

SPURGEON'S COLLEGE.



*From the Library*  
*of the*  
Rev. F. B. MEYER, B.A., D.D.

May 1906

## THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

# THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

BY THE

REV. F. B. MEYER, B.A.

LONDON



*Multæ terricolis linguæ, cœlestibus una*

LONDON

SAMUEL BAGSTER AND SONS LIMITED

15 PATERNOSTER ROW

1906

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. CHRISTIAN PURITY OF SOUL . . .	I
II. THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION ATTAINED THROUGH THE CROSS .	17
III. THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION CONSUMMATED IN THE CONSCIOUS- NESS OF CHRIST'S INDWELLING .	33
IV. THE PURE INTENTION OF THE SOUL REALISED THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT . . . . .	53
V. THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION ABOUNDING IN JOY . . . . .	75
VI. THE PURITY OF INTENTION, THE KEY TO OUR LORD'S LIFE AND OURS .	91
VII. THE BLESSED STEPS OF HIS MOST HOLY LIFE . . . . .	III
VIII. THE UNDIVIDED HEART . . . .	133

	PAGE
IX. THE PURE INTENTION OF THE SOUL MAINTAINED IN THE MIDST OF LIFE'S DRUDGERY . . . . .	153
X. THE PURE INTENTION OF THE SOUL CONSISTENT WITH THE LIFE IN THE GREAT CITY . . . . .	171
XI. THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION REVEALING ITSELF IN LOVE . . .	189

# I

## CHRISTIAN PURITY OF SOUL

# THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

## I

### CHRISTIAN PURITY OF SOUL

THE nature of man, according to the distinct teaching of the Apostle, must be considered under the three divisions of Spirit, Soul, and Body. "May your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame" (1 Thess. v. 23). This division is not made in one passage only, for in 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14; iii. 1; vi. 19, it is the basis of a prolonged argument for a transfigured character. The spiritual, the carnal or soulish, and the

#### 4 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

physical, are in turn referred to as playing a very distinct part in the economy of a holy life.

Throughout Old and New Testament *the soul may be taken as signifying the animal life*, which in its lower ranges we share with the inferior orders of creation, but which in man attains to heights of reason and moral perception, to which these have no claim. Probably, therefore, we may take the soul as representing our individuality. It is the sum-total of our emotional, rational, and moral consciousness. The soul is the seat and centre of the "I," the *ego*, that which gives each one of us our specific character. But when we have said all, how little we have said! How little we know! What profound depths are unexplored! We are as those who hold a torch over a deep,



dark well—its glimmer only reaches for a few feet, making the abyss beyond more opaque and impenetrable than ever.

The soul opens upward to the Infinite and Eternal through the *Spirit*, with its capacity for God, and downward to the Finite and Temporal through the *Body*, with its capacity for material objects. The spirit stands for our heavenly aptitudes, the body for our earthly ones. By the one we are able to seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God ; through the other we are apt to become entangled with the things that pertain to earth (Col. iii. 1-5).

Probably the prime reason for our having been sent into the world is to test the true quality of our souls, and to give us the opportunity of making the supreme choice

## 6 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

as to whether we will yield to the attraction of the Divine, the Eternal, and the Infinite, which appeal to us through our spirits, or to the fascination of the earthly, the material, and the transient, which appeal to us through our bodies. The soul has to choose which it will serve, God or Baal, the voices of the stars or of the clods, of the æons or the throbbings of earth's chronometers; and according to its choice will be its lot when it goes out from this strange experience which we are accustomed to call *life*, but which is probably only the vestibule to life.

From the hour of our birth into this material sphere, the soul for the most part yields itself to its environment, of which it is aware through its senses. It becomes subject to vanity, the Apostle says. It serves

## CHRISTIAN PURITY OF SOUL 7

divers lusts and pleasures. It is enslaved to the domineering caprice of appetite, passion, and desire. If the fruit of the tree appears to be good for food, and is a delight to the eyes, and seems likely to make one wise, it is enough, the hand is reached out to take, and eat, and the eyes are opened to know good and evil. This is the life-story of untold myriads of human beings. Their souls have become enslaved to their senses, so that in the words of Peter's second Epistle, they are the hapless bond-slaves of corruption. Whatever suggestion is made to them through the gateways of sense elicits from the soul a ready and immediate response. The kingly faculty, which should rule, is carried captive by its lusts. And surely lusts are the lawless exaggeration of what in our original creation was perfectly

## 8 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

natural and innocent, but which by inheritance from past generations, and by our own wanton indulgence, has become depraved and tyrannical?

Such a life is necessarily a divided one. The soul is torn hither and thither. Like a surge of the sea it is driven by every wind, now in this direction and again in that. It is careful and troubled about many things. The cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things enter in and choke the word, so that it becomes unfruitful. A multitude of fleshly lusts war against the health and peace of the soul. The vision becomes double, and the soul like a country torn with faction and revolt. Most fitly does the Book of Judges precede that of the Kings, for the earlier state with most of us is that in

## CHRISTIAN PURITY OF SOUL 9

which powerful impulses do what is right in their own eyes, not brooking other supremacy than their own wild will.

Through all those experiences the soul is not destitute of spiritual impressions. The reign of sense is not absolute. At times the voice of God is heard calling from the heights, and the knock of the spiritual world is detected loudly at the door which opens out to the Infinite. Sometimes, indeed, it seems as though the soul were about to break from its bondage, and stand free and glad before the Throne of God and the Lamb. For a brief space it escapes the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, though, alas, often it is again entangled therein and overcome; it turns back from the holy commandment which had been delivered unto

## 10 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

it, so that the last end becomes worse than the first. It happens according to the true proverb, the dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had been washed to wallowing in the mire. The rent condition of the soul, which is at the beck and call of every imperious desire, aroused by some outward and earthly solicitation, is well depicted in the vehement ejaculations of another Apostle: Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures, that war in your members? Ye lust and have not: ye kill and covet and cannot obtain: ye fight and war. Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?

What purity, what peace, what concentration of soul, are possible under such condi-

## CHRISTIAN PURITY OF SOUL 11

tions ! The inner kingdom is divided against itself, and cannot stand. The soul's vain attempt to serve two masters is a bitter failure. Now it loves the one and then the other. Love and hatred, attraction and repulsion, the tendency toward God and toward evil, alternately assert themselves, and the harassed soul cries in its tempestuous inner dialogue : I delight in the law of God after the inward man : but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me out of this body of death !

It is often after such an experience, when the soul anguish has been more acute than usual, that we are delivered. The soul,

## 12 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

sickened with its long and bitter experiences, and conscious of the gracious wooing of its Immortal Lover, turns towards the spiritual side of its nature, throws open the door to the breath of Eternity, and uncurtains its windows to the Eastern sky, flushed with the first touch of dawn. So it stands there with wistful, lingering, longing gaze fixed on God, crying, *Unite* my heart to fear Thy name. The Divine Master comes in sight, majestic, radiant, fairer than the sons of men. Instantly the soul recognises its affinity, moves towards its Lover and Friend, saying—

“Jesu, Lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly.”

From that moment it enters into Peace that passeth understanding. When it yields itself to Christ, its supreme Master, surrenders to



## CHRISTIAN PURITY OF SOUL 13

Him all the keys of the inner kingdom, confesses its desire that He should henceforth be its Over-Lord, and bids Him welcome to the throne, a voice as of angels harping on their harps and singing is heard through the soul, saying, Now is come Salvation and the Kingdom of our God : these inner kingdoms are become the Kingdom of God and of His Christ : Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power : Hallelujah, for the Lord God, the Omnipotent reigneth. Then as the King Emmanuel enters the city of Mansoul its light becomes that of the crystal, and its happy populations crowd around Him, crying, Rejoice greatly, the King cometh, having salvation! And as the advent of the King supersedes that of the former despotic passions which had wrought their wild will, there comes to the soul a

## 14 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

blessed Unity, a oneness of aim and purpose which gathers up the entire being into a well-ordered and harmonious whole.

The most striking image of this transformation is suggested by the figure of the Temple, used originally by our Lord and afterwards by His great Apostle. In the Temple there were three parts: the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, and the Outer Court, corresponding respectively to the Spirit, Soul, and Body. As the Soul is central in our nature, so the Holy Place, with its candelabra, its incense-altar, and its shew-bread table, stood between the Most Holy Place on the one hand and the Outer Court on the other. In the Most Holy Place, answering to the human spirit, the Shechinah glory shone as once in the Burning Bush of the Desert and the Beacon-

## CHRISTIAN PURITY OF SOUL 15

cloud of the Wilderness March; but too often the heavy veil which hung between the Most Holy and the Holy Place obliterated from the mind of Israel that radiant splendour, and the people lived as though the Outer Court were all, with its sacrifices of bulls and calves, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean.

But when Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, the sacred inner shrine stood revealed, the light that had never shone on sea or shore was unveiled, and if it were shining there at that hour, it was set free to flood the Holy Place and the exterior Court. So, when the soul awakens to its true destiny, and resolves that the old man—*i.e.* the former habit of life—shall be surrendered to the Cross, the veil which had

## 16 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

hidden the Inner Light is torn in twain, the soul and spirit, like the Holy and Most Holy Place, are thrown into one, and the Light of the Eternal flows through the whole nature from its Divine Fountains, irradiating first the spirit, then the soul, and finally the physical body, until the whole nature becomes one in expectancy, in faith, in desire, in impulse. Then Glory is rendered to God in the Highest, and in the Heart there is Peace. The government is placed on the shoulders of Emmanuel, who is Christ the Lord, and of the increase of His government and of Peace, there is no end.

## II

# THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION ATTAINED THROUGH THE CROSS

## II

### THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION ATTAINED THROUGH THE CROSS

WE have already touched on the soul's anguish when it is torn between the attractions of the spiritual on the one hand, and of the sensuous and physical on the other. That anguish may be described as soul-sickness, and the nobler the constitution of the soul the more agonising its consciousness of failure.

Let us recite one or two confessions, which set forth the bitterness of this soul-sickness.

## 20 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

"I will say nothing," wrote the great German philosopher, Goethe, in 1824, "against the course of my existence. But at the bottom it has been nothing but pain and burden, and I can affirm that, during the whole of my seventy-five years, I have not had four weeks of genuine well-being."

Bunyan describes his feelings before conversion thus: "I was sorry that God had made me a man. The birds, beasts, fishes, &c., I blessed their condition, for they had not a sinful nature; they were not obnoxious to the wrath of God; they were not to go to hell-fire after death. I could, therefore, have rejoiced, had my condition been as any of theirs. How I blessed the condition of the dog or horse, for I knew they had no soul to perish under the everlasting weight of sin or hell, as mine was like to do!

Nay, and though I saw this, felt this, and was broken to pieces with it, yet that which added to my sorrow was, that I could not find in my soul that I desired deliverance. My heart was exceedingly hard. If I would have given a thousand pounds for a tear, I could not shed one; no, nor sometimes scarce desire to shed one."

Henry Aline was a devoted evangelist, who worked in Nova Scotia a hundred years ago, and he thus vividly describes his soul-sickness and sorrow: "Everything I saw seemed to be a burden to me; the earth seemed accursed for my sake; all trees, plants, rocks, hills, and vales seemed to be dressed in mourning, and groaning under the weight of that curse; and everything around me seemed to be conspiring for my ruin."

Outside Christian circles, this same misery



## 22 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

is felt. I notice that Count Tolstoi tells his own story under the veil of an Eastern parable, which I heard when in the East.

He says : "Seeking to save himself from a wild beast, a traveller jumped into a well with no water in it ; but at the bottom of the well he espied, to his horror, a dragon waiting with open mouth to devour him. So the unhappy man, not daring to go out lest he should be the prey of the wild beast, and not daring to jump to the bottom lest he should be devoured of the dragon, clings to the branches of a wild bush, which grows out of the cracks of the well. His hands weaken, and he feels that he must soon give way to a certain fate ; but still he clings, and finally sees two mice, one white (the days), the other black (the nights), evenly moving round the bush where he clings, and

gnawing off its roots. The traveller sees this, and knows that he must inevitably perish; but while thus hanging, he looks about him, and finds on the leaves of the bush some drops of honey. These he reaches with his tongue, and licks them off with rapture. Thus," continues Tolstoi, "I hang upon the boughs of life, knowing that the inevitable dragon of death is waiting to tear me, and I cannot comprehend why I am thus made a martyr. I try to suck the honey which formerly consoled me, but the honey pleases me no longer, and day and night the white mouse and the black mouse gnaw the branch to which I cling. I can see but one thing: the inevitable dragon and the mice—I cannot turn my gaze away from them. This is no fable, but the literal, incontestable truth. What will be the out-

## 24 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

come of my life? Why should I live? Why should I do anything?"

These extracts remind us of some older words still: "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit."

From every quarter, then, comes the same complaint, that sin is sickness, and that the sickness is hard to bear. You may not have felt like this because you have never caught a glimpse of what God means the soul to enjoy; but if your eyes were opened to see the possibilities of soul-health, you would also come to know that you are poor and miserable, blind and naked—that the whole soul is sick, and the whole heart faint.

The cure of this condition, as already in-

dedicated, comes through the Cross. It was when Jesus *died* that the veil, which divided between the Most Holy Place and the Holy, was rent in twain, and the two apartments became one; and it is when the soul enters into the inner meaning of the Cross that it becomes united and single, its eye single, and its being flooded with the ray of a holy light, which is its pure intention.

In other words, Calvary has two aspects, the one towards pardon and the other towards peace. This for justification, and that for sanctification. *First*, we come to the Cross, and see in it the consummation of God's self-giving love, that in the Person of Christ He took upon Himself our nature with its failure and sin, bore our sins in His own Body on the tree, reconciled us unto Himself, and did away sin with such absolute

## 26 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

oblivion that infinite space is the only emblem that can set forth the distance of its removal. "The Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin;" "In Him we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of sins;" "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Beholding the Cross, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, we give three leaps for joy, the burden rolls from our back into the sepulchre, and is lost for ever in its depths.

But there is a *second* view of the Cross, which is quite as important, though it is too often lost sight of. Approaching it for a second time, the soul discovers itself in the Person of the dying Lord, it realises that it was crucified with Him, it becomes conscious that through the nails and spear, the anguish of death, and the crucifixion of the Saviour's

## ATTAINED THROUGH THE CROSS 27

Body, it was freed from the dominion of the old nature, and that it is now wedded to Him who was raised from the dead. As soon as this fact is accepted, we cry with the Apostle, "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20, R.V.), or, appropriating other words from the same Epistle, we recognise that "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (v. 24). Thus it becomes clear that what was ours in the purpose of God when our Lord died, becomes ours in actual experience by the appropriating act of faith.

The Cross is thus not simply a dogma or

## 28 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

doctrine, but an experience. It is the bridge by which we pass from the prison of misery, which we have described, into the palace of Delight; it is the instrument by which we are delivered from the power of our selfish nature and transferred into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Whenever the strong passions of our lower nature, working through the physical appetites, assert themselves, we turn to the Cross, realise that the "old man" has been crucified with Him, that the power of sin might be rendered inoperative, and we claim that the Holy Spirit should enable us to mortify the deeds of the body, so that we may live the life of the sons of God.

We cannot too distinctly emphasise the process of experience through which the soul passes on its way to complete emancipation. Take one who has been dominated by pas-

sionate desire, by furious outbreaks of evil appetite, by jealousy, envy, anger. Let such an one, when the storm begins to rise, repair instantly to the Cross, and realise that there in the purpose of God the old nature was crucified, that there a break was made between the dominion of bodily appetite and the rule of the Divine Spirit; let this be affirmed and repeated, accentuated and appropriated; let the soul dare to stand by the act of the Redeemer as being final and irrevocable; and immediately an amazing and incredible revolution will take place, the rising storm will be quelled, and a voice will be heard from the tossing bark, hushing the waves, and causing a great calm of peace and blessedness. In that calm the Holy Spirit will continue His blessed ministry of perfecting the life of the indwelling Christ



### 30 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

which is the loftiest realisation of the pure intention of the soul.

Here is an account of how the need of one penitent was met : “ ‘ Oh, help me, help me ! ’ cried I, ‘ Thou Redeemer of souls, and save me, or I am gone for ever ; Thou canst this night, if Thou pleasest, with one drop of Thy blood, atone for my sins, and appease the wrath of an angry God. ’ At that instant of time, when I gave up all to Him to do with me as He pleased, and when I became willing that God should rule over me at His pleasure, redeeming love broke into my soul with such power that my whole being seemed to be melted down with love ; the burden of guilt and condemnation was gone, darkness was expelled, my heart filled with gratitude, and my whole soul, that was a few minutes

## ATTAINED THROUGH THE CROSS 31

ago groaning under mountains of death, and crying to an unknown God for help, was now filled with immortal love, soaring on the wings of faith, and crying out, 'My Lord, O my God!'"

The late marvellous work of God in Wales has been a wonderful tribute to the power of the Cross in human lives. The one characteristic of that work has been focussed and expressed in the words so often on the lips of Evan Roberts, "Bend to God." The people have bent before the will of God; as the love of the Crucified has been made known to them, they have wept to see the awful chasm between the spirit of their lives and of His, and in the energy of the Holy Spirit, they have yielded themselves to be crucified with Him.

In a recent article, written by one who has entered deeply into the heart of the

## 32 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

movement, we have been told that "Its heart has been the unveiling of the Crucified." As one has travelled through the Principality during these wonderful months, one has heard, on the mountains and in the valleys, in the coal-mines and the trains, the same quaint old chorus—

"O the Lamb, the gentle Lamb,  
The Lamb of Calvary."

And it is this spirit which has revived the religious life of the community.

We must not be content with viewing the death of the cross as a substitute for ourselves, or a way of escape from suffering even unto death. We must enter into the sufferings of our Lord, must be crucified with Him, must be baptized into His death, in the utter renunciation of self-will, that we may rise to the newness of His life.

### III

THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION CONSUMMATED IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF CHRIST'S INDWELLING

### III

## THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION CONSUMMATED IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF CHRIST'S INDWELLING

IT is a mistake to dwell always on the elementary truths of pardon for the past, of ever-present help for the present, and of the imitation of Jesus Christ for all time to come. It is also a mistake to be always dwelling upon sin, and looking in upon ourselves to discern how far we have been cleansed from it. No physician of eminence would be foolish enough to turn the thought of his patients inwards on their symptoms

### 36 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

and ailments. If he be a wise man, he will speak hopefully and brightly to those who visit his consulting-room, and fill their minds with suggestions of speedy recovery. So with the life of the soul. The more we can turn people's thoughts away from their emotions, or the rapid changes of temperament and experience, to the unchanging Christ, the more likely we are to help them into a bright and holy walk with God.

We all of us need more of an *overwhelming consciousness of our Lord's indwelling* to deliver us from our self-consciousness, to free us from the fascination of evil, so that He may be more literally present to us than our dearest and closest companions.

It is pleasant to read that incident told of the Rev. George Bowen of Bombay. One of his class-mates relates that he was pre-

sent when that man of God was praying with a few of his friends. Suddenly the lights went out, but Bowen startled them by saying: "Fellows, do you know I have got a more real sense of the presence of Christ with me in this room this evening than I have of the presence of any of you!"

It has been truly said that the presence of Jesus Christ will blast out of life a thousand things that it cannot abide, and the man who wishes to enjoy it must make choice between the things of Christ and the things that are not tolerable to Him. When once Jesus Christ has become Lord of all the consciousness of our lives, a thousand temptations die away because they find no response; there may be a susceptibility, but there is no desire, no kindling of the soul, no going forth of passion.

### 38 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

*The indwelling of Christ was forepromised.*

—In John xiv. 23 the Master said, uniting Himself in one pronoun with the Eternal Father : “ *We* will come unto him, and make *Our* abode with him ” ; and it is interesting to know that the Greek word there translated *abode* is the same as occurs in xiv. 2, where it denotes the *mansion* He has gone to prepare. He promises us a mansion in glory, and then tells us that He will make His mansion within the heart that loves Him.

In His High-Priestly prayer, it was our Lord's reiterated request that His disciples should share the mystery of His own inner life ; that as the Father was in Him, and He in the Father, so He should be in each disciple, and the disciple in Him.

Anything short of this is to miss the es-



sence of our holy religion. It is not primarily a system of doctrines, however orthodox; it is not a set of maxims of morality, however elevated; it is not an energising power enabling us to realise the ethics of our Lord. Christianity, as our Saviour sketched it before He went back to the Father, must be a *life*. No other religion allies itself, as Christ's religion does, to a human Person eternal and Divine. It was this which He promised; it is this that He is prepared to fulfil. If you have not realised it, ask Him that not one good thing may fail of all that He has promised, but that in your experience also His anticipations may be fact.

*The indwelling of Christ is by the Holy Spirit.*—The Lord Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, but He indwells the human heart through the Divine Spirit, just as the

## 40 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

sun which is located in the heavens sparkles in the eye of the child, and on the crest of the wave, by means of the far-travelled beam that leaps the abyss and threads the vault of night.

In Ephesians iii. 17, we learn from the Apostle's prayer, that it is only as we are strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man that Christ can dwell in our hearts by faith; and from Romans viii. 9-11, the parallelism between the verses teaches us that *Christ in us* is equivalent to *the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead*.

Hence we are wont to say that they who have most of Christ have most of the Holy Spirit; and certainly one symptom of having received and being infilled by the seven-fold grace of the blessed Paraclete is a very

deep, definite, and blessed consciousness of the indwelling Christ.

*The indwelling of Christ was one of Paul's two secrets.*—He accounted himself the trustee of the mysteries of God, and that in a particular sense. He was entrusted with the sacred charge of two of them. The first he unfolds in Ephesians iii. 6,—that the Gentiles should enter the Church, the Bride of Christ, on an equality with the chosen people; that they should be fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus. Secondly, in Colossians i. 27, he explains that God has been pleased to make known to him “the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles”—Christ within, the hope of glory.

As Ezra entrusted the holy vessels to the

## 42 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

priests and Levites, bidding them carry them untarnished across the desert, so the Apostle held that he had been commissioned by Christ to carry these two great truths, until, in the hour of death, he should pass on the holy charge to Timothy, and others whom he had trained.

*The indwelling of Christ does not imply any extinction of Personality.*—The soul is the seat of that personality. There the attributes and qualities gather, which make any one of us distinct from all others, so that Isaiah is Isaiah, and Ezekiel Ezekiel; and each of the evangelists is marked with his particular and characteristic style. When the presence of Christ takes possession of our inner life, it no more obliterates our personal traits than does the entrance of light alter the furniture of the rooms into

which it pours. There is a change in the pivot, in the impulse and inspiration, in the axis around which the personality revolves; but there is no obliteration of what is characteristic.

By his original nature man was made to depend on God. His soul, as we have seen, was central—on its upper side opening through its spirit to the unseen and eternal; on its under side opening through the body to the earthly and material. It was evidently the Divine intention that man should hearken only to those bells that ring in his soul from above, and be oblivious to those that ring from below. Alas for man! he refused the upper and chose the under; he turned from the Divine and the eternal to make himself as God; he substituted the human pivot and centre for the Divine.

#### 44 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

This was the Fall; and the reversal of this fatal choice is Redemption. When God once more becomes all in all, the enthroned King of the inner life, though there is a change in the ruling power, all the characteristic life of the soul continues—the same crowds throng the inner thoroughfares and market-places,—there is the old stir of life, though all is now under the domination and control of the Eternal Spirit.

*The indwelling of Christ is a mystery.*—The word *mystery* is Greek, and means *a secret* which cannot be understood by the reason of the natural man. Just as the miraculous birth of our Lord was a mystery to the mother that bare Him, so the miraculous indwelling of Christ by the Spirit eludes the prying eye of intellect, though it can be apprehended by the child-

like heart. Christ hidden in the soul—here is a mystery; indeed; and in this sense every Christian is a mystic; though every mystic is not a Christian. Only let us be thankful for the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and made known unto all the nations, according to the commandment of the Eternal God (Rom. xvi. 25, 26).

The conception of this wonderful indwelling of Christ seems less mysterious when we remember that we are not primarily bodies, but souls in bodies, that the body at the most is only the implement and weapon of the spirit, the dial-plate on which it registers its decisions.

*The indwelling of Christ is independent of our consciousness.*—In 2 Corinthians xiii. 5 the

## 46 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

Apostle goes so far as to say that if Jesus Christ is not in us we are reprobates ; and his teaching is corroborated by such graphic similitudes as the comparison of the vine, of the human body, and of the close affinity between husband and wife.

Oh, dare to believe that Jesus Christ gives not His gifts, but Himself ; that He is within, not because of any merit on our part, but because nothing else will satisfy His heart of love ! When the fire of emotion burns low, and faith gets dim, do not wait to be overtaken by the emotion of Christ's indwelling, but dare to affirm again and again, "He is in me ; I do not realise His indwelling as I would ; my soul does not respond to it as I desire ; but nothing can ever alter the blessed fact that He whom the Heaven of heavens cannot con-



tain, has stooped to become the denizen of those depths of my nature which lie beneath the surface, as the great deep of the ocean beneath the surge of the waves."

As the Shechinah indwelt the Most Holy Place, even when the curtain prevented the priests from catching the rays of its supernatural splendour, so we must believe that deeper than consciousness, often veiled from our view in the shrine of our deepest being, the Son of God literally indwells and reigns.

*The indwelling of Christ is made known by a distinct revelation.*—Galatians i. 16 seems to place this beyond doubt, for this passage can hardly refer to the Apostle's conversion when he was stricken to the ground by the supernatural glory "of that light." Its more obvious reference is to some sub-

## 48 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

sequent disclosure of the Divine purpose. Perhaps as he was kneeling in the temple, the revelation of Christ being within his soul burst upon his view, and the Apostle *knew* that his body was indeed the precinct of the Temple of the Holy One.

Is there not something similar to that in our experience? It is when we enter into the deepest meaning of His Cross, when we, too, say, "Not our will, but Thine be done"; when we are prepared to go all lengths with the Lord, that the veil which hangs between us and Him is rent, and we see Him, the inspiration of whose indwelling had often filled our souls, but whom we had not beheld.

*There are many symptoms of this indwelling.*—John vi. 55 tells us that it is productive of a great hunger, so that the soul

which is most conscious of Christ within feeds eagerly on His Body, which is bread indeed, and His Blood, which is wine indeed. 1 John iii. 24 tells us that the soul which He indwells is an obedient one; 1 John iv. 15, that it falters not in its confessions; 1 John iv. 16, that it faints not in its love. "My soul," says the Psalmist, "follows hard after Thee, and Thy right hand sustains me." How often we have found ourselves in the company of those who have been unable to pronounce our shibboleth as we do! But as we have marked the indications of the soul's close following of God, we have felt the out-flowing of a Divine love.

*The knowledge of this mighty mystery breaks in glory.*—The Apostle expatiates on the *glory* of the mystery. As the mystery  
D

## 50 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

of light breaks in the glory of the rainbow, as the mystery of the hidden root breaks in the glory of the flower, as the mystery of love in the maiden's heart breaks in the radiance with which she greets her lover, so when the soul apprehends that it is really one with Christ, there is a lightness, an elasticity, a blessedness which tell of the glory which has come in full tide.

*The glorious fact of Christ's indwelling enriches the soul.*—The Apostle speaks of the *riches* of the glory of the mystery (Col. i. 7). The indwelling Saviour does not rob us of any of those natural gifts and graces with which we are endowed, but surrounds them with an atmosphere in which they become most vigorous. Just as the common plants of our northern climate burst out with new profusion when transplanted to southern

climates, so a very ordinary intellect, imagination, and emotion will obtain an altogether new potency and beauty as soon as this truth is apprehended.

Gradually the light of this glory will possess us. In the early morning the sun-rays strike upon the side of a deep well, illumining it for only a few yards from the earth's surface, but as every hour advances, and the sun rises in the heavens, the beams strike lower down the well-side, revealing more and more of it, until when the sun stands in mid-heaven the beams strike perpendicularly downward, and the whole well to the bottom is illuminated. So it is with this blessed consciousness. It may be faint and feeble to-day, but, if you yield yourself to it, it will grow and deepen until the whole being responds to it, and

## 52 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

all its inferior kingdoms become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Then the prayer of the Mediator shall be realised : "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in one."

It is in the undivided and pure heart that the Saviour finds His home. If we subordinate all desires and hopes, all aims and ambitions, to His government and for His glory, He will assuredly come to abide. If we confess that other Lords beside Him have had dominion over us, but that by Him we desire to make mention of His name alone, our whole body shall be suddenly filled with the light of His indwelling.

## IV

THE PURE INTENTION OF THE  
SOUL REALISED THROUGH THE  
HOLY SPIRIT

## IV

### THE PURE INTENTION OF THE SOUL REALISED THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

IN Paul's greatest epistle, that to the Romans, there is a paragraph which speaks of the three - fold groaning of Creation, of the Saints, and of the Spirit. In each case the groans are not unto death but unto life, they indicate the throes of birth. And we learn also that the groans of the Spirit are in harmony with the mind and will of God. *"He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God"* (Rom. viii. 27).



## 56 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

In this marvellous passage, the depths of which pass human understanding, we have to notice first, that it announces and accentuates the literal Presence with us of the Comforter. If one were asked to indicate in a word the difference between the Church of to-day and the Church of the first age, surely it might be summed up thus—that the early Christians believed, as we do not, in the literal Presence with them of the Holy Spirit.

Every age has been inclined to think that there was more of God in previous ages than in itself. Thus, when Jesus Christ was pursuing His ministry in Galilee and Jerusalem, teaching as none ever taught, working miracles on the leper and the dead, and showing forth in His character and life the very splendour of the nature of

## THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT 57

God, His contemporaries were constantly referring to the ancient past, when God gave His people deliverance from Egypt, made a way through the Red Sea, rained manna out of heaven, and led them into the promised land. It seemed to them that there was more of God in the age of the Exodus, than in the Life which was being enacted before their eyes.

It may be that the Church of to-day is making the same mistake. She looks back upon the first preaching of the evangel, as having been the unique time of God's residence amongst men, a residence which has been withdrawn and can never be replaced; whereas, if we look at the matter in the light of our Master's teaching on the eve of His death, we shall discover that, as distinct as Christ's Advent was the Advent

## 58 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

of the Spirit; and as distinct as His work was for thirty-three years, is the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Would that, instead of straining our eyes into the remote past or into the dim future, to detect the presence of God, we dared to believe that the Holy Spirit *is* come, that He *is* here, that the only thing which keeps Him from manifesting Himself in His glorious might is our unbelief, our hardness of heart, our occupation with our dead selves! If once the Church of God believed that, she would go forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

It seems as if there are four different groups of people in regard to this matter. The *first* group are little else than admirers of Christ. They have heard Him speak,

look upon Him as the Divine Teacher, in some sense view Him as the Saviour of the world, but they have never gone as far as Calvary. They look upon the Spirit of God merely as a breath or influence, and have never appreciated His Divine Present Power.

There is a *second* group, who have gone a step further. These know that Jesus Christ is more than the Divine Teacher—that He died upon the Cross, and by His precious death made propitiation for sin; but they never get beyond that Cross. Beholding only the Blood, they have no idea that there is anything more, by which the glorious benefits of our Saviour's death can become efficacious.

There is a *third* group of people. These are always in that upper room, always

## 60 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

engaged in agonising prayer, always entreating that the Spirit of God may come, not realising that He has come, that the rushing sound of wind has been heard, the fire has burnt, the footfall of His Advent has been recognised. Ah! happy are they who have passed into the *fourth* group, who look back on Pentecost as a definite moment, when the third Person of the Blessed Trinity came to reside in the Church, so that as Jesus incarnated Himself in the body born of the Virgin, so the Holy Spirit has definitely incarnated Himself in the hearts and lives of those who believe.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S LITERAL PERSONALITY.—On the eve of His betrayal our Lord said that "Another" should come. Now is it at all possible that He would

## THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT 61

have been content that His successor should be an influence or a breath? Does not the fact that he spoke of *Another*, as coming to take His place indicate that in His judgment and forethought that Other was to be as distinct a Personality as Himself, leading, searching, guiding, encouraging, witnessing, and inspiring.

Let us pass from those days to the early Acts of the Apostles. We find the Spirit of God in the Church so personally, that when Ananias and Sapphira conspired together, Peter warned them that they were deceiving the Holy Ghost. You cannot deceive an influence. We remember also, that in the case of Peter and Cornelius, it was the Holy Spirit who sent the message which brought these two men together for the new great departure of the Church in

## 62 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. "The Spirit said unto him." Afterwards it was He who said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I* have called them"; and, lastly, in the great council of the Church, the Apostles said: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." He was as real a Person as they were. All through the Gospels, especially in the closing scenes, and markedly in the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as being the representative of Christ, the one Divine Person who is in the very heart of the Church.

For one crowning proof let us look again into this marvellous verse quoted in our opening paragraph. It makes a distinct reference to the Personality of God the Father, and as distinct a reference to the

## THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT 63

Personality of the Holy Ghost. "He that searcheth the heart"—who can this be but the Omniscient God who searches all things, the First Person of the Holy Trinity? It is He who searches the heart, and knows what is the mind of the Spirit. The Spirit has a *mind*. Evidently, then, there is as true a distinction between the personality of the Father and the personality of the Spirit, as there was of old in the Incarnation between the personality of the Father and the personality of the Son.

It has been asserted that the Spirit of God is only another name for our own energy; but notice how clear a discrimination the Apostle makes between the Spirit of God, God who searches the heart, and the heart of man. *God*, who searches the human heart, knows what is the *mind of the*



## 64 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

*Spirit*, who is resident in *the heart*. Here we have God who is searching our hearts, and the Spirit of God immanent in the heart as its guest, and the heart which is yielded voluntarily to welcome Him. As Jesus intercedes in heaven, so does the Holy Spirit intercede in the heart of every believer, and in the heart of the Church. There is the distinct voice raised by the Mediator on the Throne, and a distinct response raised by the Paraclete on earth, and these two are one. The Son in the glory and the Spirit in the heart intercede in unison.

If there were no other passage in the whole Bible, these words not only open up the mystery of the Eternal Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, but make clear that the Spirit of God has His residence, not in illimitable space, nor yet wholly on the

## THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT 65

throne of God. As the Second Person of the Trinity condescended to be born of a virgin, so the Blessed Spirit of God has condescended to our hearts and lives to reproduce in us the image of Jesus Christ. Oh, soul of man or woman, dost thou understand, perceive, and realise, that if thou art regenerate, if believing and penitent, the Holy Spirit of God is actually resident within thee? He may have been grieved, quenched, but He is still there. Let everything which limits the Holy Spirit be removed, so that His presence may be allowed free scope; and let every whit of the inner Temple say, *Glory* (Ps. xxix. 9).

“THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT.”—Every personality has a mind, a thought, a distinct intention; and we who have received the Spirit into our hearts must believe that He

## 66 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

has come for a purpose. Below the veil of superficial thought and emotion in the subconscious depths of our soul-life, the Spirit of God is most certainly brooding, as once He moved on chaos, producing order out of confusion, light out of darkness. Each is a universe; in each nature an abyss; in each the Spirit works. And that is our hope; for if it were not so we could never become saints. Our one hope is that the Spirit of God is literally within; and that He is there with a mind, *i.e.* with a fixed thought, purpose, and intention.

So far as we understand it, the Divine intention in the creation of the universe was that God might realise and reproduce Himself in His works. For this purpose He began with the inorganic, and pursued His way upwards to the organic; next,

## THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT 67

there was the marvellous in-breathing of the breath of life. Afterwards, the unfolding purpose of God climbed, like a spiral staircase, until the lower creation was finished, and a platform was provided upon which His consummate art should have full scope. Next, man was made, and a great step forward was taken for the fuller realisation of God in His creation. Through long ages the human mind was conscious of the Divine strivings within it, but the progress was small and slow, until in the person of Jesus, He realised Himself perfectly, and in an ecstasy the Divine voice resounded from Heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." In Jesus Christ the Divine Ideal was realised perfectly. That was the moment for which the ages had been travailing, for which the Jewish race had been

## 68 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

separated from other races, and for which the long discipline of the Old Testament religion had been preparatory.

Throughout the earthly life of our Lord the Spirit dominated and moulded His human nature, He rested on Him "without measure," and this inevitably exposed Him to hatred and death; but, through death He passed up into the glory, and the fulness of God more and more indwelt and glorified His human body. He is the "Man Christ Jesus," and also "God manifest in the flesh." It has pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell.

But that is not all. It was not enough for God to realise Himself in one lily flower. Pentecost signifies that this glorified human nature is to be repeated through all the ages in those whom He has made His own.

## THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT 69

That is "the manifestation of the sons of God." God could not be content to realise Himself in Jesus Christ alone, by the Spirit He desires to repeat Himself in each of His people. We are but infants in swaddling clothes, the work has only just begun. We are mumbling but the inarticulate utterances of babyhood, but the Spirit of God has entered our hearts with a sublime purpose, an intention to consummate the likeness of Christ, which cannot be disappointed. This is His mind. Often we say, "I have made up my mind what to do," or "This is my mind, I will go through with it"; so the Holy Ghost has come into our hearts with His mind made up, and, if we will let Him, He is resolved to reproduce Jesus Christ in us, so that we may be conformed to the image of God's Son.

## 70 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

Do you understand this? Do you know that some day you are going to satisfy God? Do you realise that somehow, somewhere, sometime, God is set on making in you a counterpart of Jesus, on which He will look and say: "I am satisfied!"

THE EXPRESSION OF THE SPIRIT'S PURPOSE. "*With groanings that cannot be uttered.*"—They are too deep for speech. There is agony in a groan; and there is agony with the Spirit of God at our earthliness, at our sensuality, at our repeated plunges into the sea of ink, at our return like the dog to its vomit. It is keen pain to Him each time we permit an outbreak of sin; there is suffering when we know the better and deliberately choose the worst. There is the groan, like that of Christ at the grave of Lazarus, or His tears over Jerusalem.

## THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT 71

What is the remorse that we experience, but our response to these groanings of the Spirit?

A groan not only expresses agony at sin and failure, but is inarticulate. "That cannot be uttered," indicates that the Spirit of God has yearnings which cannot be expressed in our humanity as it is now. There is no musician who has not groaned at his inarticulate expression of the perfect song; he has heard harmonies which he cannot beat out in any notes that he can obtain from an earthly orchestra — songs without words. Does not every writer get glimpses of truths for which he has no language? Does not expression fail us when in love? We say over and over again, "I love you! I love you!" Love surpasses all our speech; it is illimitable.

When the Spirit enters the human heart,



## 72 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

He is so restrained, so compressed. He fills the stellar spaces, and when He is crowded into one little soul, it stifles Him. He wants so much for us. He is so eager, so passionate, so intense, His groanings for and over us cannot be put into human speech, and God who is searching the heart hears the groans of His own Spirit, grieving at our lethargy, our tardiness to respond, our relapses—groanings which, if only we had given Him better heed, might have been saved. God knows all about this, and how He makes intercession in us and for us according to His will.

What are we to do? First, be very thankful that the Holy Spirit is within. Let us never doubt it, but hold to it as our anchor. Second, we must let Him have His way. Do not thwart, do not grieve,

## THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT 73

do not quench. Then as the marble chips, the image will grow; and there will be a fifth gospel added to those according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, the gospel in our lives of the gradual reproduction of the image and nature of our Lord.

There is no uncertainty that this result will be achieved, perhaps not to-day nor to-morrow, but at last. The groans of the Holy Spirit guarantee that it shall be so, because throughout this magnificent paragraph they are evidently the groans of birth not death, of hope not despair. "The creature groaneth and *travaileth in pain*. . . ."

We have no hope in ourselves. So fickle, so unstable, so changeable are we, that we dare not reckon on any vows we swear or resolutions we forge. As likely as not we shall fall away within an hour. We have

## 74 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

proved the brittleness of our heroic hours to carry us through great crises of the soul; but everything is altered, so soon as we learn that we are the subjects of the anxious heed of the Spirit of God.

When He puts His hand to the plough He never looks back. There are no unfinished pictures or torsos in His workshop. He has made, and He will bear; He has begun, and He will perfect; He has created desires and ideals, which He will gratify. We are the children of His love, and He can withhold from us no good thing. If we resist and grieve, so much the worse for us, so much more acute our pain, but to yield to Him is to hasten the fulfilment of His eternal purpose of bringing many sons unto glory, and conforming them to the image of the Son.

V

THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S IN-  
TENTION ABOUNDING IN JOY

## V

### THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION ABOUNDING IN JOY

THE sacred writers are not oblivious of the stern and sorrowful realities of human life. They have their hand on the fluttering pulse of humanity; they are keenly alive to human hopes and fears, the yearnings and disappointments, the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* passages, which climb to ecstasy and descend to despair. No æolian harp is so sensitive to the breath of the air as the Bible to the infinite pathos and dread of men's innermost thoughts. But to open it as at hazard, is to come, almost certainly,

## 78 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

on some passage which is as joy-making as Milton's "L'Allegro," and more.

No lover of our great English speech can afford to be ignorant of the contrasted beauties of the "Il Penseroso" and "L'Allegro." For the young student of the language in which Addison wrote, Burke harangued, and Milton sang, there is no better exercise than to contrast these two poems, comparing them line by line, and noticing how the same natural or architectural objects produce different emotional effects, according to the standpoint from which they are viewed. The morning light or the evening glow will make all the difference between gaiety and pensiveness, the light heart or the sad one. And is not this the secret of "rejoicing always." The main features of our life may be dark and sombre, its daily round mono-

tonous, its upward clamber difficult, its progress a hand-to-hand fight—it may seem impossible to rejoice in any one of these, considered in itself. But the aspect of everything is altered when we bring “the Lord” into it. We cannot always rejoice in our circumstances, but we can always rejoice in Him; and we can rejoice in our circumstances when we consider them in the light of His permission, of His tender care, and of the results of His glory, which they are being caused to subserve. We can always rejoice in the Lord, that He is near us—strong, sweet, true—just as the tenant of the almshouse may toddle forth to sun his rheumatic limbs in the genial warmth of early summer, forgetting for a moment the trials and twinges of his lot.

The Psalmists are always calling us to

## 80 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

joy ; and in this they must reflect the main trend and spirit of the national life of their time. Poets interpret and reflect the spirit of the age in which they live. In the music of the Temple, which resounded with the melody of harp and psalter and instruments of ten strings, the inner heart of Israel found its appropriate expression. Perhaps it was the influence of the sunny air ; perhaps of the simple, innocent, natural life of the people ; perhaps from the freedom of great wealth on the one hand, or grinding poverty on the other. But certain it is that the Hebrew people must have reached a high standard of religious and natural gleefulness, judging from the exuberance of the Psalter and certain passages of the Prophets. At the end of the Psalter the organist pulls out all the stops in the organ



of Nature, and pours forth a perfect torrent of praise, from the piping melody of a thrush to the roar of the ocean bass.

"Sing unto the Lord a new song,  
And His praise in the assembly of the saints,  
Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him,  
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.  
Let them praise His name in the dance;  
Let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel  
and harp."

"Round your faces," said an old-fashioned Methodist local preacher. I often think of it when I look on the faces of some religious gatherings. The countenances are so expressionless and heavy. Some one in my hearing the other day called them "lumpish." The word is not classical, and I am not enamoured with it, but it is very expressive. Christian people, when they

## 82 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

come together in their places of religious meeting, often present an appearance of insufferable gloom or depression. Why is it? Perhaps it is considered respectable, or God-honouring, or more consistent with religion. Years ago our fathers were wont to refer to *conversion* as "becoming *serious*." They would say, "So-and-so has become serious." And it is in keeping with this expression that in some hymn-books, in the version of the Hundredth Psalm, the line which was originally written—

"Him serve with *mirth*, His praise forth tell,"

has been altered into—

"Him serve with *fear*, His praise forth tell."

Surely we need, then, to heed the message of the Methodist preacher, and *round our faces*, so that the sparkling eye and the

happy expression may tell the peace and joy in God which reigns within. Miss Havergal gave, as her dying message, "The world needs *bright* Christians."

*Rejoice in the Lord alway, for joy is strength.*  
—Nehemiah (viii. 10) showed an accurate knowledge of human nature when he stayed the weeping of the people, as they stood condemned and conscience-stricken beneath the reading of the law. The walls of Jerusalem were hardly finished, the natural defences as yet incomplete, the enemies of the newly returned exiles on the alert—it would have been suicidal on the part of the leaders to have allowed the people to be overwhelmed with sorrow. "Go home," they said, "eat the fat and drink the sweet, neither be ye grieved, for the jot of the Lord is your strength." During the late

## 84 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

war, we were told of the scion of a noble house who had escaped from captivity at Pretoria being able to live for four days on some sticks of chocolate, because he had begun to taste the inexpressible joy of liberty. What cannot men do when their hearts are glad and free? Joy gives wings to the feet, sinews to the legs, muscles to the arms, elasticity to every motion. Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice in the Lord and always.

*Rejoice in the Lord always, for joy is attractive.*—The first thing that led me to seek the secret of God was the exuberant joy which I discerned beaming forth from the noble nature of a young man who had recently yielded himself entirely to God. What he said was probably not remarkable. At least, it has long ago faded from my mind. But I said to myself, "Here is one who is

happy in his religious life. Not condemned for the past, not conscious of a cloud between himself and God, not dreading the future. His religion is a light on his inner heart, and the glow of it is on his face." To see it was to hunger for it, and to desire it was to obtain. Yes, there is a spring that rises in the soul, and flows over in musical ripples on the face and in the speech, which is infinitely attractive to those who have just religion enough to make them miserable. If only we were happy in our religious life, with the sparkle, the light, the song that Christ gives, many would come around to ask for our secret, whose joy has been like the brief crackling of thorns under a pot.

*Rejoice in the Lord, for joy is proof against temptation.*—The evil one is foiled by song as much as by prayer, and perhaps more.

## 86 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

What can Sennacherib do when the virgin daughter of Zion laughs him to scorn? What can Ammon and Seir do against Jehoshaphat when he inaugurates the battle by appointing certain to sing unto the Lord, and praise the beauty of His holiness? As the microbes of disease cannot exist in the sunlight, neither can temptation succeed against a joyous, singing heart. Song is an antiseptic environment—a bank of sunbeams—which is utterly impregnable to all the assaults of the adversary.

*Rejoice in the Lord, for joy is very much the matter of the will.*—We can choose whether to look on the dark or the bright side of things, on the possibilities of failure or the probabilities of success; on the bank of clouds that stand like Alps on the horizon, or the blue skies that canopy overhead.

Say to yourself sometimes, "I am going to be happier; I refuse to give way to these depressed and saddening thoughts; I am resolved to turn from my circumstances to my Saviour." Do as David did, when he took himself to pieces and spoke to his soul, as though it were some other self: "Why art thou cast down, oh my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I will yet praise Him." Be glad, that some day you will have reason to be glad; rejoice because the sun is shining down the valley, in the direction you are going; rejoice, because weeping can only endure for the night, whilst joy is eternal and everlasting; rejoice that you have such a God, in whom are beauty and strength. Say with Habakkuk, "Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in

## 88 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

the vine, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock be cut off from the fold, and no herd be in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

There is always a patch of blue in the darkest sky—look at that; it will grow. Count your mercies; God always leaves us more than He takes. If you don't feel like singing, be sure to start a song; the singing voice will often stir the weary songless heart and it will catch the contagion. Hide yourself in God, put Him between yourself and your anxieties or your foes—even when your feet are fast in the stocks begin to chant some old Psalm, till the prison rocks and the chains fall from off your wrists.

*The perennial source of joy is the undivided heart.*—When we are divided between many



conflicting interests, halting between two opinions, trying to serve two masters, distracted by the cares of many things, which enter in to choke the word, we cannot be really joyful. But when the whole current of our being sets in towards God, wiping out the minor ruffles and cross-currents of the stream; when we have no motive save to please our master Christ and do His will; when we are the gilded temples for His indwelling, the channels for His out-working, then our peace begins to flow as a river, and having peace with God, we rejoice in hope of His glory, and rejoice in tribulations also, and rejoice in God Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v. 2, 3, 11.)

Probably we shall do wisely, not to seek joy as an end in itself, let us rather culti-

## 90 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

vate the conditions out of which joy springs. It is always good when children sing. The song assures you that the heart is not distracted with anxiety, or wrong-doing, or trouble. Singing is the overflow of a contented, quiet heart, which brims beyond its holding. When the burnt-offering began, in the old sacred story, the song of the Lord began also ; and when once the whole soul is laid as a burnt-offering on God's altar, the song begins which shall never cease.

## VI

THE PURITY OF INTENTION, THE  
KEY TO OUR LORD'S LIFE  
AND OURS

## VI

### THE PURITY OF INTENTION, THE KEY TO OUR LORD'S LIFE AND OURS

AN Eastern prince was accustomed to retire for an hour every morning to a certain chamber in his palace, which was carefully reserved from every common eye, and in which he said that he found the secret of his life. When the room was entered, it was discovered that it was furnished like a shepherd's hut, for his forefathers were shepherds. There, with the most simple surroundings, he had been accustomed to meditate upon his past, his present, and his future.

## 94 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

I want to conduct you into Christ's inner chamber in which His Spirit dwelt, and the door of which He has left open for us, that we also may enter and dwell there. The text which more than others introduces us into the inner secret of our Saviour's life is given in His own words: "*As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me*" (John vi. 57). From these words we may infer that what the Father was to Jesus, Jesus is willing to be to all who believe; and what Jesus said of His relationship to the Father, we may say of their relationship to *Him*, and we may read these words thus: "As the living Saviour hath sent me, so I live by the Saviour."

If devout souls would take the Gospel according to John, and substitute "Christ"

for "the Father," and hang on Christ as Christ hung on God, they would not require a book of private devotion other than that which is furnished by this golden book of the inner life.

*Our Saviour might have lived an independent life.*—He was "the Holy One" before He stooped to us, and deliberately laid aside the use of the attributes of His Godhead. During His human life He might at any moment have availed Himself of those divine attributes, and have fulfilled His mighty works in their power. Whenever He was hungry, instead of waiting for Peter or others to provide, He might have used His creative power to transform the very stones into bread. Had He so chosen, He might have planned His own life; and from the transfiguration mountain have

## 96 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

stepped into paradise. He might have spoken His own words, and poured forth such floods of eloquence as would have shone on the pages of literature with dazzling brilliancy. He might have sought His own glory as the supreme end of His life, so displaying the wealth of His nature that His deity would have been apparent to all.

*Moreover, Satan was always urging Him to do it.*—Straight from the river Jordan He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. In the first assault the Evil One said to Him: "Thou art the Son of God; Thou hast just been claimed as such; Thou hast all power; use that power for Thyself, and make these stones bread."

That was the crucial point in our Lord's life, and in effect He replied: "It is not

## THE KEY TO OUR LORD'S LIFE 97

My desire to be other than a dependent human being. Inasmuch as those whom I have come to save must learn the lesson of depending upon My Father and Me, I also will learn by personal experience what it is to depend by faith absolutely upon My Father. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God; and I will wait until My Father sends Me the help I need." Afterwards, and throughout His earthly life, the same suggestion was ever being hissed in His ear, "Save Thyself" (Matt. xvi. 22, 23), but never once did He heed or yield to it, till on the Cross He surrendered His spirit to the Father, and trusted Him to raise Him from the dead.

*Dependence was the law of His life.—In His birth* the Father gave Him life. "As the Father had life in Himself, He gave

G



## 98 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

unto the Son to have life in Himself." It was not His own life, and after thirty-three years the Father asked again for it. When dying, Jesus said: "Father, receive My life." He held His life in trust—God gave it, God maintained it, God required it, and at every heart-throb the Son said to the Father, "I live by Thee." God was as much the breath of Christ's life as the air is of our natural life. The unaltering attitude of Christ was that of receiving life and breath and all things from the Father. Thus we should live, always drawing upon Christ, the fountain of life; He came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly, but we must receive the abundance of His grace if we would reign. As branches we must derive the vine-sap for our nourishment and vigour.

## THE KEY TO OUR LORD'S LIFE 99

So in the *plan* of our Lord's life. Sometimes He would say to His disciples: "Let us go across the lake and rest." But He was quite willing to lay aside His cherished purpose when the people hurried around the lake and asked to be taught and fed. In their intrusion on His quiet He saw the emergence of His Father's plan. Once when He was on the way to Jairus' home a woman who had an issue of blood stopped Him, I know not for how long, and in the touch of her finger He saw the intrusion of the Father's plan for the day, and at once arrested His own plan to follow it. In that wonderful fifth chapter of John, He says: "The Son can originate nothing—but what He sees the Father doing." When He was in Joseph's shop, as a young boy of twelve or fourteen, and saw Joseph making

## 100 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

yokes for the oxen, He studied carefully how he made them, and fashioned the yoke on which He was working after the same pattern and shape. Afterwards, when He went forth on His life's ministry, He was ever watching for the development of the Father's plan, and the things which God did in the unseen and eternal world, He repeated before the eyes of men. So His plan was the plan of God.

Jesus also depended upon the Father for *His words*. In one of the most beautiful translations of the Revised Version, in the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah, we are told how the Father, morning by morning, bent over the Son and awakened Him, whispering into His ear the words which He was to utter, and teaching Him how to speak words in season to them who were weary,

so that as Jesus went forth to teach the people day by day He did not speak His own words, but the words which the Father gave Him. It was indeed "by the Spirit" that He gave His last command to the Apostles whom He had chosen.

Then as to *His miracles*. In that wonderful fourteenth chapter of John, Jesus says: "The words that I say unto you, I speak not from Myself, but the Father abiding in Me doeth *His* works." We might almost say that we do not know Jesus, because He was so completely dependent upon the Father. His words, His works, His life were the Father's, and in Jesus we do not see Jesus but the Father mirrored, as heaven in a clear lake. So also with *His will*. He was possessed of a will of His own, because He said, "Not *My* will"; but we remember

that He also said, "Not My will but *Thine* be done."

We know, too, how He sought *the Father's glory*. He said, "I have glorified Thee on earth." It was as though it mattered little what men said or thought of Him. His only care was to afford them deeper and truer conceptions of the Father, whom He came to declare. He pledged Himself to answer our prayers, "That the Father might be glorified in the Son"; and in His last prayer He said, "I would wish to be glorified, My Father, only that I may the better glorify Thee." It was as though the Lord Jesus were only ambitious to be known and recognised by men, that He might unfold God's character, and attract to Him.

*If our blessed Lord chose this life of dependence out of all possible lives that He might*

*have lived, is it not wisest, most blessed, most Christlike, for us to give up living the independent life in the flesh, and to begin from this moment to depend upon Christ as Christ depended upon God?*

If our Master held His life moment by moment at God's dictation, should not we shape *our* plans and expend *our* life as Jesus wills? If He allowed His plan always to give way to God's plan, is it not evident that, instead of scheming, planning, and striving to get our own way, we ought always to be looking out for *His* plan so as to yield submissively before it? If He gave up His words for the words which the Father put into His lips, do we not greatly mistake in trying to elaborate our sentences and weave the web of bewitching words instead of day by day waiting to receive the

## 104 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

words our Saviour gives us? If we would depend upon the Master for the power of His life, opening all our being, and preferring His power imparted to any power of our own, I need not say how our lives would at once become divine and marvelously powerful.

### HOW CAN JESUS BECOME TO US WHAT THE FATHER WAS TO HIM?

First: *We must be quiet; we must wait.* In all music there are rests, and sometimes whole bars of rests; so there must be in every life the still hour for allowing God by the Holy Spirit to form His Son within us. Jesus often climbed into the mountain solitudes, apparently to give time for the thought of God the Father to fill His

nature, and there must be times in our life when we give an opportunity for Christ to assert Himself and impress Himself absorbingly on the vision.

Second: *We must be sure to make Jesus first in everything.* The first words in our Bible are very significant—"In the beginning God." The story of every day ought to be commenced with the words: In the beginning the Word. He must be the Alpha, the first, the beginning. If, before you rush into a new enterprise, you would sit quietly down and be sure that Jesus Christ is first, it would save you from landing in many a quagmire. Let Jesus be first in every plan, every act, every sermon, every letter and interview. All must be begun, continued, and ended in Him.

Third: *We must make the glory of Jesus*



## 106 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

*our aim.* We may not always *feel* it to be our aim, but must *choose* it to be so. Our will must lie in that direction, as a needle which is to be magnetised lies along the magnet. Always remember this great principle of the Christian's life, that when you cannot feel a thing, you must choose it by an act of your will, and then ask God to create in you the corresponding emotion, as the motive of your action. Let the glory of Jesus be your aim in every service. Let His glory be the thought, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you may do. This must be the supreme purpose, whether we are engaged in making money, in house-keeping, or in mission work. Our prayers for the conversion of our friends are often hindered by the imperfection of the motives that prompt them. We wish them saved

## THE KEY TO OUR LORD'S LIFE 107

that they may no longer bring misery and disaster into the home. To succeed in prayer, our motive must be pure, and we must be willing to put the glory of Christ as the prime consideration in the conversion of those we love.

Fourth : *We must meet God's will in every circumstance.* Draw a circle, the circle of God's will, then step into it, and keep in it all your life ; so that whatever happens may reach you through the encircling will of God. Joseph's brethren may put him in the pit, but it is not they who sent him into Egypt, but God. Judas may bring the cup, but Jesus says : "The cup which *My Father* hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" When we are living in the will of God, our enemy may shoot his poisoned arrows against us : they will glance aside

## 108 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

unless God wills otherwise; but if He wishes them to strike, by the time they reach us they have become God's permissive will for us.

Lastly: *We must reckon on God.* We have no right to be constantly feeling our pulse and worrying about our faith. Let us look away from faith to the object of faith. It is better to have the least faith in Christ, than the greatest faith in our faith. To obtain strong faith, reckon on the faithfulness of God. Begin to count God faithful. It is useless to question whether you have faith enough to believe a note of hand; the question is, whether the man who signed it is worthy of trust.

Go over these steps again: be still: make Christ first in everything: live absolutely for Him: receive from Him all your words to

speak, all your works to do, all the power of your life: when accosted by any sudden emergency or need, seek from Him, who sent the demand, the power to meet it: reckon absolutely upon Christ: meet His will in every circumstance. Such was the way that Jesus lived towards His Father; live so towards Him.

You may inquire how it was that the human nature of Christ became so absolutely yielded to the Father. The answer comes from one of the profound sentences in the Bible: "Who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God." When our Lord was baptized, He said, by symbol and metaphor: "I come to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." And immediately there came on Him the power of the Eternal Spirit. It

## 110 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

was in the power of that Spirit that He yielded Himself to God, without spot or blemish. If, then, we are to live towards Christ as Christ lived towards the Father, we must be energised by the same Spirit. Whatever our station or occupation, we may resolve to live that life from this hour, but may forfeit the power to live it within twenty-four hours, unless we rely on the Eternal Spirit to work mightily in us as in Him. The only power by which we can live the life of Jesus, is through the infilling of the Holy Ghost. Shall we not, then, resolve to finish for ever with the independent life, and to dare to say, as never before, "The living Saviour hath sent me, and He lives in me"? To which we shall hear Him responding, from the excellent glory, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

VII

THE BLESSED STEPS OF HIS  
MOST HOLY LIFE

## VII

### THE BLESSED STEPS OF HIS MOST HOLY LIFE

EVERY ear which is attuned to the music of noble words, and every heart which is accustomed to the perfect balance of theological truth, must feel the fascination of the Collect for the Second Sunday after Easter: "Almighty God, Who hast given Thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life." This is a perfect blend of what was once the Unitarian standpoint and the Evangelical. The Unitarian, especially in Channing's time, when Unitarianism

## 114 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

seemed likely to be one of the most potent forces in the religious world, laid stress almost entirely upon the ensample of the godly life, to the exclusion of the evangelical doctrine of the sacrifice for sin; and as a set-off to that extreme, the Evangelicals, especially in the early part of the last century, laid all stress upon Christ's sacrifice for sin, but little or none on the ethical value of His life. We must blend the two, and hence the prayer goes on to say, "Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord." What could be a nobler ideal for any one of us than to endeavour to follow daily the blessed steps of His most holy life!



There are three aspects in which the steps of Christ's most holy life are delineated in the Word of God,—the *anticipatory* of the Old Testament, the *historical* of the Gospels, and the *commemorative* of the Epistles. The Epistle of St. Peter tells us that Christ "left us an example that we should follow His steps." We might dwell at length, as Dr. Stalker does, in his *Imago Christi*, on the steps of Christ, as described in the synoptical Gospels; but it may make a better indent upon the memory to take the description of our Lord's most blessed life as given to us in the meal-offering.

The meal-offering, consisting of fine flour, frankincense, and oil (Lev. ii.), foreshadows the human aspect of our Saviour's life. The burnt-offering unfolds His entire consecration to the will of God, even to the Cross;

## 116 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

but the meal-offering which follows immediately, and in which there is no mention of blood, sets forth the human aspect of our Saviour's character,—His daily life, or "the blessed steps of His most holy life." It is one of the "sweet-savour offerings" fragrant to God, which have no necessary connection therefore with sin in the propitiatory and expiatory aspect. It deals with Jesus, not as the sin-offering, but as the Holy One of God. In corroboration of that thought we notice that the whole of the meal-offering was consumed, part of it by fire, and the rest of it by the priests and the offerer, which reminds us that the whole life of our Lord was very grateful to the Father. He daily fed upon the obedience, humility, and purity of His Son. On the other hand, the life of Christ is fed upon

by all mankind, and especially by those who are kings and priests unto God. It is for *us* to feed upon His character, so that as food passes into our nature, He may pass into our daily life, and that we may live as those in whom He is repeating Himself. Hence, if we are told that we are to follow His steps, and if those steps are anticipated in the characteristics of the meal-offering, it seems as if we should achieve this purpose best by resembling Jesus Christ in four aspects—(1) *The evenness of the fine flour*; (2) *The anointing of the oil*; (3) *The fragrance of the frankincense*; (4) *The sparkling nature of the salt*.

#### THE EVENNESS OF THE FINE FLOUR.—

It is obvious to any one who has handled flour how even it is; no roughness, no grit; it passes so smoothly through the hand.

## 118 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

Although it offers an inviting theme, there is no need to describe the process by which the flour is made so fine and even, of the rush of the turbid stream, of the movement of the great mill-wheel, and of the stones by which the grain is ground to powder. All this might have a deep and holy reference to ourselves, if not to Him; for it is only by the bruising, grinding, and crushing processes of life that we can become as the fine even flour.

With our Lord, what evenness there was in His temperament. There was no exaggeration, no preponderance of one virtue over another, but a perfect balance, harmony, and beauty. Moses was the meekest of all men, but there was a terrible piece of grit when he cursed the people at Meribah. There were many fine qualities in Peter,

but we remember how, after he asked to be allowed to walk upon the water, he began to sink through unbelief; and that at another time, after telling the Lord that he would go with Him even to death, within a few hours he denied Him. The holy Apostle Paul had to take back his words about the High Priest. Even John called for fire from heaven to consume the villages of the Samaritans. All these great saints had a grit in them which was very different to the perfect evenness and composure of our Saviour's life.

On the one hand, He said that He must be about His Father's business; but, on the other, He went down to Nazareth and was subject to His parents. When feeding the five thousand, He told His disciples they were to see that everybody had enough,

but when all had been filled He took care that the fragments were gathered up, so that nothing was left. In the garden of Gethsemane we find Him prostrate in humility before God, but, when the crowd comes, He meets it with majestic dignity. On the one hand, He would flash out flames of fire against the Pharisees; but if a woman came to touch the hem of His garment, or a father to plead for his child, with what infinite tenderness and sweetness He would help and save! There was a perfect balance and equilibrium in our Saviour's life.

Has there not been too little of this in us? We have been precipitate and impetuous, have taken up a duty and dropped it, have been hot, and soon cold; in private have vowed that we would never yield to

a certain sin, but we have yielded ; there has been no counting upon us, people of moods and tenses, just like some mountain lake, now swept by the wind or radiant in the summer sunshine, but never for a dozen yards the same. If we have been strong, we have run a terrible danger of being obstinate ; if we have been gentle, we have been tempted to be weak ; if we have been so calm that though a storm were breaking on us, it left us unmoved, there has been danger of our becoming callous and indifferent. It is so difficult to magnify one virtue without doing so at the expense of all the others. We all need to come to the evenness, consistency, and perseverance in doing well, which are symbolised by fine flour.

THE OIL.—How many times, in these

regulations about the meal-offering, allusion is made to the oil, which, in the typology of the Scripture, always stands for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This oil was applied in two ways to the meal-offering. In the case of the cakes, it was mixed with them; but in the case of the fine flour, it was poured over it; which may be taken to illustrate two aspects of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon our Saviour's life. That the oil was *mixed with* the cakes recalls how the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin, so that "the Holy Thing" was born of her by the operation of the Holy Spirit on the nature of His mother. Throughout our Lord's life His character was permeated by the Blessed Spirit. That the oil was *poured upon* the flour, we are reminded that on the day of His baptism, before He



entered on His work, He stood beneath the descending unction of the Blessed Spirit, and was set apart for the service of God and man. From this we gather that for each one of us there must be the daily fellowship and communion of the Holy Ghost, by Whom alone our character can be made sweet and strong; and whenever we anticipate some extraordinary demand, we should seek a very special anointing of the Holy Spirit. Never forget that the meal-offering of a holy life is only possible as it is permeated and anointed with "the Unction of the Holy One."

THE FRANKINCENSE.—With the meal there was frankincense—the resin which exudes from the incense tree, and which, when burnt, gives a brilliant flame and fragrant scent. Frankincense must always stand for

the joy of God which was so evident in our Saviour's life. One seldom sees a painting that represents one's ideal of our Saviour's face. In most there is not enough of the sparkle, the joy, the lustre of the indwelling Shechinah. It could not have been quite the worn and weary face which many painters depict, who do not allow for the play of holy joy.

With many of us, there is little enough of the frankincense of Joy. In the fifth circle of Dante's *Inferno* he describes the suffering of those who yielded to hatred; it is a black and loathsome marsh; but Virgil tells Dante that there are others there, who suffer for evermore, because in the bright, sunny air they condemned themselves to gloom; or, as Shakespeare says, "They were sad as night, only for wantonness."

There are many people just in this condition, who, in a redeemed world, where there is so much that is beautiful and bright, carry a perpetual gloom upon their faces. Perhaps most of us at times are tempted to leave the frankincense of joy out of our lives, and to run the danger of falling into the old sin, of which Dean Paget has reminded us, known as "accidie."

Are not there days in your life when you cannot smile or look pleasant, when you refuse to say what you have to say in a cheery and bright tone, when you are sunken in a deep black fog of your own making; days when you cannot sympathise with the laughter of little children, or the joy of those who are glad; days when you find it impossible to be tender to the sorrowful, or to minister comfort; days

## 126 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

when you have no enthusiasm, but your life lies like a low-lying, marshy land, swept by an east wind, which is bringing up the mist from the sea? You settle yourself down into a fixed despondency, your voice is depressing to listen to, and your face miserable to see? This is what the old teachers called "accidie."

You say, Is not this largely a matter of over-weariness, of a languid, tired spirit, of a nature which has been on too great a strain, and which is suffering from the reaction? Those excuses may be made for you by other people, but it is a perilous thing to make them for yourself. Be very pitiful for those who are weary and languid around you—you do not know what secret pain they may be suffering; but on yourself have no mercy, refuse to sit beneath the

pall of black darkness, always fight against your depressions, and vanquish them in the name of Jesus Christ your Lord.

The noblest trait in Christian living is when men and women refuse to surrender to the difficulties of their circumstances or temperament, but dare to say, "Because these things threaten to make me miserable and useless, by the grace of the Holy Ghost I am going to drain these fens and run channels through these morasses, hoping for summer skies to shine upon this marsh, until the very sun shall heal the earth." This is the burning of the frankincense.

The best cure for "accidie" is to consider the sorrow of those who are more sorrowful than yourself; to perform some office of mercy; or better still, to throw yourself back upon the love of God, that

## 128 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

this may steal like a benediction into your sad heart. See that you always burn frankincense.

THE SALT.—Our Saviour's words were full of salt; pure and sparkling, incorruptible, and staying corruption. Salt is good, and the words of Christ are good, because so full of salt. The Book of Proverbs is the salt-cellar of the Bible. It would be well, particularly for the young, to commit to memory chapters of the Proverbs. In contradistinction to salt is *leaven* (Lev. ii. 11), constantly used in the Bible of that which is corrupt and breeds corruption. In every workroom and workshop, how laden the air is with leaven, with corrupt germs, with unholy words, and thoughts, and suggestions that breed in the heart, until, though years have passed, some word you have heard

will come back to spoil your holiest moments, and ferment, as leaven does. Let us take care that in our speech there is nothing that breeds ferment, impurity, or pride.

And equally we must beware of *honey* (Lev. ii. 11), which stands for the luscious sweetness of nature. There are some people who are apt at saying sweet things, at being winsome and affable. It is very difficult to draw the line precisely; but, instinctively, we know when there is a sort of unreality in the sweetness, when it is too effusive, when compliments are applied and flatteries given with too lavish a hand, and we turn away with a kind of nausea.

On the whole let us see to it that we employ the *salt* of sound common sense. That does not mean that our talk is to be

## 130 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

monotonous. Salt stings, sparkles. Wit, a little touch of wholesome humour, the play of repartee, the sound conundrum of common sense—all this is innocent enough; but let us take care of the leaven of criticism and impurity, and of the honey of mere natural sweetness.

It may be said that this is a high ideal. Yes, but this was the life of Jesus! To attain it, do not seek to imitate Him simply, as the sculptor may imitate the model, for so you will suffer constant disappointment; but remember that the relationship between you and Him is like that between the child and its mother. The child, in a sense, is part of the mother, the child has received the mother's nature, and she really lives through her child. Such is your relationship with Jesus. You and He are one by



a living faith. Daily say: "Blessed Lord, I cannot, but Thou canst; I fail, but be in me what I want to be and am not." And if you fall, be sure to fall *uphill*, and not *down*. Many people when they fall, fall downhill in despair, and say, "I never, never can." Other happier souls fall uphill, believing that God forgives, that God will restore, and help, and save. Say, "I have fallen; but it is not my real and best self, not my ideal, not what I want to be, not what, by the grace of God, I will be. I will forget the things that are behind, and press on to those which are before, following the blessed steps of His most holy life."

There is of course no manner of doubt that those who follow in the footprints of Christ will be led ultimately to the Garden and the Cross. It cannot be otherwise. "If

## 132 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

any man serve Me, let him follow Me," said our Lord; "and where I am, there shall also My servant be;" but He had already, in His previous breath, said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

In all the Gospels there is no more striking picture than of the eager figure of Jesus preceding the Apostles on their way to Jerusalem, whilst they followed in amazement and fear (Mark x. 32); but He leads not only to the Cross and Grave, but to the Easter Morn, the Ascension Mount, and the Right Hand of God.

## VIII

# THE UNDIVIDED HEART

## VIII

### THE UNDIVIDED HEART

*"Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth: unite my heart to fear Thy Name"* (Ps. lxxxvi. 11), is a beautiful prayer in a psalm, which has been compared to a tessellated pavement, because composed of fragments of other psalms reverently pieced together. But though most of its sentences may be discovered in other places of the Psalter, this petition stands unique in its beauty and strength. This is the Psalmist's Spirit-given invention; here he is original. This is the gush of some geyser spring in his heart, that flashes in the light and pours

## 136 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

its perennial fountain of inspiration on the world.

There are obviously three divisions in this verse: (1) "*Teach me Thy way.*"—The Hebrew word used might be rendered "*stake out.*" Sometimes in riding through the country, parts of which are submerged in the winter floods, we see high stakes jutting out at various points. Our driver tells us that the river often overflows, and if it were not for these indications it would be impossible to discern the way. That is the precise idea of the Hebrew: "Stake out my way, that even when the storm rises, and the dark water sweeps across my path, I may realise that Thou hast marked it out so as to be unmistakable."

(2) "*I will walk in Thy truth.*"—Throughout the Psalter the word *truth* would better

be rendered *troth*, i.e. faithfulness—"I plight thee my troth." When the Psalmist says, "I will walk in Thy faithfulness," he means to say that all his days shall be spent, leaning and reckoning upon the faithfulness of his Guide and Friend, in the very atmosphere of trust in the trustworthiness of God.

(3) "*Unite my heart to fear Thy Name.*"—We have another rendering in the Prayer Book version: "O knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear Thy Name"; that is, not simply is the heart united in itself, a simple and single purpose; but it becomes such because it is united and knit to the nature of the Eternal God. "O knit my heart unto Thee, knit it, weave it into Thy life, and never let me extract myself again—knit my heart unto Thee!"

## 138 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

These three thoughts may be entitled *Via*, *Veritas*, and *Vita*, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. And the answer to my text is in the announcement of our Lord, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "Teach me Thy way"—"I am the Way;" "I will walk in Thy truth"—"I am the Truth;" "Knit my heart unto Thee"—"I am the Life." The answer to the soul's cry is in Him in whom all fulness dwells for the sons of men. Notice also the foundation argument, on which the prayer rests: (v. 5) "For Thou, Lord, art good;" (v. 10) "For Thou art great;" (v. 15) "Thou art a God full." "Thou art good, Thou art great, Thou art full; therefore knit my heart unto Thee."

THE DIVIDED HEART.—The world is full of instances of the divided heart. The

double-minded man who is unstable, the man who is double-sighted, the man whose ways are perplexed because he has no definite purpose before him. The Greek word for *care* means "that which divides": and Jesus Christ said we must live a life free from care, because care divides, weakens, and makes us blind.

Some are divided *by anxiety*. When our companions are expecting us to take a bold and straightforward course, they are surprised to see a wavering line, as when the eagle that was expected to soar straight to the sun pursues an uncertain course, because an arrow is lodged in his breast. The man who is anxious cannot take a strong, straight course, any more than a man can sleep when he is wondering whether he has locked the door or wound his watch.



## 140 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

Some are divided by *contrariness*, which is a most difficult and complicated disposition of the soul. We want to be pleasant, helpful, agreeable, and amiable, but are conscious of the pressure of some cross-current. Whence it comes we know not; but we find ourselves between two strong influences, the one to be sweet and Christlike, the other to be awkward and restrained.

Some of us are divided *because of the incoherence and fitfulness of our impulses*. Happy are those whose desires are well under hand; but with many they have the dominant place. Their passions are strong, their desires ungenerous. In many cases, doubtless, this results from some strain of heredity, which our ancestors have bequeathed to us, so that we are suffering

from the lawlessness of men and women who have preceded us, and which belongs to long generations behind.

Others are *critical*. Two souls strive within them. Whilst admiring what is good in other people, they are conscious of a second self that sits in judgment. It seems as if there is in most, a purer, holier, lovelier self; and behind that the dark, critical, cynical self, which is always judging and passing unkind comments.

Others who are divided *by the accusations of conscience*. They are always in dread lest they have done wrong, always thinking that God is angry, always failing to be at peace with Him or themselves. On Sunday they seem at full stretch for the Kingdom, caught up and borne heavenward; but as soon as they touch this mundane world there is an

## 142 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

inevitable reaction. The very yearning after God to-day will be met to-morrow by an equal intensity in their business, in making money, or in seeking pleasure. Paul tells us that he was conscious of these two wills—the better self which longed to do the will of God, and the lower, selfish, animal self which brought him into subjection. Augustine tells us that though the prayers of his mother so greatly affected him, he was constantly swept from his ideal by passion. He compares himself to a man oversleeping in the broad daylight, whose limbs are glued to the bed by drowsiness, and there is conflict between the intention to arise and heavy slumber. You will remember, too, how Bunyan tells us that he realised the two selves at war within him. First, the Devil came and tempted him saying, "Sell Him!

Sell Him ! Sell Him !" but he resisted even to blood, saying, "I won't." But as the Tempter's voice continued, urging "*Sell Him !*" finally Bunyan answered, "Let Him go if He will." Whereupon, for a whole year, Bunyan suffered a perfect agony of remorse and torture, on the one hand accepting Christ, on the other prepared to barter Him away.

A divided heart lacks the first element of strength, it is unstable. The men who leave their mark in the world are the men of one purpose who, with Paul, can say, "One thing I do." The small man who has one intense purpose becomes a great man. If a man is taken up by one great thought, by the greatness of his thought he will presently approximate to the level of his conception ; but the man who is divided

## 144 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

by diverse interests dwindles into a little man and a groper in the dark. Oh, happy are those that always live a balanced life of perfect equilibrium, who have their impulses well under control, who can keep the wild horses in hand, who can do what they ought to do and avoid the thing which their highest nature condemns. We must, for peace and strength, follow one purpose, saying, "Unite my heart! Knit my heart unto Thee!"

THE CONCENTRATED HEART.—There are other aims besides religion which give peace, strength, and vision. John Foster tells of a young man who one day climbed the hill that overlooked the broad acres of the inheritance which he had squandered and lost; as he sat and mused, looking over what

had once been his ancestral home, the purpose flashed into his mind to recover it. He at once rose to put it into execution. Passing through the village and seeing some coals lying outside a house, he obtained a pittance for removing them, and from that moment gladly performed the most servile duties, which opened into more remunerative ones, until he gained sufficient money to repurchase the inheritance, finally dying worth tens of thousands of pounds. It was his *one purpose* to undo the past which made this young man strong.

In another case it was the purpose to be rid of a certain crabbedness of temper, and to cultivate a spirit of perpetual *urbanity*, that gave a purpose and direction to life which had never before been realised.

In the "Life of John Bright," we are told

## 146 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

that it was the thought suggested by Mr. Cobden, that he might be able to lighten the heavy anxiety that beclouded many homes, which delivered him from the melancholy which the death of his beloved wife had inflicted on his spirit. He was inert and paralysed until the inception of this new purpose inspired him to take up life anew. The purpose of philanthropy has again and again unified, quickened, and ennobled the soul that seemed spent and hopeless. It has girt its loins to fresh endeavour, and in its unity has become strong. Get hold of a purpose, and live for it. A stream that spreads itself too widely, and is dissipated into too many channels has no driving power; a very narrow stream becomes swift enough to turn the mills all along its course. A concentrated heart, even

though not yet consecrated, is stronger than a divided heart.

THE CONSECRATED HEART.—Concentration makes a strong man, but consecration makes a saint; and we get this strong saintly life when our heart is united—not simply united in ourselves, but united in ourselves because we are united to God. “Knit my heart to Thee, O God. In Thy goings forth throughout this world and all worlds, knit my heart to Thee.”

It is the man who knits himself to Nature as Edison has done, as Newton and Faraday did, as great discoverers must all do, who finds that Nature serves them best. If you fight Nature, if you antagonise her, if you resist the laws of fire or water, you will burn or drown; but if you study the way in



## 148 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

which Nature is working through the world, if you unite your life with her, then she will drive your motor-cars, light your lamps, and supply all the necessities of daily existence.

The same is true of the great laws of our national life. The law which is pleasant to the man who obeys it is ruin to those who resist it. The law which will promote virtue to its highest position will hang the murderer. You must unite or knit yourself to law to be blessed.

Is it not so with human character? You may be acquainted with an individual with whom at one time you had no sympathy—indeed, you disliked him. But after a while he opened his heart to you. Some great sorrow came, and you and he were thrown together. You found that you had misjudged and misread him, but when your

heart opened out to him, and he became your close friend—when you were knit to him, and began to understand him, he became one of the greatest helps in your life.

What is true of nature, true of law, true of human sympathy, is true also of God. If there are men who are living in opposition to God, they cannot realise what God is. He is an enigma to them. A great barrier of ice seems to separate between them and Him. But directly a man is knit to God, and he becomes at-one with God, his life acquires simplicity and power.

Let us, then, open our hearts to the great God who is brooding over each of us, saying :  
 "O Divine Will, knit my will with Thine ! O  
 Divine Love, knit my love with Thine ! O  
 Divine Sympathy, unite my sympathies with  
 Thine ! O Divine Rectitude, unite and knit

## 150 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

my moral sense with Thine! O Divine Activity, knit the activities of my life with Thine!" God is always going forth on His great ministries. He is passing by your bedsides every morning, saying, "Awake and come." Let us ask then, that He may take our little lives into union with His great heart and mighty movement, that in keen sympathy and loyal co-operation we may move forward with Him!

"Knit me, for I cannot knit myself; but come out of Thine eternity, step out, rend the veil with Thy strong hands, and come to me in my tiny commonplace existence! My God, knit me and weave me into Thy nature, and weave Thy nature into me, that Thou and I may keep step, keep in tune and time, until time shall be no more. Knit me, unite me with Thyself!"

Do you want to be knit to God, to be made one? There is only one way, by Jesus. We must "receive the at-one-ment" from Christ's pierced hands. Put away known sin, put away doubtful things, put away self-will. Let Jesus make you at one with Himself. Go, and speak to that man and woman whom you have slighted; ask for forgiveness from those you have wronged; get right with brother and sister from whom you are estranged. At least be willing to be at one with them. Yield yourself to God that He may disunite you from the world, and unite you in yourself. He will not fail you, and you shall become one with Him, as the Father is in the Son and Son in the Father. Knit me, and keep me knit. Let this be our daily prayer!

This growing attachment will necessarily

## 152 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

bring about a detachment from the things of Time and Sense. As we are knit to God, the hold of the world will be loosened, Ruth's new love for Naomi will naturally draw her away from her people and her gods, and even from the grave of her boy-husband. The moon's attraction will lead to a tidal wave round the globe. It feels her pull upward, which is stronger than the old downward pull of mother-earth. So be it with each of us! "Draw us, and we will run after thee."

## IX

THE PURE INTENTION OF THE  
SOUL MAINTAINED IN THE  
MIDST OF LIFE'S DRUDGERY

## IX

### THE PURE INTENTION OF THE SOUL MAINTAINED IN THE MIDST OF LIFE'S DRUDGERY

WHAT a difference heaven's light makes to common objects! A worn-out bottle-skin, a patch on an old garment, the fox creeping to its hole, the homeward flight of birds from their feeding-grounds, a rustic penfold—all these shine with a new glory when touched with the luminous words and thoughts of Christ. The shavings and implements of a carpenter's shop are for ever consecrated, because the light from His face shone on them during the years of

## 156 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

His service in carpentry. It is also true that when His thoughts and conceptions of life fall on the scenes of daily toil, "the common round" no longer appears as a tread-mill, but becomes a ladder which links the lowest earth with highest heaven.

Drudgery, perhaps, belongs more to a *woman's* life than to a man's. I think, for instance, of a cripple girl, shut up in a narrow tenement with her querulous and constantly complaining mother, keeping the tiny room spotlessly clean, and working with her crippled hands from early morning till late at night to support them both; of the women employed in the manufacture of brushes for road-sweeping, engaged in dipping hard bristles into boiling pitch and riveting them into the stamped pattern of the brush, their persons saturated with the



mixture; of the girls who are employed in carrying sugar-sweets to ovens raised to a furious heat, stung by wasps in summer, and exposed to rheumatism in winter; of drudges in families and boarding-houses, on their feet from morning till night, and performing perpetually the same domestic duties; of lone women in secluded spots whose life is rarely lit up by an expression of love or interest, and whose daily track is the beaten one which has been trodden by their feet for tens of years. Such are cases of drudgery which are unlit by rays of earthly happiness. They spend their lives under leaden skies. Their path lies along the level sand, with no hill on the horizon nor juniper-bush to cast its tiny shadow.

*Men* also have their drudgery. The

## 158 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

lawyer's copying-clerk who has sat at the same desk for years reproducing acres of legal phraseology; the "hand" in the factory who is always engaged in performing some trivial task which may only need the twist of a finger and thumb; the porter in the crowded station, ambitious for better things, but who probably will spend his life in shouldering heavy luggage; the cemetery chaplain, with his threadbare black, who probably will never receive a respite from the constant repetition of the Burial Service and contact with sable-vested mourners, until the service which he has so often read over others is mumbled over himself.

Such are some of the drudges in human life. Those of us to whom life brings so many changes of travel, of intercourse with intelligent and noble souls, of new books,

new scenes, and new tasks, can hardly realise what life is which has no ups and downs, no changes, no infusion of the fresh elements that give charm and expectation.

What are the considerations which will shed heavenly light upon drudgery like this, until common things begin to shine with heavenly lustre, as a bit of glass bottle across a valley which has caught the level rays of the setting sun and begins to sparkle like a star?

*The first thought which will light up life's drudgery is the remembrance that it has been appointed by God's wise Providence.*—God as much sent Joseph through the drudgery and discipline of prison as through the glory of the palace. Every part of his life was designed for the evolution of a Divine

## 160 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

Purpose for himself and others. If he had evaded the irksome duties of the prison, he would never have come in contact with Pharaoh's servants, and so the link which bound prison and palace would have been missing. You can never tell why God is exposing [you to the fret and pressure of the present moment until you see the apartments of which it is the vestibule. All God's purposes are love; "all things work together for good." For the disciple, all long, straight roads, however dusty, lead to the Golden City, the sure anticipation, therefore, of the goal which must be a happy one, since God is God, and our trust that He is bringing us thither by the shortest and wisest path, should gild with the light of expectant hope the tedium and monotony of the present.

*The drudgery of life is as much a Divine vocation as are its more brilliant passages.—*

Too often we speak of being *called* to the ministry, confining the term to the young lad, who, like Samuel, has heard the Divine Voice; as though it were unsuitable to speak of a carpenter being *called* to the bench, the blacksmith to the forge, the shoemaker to the last. This exclusive use of the word is in direct collision with the Apostolic precedent which bids "every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." "Brethren," said the Apostle, who more than any has inspired the thinking of subsequent generations, "let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

If it were possible for the poor slaves of some great patrician's household, who might

## 162 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

be compelled, on their bended backs, to bear for hours together without the least movement the chess-board on which their masters were deliberately playing, to be taught to think that the menial service they were called to perform was a Divine vocation (1 Cor. vii. 21), surely there is no toil or duty assigned to us in the course of Divine Providence in which we may not hear the voice of God. If you listen when the bell arouses your tired body to another day of toil, you will detect the silver music of the bells of heaven summoning you to take up your part in the great economy of the universe. He who appoints stars and glow-worms, cherubim and fire-flies, suns and molecules of dust, to perform their several parts in the clockwork of the universe, has appointed you as a little cog-

## IN THE MIDST OF DRUDGERY 163

wheel or screw, and by your faithful performance of obscure and unrecognised duty you are helping to maintain the order of the great movement which extends throughout the universe and is slowly advancing to that "far-off, Divine event" of which the poet sings.

*The faithful performance of drudgery-duties is tending to the formation of noble character.—*

All that God wants of any one is *faithfulness*. Not brilliance, not success, not notoriety which attracts newspaper notice, but the quiet, regular, and careful performance of trivial and common duties, as beneath "the great Taskmaster's eye." To be "faithful in that which is least" will win as rich a reward as faithfulness in the greatest. Indeed, it is harder to be faithful over a very little than over much. The opportunity, there-

fore, of winning the highest reward in the future world is not given only to those who are called to occupy the high places of the field, where every brilliant act is chronicled by admiring pens, but to those who dig out the foundations, who do duty in the trenches, and who are buried in common graves, without magnificent obsequies or glowing epitaphs. Of many it will be said at last: "They had their reward" in the blowing of the trumpet of earthly fame and the murmured applause of many voices; the turn of those to whom no one said "Thank you" will then have arrived.

Have you not seen the way in which men construct arches? A number of beams, wooden uprights, and cross-pieces are constructed into the form of the arch which is to be. The structure looks very confused



and flimsy, it is difficult to trace the design, and one spark of flame would consume the whole; but upon its span the bricks and stones are deposited which will last for generations. So upon the mean structures of daily drudgery, which excites no enthusiasm, which strains the muscles and wearies the nerves, is being built up a character which will be "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever" when the heavens have passed away "as a scroll."

*In every piece of honest work, however irksome, laborious, and commonplace, we are fellow-workers with God.*—Throughout His miracles we find our Lord invited and used the co-operation of His followers, or of some material substance, such as bread and fish, or the clay for the blind man's eyes, or the interposition of the strong hands

which rolled away the stone and unbound the swathed limbs of Lazarus. All these are living illustrations of an eternal fact that God uses us as His fellow-workers in the accomplishment of His purposes.

It is for Him to cause the growth of the golden corn; but man must reap and thresh it, grind out the flour, make and distribute the loaves of bread—only so can the great populations have their prayer answered as in many tongues they cry: "Give us this day our daily bread." It is God's work to flood with sunlight the woodland and forest, by earthquake and cataclysm to entomb vegetation in the cellars of the earth, and by long processes to change the green growth to coal; but all this provision would be useless unless man exhumed the ebony treasure, with infinite labour bore it to the

surface, and presently carried it, by collier-barque, or barge, or costermonger's barrow, for consumption in human homes. The tailor is God's fellow-workman, helping Him to clothe the bodies which He has made to need garments of various textures. The builder helps God to house the children of men. The merchant helps God to bring the products of the East to refresh and enrich the toiling masses of the West. The author, printer, and publisher help God to distribute His thoughts and Gospel for the quickening, comfort, and inspiration of men. The girl who makes chocolate-creams helps God to give pleasure and delight, as well as nourishment, to hundreds of children; and the lawn tennis-ball manufacturer helps God in the development and strengthening of the human

## 168 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

body, on the endurance and vitality of which the success of the Gospel may largely depend on some far-off mission-field. It is a beautiful and inspiring thought as we each go forth day by day to what seems to us a piece of common drudgery, to realise that God is our fellow-helper, and that we are fellow-workers with Him.

Take up your work, then, you who seem to be the drudge, the man-of-all-work, shoe-black, or slavey ; do it with a brave heart, looking up to Him who for thirty years wrought at the carpenter's bench, remember that "your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Throughout all the many scenes through which you pass and the actions you perform, set the Lord ever before you. Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you

## IN THE MIDST OF DRUDGERY 169

do, do all as in His Presence and to win His smile, so life will be knit together by one pure intention of soul, as the different metres of a poem are penetrated by the one thought, or plan, that persists from the first line to the last.

Love is at the soul of everything, just as the commonest flint will emit sparks when struck. Wherever you may be, whoever you are, and whatever the burden and hardship of your life, you can love. It is pleasant to think that the sunshine, and the winds, and the trees are able to love in some way of their own. Though nature seems so solitary and silent through the long winter, or in the great far-stretching lands, she is never desolate, for through her the Spirit of Love, which is the Spirit of God, is ever breathing.

God is the greatest Lover, therefore He

## 170 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

is the happiest of all beings; and the more we love the nearer we are to Him. It is His love that is brooding over the world, and He will never cease to love. Let thoughts like these fill your heart; resolve to love perfectly, unselfishly, helpfully, and the most lowly life of drudgery will begin to glisten, as the grass-blades do when the sun and dew-drops garnish them.

X

THE PURE INTENTION OF THE  
SOUL CONSISTENT WITH THE  
LIFE IN THE GREAT CITY

## X

### THE PURE INTENTION OF THE SOUL CONSISTENT WITH THE LIFE IN THE GREAT CITY

PAUL never failed to insist that he had been called equally as the other apostles; he affirmed that he was a witness of the Resurrection as his fellow-apostles. For instance, in writing to the Corinthians, he said: "Last of all He was seen of me, as of one born out of due time." And again: "Have not I seen Christ?" For Himself he had beheld that face above the brightness of the sun, the wounds in those hands, the feet that burned like brass in a furnace,



## 174 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

and had heard that voice as the sound of many waters. To his ear had come from Christ the summons, "Saul, Saul," with as much emphasis and directness as when He had addressed Simon Peter in the old days of His human life.

In the earliest stages of the Christian Church no one had a greater influence in formulating its doctrine, or initiating its activity, than he who, amid the glow of the Syrian noon, was stricken to the earth by the brilliance of a greater light. When we compare the teaching of the Epistles with the exquisite stories of the Gospels, we realise how much Christianity owed to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who was the chosen organ of the Holy Spirit for His further revelations of truth.

It is interesting to notice how immediately

the new disciple addressed our Lord with the appellation which indicated his desire to prostrate himself at His feet, and become His loyal subject and servant. From that moment Christ's will was to be predominant and His commands imperative. It was therefore in keeping with the practical nature of the Apostle's mind that he should at once ask for something definite to do. To him visions were of comparatively little importance unless they could be realised in practical deeds. "Lord," he said, "what wilt Thou have me to do?" And He said, "*Rise and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do*" (Acts ix. 5, 6).

It was startling to be told, "Go into the city." For three days he had been approaching Damascus with murderous intent.

## 176 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

His purpose in visiting the city was to find out men and women who had believed in the Lord Jesus, that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. In the execution of his project, he was prepared to enter home and meeting-place, to harry the infant Church. It might have been expected that Christ would have turned him back to Jerusalem for further instruction by the Apostles, or might have sent him to some secluded scene where he might meditate upon the great change which had suddenly altered the course of his life. What more natural than to send him to Tarsus, his home, where, amid the scenes of his early days, he could prepare for his life-work? But instead of these, he was bidden to go into the city. Those who are bearing some intolerable weight of sorrow shrink from

familiar and ordinary scenes, and long for an entire change, where their mind may be diverted from the associations of the past. The broken-hearted lover says, "Let me travel in foreign places"; the sorrow-stricken mother cries for relief from the rooms which have rung with baby laughter and are linked with irremediable loss. But for Saul there was no intermission in his ordinary routine of life. He had had his vision, and was now summoned to carry it with him into the busy scenes and hubbub of a city with which, probably, he was almost as familiar as with Jerusalem. It was there, and from a humble disciple, Ananias, that he was to receive further instruction.

A great law reveals itself here. The visions that God gives us are to prepare us for practical service, and we are sent back

## 178 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

to familiar scenes to work out there the inspiration and stimulus that we have received. The Risen Christ appears to us, and immediately the summons rings out, "Go into the city."

THE BEST THING FOR A MAN WHO HAS SEEN CHRIST IS TO GO INTO THE CITY.— Notice the sanity of Christ's teaching. The Romanist says that when we have seen our vision we are to seclude ourselves from ordinary life, immuring ourselves behind monastic walls and closely-barred windows, straining our eyes for repetitions of the celestial beauty. Others bid us live in a limited circle of Christian duty, perpetually looking for the second advent as the one means by which the world is to be put right, and ignoring the claims of the city upon the Christian disciple, as though the

carcase should be left without its salt, and the darkness without the glow of the lamp. More wholesome is our Lord's prayer that His disciples should not be taken out of the world, but kept from its evil, that they should be the counteractive of the darkness, sin, and sorrow around, until His light shall break upon the eastern sky as the dawn of a new age.

*The call of the city is the corrective of the temptation which accosts us all to become dreamers.*—When a man has beheld the Risen Christ he is strongly tempted to build an oratory on the spot, and to spend days and nights waiting for a repetition of the glory which dazzled him; but to do this is to miss the divine intention in having opened our eyes to see.

We are familiar with the distinction be-

tween ideas and their form, between inspiration and embodiment, between thoughts and acts. There is always a temptation in human life to divorce them. Some men will sit in their arm-chairs and dream dreams, see visions, and elaborate systems, who are absolutely useless in the progress of the race, or in the march of civilisation. They resemble artists who never translate their visions of beauty to canvas or marble. The temptation to this is very real to us all. We dream of victories, but never enter a battle; we imagine heroic action, but never attempt one; we represent ourselves as cheerfully enduring martyrdom, but take care never to come within a hundred miles of the scaffold or stake. So God bids us go into the city to save us from vaporising our religion in dreams, illusions, and vain

fancies. It is as though the voice of God came to us each morning after we had beheld the Risen Christ, each Sunday after we had knelt in the church, filled with high and holy intentions, and bade us go forth into the city, with its need and sorrow, its temptation and battle, that our character might be ennobled by putting into effect the fair and beautiful conceptions which had entranced us. Ah, we find ourselves of very different stuff in the actual contact of the world to what we imagined ourselves to be!

*It is necessary also to go into the city, because we shall meet there influences which will promote our highest welfare.*—Had He chosen, our Lord could have said everything that needed to be said to His new disciple; but that is not His way. He is ever economical of the supernatural. He appeared to Saul



## 182 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

because nothing else would have arrested him, or changed his career; but having done this once He left Ananias to do the rest. He did what He must do, and left Ananias the remainder. Only by entering the city could Saul be brought in contact with the simple-minded disciple who could complete the Master's commencement.

It is in the city that we meet the Ananiases of our lives—the simple, humble, obscure people prepared to influence us, as did the servants of Naaman, who persuaded him to pacify his rage and test the waters of Israel. Society is bound together by strong human ties; the city cannot exist without the country; the upper classes are more dependent than others upon the ministry of the lower; Peters are brought to Christ by Andrews, the miracles of Christ

are supplemented by the co-operation of the apostles, and Saul is brought into the clear light by Ananias laying his hand upon him, and saying, "Brother Saul." We are all learning more than we know from contact with the men and women whom we meet in the city. Men that carry water-pots conduct us to the rooms in which our Pentecosts take place.

*Also, the city needs us.*—The world will not come to our Churches, or read our Bible, or look into the dazzling face of Christ. Its children seem to think that Christianity means our withdrawal from what is healthy and homelike, into some dim and mystic region where life is robbed of half its significance. They speak of religion as "becoming serious"; they think that a "religious life" must be spent apart from store and

## 184 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

street in communities of celibates. How necessary it is, therefore, that the disciples of Christ should go "through dusky lane and wrangling mart" with Heaven's light upon their faces, and repeating a holy strain in their hearts, to teach men that religion is warm, natural, and human.

For all these reasons we must go into the city. There we shall learn more than ever the cloister can teach; there we shall receive influences which are necessary for the development of the highest type of character; there we shall become the world's Bible, its light, inspiration, and conscience. No sooner has the vision faded than we have to gird up our loins and arise, telling what has been told, bearing witness of what we have seen, and lighting the murky gloom with the reflected glory of the celestial and divine.

IT IS BEST OF ALL FOR THE CITY TO BE VISITED BY MEN WHO HAVE HAD THE VISION OF CHRIST.—Many amongst us lay too much stress on machinery. They think to lift men by careful organisation, by councils and committees, by social reform and legislative action. But men need more. "Where there is no vision the people perish." "Man cannot live by bread alone": he demands the words that come from the mouth of God. It is not enough to have elaborate edifices with five porches for wounded and suffering humanity; there must be an angel to trouble the waters. The heart cries out for brotherhood, peace, faith, hope, love, righteousness, and liberty, and only those who have beheld these incarnated in the Risen Lord can meet the deepest needs of their fellows.

Run your thought over the page of history,

and say who has done most for his race—the men of ideas or the masters of organisation? We must not undervalue the latter, but after all they *follow*, not *lead*; they make good the roads whilst the others have explored the country, and led the march of humanity. The idealists of our race, those who have seen visions and dreamed dreams, the Cavours, Mazzinis, men who have stood on Pisgah, and beheld a country which they were not destined to enter, the men who have coined the key - words, and sung the marching music of the centuries, the prophets and seers of the race—these are they who have left the most indelible mark.

*It is most important in a symmetrical life to combine vision and city.*—It is inexpressibly sad for a man to toil and moil in the city without having, from time to time, his vision.

It is equally injurious, as we have seen, for a man to have his vision apart from the city. To the denizen of the city we would say, Go forth beyond its gates, and open your eyes to see and your ears to hear, and come back with the light of eternity in your soul; to him who has seen the vision we would say, Get as quickly as possible into the city, there to realise the possibilities of life.

What is your vision? It must be of the Man, Christ Jesus, the ideal Man, the perfect realisation of God in man. It must be of Jesus suffering for the sins and sorrows of men, and for yours. "I am Jesus whom *thou* persecutest." It must be of Jesus, the Saviour, whose Blood cleanses from all sin. Never rest until by the grace of the Holy Ghost this vision has been yielded, not to mortal eyes, but to those of the soul.

## 188 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

What is your city? It is the place where God calls you to suffer or toil, to bear the burden and heat of the day, to wrestle with various forms of injustice and wrong. Are you humble in the presence of Christ? Be equally humble in the midst of city life. Is your faith strong when you kneel beneath the open sky? Let it not fail you when you can only see a scrap of the vault of blue between the high houses. Does immortal hope spring in your breast, here where Jesus speaks of the great future? Let it be dominant in tone and gesture, speech and act. Bathe yourself in the eternal, which seems so near when you are alone, and then go forth to believe that it underlies the throb and stir of the world of men, as ether interpenetrates all substance and existence lying as a mighty ocean between our shores and the Jasper Throne.

## XI

THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S IN-  
TENTION REVEALING ITSELF  
IN LOVE



## XI

### THE PURITY OF THE SOUL'S INTENTION REVEALING ITSELF IN LOVE

THERE are moods of the soul when we would be prepared to barter every incident in the Gospel if we might retain the parable of the Good Samaritan. At such times it is priceless. We would be prepared to surrender the story of the prodigal son, of the woman who was a sinner, and of the dying thief, if only we might retain it, as the star of hope shining on the bosom of night.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OUT OF WHICH IT AROSE ARE FAMILIAR. — The lawyer was

evidently a student of Scripture, and was probably a well-intentioned man, standing out from the rest of the crowd. He said: "Master, I want to know the secret of that life which is beyond the narrow horizon of this world, unmarked by the flight of the years, in which God and the holy spirits are living in the eternal and unseen. I am weary of the narrowness of my ordinary existence, I long to import into this commonplace the spirit of eternity. What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Our Lord replied: "Why ask such a question of Me, when you have the clue to its solution in your own Scriptures? What do you find there?" In answer, his interlocutor quoted the old command, thou shalt love God in heaven, and thy brother-man on earth.

"You have rightly answered," said our Lord; and there can be no possible doubt that if a soul will rid itself of the selfishness which is the bane of life, and begin to live in the constant thought of God on the one hand and of man on the other, forgetting itself in its expenditure on behalf of others, it may at once pass into that blessed life which fills heaven with rapture. We are taught this by the very construction of our Anglo-Saxon language, for, surely, *love* is the past tense of live, just as *drove* is the past tense of drive; in other words, the soul which has loved has lived: souls that do not love only *exist*. If there has been a supreme love in the life, even though the outward enjoyment of it may be intermitted for a time, there has been a draught of the river of God which is full of water, that

## 194 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

proceeds from the Throne of God and of the Lamb. Do you love? Then you live with something, at least, of the very life of God.

The lawyer still further pursued his question by asking, "But who is my *neighbour*?" The Lord answered in effect, "Ah, there you mistake! It is not for you to ask who is willing to neighbour me, but whom am I prepared to neighbour?" So long as the soul is self-concentrated enough to inquire for those who should draw near and comfort it, so long is it still under the thrall of selfishness; but directly it ceases to think of being neighboured, and sets itself to neighbour others, there comes into it the blessed joy of God. Seek for neighbours and you will never find them. Live to be the neighbour of all who need, and you will have

## REVEALING ITSELF IN LOVE 195

as many as you require when the days of which you say, "I have no pleasure in them," are at hand.

The incidents of this parable were probably founded on fact. We can almost see that long, lonely road, wild and desolate, that led down from Jerusalem, situated in its circle of hills, to Jericho on the margin of the Jordan. The inn, standing half-way, with its stabling, but with no trees or vegetation near, providing a much-needed shelter for man and beast. The only denizens of the Pass being the wild things, such as rabbits that burrow, grouse and ptarmigan, the hawk poising in the blue air. The great boulders casting their shadows in the intense light, and affording sheltering-place for bandits. The lonely traveller was set upon in the wildest part of the road by

## 196 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

the Bedouin, and making a show of fight, was felled to the ground, pillaged of his possessions, stripped of his clothes, and so desperately wounded as to become unconscious. The whole scene was tragic and terrible.

The priest, who represents formal religion, felt no necessity to arrest his progress, except to look upon the mass of unconscious, bleeding flesh. The wounded traveller had no special claim upon him, and the Levite followed his example. The two passed by on the other side, leaving the hapless sufferer to his fate, and he was too far gone to raise a hand to beckon help, or a groan to appeal for it.

Then the Samaritan drew near, was touched with the spectacle of helplessness, had compassion and bent over the dying

man, staunched his wounds, pouring in the oil and wine which revived the ebbing life, brought him on his own beast to the inn, where he was well known, and through the livelong hours of the night took no rest, but spent himself in resuscitating his *protégé*, moistening the parched lips, changing his posture, alleviating the high fever of his blood, until, as the morning star shone on the margin of the night, he felt able to leave him in the care of the host, with the promise that he would defray all further expenditure.

LOVE TO GOD.—God's love to us is beautifully set forth in this story. Surely we may expect that He will show to us the love which He expects us to show to others. May we not reverently say that He will love us with all His heart and soul

## 198 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

and mind and strength? He loves as the Samaritan did, though we have been enemies in our mind by wicked works, and have had no dealings with Him. He will love us, though, as in the case of the wounded traveller, there is nothing attractive or beautiful in us, but the reverse, for surely our sin is more repellent to His holy nature than the spectacle of wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores were to the kindly Samaritan. His love does not wait for our appeal, any more than the compassion of the Samaritan awaited the appeal of the poor victim of the bandits' outrage, and it is here that the parable is of such advantage to us.

There are hours in our life when we stand upon the transfiguration mount, and the solar look is upon our face. The sense of joy and rapture in our hearts makes us



feel able to combat every difficulty and vanquish every foe ; but these experiences are comparatively rare. Not infrequently we, too, lie upon the thoroughfare of life pillaged, stripped, and wounded ; we have lost the jewels of faith, hope, love, and joy ; we have been despoiled of any reason for self-esteem and congratulation, we can hardly cry for help ; the love, yearning, desire, and prayer of other days have died down as the flame into black cinders ; but then it is that God has compassion, and draws near, bending over our life. He has pity on us who have no pity on ourselves, loves when we do not love Him, resuscitates our ebbing life, pours in the wine of the precious blood, and the oil of the Holy Spirit, takes care of us with a tenderness of solicitude which no woman,

however loving, could exceed. Ah, it is a blessed thing for the soul when God has compassion and takes care of it !

But how shall we love God ? Is it so very hard ? Does not His character attract, or, if not, do not His long-suffering and tender mercy lead to grateful reciprocation ? But supposing that all this fails, may we not love Him with our strength and mind, even though we do not feel the rapture of emotion ?

We must distinguish between the *fact* and the emotion of the fact, between *love* and the feeling of love, for the former may exist when the latter is deficient ; we may love God with our strength, devoting to Him the energies of our nature ; with our mind, thinking of and for Him continually ; and even with our soul, recog-

nising His Lordship and superlative claim, without being able to join with Rutherford, or Faber, or Miss Havergal in their emotional outbursts. Love God with your mind and strength, make Him first, live for Him as the one object and goal of existence, and the dying spark of love will become fanned into a flame, and you will love God with your *heart*.

It is wonderful also how much our love to our fellow-man will promote our true love to God. He who says that he loves God must love his brother also, and he who truly loves his brother will, almost certainly, be brought to love God. "He that liveth in love liveth in God and God in him."

LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOUR.—Our neighbour is the person who needs us most. It may be some inmate of our home, a

## 202 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

servant, a relative, an habitual and familiar friend, it may be some companion in the occupation and business of life, or it may be some individual who is cast in our way by what seems chance, but is really Providence. The next person who needs you is your neighbour.

It must be remembered, as the parable teaches, that our neighbour is not always able to appeal to us, is certainly not one to whom we would be naturally attracted, and may be one against whom we have some personal antipathy. It is easy to like people who are naturally attractive and agreeable, but that love is by no means the highest form of Divine love. When we were yet enemies, Christ died for us: God loves us, not because we are fair, but to make us so.

## REVEALING ITSELF IN LOVE 203

In order to stimulate this love in our hearts to such people, again it is well to begin with the strength and mind rather than with the heart. We cannot command our emotions, but we can direct the energies of our strength. Supposing there be in your home some aged relative, con-torted by rheumatism, apt to yield to querulous complaints, and to murmur at the least interruption of the even tenor of comfortable environment, you may find it very difficult to love him with your heart, at least, in the first instance. You may, however, love him with your strength by ministering, by carrying him in your arms up and down stairs, by doing errands for him; you may love him with your mind by thinking, planning, and devising methods for his comfort, and little alleviations of his

tedium; you will then come to love him with your soul, appreciating qualities in his character which had until then escaped your notice; and, finally, you will come to love him with your heart; and when, at last, the poor emaciated body is consigned to mother earth, you will stand beside the grave with a flood of genuine tears.

It is simply marvellous how compassion leads to true affection, and how we come to love people to whom we perform kindly and unselfish deeds. Love with your strength, and you will come to love with your heart.

LOVE TO THE OUTSIDE MASSES. — The religious world, as represented by the priest and Levite, has been too forgetful of those who are not found, for the most part,

within our places of worship. The religious leaders of the people with cold charity have passed by the children of men who may have been opposed to all religious systems, or, at least, have been despoiled of virtue, purity, self-control, faith, hope, love. Too often there has been the casual look, and then the averted face, and the onward step towards the comforts and amenities of home, whilst the helpless have been left to make what shift they might.

All this must be altered by the Church, which should evince towards the outcast and lost the compassionate love of God. We must bring them to the inn of the Church, must administer to their physical need, but, above all, must care for their spiritual necessities. The Master, in these words, seems to bid us take care of those who cannot

## 206 THE SOUL'S PURE INTENTION

care for themselves. He was the first Good Samaritan. He painted His own portrait, when He depicted the loving interest of this stranger in this wounded Jew. He bids us "go and do likewise." He expects that day by day His people should reflect His own heart of compassionate love as the moon reflects the sunshine, and in doing this He knows that we shall discover the fountain of eternal life rising up within us with perennial freshness.

The lesson for all of us is that we should ask for the anointed eye, that we may be quick to see those cases of need which God has put in our way to elicit our comfort and help. Let us be sure that there is hardly a day in our life when some wounded traveller on the long road does not require our help, and as we have received mercy



## REVEALING ITSELF IN LOVE 207

let us pass it on ; as we have been forgiven let us forgive ; as we have known the preciousness of the oil and wine let us be quick to impart them ; let us comfort others with the comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted ; let us take care of them as God is ever taking care of us.

This exquisite story is followed by the lifting of the veil on the human friendship of our Lord. We behold Him in the midst of a family group, where Martha serves and Mary sits at His feet. We are told, elsewhere, that Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. Here is another aspect of Love, and here also is Life. The love of merciful help and the love of human friendship are the golden clasps of a life, which is happy and content, though the lot be poor and winter lies over all the land.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.  
Edinburgh & London