God on a daily basis: (John 6:56)

The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. (AG116.4)

Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died. (DA480.1)

One can only wish that we could interview Enoch as to the implications of living in, or abiding in God. Nevertheless, whatever else may be included in this mysterious concept, it most certainly includes the spiritual and continual connection of the mind of the creature with the mind of the Creator – for this is how Enoch walked with God.

Pray in your closet, and as you go about your daily labor, let your heart be often uplifted to God. ***It was thus that Enoch walked with***

God. These silent prayers rise like precious incense before the throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome him whose ***heart is thus stayed upon God***. (AG239.5)

Obviously, we are not here speaking of prayers that are hoary with formality and rusty with routine; and we are most certainly not alluding to a stiff, cold, lifeless and loveless relationship with an unapproachable authoritarian.

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God ***as to a friend***. (CSA26.3)

We need not be content with merely formal prayers; we may come to Jesus ***as to a friend***, and in the most simple-hearted, definite manner tell him all our worries, perplexities, and trials, and ***He will carry our burdens for us***. When our minds and our lives get tangled, we may take them to One who knows just how to untangle them. Jesus invites us to cast all our cares upon him, for He cares for us; then let us leave them with Him, and receive His peace and rest into our hearts. (RH, October 21, 1884 par. 2)

Is it not amazing that a high, holy and perfect God would not only elect to live in His fallen children, but that He would even invite us to live ***in Him***.

We are to dwell ***in God***, and ***God in us***. (HP66.2)

God designed us to work on a high plane of action, to ***enter into His mind***, and thus acquire an education that would enable us to work the works of righteousness. (CTr359.5)

What could be more intimate than living in the mind of God? What could be more comforting than knowing that we have direct access to One who knows all things? How thrilling to know that we may share our smallest challenges and sorrows with the Supreme Ruler of the universe? How wonderful to know that the Father of Lights, He who holds all things together, has an intense and personal interest in even our smallest of dreams?

Living as we do in a hostile, cold and unfeeling world, everyone needs to know that there is a hiding place, a place where even the weakest of mortals may find comfort, assurance, and absolute security – a place of refuge where no harm can befall us?

A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you. For you have made the LORD, even the Most High, ***your dwelling place***.
(Psalm 91:7-9)

Even though we are frail and burdened with sin, we have a secure place of shelter ***in the Most High***, a fortress that is forever accessible to all who would enter in. Though everything around us may crumble and fall, though trouble may mount up on every side, we have a secret place, a secure, private audience chamber where we may meet with One who is infinitely patient, wise, kind and loving, One who is more than delighted and more than excited whenever we call on Him for help.

He knows whose hearts are burdened with sorrows and disappointed hopes. He is at our right hand to interest Himself in all our sorrows and to soothe our griefs. ***He presses close*** to the

believing mourner who yearns for His presence; but he never forces His company upon any. (ST, January 20, 1888 par. 8)

In the gracious blessings which our heavenly Father has bestowed upon us we may discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite, and a tender pity surpassing a mother's yearning sympathy for her wayward child. (HP14.6)

The Lord will no more cast off the humblest, lowliest believer in Jesus, than He will demolish His throne. (OHC167.5)

Thanks to the gift of Jesus and to the gift of faith we may rejoice in the fact that our compassionate heavenly Father does not look upon us as mere sinners who have been barely saved by grace. He has endured infinite suffering that He might restore to us the dignity and the privileges that we lost in Eden, and He wants us to find great comfort knowing that . . .

WE ARE accepted in the Beloved. **WE ARE** members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. (ST, June 6, 1895 par. 4)

By His appointment [the Father] has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed with our nature. As our Intercessor, ***His office work is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters.*** (7ABC488.2)

He would have us bear testimony to the fact that He cannot be satisfied until the human race are reclaimed and reinstated in their holy privileges ***as His sons and daughters.*** (DA826.2)

What a change comes over us, and oh how our confidence grows when we are able to absorb the fact that, in spite of our failings, and thanks only to grace, **WE ARE** members of the royal family, **WE ARE** children of the King, and **WE ARE** heirs of the kingdom – even right now. (1 John 3:1)

And so, dear reader, until we meet at Jesus feet, please never stop seeking the kingdom – but, whatever you do, never lose sight of the fact that we can only find the kingdom by finding the King.

After all, this is the ultimate goal of life:

The deepest and truest philosophy of life and faith is to bring ourselves into the most intimate relation with God. (UL276.4)

To comprehend and ENJOY GOD is the highest exercise of the powers of man. This may be attained only when our affections are sanctified and ennobled by the *grace* of Jesus. In Jesus is the life of the soul. In the outgoings of our hearts to Him, in our earnest, *affectionate yearnings* for His excellence, in our eager searching into His glory, ***WE FIND LIFE.*** In communion with Him we eat the bread of life. (OHC61.2)

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*OGod, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will*

*praise You. So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, for You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me. (Psalm 63:1-8)*

*I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever. For Your lovingkindness toward me is great, and You **HAVE DELIVERED** my soul from the depths of Sheol. (Psalm 86:12-13)*

*But as for me, the nearness of God is my good. (Psalm 73:28)*

*God is bedrock under my feet, the castle in which I live, my rescuing Knight. My God – the high crag where I run for dear life, hiding behind the boulders, safe in the granite hideout. (Psalm 18:1-2 MGE)*

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## Chapter 19

# Love in Top Gear

Thus far, the primary focus of this book has been on God and on what we can do to improve our relationship with Him. In order to reinforce what has already been stated on this matter, let us again turn our attention to the fruit of this relationship, with special emphasis on those to whom this fruit should be most evident.

As was noted earlier, at the end of this world's history there will be but ***two classes*** of people:

- 1) Those who cared only about themselves, and
- 2) Those who cared about others. (Matt. 25:31-46)

In discussion over matters of law, Jesus identifies this second class as the true commandment-keepers of God; and He emphasizes the point that this class will be recognized by ***two outstanding characteristics***:

- 1) They will ***love*** the Lord with all their hearts, and
- 2) They will ***love*** their neighbors as themselves. (Matthew 22:37-40)

These two characteristics are perfectly summed up in God's ten commandment law where the first four commandments focus on our **love** relationship with God, and the last six commandments focus on our **love** relationship with our neighbor.

In truth, . . .

***Love*** to God and ***love*** to man ***is the sum of righteousness***, (DA504.1; OHC73.3)

This is why God's law is referred to as the "***the great standard of righteousness***" - for it is, in essence, the ultimate definition of love. (FE237.1)

In the final analysis, love is the substance of God's law and love is the fulfillment of that law. When we accept this as fact, it enables us to better understand a number of other very vital truths:

- 1) First Truth: Commandment-keeping is all about being merciful, kind and ***loving***.

When the children of God manifest ***mercy, kindness, and love*** toward all men, they are witnessing to ***the character of the statutes of heaven***. (DA505.1)

- 2) Second Truth: Commandment-keeping has infinitely more to do with ***character*** than it has to do with our tedious adherence to what some may be inclined to see as little more than a spiritless code of rule.
- 3) Third Truth: True ***obedience*** has infinitely more to do with how we relate to God and to others than it has to do with our self-focused response to what so many tend to perceive of as little more than a loveless list of do's and don'ts:

***True obedience*** is not a mere outward compliance, but ***the service of love***. (SC60.2)

By drawing these all-important truths together, we deduce that true religion is a far cry from what many might consider it to be:

In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus illustrates the nature of ***true religion***. He shows that it consists not in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others, in genuine goodness. (WM42.1)

In the estimation of heaven, ***greatness of character*** consists in living for the welfare of our fellow men, in doing works of love and mercy. (DA613.4)

Unless there is practical self-sacrifice for the good of others, in the family circle, in the neighborhood, in the church, and wherever we may be, then whatever our profession, we are not Christians. (DA504.2)

This translates into the fact that our obedience should be as obvious to others as the fruit on a heavy-laden tree would be obvious to the observant passer-by.

But what is the Christian fruit that should be so conspicuous to others?

Paul gives us the answer:

But the fruit of the Spirit is ***love***, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22)

These fruits, or character traits, are the trademarks of love. (John 15:8). This is why we are told that . . .

Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22)

In other words, these precious character attributes perfectly satisfy the demands of God's law, for . . .

He who **loves** his neighbor has fulfilled the law.  
(Romans 13:8)

Thus it is **love** that fulfills the law, and . . .

This is **love**, that we walk according to His commandments. (2 John 1:6)

With these thoughts in mind let us now turn our attention to the all-important question:

## Who is our Neighbor?

He is our neighbor who most needs our charity [love] and help. (SW37.1)

Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is everyone who is the property of God. (COL376.2)

What else can we conclude but that ***everyone is our neighbor***.

This means that if we are genuine commandment-keepers, our **love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control will be clearly evident to **everyone**. Scripture even goes so far as to highlight three special groups of people to whom our **love** should be most evident:

Our families . . .

Our enemies . . .

The less fortunate:

## Loving Our Families

If everyone is our neighbor, this would mean that the members of our family are our closest neighbors. This being the case, our commandment-keeping should be especially evident to our spouses, our children, our parents, our grandchildren, and our relatives.

If you are . . . to be the light of the world, that light is to shine in your home. Here you are to exemplify the Christian graces, to be lovable, patient, kind, yet firm. Let the light of heavenly grace irradiate your character, that there may be sunlight in the home. (ML102.6)

Thus the affection and the kindly attentions that the true commandment-keeper gives to those who are beyond the home circle, will always be but a reflection of the spirit of love that he or she fosters in the home:

“O,” you may say, “I do keep the commandments.” Do you? Do you carry out the principles of God’s commandments in your home, in your family? Do you never manifest rudeness, unkindness, and impoliteness in the family circle? If you do manifest unkindness at your home, no matter how high may be your profession, you are breaking God’s commandments. No matter how much you may preach the commandments to others, if you fail to manifest the *love of Jesus* in your home life, you are a transgressor of the law. (1888-961.1)

It would be well for every man to sign a pledge to speak kindly in his home, to let the law of love rule his speech. Parents, never speak hastily.

If your children do wrong, correct them, but let your words be full of tenderness and **love**. Every time you scold, you lose a precious opportunity of giving a lesson in forbearance and patience. Let **love** be the most prominent feature in your correction of wrong. (AH440.1)

What more need we say on this critical matter?

## Loving Our Enemies

Be like Jesus this my song,  
In the home and in the throng,  
Be like Jesus all day long,  
I would be like Jesus.

This age-old chorus expresses the aspiration of all aspirations, and we sing it with such gusto, but do we really understand what it means to be like Jesus? Have we come to terms with the fact that being like Jesus means emulating His unconditional love and following His example? Are we settled in the idea that being like Jesus means being ever-willing to make sacrifices for others? Are we sensitized to the fact that . . .

The love that gives kind words to only a few,  
while others are treated with coldness and  
indifference is not love, but selfishness?  
(OHC231.2)

If everyone is our neighbor, then in order to be like Jesus we would have to love everyone the way He loves everyone – and this would most surely include loving our enemies . . . all of our enemies.

Yes, indeed, Scripture is crystal clear as to what it really means to be like Jesus:

- If we are like Jesus, we will be kind to the ungrateful and wicked. (Luke 6:35)
- If we are like Jesus, we will give food and water to those who dislike us. (Proverbs 25:21)
- If we are like Jesus, we will choose to rather be cheated or wronged than to take a fraudster to court. (1 Corinthians 6:7)
- If we are like Jesus, we will pray for those who persecute us. (Matthew 5:44)
- If we are like Jesus, we will bless those who curse us. (Luke 6:27)
- If we are like Jesus, we will repay evil with blessing. (1 Peter 3:9)
- If we are like Jesus, we will do good to those who hate us. (Luke 6:27)
- If we are like Jesus, we will love our enemies. (Matthew 5:44)

Thus the challenge that faces every one of us is a most lofty and most sobering challenge indeed:

When we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are ftted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. (DA641.3)

In truth, we may consider ourselves decidedly blessed if we are unfairly treated, and if we find ourselves surrounded by people who hate us, who curse us, and who spitefully use us, for without them where would

we find opportunity to learn to be like Jesus? Without them how would we ever learn to love our enemies as He loves His enemies – even to the point of being willing to die for them?

While opposition always comes with trial, we should not be troubled by this fact - provided we keep ourselves ever reminded that . . .

**All** of our trials are God's workmen whereby good is brought to us. (MH488.4)

James even goes so far as to suggest that we should be happy when we face various trials:

Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)

Thus we can appreciate why it is that Jesus urges us to treat our enemies with love, grace, tolerance and patience:

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; ***that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.*** (Matthew 5:44-45 KJV)

In these words, Jesus is not only giving us the sure recipe for peace, He is also reminding us that every enemy represents a golden opportunity (a) to emulate His more than amazing grace, (b) to prove that we are God's children, and (c) to bask in the sure evidence that He is living in and through us.



## Loving the Less Fortunate

We now come to a very special group of people, all of whom have a very prominent place in God's heart. These people are so special to God that He identifies Himself with them in a very personal way, so much so that He invites us ***to see Him in them***:

***I was*** hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, ***I was*** thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ***I was*** a stranger and you did not invite me in, ***I needed*** clothes and you did not clothe me, ***I was*** sick and in prison and you did not look after me. (Matthew 25:42-45)

While it may well be difficult to see Jesus in the person of someone who has bloodshot eyes, gnarled hands, and shabby clothing, and while we may struggle to see our most glorious God in the person of the prisoner, the orphan and the widow, this is precisely what Jesus is urging us to do, for . . .

He identifies Himself as being in person the very sufferer. (CSA60.3)

Jesus identifies His interests with those of suffering humanity, and He tells us that whatever we do to relieve a sufferer, we do for Him. (MM121.1)

He points us to the poor and suffering and oppressed, and to souls bound in chains of superstition and error, and assures us that if we do good to these He accepts the deed as though done to Himself. (RH, October 31, 1878 par. 16)

This, of course, presents every one of us with another huge and very personal challenge. It also presents God with a failsafe barometer by which He may measure both our character and our **love**. This is why . . .

It is not wise for you to neglect the divine favor that Heaven offers you if you will care for those who need your care, ***and thus let God knock in vain at your door.*** He stands there in the person of the poor, the homeless orphans, and the afflicted widows, who need love, sympathy, affection, and encouragement. ***If you do it not unto one of these, you would not do it unto Jesus were He upon the earth.*** (2T329.2)

Thus we can appreciate why it is that . . .

The angel of God places benevolent acts close beside prayer. (3T405.1)

By failing to attend to the needs of the poor and the suffering, we turn our backs on the One who suffered infinite pain and shame for all of us, and this we can only do at the peril of one day having to hear the following words from the Master Himself?

All the days of your life ***I was near you in the person of these afflicted ones***, but you did not seek Me. You would not enter into fellowship with Me. I know you not. (DA640.1)

It was I who was hungry and thirsty. It was I who was a stranger. It was I who was sick. It was I who was in prison. While you were feasting at your bountifully spread table, I was famishing in the hovel or the empty street. While you were at

ease in your luxurious home, I had not where to lay My head. While you crowded your wardrobe with rich apparel, I was destitute. While you pursued your pleasures, I languished in prison. (DA639.5)

When you doled out the pittance of bread to the starving poor, when you gave those flimsy garments to shield them from the biting frost, did you remember that you were giving to the Lord of glory? (DA640.1)

How encouraging to know that every suffering soul affords us an opportunity to enter the secret place with God. As we enter into fellowship with them, we enter into fellowship with Him – and what a very special time of fellowship this is as the Spirit of God engineers so special a rendezvous for the grand purpose of restoring His image in them - and in us.

This being the case, it is more than obvious that we never help the poor and the suffering without helping ourselves. This is one good reason why God urges us to be ever mindful of the needs of others, for . . .

**No one can live the law of God without ministering to others.** (DA583.3)

Thus, as mentioned before, our highest calling in this life is not to just “keep” the law, but to live the law, and living the law means being a willing depository for God’s mercy, kindness and love, it means that we are to follow the example of Job by being proactive in helping others:

I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. (Job 29:16 KJV)

Job surely understood that every needy case presents us with at least four golden opportunities: (1) the opportunity to relieve the plight of others, (2) the opportunity to relieve our own plight, (3) the opportunity to fellowship with Jesus, and (4) the opportunity to experience what it really means to be like Jesus:

It is to provide these opportunities that God has placed among us the poor, the unfortunate, the sick, and the suffering. They are Jesus' legacy to His church, and they are to be cared for as He would care for them. In this way God takes away the dross and purifies the gold, ***giving us that culture of heart and character which we need.*** (HP324.2-3; see 2 Corinthians 8:14)

[This is why] the poor are ***purposely*** permitted to be thus of God, that we may be tested and proved and develop what is in our hearts. (AH447.2)

He has placed them among us to awaken in our hearts that love which He feels toward the suffering and oppressed. (4T620.2)

Is it any wonder that Paul urges us to . . .

***Be careful to engage in good deeds and to remember the poor.*** (Titus 3:8; Galatians 2:10)

According to the apostle, . . .

Our people ***must learn to engage in good deeds.*** (Titus 3:14)

This is an absolute must because love simply cannot walk away from suffering. Just as Jesus could not and cannot walk away from our suffering, so He calls on us to

be like Him. By so doing, we live the law, we bring honor to His name, and we give fair testimony to an on-looking universe that God's law is "holy, and just, and good." (Romans 7:12 KJV)

If we are like Jesus, we will see Him in every beggar, and in every suffering soul, and through them we will hear Him calling on us to come closer to Him as He presents Himself to us *in them*:

As we look aright to the cross of Calvary, every nerve of heart and brain will thrill in sympathy for the human misery in all parts of our world.  
(WM296.5)

Then, as we do whatever we can to come closer to those who are in need, heaven rejoices and angels that excel in glory will most certainly be in attendance – and the beauty of it all is that we may be ever confident in the knowledge that our God-inspired generosity will never bring us to want:

To sow beside all waters means a continual imparting of God's gifts. It means giving wherever the cause of God or the needs of humanity demand our aid. ***This will not tend to poverty.*** "He who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully." The sower multiplies his seed by casting it away. (COL85.2)

One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and ***He will repay him for his good deed.*** (Proverbs 19:17)

With these reassuring words in mind, let us conclude this chapter with three MASSIVE thoughts:

- 1) We need our families so that we may have opportunity to grow up in an atmosphere of **love** -and this that we might learn to be like Jesus.
- 2) We need our enemies that we might have opportunity to practice **grace** - and this that we might learn to be like Jesus.
- 3) We need the poor and the needy so that we may have unlimited opportunities to exercise **kindness** - and this that we might learn to be like Jesus.

Then, when **love** and **grace** and **kindness** have an abiding place in our hearts, we will witness to the world that commandment-keeping does not set us apart from others for, in all cases, commandment-keeping is all about emulating the perfect example of the kind, tender, meek and lowly Friend of **ALL** Sinners. (DA649.4)

## Starting Your Own Mercy Network

For the sake of those who are wondering how they may most effectively reach out to God as He presents Himself in the person of His suffering children, the following is but one idea amongst many.

Having prayed for divine guidance, simply visit your nearest old age home or charitable institution and ask the person in charge to direct you to the most lonely and/or most needy person in the institution. The rest should simply fall into place.

Then, as time and circumstances permit, invite friends, family and colleagues to start caring for others in that same institution - and you will be amazed at how soon the atmosphere in the entire establishment will change, and it will change because God's holy angels will be in attendance:

As you open your door to Jesus' needy and suffering ones, you are welcoming unseen **angels**. You invite the companionship of **heavenly beings**. They bring a sacred atmosphere of joy and peace. They come with praises upon their lips, and an answering strain is heard in heaven. ***Every deed of mercy makes music there.*** The Father from His throne numbers the unselfish workers among His most precious treasures. (DA639.2)

While we should always participate in group ministries, we need to bear in mind that God is calling on every one of us to also engage in our own private ministry – and this that He might meet with us personally ***in the person of those less fortunate than ourselves.***

This is the essential preparation for every believer. God longs to save us, and He has made every provision that we might be ready when He comes, but we need to bear in mind that when that grand and tumultuous day finally arrives, . . .

He will not inquire how successful you have been in gathering means to hoard, or that you may excel your neighbors in property, and gather attention to yourself while excluding God from your hearts and homes. He will inquire, What have **YOU** done ***for Me*** in the person of the poor, the afflicted, the orphan, and the fatherless? ***I was*** sick, poor, hungry, and destitute of clothing; what did YOU do ***for Me*** with my entrusted means? (ST, November 20, 1884 par. 13)

|                                                    |                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Through <b>prayer</b> . . .                        | <u>we speak to God.</u>                                      |
| Through <b>praise</b> , . . .                      | <u>our hearts sing to God.</u>                               |
| Through the <b>study of the Scriptures</b> . . .   | <u>God speaks to us.</u>                                     |
| When we <b>spend time in nature</b> , . . .        | <u>God speaks to us through the revelation of His glory.</u> |
| When we <b>meditate</b> on sacred themes, . . .    | <u>we converse with God.</u>                                 |
| When we <b>fellowship</b> with the less fortunate, | <u>we visit with God.</u><br>(CSA60.1; DA640.1)              |

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How blessed is he who considers the poor; the LORD will deliver him in a day of trouble. The LORD will protect him and keep him alive, and he shall be called blessed upon the earth; and will not give him over to the desire of his enemies. The LORD will sustain him upon his sickbed; in his illness, You restore him to health. (Psalm 41:1-3 Margin)

Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me. (Matthew 25:40)

But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? (1 John 3:17)

Chapter 20

The High Point of Life

Having seen that the sum of human failing includes not only the bad things that we do, but also the good things that we fail to do, we now need to revisit a thought that has surfaced repeatedly throughout this book:

The heart is more *deceitful* than all else and is desperately *sick*. (Jeremiah 17:9)

While this is a rather bitter truth, there is a very special blessing associated with it – and in order to secure this blessing all that we have to do is to accede that our hearts are sick and deceitful.

This is a most comforting truth and it comes to us from the lips of Jesus Himself. He tells us that:

1. We are blessed when we know that we are sinners,
2. We are blessed when we regret the fact that we are sinners, and . . .
3. We are blessed when we submit to the fact that in and of ourselves we have no power whatsoever that can free us from sin. (Matthew 5:3-5 paraphrased; see DA299-302)

But why would Jesus pronounce so special a blessing on those who acknowledge that they are *sinner*s?

The answer is as simple as it is obvious:

In order to receive help from Jesus, we must realize our need. We must have a true knowledge of ourselves. ***It is only he who knows himself to be a sinner that Jesus can save.*** Only as we see our utter helplessness and renounce all self-trust, shall we lay hold on divine power. Perils surround us; and we are safe only as we feel our weakness and cling with the grasp of faith to our mighty Deliverer. (MH455.4-5)

Thus, even if we rank ourselves at the very bottom of the ladder of spirituality, and even if our failings leave us feeling hopelessly lost - ***all is not lost.***

On the contrary, if our failings drive us to our knees at the foot of the cross, we may count ourselves most fortunate – for it is here, kneeling in contrition before the crucified and mangled body of Jesus, that eternal life begins, and it is here where we, as fallen beings, reach the very zenith of our life experience:

Kneeling in faith at the cross, [the believer] has reached ***the highest place to which man can attain.*** (AA209.4)

While this is certainly a most challenging fact, it is one that gives to Christianity an exclusive foundation for, unlike so many other faiths - those that believe that man has the ability to rise in his own strength - Christianity is founded on the fact that ***we can only ever rise by falling*** - that is, ***by falling on the Rock:***

To ***fall upon the Rock*** and be broken is to give up our self-righteousness and to go to Jesus with the humility of a child, repenting of our transgressions, and believing in His forgiving love. (DA599.3)

The heart that has not ***fallen on the Rock*** is proud of its wholeness. Men want a dignified religion. They desire to walk in a path wide enough to take in their own attributes. Their self-love, their love of popularity and love of praise, exclude the Saviour from their hearts, and without Him there is gloom and sadness. (COL162.1)

Little wonder, therefore, that Jesus pronounces a special blessing on all who acknowledge that their hearts are sick and deceitful, for in the absence of this awareness we would not be inclined to ***fall upon the Rock***, and we would have no hope of rising - ***IN HIM***.

This thought gives rise to the obvious question:

What makes us aware of our sinfulness?

There are a number of answers to this question, but there is one answer that overrides them all – ***When we see God, the contrast between His character and ours will always bring us to our knees:***

The experience of Job is a case in point. When he saw God, he spontaneously uttered the following words:

I ***despise myself*** and ***repent*** in dust and ashes.
(Job 42:6)

Then we have the experience of John. While imprisoned on Patmos, John also “saw” God and his reaction is not unlike that of Job:

He looked upon the King in His beauty, and **self was forgotten**. He beheld the majesty of holiness, and felt himself to be **inefficient and unworthy**. (DA103.3)

Finally, we have the experience of the prophet Isaiah. When he saw God, he was stunned as the light of God's perfection made obvious the darkness of his soul.

Woe is me, for I am **ruined!** Because I am a man of **unclean lips** - for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (Isaiah 6:5)

These notables all saw God, and all were deeply and immediately convicted as to the sickness and deceitfulness of their hearts. All three repented, all three lost sight of self, and all three were profoundly troubled by their fallen condition.

Thus, the sure remedy for pride and for self-satisfaction is to gain a clearer vision of God. One mere glance at His glorious character will convince even the most conceited of "saints" that he is in desperate need of a gracious Saviour and in as desperate need of a righteousness that he does not and never will possess.

In light of the foregoing, maybe the best way to conclude this book is to invite my reader to join me at the foot of the cross as we spend a few moments gazing upon the Most High in His most glorious hour.

As we look up at His bruised and battered frame, and as we consider what the unconverted heart is capable of doing – even to the Most Innocent - and as we contemplate how both the ugliest and the most glorious moments of all time collided on the cross – **for us** - we can only sing out a trillion praises - and we can only kneel in humble confidence as we pray . . .

At the Foot of the Cross

Loving Master, as I look up at your horribly mutilated body, I am absolutely stunned at the level of suffering that we, humanity, inflicted upon You. The fact that you chose to walk this painful path knowing precisely what lay ahead of You convinces me that Your love for us is infinite – for nothing less than infinite love could have persuaded You to choose to endure infinite suffering on our behalf. (HP44.5)

Yet I stand aghast as I contemplate the fact that the price of our sin reaches way beyond your physical wounds. What manner of love would persuade You to take the consequences of our sin upon Yourself – even though You understood that this would cause separation between You and the Father – and even though You knew all too well that this separation would break your heart – even unto death? I am so, so sorry dear Lord. (DA690-693)

As a mere mortal I will obviously never understand the level of pain that ensues when two infinitely loving Beings are separated, seemingly forever, yet You elected to be separated from the Father because you could not bear the thought of being separated from us? Thank You, kind Master. (CTr30.3)

*In this light, words fail me as I contemplate the fact that You would have been willing to endure all this even if I were the only sinner in the universe. **How will I ever come to terms***

with the thought that Your love would have persuaded You to endure infinite suffering - JUST FOR ME? (MH135.1; COL187.2)

As I look upon Your pain-wracked face, I shudder as I realize that I am the one who deserves to die the most agonizing and shameful death, I am the one who deserves to be disfigured and marred "beyond human likeness," I am the one who deserves to be separated from the Father - and yet You chose to suffer all that I deserve to suffer in order that I may enjoy all that You deserve to enjoy?

At the end of eternity, I will still be struggling to understand how You could take the consequences of my sinfulness upon Yourself, and this not only to purchase my pardon, not only to earn for me the right to live forever, but that I may call myself a child of the King and an heir of Your kingdom - even today. Truly, dear Lord, You are the Friend of all friends.

As I consider my terrible predicament and my shady past, and as I reflect on the pain that I have inflicted upon You and upon the universe, I realize that I have no right to even imagine that I can do something to merit my pardon or to settle my infinite debt. Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy. My only hope is in You. (Psalm 109:26; 39:7)

I am Your lost sheep, thank You for going in search of me. I am Your lost coin, thank You for sweeping the depths of Your compassion

in order to find me. I am Your lost child, thank You for luring me home with Your awe-inspiring loving kindness. From the innermost core of my sin-sick soul I thank you for saving me from this body of death. Indeed, You are a most remarkable God!

Considering how You took the finger of the law that pointed at me and how You pointed it at Yourself, I can only hang my head in shame as I call to mind the many times that I have pointed fingers at others – and I can only blush – exceedingly – as I recall that in every case I was oblivious of the fact that you suffered infinite pain for them – just as You did for me.

Thank You for being so patient with me; thank You for Your grace and Your compassion; and thank You for serving so faithfully and effectively as my Redeemer, Defender and Best Friend. Above all, dear Lord, I thank You in that I may look back on the darkest chapters of my spotted life, and on all of my most shameful THOUGHTS, WORDS and DEEDS, and I can find absolute rest knowing that You have paid my debt in full and forever.

You have won the race of life on my behalf, and You deserve a most glorious trophy – a trophy the size of the universe – but the only trophy that I can offer You is my frail, sin-burdened and oh-so-thankful heart, please take it, live in it, soften it, and transform it according to Your gracious will.

And so, dear reader, as we conclude this adventure into the Secret Place of the Most High, it is my prayer that you will have an abiding sense of God's personal and intense interest in every aspect of your life. May all of your days be filled with wonder and joy as you discover more and more of the infinite love, preciousness, loveliness, delightfulness, and excellence of the One who yearns to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace, not in some far-away place, but deep down within your heart and mine – and this that He might “***be all in all,***” and that He might “***Al all in all.***” (1 Corinthians 15:28; Ephesians 1:23; DA138.3)

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Hating sin with a perfect hatred, ***He yet gathered to His soul the sins of the whole world.*** Guiltless, He bore the punishment of the guilty. Innocent, yet offering Himself as a substitute for the transgressor. ***The guilt of EVERY sin pressed its weight upon the divine soul of the world's Redeemer.*** The evil THOUGHTS, the evil WORDS, the evil DEEDS of every son and daughter of Adam, called for retribution upon Himself; for He had become man's substitute. (FLB101.3)

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As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. (Psalm 42:1)

All my springs of joy are in you. (Psalm 87:7)

Appendix

Guidelines for Good Measure

In the light of the fact that but one thing is necessary, we can rest assured that the evil one is working with relentless energy in an effort to get God's children to focus their attention on anything other than THAT ONE THING. (DA330.1)

Our wily foe will use his agents to misrepresent the character of God, to complicate the plan of salvation, and to deceive us with no end of half-truths. One of his favorite ploys is to get us to engage in battles that we are not equipped to win and/or to draw us into perilous pursuits that God never intended for us to engage in.

With these thoughts in mind, let us carefully consider a few practical guidelines that will help us to ensure that our minds are not drawn away from THAT ONE THING:

- 1. It is NOT our highest priority in life to try, singlehandedly, to change our characters.*** Our first duty is to dwell in the secret place with Jesus. As we spend time beholding Him, the Holy Spirit will sanctify our will and He will do the character changing...

The sinner sees Jesus as he is, full of compassion and tender love, and **by beholding** the manifestation of his great **love** toward fallen man in His sufferings of Calvary, **he is transformed in character**. (ST, February 12, 1894 par. 1)

The **ONLY** remedy for [our condition] is to **behold Jesus**. (FE294.1)

2. ***It is NOT our responsibility, and it is not at all wise, to keep our minds focused on our weaknesses and sins.*** We are to behold Jesus and He will give us peace and hope in spite of our weaknesses and sins, and He, through His Holy Spirit, will enable us to overcome.

Each one will have a close struggle to overcome sin in his own heart. This is at times a painful and discouraging work; because, as we see the deformities in our character we keep looking at them, **when we should look to Jesus** and put on His robe of righteousness. (9T182.3)

Satan seeks to draw our minds away from the mighty Helper, to lead us to ponder over our degeneration of soul. But though Jesus sees the guilt of the past, He speaks pardon; and we should not dishonor Him by doubting His love. The feeling of guiltiness must be laid at the foot of the cross, or it will poison the springs of life. When Satan thrusts his threatenings upon you, turn from them, and comfort your soul with the promises of God. The cloud may be dark in itself, but when filled with the light of heaven, it turns to the brightness of gold; for the glory of God rests upon it. (MYP109.3)

3. ***We do ourselves untold damage when we constantly rehearse and repeat all that we regret about our past.*** Thanks to Jesus, we have every right to leave these things behind us and to train our minds to think positively about the future. (Philippians 3:13)

If any have dark chapters in their experience let them bury them. Let this history not be kept bright by repetition. Cultivate only those thoughts and those feelings which will produce gratitude and praise. (HP36.4)

4. ***God has NOT called us to strive, singlehandedly, to keep the commandments.*** He has called us to learn more about Jesus and to thus develop our love relationship with Him; and the more we get to know Him, the more we will love Him, and the more we love Him, the more our lives will be brought into harmony with His law of love.

Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. (DA203.2)

If we ***love*** Him, we shall be solicitous to please Him, to obey Him. (GW92 429.1)

Those who ***love*** Jesus will ***love*** to obey all his commandments. (RH, August 25, 1885 par. 13)

5. ***God has NOT commissioned us to strive, in our own strength, to transform ourselves into shining lights.*** Here again, our ultimate commission is to behold Jesus and to serve as His temple or sanctuary. Then, and only then, His light will shine out through us . . . (OFC135.1)

Jesus does not say to us, “**Strive** to shine.” He says, “**Let** your light shine.” He in whose heart Jesus abides cannot help shining. “**Let** your light shine.” (1NL106.4; DA677.1; Matthew 5:16)

He who draws nigh to Jesus need not try to shine. As he beholds the Saviour, he catches the divine rays of light from the Sun of Righteousness, and he cannot help shining. The light that is in him shines forth in clear, bright rays, in words and works of righteousness. (UL322.2)

- 6. As Christians we err exceedingly if we ever entertain the idea that we are or that we can be spiritual superheroes - or if we ever attempt to portray ourselves as such.** As God’s representative, Jesus is the only superhero and our highest calling is to fall on our knees before Him so that we may rise in the only way that we will ever rise - “**in Him.**”

We are so weak that we cannot bear much spiritual prosperity, lest we take the glory, and accredit goodness and righteousness to ourselves as the reason of the signal blessing of God, when it was all because of the great mercy and loving kindness of our compassionate heavenly Father, and not because any good was found in us. (2T149.1)

The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in **His strength.** (LHU97.7)

- 7. It is extremely unwise to put great energy into the study of Spiritualism, the occult, the illuminati, rock ‘n roll, and the ways of evil.**

To venture beyond what Inspiration has revealed to us about the ways and the works of darkness, is to stand at the edge of a perilous precipice.

Many are investigating ***Spiritualism*** simply from curiosity. They have no real faith in it, and would start back horrified at the idea of becoming mediums; but ***they are venturing on forbidden and dangerous ground.*** (TDG247.3)

Be cautious in regard to what you read and how you hear. ***Take NOT A PARTICLE OF INTEREST in spiritualistic theories.*** Satan is waiting to steal a march upon everyone who allows himself to be deceived by his hypnotism. He begins to exert his power over them ***JUST AS SOON AS*** they begin to investigate his theories. (MM101.5)

8. We need to realize that there are serious dangers associated with the study of the literary productions of skeptics. Our calling is to study the word of God and the life of Jesus and this will safeguard our minds against the misleading sentiments of the skeptic.

Shall the sentiments of unbelievers, the expressions of dissolute men, be advocated as worthy of the student's attention, because they are the productions of men whom the world admires as great thinkers? Shall men professing to believe in God, gather from these unsanctified authors their expressions and sentiments, and treasure them up as precious jewels to be stored away among the riches of the mind? God forbid. (CE71.1)

The study of works that in any way express infidel sentiments is like handling black coals - for a man cannot be undefiled in mind who thinks along the line of skepticism. (CE99.2)

The skeptic has studied the Bible with the sole object of finding passages which he can use to trouble and perplex other minds. Some Christians feel it their duty to defend the word of God, and they enter into controversy with the skeptic - rather, with satan and his angels, who speak through him [the skeptic]. ***This is just what the prince of darkness and his agents desire.*** (ST, June 8, 1882 par. 19)

He who associates with [is made familiar with, taught about] the skeptic ***will*** soon become skeptical; He who chooses the companionship of the vile [whether in person, in books, or in teachings] ***will*** most assuredly become vile. To walk in [to hear, to teach, or read] the counsel of the ungodly ***is the first step*** toward standing in the way of sinners and sitting in the seat of the scornful. (CH414.3)

9. ***While Scripture does draw stark contrasts between good and evil, and error and truth, we should always keep in mind that it is not our knowledge of error and evil, but our knowledge of truth that sets us free.*** God has called us to dig deep into the mines of truth that we may readily discern and reject error and be repulsed by evil.

There is a spurious knowledge, the knowledge of evil and sin, which has been brought into the world by the cunning of satan. The pursuit of this knowledge is prompted by unsanctified desires, unholy aims. Its lessons are dearly bought, but many will not be convinced that **they are better left unlearned.** (CTr23.2)

Those who will close their eyes and ears to evil will become changed. We want to have that power that will enable us to close our eyes to scenes that are not elevating, that are not ennobling, that will not purify and refine us; and to keep our ears closed to everything that is forbidden in God's Word. He forbids us to imagine evil, to speak evil, and even to think evil. I see in Jesus everything that is lovely, everything that is holy, everything that is uplifting and pure. Then why should I want to open my eyes wide to see everything that is disagreeable? By beholding we become changed. Let us look to Jesus and consider the loveliness of His character, and by beholding we shall become changed into the same likeness. (OHC334.3-5)

The best way to expose the fallacy of error is to present the evidences of truth. This is the greatest rebuke that can be given to error. (Ev576.2)

Resolve ***never, never to repeat error***, but always to teach the truth. Fill hearts and minds with the solemn, sacred truth for this time. (Ev623.4)

Living as we do in the midst of a titanic battle between truth and error, our first priority is to recognize that we

will not find any answers within ourselves. Without fail, however, we will find all of the answers in the secret place, alone with God. We can talk to him anywhere and at any time, and we can depend on Him to provide just the answers and just the direction that we need.

Please take courage, dear reader – Jesus loves you, and He will finish the work that He has begun in your life. If there was hope – absolute hope – for a thief on the cross who spent but a few fleeting moments with Jesus, there is absolute hope for you and I.

Those who ***look upon*** and ***believe in*** Jesus Christ, as the thief looked upon him when lifted upon the cross, shall live forever. (3SP159.3)

Glory not in self, or in success; but consecrate everything to Him who has loved us, and washed us from our sin in His own most precious blood. ***Lift Him up***, the Man of Calvary. (6MR203.2)

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*Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. (Psalm 73:25)*





“When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education. It is God’s own method of development. “Acquaint now thyself with Him” (Job 22:21), is His message to mankind.” (AA126.1)

## To Enrich Your Secret Place Experience

- At [www.closerthanever.org](http://www.closerthanever.org) the reader will find part two of this book which, at the time of this writing, is still a work in progress.
- When it comes to Bible Translations, there are many voices proclaiming the benefits of one translation over another, and there are more than a few voices questioning this or that translation. Without casting doubt on any other translation, we would like to place on record that we have been greatly blessed by the New American Standard Bible (NASB).
- Widely considered as the best ever exposition on the life and character of Jesus, the book, *Desire of Ages*, comes with our highest recommendation. Even if you only read two pages of this book every day, you will be wonderfully blessed. Search for “Desire of Ages by Ellen Gould White” at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). New and secondhand copies are usually on offer.
- While music should never take up too great a proportion of our time, we feel compelled to refer the reader to a CD that will unfailingly transport you into the secret place with the Most High. This CD is entitled *Perfect Peace* and the singer is Gerda van Biljon. This is an extraordinary and deeply spiritual production. Sample tracks may be listened to and the CD may be purchased at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).
- This book is available as a free E-book at the following link: [www.findingpeace.info](http://www.findingpeace.info).

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in a Troubled World

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