

# *God and Me*

*Being a Brief Manual of the Principles that Make for a  
Closer Relationship of the Believer with God*

By  
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"The night is dark and I am far from land;  
I yield the helm, O! God, to Thy command.  
Be Thou my guardian and my refuge be;  
Shipwrecked and lost, I look to Thee,  
Great Pilot of the sea."  
—*Rankin*

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## FOREWORD

This little book is designed for all believers in Jesus, and especially for those who have recently entered into the blessed relationship of adoption into the holy family of the heavenly Father, and so it may be called a primer for the beginners in Christian living.

It must be understood that the term “me,” as used in this book, does not refer exclusively to the author, but to *you*—anyone who reads these pages—and the purpose of its use is to make more personal our relationship with the Father.

## **A MORNING PRAYER**

THOU hast again lighted the hours of time, and it is another day, with its cares, irritations and opportunities.

Make us to live in sympathy—Thyself and me—that I may follow Thee in the downward steps of self-denial and may know the nearness of Thyself and the beauty of myself forgotten in my thought of Thee and those about me.

Give to me health of soul, clearness of vision and strength of mind that I may be calm amid vexations, hopeful amid discouragements and faithful however faithless others may be.

Help me that I may see the open door although other doors may be closed, that I may never forget the path to the unfailing fountain and that I may practice Thy presence in order to be used by Thee through the day and to go to my bed undishonored by sin when my body is weary with sleep. Teach me forgiveness, contentment and peace and we shall not have walked the way in vain, for Thou still art God and I, a sinner saved by grace.

Amen.

# GOD AND ME

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Just as though there were none other in heaven but Him and no one else on earth but me, *God and I are friends*. He is as real as I am. God is a spirit, and the most important part of myself is my spiritual being, consequently there is a common ground upon which God and I have met, and, because He first loved me, I love Him. Henceforth my business is not to discuss Him nor to define Him in doctrinal formula, but to exhibit in my daily life His beauty and glory.

I do not care anything about the theories of the fall of man; I only know that I am among the fallen and He has lifted me up, reminding me that by His favor I have been saved through faith, and that not of myself. It is His gift to me.

## BELIEF

He has given me intellect, with its memory, imagination and reasoning; He has given me sensibilities, with their emotions, affections and desires; He has given me will, with its freedom, power and influence—these are the things within me—the organs of my spiritual being, wherein strength and weakness lie, where choice for good or evil plays upon the dial of my personality. They are His gifts, but these are not alone. He has given me a plan of salvation expressed in Jesus, who long ago lived here on the earth, died on the Cross, arose from the dead and is now at the right hand of the Father. From Him comes strength for my weakness and mastery of my will that my choice may be both wise and abiding.

I do not care about the theories of the Atonement, but it is a fact that Jesus died for the remission of my sins, and He arose from the dead for my justification, and I believe it, because I have heard the evidence, and *belief comes by hearing*. God gave me the power to believe things; He gave me Himself to believe in, so that He and I might be companions; consequently out of this loving-kindness a friendship has begun between God and me.

*He had confidence in me first*, or He would never have given Jesus to die for me. I do not know why He loved me so, but He is God, and His love is so far above my love that I do not stop to attempt to reason it out. I rejoice in the fact that I have both His love and His confidence, out of which has come my love and my confidence toward Him.

His words are just as live now as the day that they were first spoken. His promises are just as strong as when they were first made, and although He does not speak to

me in an audible voice, He is just as personal in His dealings with me as when He dealt with Abraham, Joseph, David, Nehemiah, Peter and Paul.

Because He does not deal with me as I think He ought to is no reason at all that He is not dealing with me in the greatest kindness. *I am ignorant, and I must give up all my little ideas of God.* Out of His word I must find out the principles of His dealings with His friends in the past, and then I will understand to some degree the specific cases of His dealings with me now, for God is always the same. *Whatever comes, He is right and true and kind.* He is not slack concerning His promises as some count slackness; but He has been long-suffering to me, not wishing that I should perish, but that I should come to repentance.

## REPENTANCE

Out of His love, holiness and power, and because of my own sinfulness, unholiness and weakness, *His Holy Spirit convicted me of sin*—a divine task.—and I acknowledge before God all my transgressions, for the contrast between Him and me so pained my soul that I could get no peace until I brought to Him a conscience-smitten spirit and a penitent heart—not mere sorrow for things done or left undone, but *abandoning of myself to God*, involving my personal guilt and my absolute helplessness.

*He has untaught me being ashamed of repentance and has revealed to me its manliness and dignity.* Impenitence is meanness to the core, but the nobility of a soul that sins is first seen when it turns to repentance and lingers not among the gravestones of its unholy past. It is the most pleasing of all the emotions—deeper than grati-

tude, higher than joy, more precious than peace, brighter than hope and sweeter than love. It is all these and more, as it walks along its roadbed of humility. *It is the one cry that has precedence in heaven over all others.* Repentance toward God is always greeted by love—never an exception. Once done, those sins are in the covered past; but after-sins necessitate it being constantly done, for it is as necessary for the health of my soul as water is for my body. Repentance is my daily bath, for all my sins are first against God and secondarily against my fellow-men. Out of his broken heart David cried in his prayer to God, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in Thy sight,” and only God can say, “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins.” Conditions and time may partially erase it from my memory, but He has taught me that only penitence can blot out transgressions from between Him and me.

## OBEDIENCE

The best thing that I ever did was to obey God, and *obedience is at the basis of the friendship between Him and me*; neither is there anything I can ever do that exceed in worth simple obedience to Him. While there is no friendship without self-sacrifice—God sacrificing for me and I for Him—yet the giving of all my money to God or the sacrifice of the friendship of another or of my life for Him is not nearly so important as simple obedience to His word, for one of the earliest principles that God gave to one of my ancient brothers was “to obey is better than sacrifice.”

*Love is misdirected if it does not shape itself into obedience.* Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my



commandments.” It is not a question whether I see the reason for it or not. I may not understand baptism, but that is no matter. I rejoice that of my own will I was baptized. *Love does not choose which commands to do and which not to do.* It does not demur, but in good humor obeys, regardless of consequences. It speaks as Mary did to the servants at the marriage in Cana, “Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.”

Difficulties to obedience are rather imaginary than real, for all His commands are possible to all, and so they are possible to me. Surely I am under greater obligations to obey them as they appear in the Scriptures, irrespective of traditions or the opinions of others, than the soldier is to obey the orders of his superior officer; but too frequently I am ashamed of my lack of spiritual discipline by the side of a well-trained military man. Obedience is the beginning, and mutual friendship can only be maintained by its daily practice—not of the ten, but of all the commandments in His word. *Greater than any human achievement, more sacred than the working of miracles is my soul's daily practicing of the principles of God.* This must be done, else I will mar the language of love that is designed to pass between His heart and mine. I may fail at it often in the future, as I have often failed in the past, but the mark of my life must be set to try, and to try with all my might, for religion is not emotion nor the mere belief in correct doctrines, but *it is a life in obedience with God.*

## FRUIT-BEARING

This is a world of products. As simple as two and two make four, or the apprentice makes the skilled mechanic, or the schools make the accomplished scholars, so this

cooperative work—God and me—makes the fruit of holiness—holiness being from the old Anglo-Saxon word *hal*, meaning whole, from which comes both our English words—holiness and health; therefore, this cooperation produces healthfulness of soul, without which I can never see God. *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control”*—not one of these apart, but all of these together is “the fruit of the Spirit.” My friendship with God means that I am trying to attain to this. *It can no more be produced instantly than can fruit on a tree or a finished education to a schoolboy.* It takes time and the observance of certain laws for these; it likewise does the same to produce “the fruit of the Spirit.” It means toil, time, disappointments, meditation, prayers, perseverance, failures, grace, triumphs, service, repentance, forgiveness, and after while “the fruit of the Spirit” ripened out of my imperfect life.

*The knowledge of my imperfections is an occasion for thanksgiving.* A man who does not know and who does not know that he does not know is to be pitied. Said Ruskin, “Make sure that however good you may be, you have faults; that however dull you may be, you can find out what they are; and that however slight they may be, you had better make some patient effort to get quit of them. ... Therefore see that no day passes in which you do not make yourself a somewhat better creature; and in order to do that find out first what you are now. ... *If you do not dare to do this, find out why you do not dare, and try to get strength of heart enough to look yourself fairly in the face, in mind as well as in body.*”

In this self-examination I must not have my attention attracted to another. It is I that am being looked into, and

I know that I am imperfect, bearing many faults and the scars of great transgressions, so this gives me something to do wherever I am or whatever may be the circumstances surrounding me. It is clear to me that I have been brought into the schoolroom of His love to be disciplined for service. The soul is cowardly and lazy. It has to be made brave and energetic. Out of this imperfect, blurred spiritual being, I am, by joint labor with God, to be made like Him. While the achievement is a long way off from the beginning, there is enough inspiration in the task to command all my energies.

The museum at Rotterdam contains the first painting of Rembrandt. It is a rough, unartistic daubing, and at first I wondered why such a thing should be framed, until I read in the corner that it was the first painting of the great Dutch artist. On the other side were the masterpieces of his genius, and I found myself thinking of the boy faithfully applying himself to his passion through years of hardest toil, until I could see the great artist putting his finishing touches on "The Presentation in the Temple" and "The Night Watch." A great distance intervenes between beginning and achievement, but fidelity can bridge the chasm. *Nothing wrong in human life is beyond correction if that life will bend faithfully to the task.* I may not reach my ideal. Who does? But I will do my best, and He will add the crown.

Worldliness, sensuality, resentments, unforgiveness, quarrels, discontent, jealousies, envyings, drunkenness, pride, over-sensitiveness, neglect of the Bible, formal prayers, indifference to worship—all these things destroy fruit-bearing—even success in my business or in my profession may prevent fruit-bearing and so be my ruin. *Only by the Holy Spirit, who dwells within me, can I put to*

*death these deeds of my body.* To say that I have to yield to some of these because of my peculiar disposition is no excuse. *My disposition, like everything else in me, must be changed.* I want a disposition like God's, and I have come to Him to be entirely remade.

If I loaf at my task or lose sight of my imperfections until I make some break by word or act, or I am rebuked by some friend or enemy, I must not get offended either at myself or another, for God has only waked me up that I might start to work again. *I must not fail to thank Him for the rebuke, nor must I be discouraged, however imperfect I appear to myself.* My practice of friendship and love to God must not slacken, for not only my life here will be weakened by it, but in eternity—the field where life is larger—I will not be able to be of such service to God as I have the capability of being. I do not want to fail Him. The fruit of the Spirit will come. It may take longer in me than in another, as some orchards are later in yielding fruit than others, but I do not care for that—only so I produce in my life “the fruit of the Spirit.”

## **BIBLE STUDY**

The Bible contains the word of God, and in my reading He and I come face to face. I feel His breath upon my cheeks, for out of this book He speaks **to** me as though it were first spoken today and I were the first receiver of His message. It is at once the only book that feeds my soul. “Thy words were found and I did eat them; and Thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart.”

There are two testaments—the Old and the New. In the former there are thirty-nine books and in the latter twenty-seven, making sixty-six in all. The Old Testament is divided into four parts:

- (1) The first five books are classified as the Law of Moses or *Pentateuch*, a Greek word, meaning fivefold book;
- (2) the next twelve are classified as history, being a history of the Hebrews from the time of Joshua to the return from the Babylonian captivity;
- (3) Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon and Lamentations are classified as poetry;
- (4) the remaining sixteen are the books of prophecy, which clearly foretold the coming of Christ and the evidences attending His presence on the earth.

Twenty-five great chapters in the Old Testament are: Gen. 1, 3; Ex. 3; Deut. 5, 6; Josh. 1; I Sam. 3; Job 1, 2; Psa. 1, 19, 23, 51, 90, 103, 119; Prov. 3; Isa. 1, 6, 53; Jer. 17; Ezek. 18; Dan. 2; Zech. 14; Mal. 3.

Fifty of the most helpful selections in the Old Testament are: Gen. 1:26; 3:15; 9:13; 28:16, 17; 45:5; Ex. 23:20; Nu. 6: 24-26; Deut. 10:12, 13; 18:10-12; 31:6; Josh. 24: 15; I Sam. 2:30; 12:23; 15:22; II Sam. 12:23; 24:24; Neh. 6:3; Job 16:19; 19:25-27; 23:12; 28:28; Psa. 17:8, 15; 19:14; 25:4, 5, 7; 32:1, 2, 5; 35:19; 37:4, s; 39:1; 51:10, 11; 103:10, 13; 119:11; 139:23, 24; 141:2, 3; Prov. 3:654: 5-9; 6:17-19; 21:3; Eccl. 12:13, 14; Isa. 1:18; 53:4-6; Jer. 9:23, 24; 15:16; Ezek. 3:18, 19; Dan. 2:44; 12:3; Hos. 14:4; Mal. 3:8-10.

The New Testament may likewise be divided into four parts:

- (1) The first four books are biographies of Jesus and are commonly called the Gospels;
- (2) the next is the book of Acts, and it is classified as history, being the history of the establishing and

the first thirty years' extension of the Church of Christ;

- (3) the next twenty-one books are letters to churches and individual believers, dealing in a large variety of subjects and covering every phase of Christian experience;
- (4) the book of Revelation is apocalyptic, meaning something revealed, being a prophecy in symbols of the Church throughout the ages to the consummation of all things.

Twenty-five great chapters in the New Testament are: Matt. 5, 6, 7, 16, 24, 27, 28; Luke 15; John 1, 3, 14, 15, 16, 17; Acts 2, 8; Rom. 8, 12; I Cor. 13, 15; Phil. 2; Col. 3; Heb. 11; Jas. 1; Rev. 22.

Fifty of the most helpful selections in the New Testament are: Matt. 1:21; 5:3-12; 6:7-15, 33; 7: 12,21; 11:28,29; 12:36, 37; 22: 37-39; 28:19, 20; Mark 8:35-38; Luke 12:15; 14:27-33; 17:4; John 1:12; 3:16,36; 11:25, 26; 14:13-15; 15:5; 16:7-11; 17:21; Acts 1:11; 2:38; 4:12; Rom. 5:8; 8:13, 28; 10:9, 10, 17; I Cor. 10:13; 11:23-29; II Cor. 5:1, 10; 9:6, 7; Gal. 5:19-24; Eph. 4:4-6; Phil. 1:29; 4:19; I Thess. 4:16, 17; II Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:16; 12:5-11; 13:5-8; II Pet. 3:8, 17; I John 1: 8-10; 2: 15-17; 3:2; Rev. 3: 21; 22: 5.

It is profitable to read these fifty chapters frequently, as well as others similar to them, and to mark with care these one hundred selections, besides as many more. *I could not spend my time in any better way than getting these passages to memory.* God gave Joshua three rules for the study of the Scriptures—*memorizing, meditating, and doing.* David said, “Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”

Both the Old and the New Testament are inspired of God. The first or Old Testament is largely a book of the Hebrews, containing their law, history and literature, but at the same time it is the basis of the second or New Testament, and it contains prophecies of the coming of Christ and records instances of God's dealing with men and examples of human fidelity and uprightness. The New Testament is the book of present-day authority to all, both Hebrews and Gentiles, and so it is the book of absolute authority to me. The writer of the Hebrew letter said, "In that He saith, a new covenant, He hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away." Paul said, "Before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor; for we are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus." *Jesus did not destroy the law; He fulfilled it.*

*The Scriptures must be studied with common sense.* To open the Bible at random, as one would throw a box of dice and select the first verse the eye falls upon as directly applicable to my special case, is neither sensible nor spiritual. The book of God must be read according to its classifications and studied with painstaking care. One of the Psalms to preface the reading, then a chapter or two, or sometimes even less than one, followed by a few moments of meditation, then a prayer of thanksgiving, confession and petition—this is daily food upon which the soul grows; *without this, it is incompetent for any task, be it large or small.*

## PRAYER

To be on speaking terms with God is my greatest privilege. To pray—not publicly, as valuable as that may be, or in elegant language, as pleasing as that **may be to** cultured ears, but simply to hold conversation with God, irrespective of where I am or who may hear me, like the man who, coming into the Temple in Jerusalem, said, “God, be Thou merciful to me a sinner”—*just to pray is the sweetest condition of human life.*

Friends may talk over problems together, out of which may come wisdom, but no conclusion is best reached *until the whole matter has been laid before God.* To sit alone worrying over things that have been done, or that I fear will be done, does not help me and betrays distrust, for *since God and I are friends all things work together for my good*, and to tell Him all things that have a part of my thought puts me in a continual conversational relationship with Him, which both pleases Him and proves my friendship.

I am bound to this by all the courtesies of hospitality. *He is my guest.* For me not to remember that He is by my side, to lose consciousness of His companionship, would reveal a breach of hospitality. This is the meaning of the exhortation, “Pray without ceasing”—a recognition of His presence, for He is as surely with me now as He is in heaven, so I must talk with Him more freely than friends talk with friends, for He is “a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

To fall asleep with the last thought ascending to the heavenly throne and for the first waking thought to fly into the bosom of God is conducive to health of soul and body. John Quincy Adams never went to sleep at night until he had said that sweet child prayer, “Now I lay me



down to sleep,” and Sir Matthew Hale said, “If I omit praying and reading God’s word in the morning, nothing goes well all day.”

Prayer is my speech to God—the language of my helplessness, the voice of my unholiness and the incense of my heart. It is the plea of the prisoner and the flight of the soul. *Before it—the simplest prayer—all the doors of heaven open and God's ear comes close to the heart of His child.* In its use man has accomplished more things than by any other means. Not simply the normal has been developed beneath its breath, but by prayer the impossible has been done. Waters have been divided, armies scattered, fires quenched, the dead called back to life, human passions suppressed, and my own sinful heart has been washed and rewashed by His cleansing grace through prayer.

Visions of things to be done often flash out of prayer in my soul and thoughts for another lead me to the throne of grace.

“I cannot tell why there should come to me  
A thought of you, Friend, miles or years away  
In swift insistence on the memory,  
*Unless, for you, it needs be that I pray.*

“You go your way, I mine; we seldom meet  
To talk of plans or longings, day by day;  
Of pain or pleasure, triumph or defeat,  
Or special reasons why 'tis time to pray.

“We are too busy even to spare thought,  
For days together, of the friends away;  
Perhaps God does it for us, and we ought  
*To read His signal as a call to pray.*

“Perhaps just then that one has fiercer fight,  
A more appalling weakness, or decay  
Of courage, darkness, a losing hold of right,  
And so, in case he needs my prayer, I pray.

“Friend, do the same for me! If I intrude  
In thought upon you, on some crowded day,  
Give me a moment's prayer, as interlude—  
Be very sure I need it, therefore pray.

“And as you bear my name before the Throne,  
Perhaps in prayer for you, *I'll meet you there!*  
Oh! let us not neglect this holy gift—  
What blessings God hath wrought thro' prayer.”

God always hears and always answers if it is a prayer of faith, but frequently it is “*no*” rather than “*yes*” as would be the answer from a wise parent to the child’s request—the heart itself is not ready for the gift, and so God waits while my heart is being trained in the discipline of delay. Sometimes the answer is within me, for I must always help God do what I ask for. While I take to Him petitions for my personal needs, *I must never sin against God in failing to pray for others*—His church, my brethren and whosoever intrudes upon my thoughts.

“I need as much the cross I bear  
As air I breathe, as light I see;  
It draws me to Thy side in prayer,  
It bends me to my strength in Thee.”

## THOUGHTS

Thoughts are the little streams in my soul area that are

easily turned into whatever direction wished, and they gather strength from continual repetition, when they break forth into words or acts or both. Two wishes make a will, and the will molds my being. To live most carefully is to live with a consciousness of all my thought streams being beneath the eye of God, for *He is always in sight and hears what I think ere it throbs into being*. Let God speak to my heart and search me. To myself I ask—

“You are pure, you say; are your thoughts as white  
As the snow that falls with the midnight’s hush?  
Could you see them blazoned in letters of light,  
For the world to read, and feel no blush?

“If you stood in the court of heaven, ’mid swift,  
Glad greetings of loved ones who know no wrong,  
Could you bare your heart to them all, and lift  
Unshrinking eyes to that spotless throng?”

My heart is always uncovered *before Him*, day and night, and my thinking creates the embryo of my actions, so that to think improperly closely approaches the improper act—both are actions according to the teachings of Jesus, but one is inward and the other is outward. The first is known perhaps only to God and me, while the other is known to many.

The wildest chamber that I ever sat in is that of my mind, with its roving thoughts—trifling, useless, unkind and unholy. They sometimes rush upon me when I begin to read the Scriptures, and they try to beat me away from the mercy-seat in my prayers; at other times they bring up my past sins and intimate that God has not forgiven them; and then they insidiously question my friendship with God. I have foolishly too frequently yielded to these

evil influences, for I know that their presence is ruin to my soul, but *I am imperfect, and so I shall not be discouraged.* I shall keep at my task of trying until good thoughts shall continually linger about me as angels of mercy and their benedictions shall fill my mental visions.

“True dignity abides with him alone  
Who, in the patient hour of silent thought,  
Can still respect and still revere himself.”

## TALKING

The most dangerous instrument in me is my tongue. The only sin for which there is no pardon is a sin of the tongue. James said that it is “*a restless evil; it is full of deadly poison.*” Deeper wounds are made by it than by any instrument of steel; its rebukes smart more upon the soul than a blow upon the cheek, but it is an instrument as none other for blessing and for sending joy into the lives of those around me. It is always wise to keep a watch at the door of my lips, for Jesus taught that I shall have to give an account of all my injurious words in the day of judgment.

“If I am tempted to reveal  
A tale someone to me has told  
About another, let it pass,  
Before I speak, *three gates of gold.*”

“Three narrow gates: First, ‘*Is it true?*’  
Then, ‘*Is it needful?*’ In my mind  
Give truthful answer, and the next  
Is last and narrowest, ‘*Is it kind?*’”

“And if, to reach my lips at last,  
It passes through these gateways three,  
Then I may tell the tale, nor fear  
What the result of speech may be.”

When I am wronged my tongue is the instrument by which I express resentment, but the principles of the religion of Jesus teach that *vengeance does not belong to me*. Believing in Him, *it is my privilege to suffer, to be misunderstood, to pray for my enemies, to bear the Cross*, in order that I may be made like God, but it is not mine to administer vengeance to one who has wronged me. That belongs to God, and when I attempt to do that which belongs to Him, not only I forget that He is by my side, but my act is discourtesy to Him. I can talk it over with another; I can explain and myself ask for an explanation; I can ask pardon and myself try to show my brother his fault; I can forbid further encroachments, but in all this I must try to recognize that God is present and that I too am frequently saying things that I ought not to—*therefore I must pity*.

What has been said to me or about me may be true, then I should profit by it; or it may be false, which is easier to bear, for, as say the Scriptures, “*it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye should suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing,*” but whether it be true or false, it is philosophically true that, *if I speak kindly of one it will strengthen my love for that person, but if I speak unkindly, either to his face or behind his back, it will contribute to my dislike of him, and if repeatedly done my dislike will grow into hatred*. My aim then must be to speak kindly in order that I may be properly remade, for

*“love taketh not account of evil”*

It is easy to abuse another, but it is cowardly and unkind; it is always manly to exhibit the principles of Jesus in the face of wrong. *“A soft answer turneth away wrath”* and the only cure for evil is to show forth goodness, however hard and costly it may be.

If the person who did me wrong did it intentionally *it is* that much sadder and, therefore, it is to be much more pitied. *Human life is the most pathetic scene in the world*—just a human being, whether he be rich or poor, learned or ignorant, cheerful or sorrowful, good or bad—there is pathos, with its ancestry, its environments, its wreck, its struggles, its hopes, its failures, and on its inner cheek hangs a tear of grief. I am an object of pity in the sight of God, and to me all others are pictures in pathos, and the very scene calls for the bridling of my tongue that no harsh word should wound my brother man, whose soul, like mine, is already disfigured by sin; but, if I fail in all this, and I have failed often, as when a school boy I failed frequently in my arithmetic, geography and grammar, *I will not be discouraged*, but I will continue to try, for there is a friendship between God and me, and one of the chief principles in this friendship is, *“I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me”*

It has been intimated that the average person consumes about five hours a day in conversation, covering about 15 octavo pages an hour, the space covered by the ordinary public speaker, from which it is concluded that the average person makes a weekly volume of 525 pages and, covering 70 years, the conversation of one person would make a library of 3640 octavo volumes. What an immense individual library! What is it worth? In committing sins, if I have tried again, if I have left on those pag-

es thoughts of God, forgiveness, long-suffering, kindness, meekness, be my life ever so obscure and insignificant, I shall have made a library grander than the Congressional in Washington, or the British Museum in London, or the National in Paris, or the Imperial in St. Petersburg, or the Royal in Berlin.

## TEMPTATION

The mysteries of temptation are sometimes baffling, but every one who enters into the league of friendship with God must meet them. Jesus went immediately from His baptism into the conflict, and His victory over Satan then not only insured His victory on the Cross and out of the tomb, but likewise insured His victory for me in my conflict, for God is always with me, and He is stronger than Satan.

I cannot make so perfect a fight as Jesus made—I have failed often and I may fail a thousand times, but as long as I am sincerely ashamed of my failures and heroically try to overcome, I am on the pilgrim's road. A passage of Scripture, a prayer or a hymn will sometimes disarm the tempter; at other times it helps to speak directly to myself as though I were another, or the taking of a friend into my confidence may help—two of us praying together, *for men must anchor each other*—but whatever be the circumstances, *I must not forget that God is with me*, and my energies must be directed in throwing up the dikes of resistance, for my spiritual adversary is seeking my destruction.

Temptation is twofold in that it has within it both Satan's alluring into sin and God's proving of character. Satan is fighting for my soul, and he is skilled in intrigue. He uses my friends, my enemies and all kinds of circum-

stances to approach under cover any one or all of my weaknesses, not with great sins at first, but through avenues of the smallest sins, and gradually leads on the attack until I lie a conquered soul at his feet; but his conquest of me is not permanent, for by God's grace I possess the strength for freedom, and I will again claim friendship with God.

*All inclinations, desires and propositions to sin come from Satan*, who endeavors by afflictions, disappointments, worldly successes, evil thoughts and persecutions to draw me into saying or doing something that shall reflect on the friendship between God and me. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of

God, for *God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man*, but each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed"; neither can any man say that God gave to mankind these things, and with them, desires and appetites for evil and, therefore, gratification is no sin; but in the midst of these conditions God calls upon me to glorify Him in both my body and my soul by practicing the principles of godliness. "It is the devil's part to suggest," said Bernard, "it is ours not to consent; as often as we overcome him, so we bring glory to God, who opposeth us that we may contend and assisteth us that we may conquer." It is a real battle, where thoughts and motives are the armaments, and where consequences in me alone are more vital and far-reaching than those in the battle of Marathon, or Arbela, or Tours, or Blenheim, or Saratoga, or Waterloo.

I am not surprised at the extent of sin in the world, neither will I be discouraged if there is more, for the capacity for man to sin is tremendous, and the mighty depths in my own nature for evil astonish me. God is



holding me and others in check, and He is proving His love and power in the salvation of a sinner like me.

Temptation is the furnace-house of the soul, and in it God proves character, which is made by experience. *There is both strength and sense within me to meet my temptations, for He has assured me that there is no temptation beyond my ability to bear, and that in every temptation there is an open door for my escape.* Both Abraham and Job were proved, and succeeding ages have seen the excellency of their characters, because of their trials. God proves me before He takes me into heaven—not in order to know me any more than the miner proves the gold ore to find out if there is any gold in it. The miner knows that gold is in the ore and, *therefore, he proves it* by casting the ore into the smelter and thereby separating the gold from the ore. “If need be,” said the apostle, “ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that *the proof of your faith*, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

“Let thy gold be cast in the furnace,  
Thy red gold, precious and bright;  
Do not fear the hungry fire,  
With its caverns of burning light,  
And thy gold shall return more precious,  
Free from every spot and stain;  
For gold must be tried by fire,  
And *a heart must be tried by pain.*

“In the cruel fire of sorrow  
Cast thy heart; do not faint or wail;  
Let thy heart be firm and steady,  
Do not let thy spirit quail,

But wait till the trial is over,  
And *take thy heart again*,  
For as gold is tried by fire,  
So a heart must be tried by pain.

“I shall know by the gleam and glitter  
Of the golden chain you wear;  
By your heart's calm strength in loving,  
Of the fire it has had to bear.  
Beat on, true heart, forever,  
Shine bright, strong, golden chain;  
And bless the cleansing fire,  
And the furnace of living pain.”

This is as truly the way to the *education of the heart* as language and literature are for the education of the brain. These things are essential to the building of character, for which purpose I came into this friendship with God, and so I must seek with all my might to endure. While every victory makes me stronger for the next conflict, *the approaches of temptation will never cease in my life*, and sometimes they may be stronger than in previous years. A few hours before John Knox died he awoke from his sleep sighing, and he said, “I have formerly, during my frail life, sustained my contests and many assaults of Satan, but at present the roaring lion has assailed me most furiously and put forth all his strength to devour and make an end of me at once ... The cunning serpent has labored to persuade me that I have merited heaven and eternal blessedness by the faithful discharge of my ministry; but blessed be God, who has enabled me to beat down and quench this fiery dart!”

The Scriptures have named temptation as an occasion for gladness: “Count it *all joy, my brethren, when ye fall*

*into manifold temptations,” knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.” In my prayer I ask for patience and, out of the trial, God gives me that rare grace, and He wreathes this nimbus upon the head of the victor, which I take to myself: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him.”*

## AMUSEMENTS

There is much around me that is innocent, beautiful and good, and God has taught me that my body is the *temple of the Holy Spirit*, and so I must be careful where I take it and into what it shares. If I desire the recreation of outdoor sports and innocent parlor games, there is abundant opportunity without the suspicion of evil, but the choice of my amusement must be like the choice of my food. Whatever injures my body and causes me trouble, I am careful to avoid, and so whatever interferes with my spiritual life and weakens my friendship for God, I must quit. In doing this I may have to give up friends and some amusements that I like, but whether that be hard or not, it does not matter, for my friendship with God is the most precious thing in the world, and in His sight it must not have upon it any suspicion.

Some persons tell me that the *theater, dancing, card-playing and social drinking* are no injuries to them. They are to me, however, and so I must have no part in such amusements. I recognize that each of these has phases that are almost free from criticism, other than they have always had the appearance of evil, but in the culmination of the patronage of them, they have been the rocks upon which tens of thousands have gone to their spiritual

death, with not the record of so much as one finding birth into spiritual life thereby.

The theater was born 2500 years ago in the lap of evil. Aeschylus and other ancients tried to make it an institution for morality, but failed. Plato, Aristotle and Tacitus denounced it as demoralizing in its effects upon the people. Booth, Irving and Garrick of modern times sought earnestly to elevate it, but those theaters which they conducted for moral plays only, soon went into bankruptcy. Johnson and Macaulay were bold in deploring the results of the patronage of the playhouse. The celebrated actor Macready never allowed his daughter to attend the theater, and, when Mary Anderson left the stage, she forbade her children's attending any kind of plays. While there are some moral plays, the great mass of plays are opposed to the principles of God, and I am sure that He would not want me counted among those who are the supporters of an institution that is unfriendly to Him and His cause.

It is likewise so with dancing, which breaks down those God-established barriers that should ever exist between the sexes, and permits liberties to be taken that would not be tolerated elsewhere; it is so with cards, which bear the stamp of the gamblers' fingers, and it is so with social drinking, whose road lies over broken homes and broken hearts as perhaps no other pathway in the whole world. All of these things are opposed to the league of friendship between God and me, and I am under obligations to help to weaken them, rather than to help to strengthen them.

Paul said that if the eating of meat, which we think so necessary, but which he feared might sometimes have been meat that had been offered to idols, and thereby

cause some weak believer to go back into idolatry, was inexpedient, he would never eat any more meat. I am to some extent the keeper of all with whom I come in contact. Besides, the atmosphere of these things has always been hurtful to spiritual growth. One of God's earliest principles was that to live in pleasure is spiritual death—not likely to be, but dead already. My friendship with God means a serious life; *I cannot be conformed to this world*; I will not be; I must be conformed by His remaking of me, brought about by the closeness of my friendship with Him.

## COMPANIONS

Friendship is one of the most beautiful conditions in human society. It grows slowly, but when grown it stands ten thousand jars. Real friends are rare, and still rarer is a broken friendship. To this delightful condition companionship sometimes leads, and so it is of preeminent importance whom I make my companions, for I will be influenced by them for good or bad. The influence of a good person is God's greatest power on earth, but an evil companion is Satan's agent, and he will steal away my friendship from God. As disease is more contagious than health, *I will unconsciously partake of my companion's weaknesses rather than his excellencies*, so I had better have no companions at all rather than have pulled down what God is building up within me, for the friendship between God and me has precedence over every other condition in life, and he who weakens that, however much he loves me, is my enemy.

I may have acquaintances, but I cannot afford to have among my companions swearers, moderate drinkers, gossipers, trifling and vulgar talkers, lovers of amusements

more than lovers of worship, irreverent story tellers, especially making sport of Bible characters and incidents; among them may be persons whom I love, perhaps church members, but I am not strong enough to have them as my companions, however much I wish to have them. Their conversations and habits leave lasting effects upon me and will eventually weaken my friendship for God. To willfully associate with such persons is like taking up my dwelling in a district infected with disease. I can go among them to help to get them away from their habits; this I must do, for I am here to help God make better all those within my reach, so that I cannot live to myself, and my life is best spent when I am helping others.

## BOOKS

Next to living persons, good books are my best friends. I love them as though they were persons—my love reaches to the personality back of the printed page. They speak to me out of mutual friendship. Farrar said, “Who can say ‘I have no companions?’ Why, if you will, the noblest of all societies will welcome you. Kings will utter to you their best: thoughts, and saints sit beside you, like brothers! Is it: nothing that at the turning of a page you may find the best and greatest of men eager to talk to you ... orators ready to pour forth for you their most splendid periods, poets with their garlands and singing robes about them? These noblest companions, these mighty spirits will have none of the malice or arrogance or weakness of the living. We may realize from these that the communion of saints is a communion not only with the living, but with the mightier and more unnumbered dead.”

The newsstands are crowded with newspapers, magazines and books in fiction; it is the food of the multitude, but only a very moderate part of these must come to me. Much of this reading weakens the mind more than doing nothing and will produce mental impotency. *My books reflect my inner self* as the food on my table shows the taste of my palate. If I can afford to buy furniture for my room or clothes for my body, *I can afford to buy good books for the furnishing of my mental apartments*, which shall still bear its decorations after this earthly tabernacle has crumbled. A half a dozen good books is a start. "I had rather be a poor man in a garret with plenty of books," said Macaulay, "than a king who did not love reading." A weekly religious paper indicates my interest in the advancement of God's Kingdom, and I think He must be pleased when He and I watch together the records in the annals of His saints.

A few well-chosen books—in history, poetry and religion—furnish the basis for a good library, and books of travel, fiction, science and kindred branches may be added later. Slow reading and digesting is better than multifarious reading. I will not be ashamed if I have not read a new book, however popular it may be. I must discriminate in what I read, as in what I eat; but though my choice may be largely for religious books, even these must be read with care, for if they take away my taste for reading the Bible they do me harm; or if my love for them makes the Bible secondary, they are injurious. The Bible is the book for my constant reading. Ruskin said, "I consider memorizing much of the Bible the most precious and, on the whole, the one essential part of my education." And spiritually, its reading is absolutely essential to my soul. It must be the center, and *all my reading*

*should lead up to it.*

## DAILY ROUNDS

*All work is religious*, be it selling goods over the counter, writing an essay, making a fire, putting up a fence, building a house, sweeping the floor, collecting a bill, experimenting in the laboratory, lecturing on science, preparing a meal or holding conversation with another; God is not only the witness to all of these transactions, but Himself is a part of them, and out of them come lessons in patience, honesty, fidelity, perseverance, contentment, equity, justice, gentleness, meekness, reverence, humility, long-suffering, self-control and holiness. These are the qualities that make me like the ideal model, and all places are altars for my worship to God.

“Every mason in the quarry,  
every builder on the shore,  
Every woodman in the forest,  
every boatman at the oar,  
Hewing wood and drawing water,  
splitting stones and clearing sod,  
All the dusty ranks of labor  
in the regiment of *God*,  
March together toward His temple,  
do the task his hands prepare;  
*Honest toil is holy service,*  
*faithful work is praise and prayer.*”

Reading of the Scriptures and prayer are the confidential talks that He and I have on the way, but the capstone of the week is my worship with others on the *Lord's Day*. God expects this of me, and visitors coming in or invita-



tions to visit others at the hour of worship are an insult to my friendship with God. I must be among my brethren to be blessed, *else God will miss me.*

The daily round in my life is *my workshop*, where God and I are making my character. Nothing need be so violent as to break communion with Him, and if in my weakness communion is broken, I must greet Him on my first thought of Him, for He has not left me alone, but He was by my side when I was vexed by provocation, stung by disappointment, burdened with care and humiliated by unkindness.

“If I could only surely know  
That all these things that tire me so  
Were noticed by my Lord!  
The pang that cuts me like a knife,  
The noise, the weariness, the strife—  
What peace it would afford!

“I wonder if He really shares  
In all these little human cares,  
This mighty King of kings!  
If He who guides through boundless space  
Each blazing planet in its place  
Can have the condescending grace  
To mind these petty things.

“It seems to me, if sure of this,  
Blent with each ill would come such bliss  
That I might covet pain,  
And *deem whatever brought to me*  
*The loving thought of Deity,*  
And sense of Christ's sweet sympathy,  
*Not loss, but richest gain.*

“Dear Lord, my heart shall no more doubt  
That Thou dost compass me about  
With sympathy divine;  
The love for me once crucified  
Is not the love to leave my side,  
But waiteth ever to divide  
Each smallest care of mine.”

When things do not go as I want them, and I have used my best judgment and put into them all my energies, I must remember that my judgment is not infallible, and perhaps God is directing otherwise the affairs that concern me; but whether it be God’s directing or Satan’s it will eventually be for my good, for God is my friend, and He is able to overrule all things according to His will, and so I must try to practice *contentment*.

When my failures, disappointments and humiliations set me to worrying or murmuring, it is wrong, for the first indicates distrust, and the second indicates rebellion. One of God’s chief principles is “*Do all things without murmurings and questionings*” and by the side of this command He has left a lesson for me in the names Taberah, Kibroth-hattaavah, Paran and Zin— places where divine judgment came upon Israel to almost their destruction because of the sin of murmuring. I must do the thing that lies before me, and do it cheerfully and heartily. If it is an obscure service, that does not matter. God and I are together. I must seek to be contented. Today is my time. If it is not well used—and well used is to keep with God—it is time gone forever, and with it is gone the opportunity for peace and joy.

My difficulty too frequently is that I think I do not need so much severe *discipline* as God is permitting to come to me, and this is such a sin that, if I rebel against

God instead of my growth being towards contentment and trust, it will be towards sourness and doubt, which will ruin me, for "*all growth that is not toward God is growing to decay*" These daily rounds are greater issues in my life than I had thought.

Pride, discontent, covetousness, over-sensitiveness, conceit, worldly ambitions, selfishness—these are opposed to love—and to kill them in me it may have to be done by another wounding my feelings; but I must not have resentment against the person, be he a friend or an enemy. I have nothing to do with his purposes or motives, but God will overrule my mortification for my good. *My interest in the Kingdom of God must have precedence over my feelings.* He said that I must seek that first. Deeper the humiliation, greater the opportunity for me to show forth kindness, long-suffering and forgiveness, and thereby get closer to God.

“Men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.”

Jesus was treated badly, and He foretold that like treatment would come to His friends, and so it must sometimes come to me, else it will appear as though God has broken friendship with me. When it does come I must not be ashamed to suffer any more than to be ashamed to repent when I have sinned. The thorns in my path are from the crown of thorns that pierced the head of Jesus, and thus all these things that hurt are sacred, and their scars should be the occasion for real joy rather than for the expression of unkind feelings. It will not be so at once, but by full submission to God I can make it so.

I may have to struggle long and hard to keep down *re-*

*sentment* against those who wrong me; resentment grows stronger if constantly used. I have sometimes failed in suppressing it, and I shall fail at it again, but I will persevere, for my remaking is the most important thing to me in the world, and it is most frequently by the way of mortification, hard knocks, unkindness and ingratitude. I must not lose courage. I must hold close to God. I must be kind and heroic. Others in God's friendship have overcome, and so can I. This is what the apostle meant when he said, "I beseech you by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice." God has marked *my humanity* as sublimely precious, and therefore worthy of being made an offering. It is with me whether the offering shall be partial or complete. The retaining of resentment, impurity, pride, oversensitiveness, covetousness and worldliness will make the offering partial, but Jesus made a complete offering for me. *I must not be satisfied until every sin of mine and all things that hinder have been included in the offering.* The friendship between God and me calls for this. I must practice at it through the years until self-control shall man my being, and out of the lesson learned I shall be glad of the vexations, rebukes and mortifications.

"To what fit end this ceaseless round of toil,  
The fret and turmoil of the day,  
Hopes that elude, ideals that pass away,  
Rewards that with possession spoil?  
Each morn the sun on some new hope doth rise;  
Each eve some hope lies dead 'neath darkling skies.

"Dost thou presume to know the ways of God,  
To justify the means His love employs?  
Art thou informed how worlds are held in poise?

The blade of grass, how springs it from the sod?  
*If thou art blind to know how these things be,  
Wouldst thou essay to tell His way with thee?"*

## FINANCES

From the earliest history of mankind it has been recognized that God has had a part in all our possessions.

The heathen practices this principle in laying his offerings at the feet of his gods of wood and stone. Abraham paid his *tenth*, and his practice runs through the entire Old Testament, the Hebrew's offering later being nearly two-tenths of his income. Upon the rise of Christianity the bringing of their offerings was one of the first fruits of the new life. Many of the early believers gave all into a common treasury and lived on equal expense with one another. Barnabas sold his farm and laid the money at the apostles' feet. *Paul declared that hilarious giving is the ideal practice.* Out of these lessons of the past and God's unspeakable love for me I must cheerfully show forth my friendship for God in the handling of money, be it little or much. Covetousness is sin, but giving is the spirit of God, and however much one may have, he is poor who does not give cheerfully and liberally to God. To withhold from God is termed robbery in the Scriptures, and on the practice of giving the tenth to God, it is affirmed by the prophet that the windows of heaven will be opened over me and He shall pour out such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. This is true in the experience of many present-day Christians—it must be so, for God's promises cannot be broken.

Out of my daily, weekly, monthly or annual receipts, the first to be taken is my offering, if possible, beginning with the *tenth*, and I must not be satisfied until it goes far

beyond this, for I must grow in giving as in every other grace. This offering must be handled as systematically and reverently as the Hebrews did their lambs for the sacrifice. *The early Christians made their offering on the Lord's Day, and I must do likewise, for their company is precious to me.* All that I have belongs to God. I am only the *trustee*, and my offering is both a pledge of my trusteeship and a thankoffering for His goodness to me. "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want."

With the balance of the money I am to pay all other obligations. I must pay as promptly as possible. *To me a debt must never be out of date.* I must be honest if I would keep the friendship of God. My cashbook is open to Him always, and all my accounts are audited by Him. The mishandling of my money—*His money*— indicates degeneration in me, and however difficult it may be, I must seek to be systematic and accurate in all money matters. Then out of my recognition of God's place in money affairs I have a new assurance of His love, for the Scriptures affirm that God loves a cheerful giver.

## TELLING THE STORY

God is interested in me and He loves me, yet I know not why He should be any more interested in me and why He should love me any more than other members of the human race, for we are all alike, and I am no better than any. He loves others as well as He loves me, and God and I are in league for the saving of others as He has saved me.

Wherever there is a soul, be it in a casket of white, yellow or black, *I am the debtor.* I owe what God has

given me to all mankind, and God needs me in the distribution of His blessings, for this service has not been given to angels, but to men, and so a part has been given to me. Men must be the instruments to other men, or God's work is not done.

In the beginning, the Son made things and the Spirit garnished creation; in these days of redemption, both the Son and the Spirit are doing their work—one laying the foundation and the other leading men over the road of Christ to the throne of the Father, but men are honored in this service—redeemed men—men in friendship with God—in being permitted to be the message bearers of this golden tale of love. If I go into the pulpit or go to the heathen lands, that will be all right; but, if I do neither, I can still *tell others of Him*. I can talk to my companions, or maybe a stranger on the street, or by the roadside, in the office or the factory, at the church door or by the fire-side. Tell it, tell it, is the commission; speak it by word, or write a letter, and the more I tell it the stronger God is on the earth.

*God needs me to help Him save the world, and my lack of interest in another's salvation indicates my departing love for God.* Indifference is sin. If I refuse to let Him use me I stop the streams of His mercy flowing through me, just as I dam a stream of water flowing through a field. The water will find its way around the dam and go through some other depression onward to the sea, and God will use another to do what He has lovingly designed that I should do. I may fail in trying to do His will—doing it so poorly and imperfectly that out of mortification I shall hesitate to try again, but I must be willing to try for His sake. He loves me; He loves others, and He asks the privilege to use my lips to speak to my fallen

brother as He used another to speak to me when I lay fallen. His friendship is too dear; I must not fail Him, and so my stammering, blundering attempt to tell another is laid at His service, for He and I are friends.

## MISSIONS

Jesus died for the whole world—all races and nations—and without belief in Him there can be no salvation.

I have already been assured through His word that belief comes by hearing, and so I must try to make the message heard among all nations. It is not a matter of choice; *it is a necessity*, for on my becoming a believer in Him and enlisting in the league of His friendship, I am under obligations to be interested in missionary work among all nations. If I am not interested, I must seek to be, for the lack of interest not only betrays my lack of knowledge of His plan of salvation, but my lack of love as well for both Him and those for whom He died, thereby affecting most seriously the status of my friendship with God.

If I am indifferent to missionary work among all nations, I am indifferent to that which is dearest to the heart of God. *This is the chief theme of the Scriptures*. It was the last command of Jesus before His ascension. If the missionary passages were to be cut out of the New Testament, it would bleed to death, for it is a missionary volume from beginning to end. It cannot be understood aside from this viewpoint. According to the words of my Lord, *the condition of His abiding presence*—unbroken and always with me—rests upon the degree of my interest in missions.

I myself am the product of missionary work, for had not some one come years ago to my ancestors to tell them of Jesus, I should today be in that condition of Paganism



that covers the interior of China and Thibet. For what it has done for me, if there were no other reasons, I should want all mankind to share not only my civilization, but my pardon of sin and my hope of heaven. Otherwise I should be selfish, and selfishness mars the friendship between God and me, so every consideration contributes to make the cause of missions dear to my heart. It is the channel through which flows the life of God to the dying world. I can only be a little channel, but I am blessed in the consciousness that I have begun to be, and by His grace I ever shall be, such a channel. I shall some day meet these streams of mercy that are flowing through many lives, some little, like mine, and others larger, into that universal ocean of His redeeming love, that shall cover the earth as the waters cover the deep.

## SORROW

As deep as the mystery of love is the mystery of sorrow. I can understand something of the philosophy of the mind, but who understands the philosophy of pain? Jesus on the Cross said to the Father, “*Why hast Thou forsaken me?*” and out of my own sorrow I am constantly asking the question, “*Why do I suffer so much?*” It is the most common interrogation that falls from human lips.

*Sorrow is the greatest schoolroom on the earth.* The Scriptures tell me that Jesus was made perfect through suffering, and I am in His school, and those without sorrow are the untaught. *God at no time is so near me as when I am in pain.* It is the path that has been trodden by the best of the earth. The prophets and apostles, the martyrs and a great company of saints are with me, and among us walks my Friend, who is called “the Man of Sorrows.” Isaiah said that in all our afflictions He is af-

flicted. He suffers when I suffer. The wreck of this race has been the most costly thing in the universe, but God is remaking me out of the *wreck*.

“They tell me I must bruise  
The rose’s leaf  
Ere I can keep and use  
Its fragrance brief.

“They tell me I must break  
The skylark's heart  
Ere her cage song will make  
The silence start.

*“They tell me love must bleed,  
And friendship weep,  
Ere in my deepest need  
I touch that deep.*

“Must it be always so  
With precious things?  
Must they be bruised, and go  
With beaten wings?

“Ah, yes! By crushing days,  
By caging nights, by scar  
Of thorns and stony ways,  
These blessings are.”

Of all discipline sorrow is the noblest. While I shrink from it, it is the thing that gives muscle to my faith, teaching me the art of wrestling with God, and it is the one thing that gives vision to my soul, bringing the whole world, and heaven, too, in a hand's touch. *All moments become secret miracles* and inexpressible experiences

come to my soul. By the same strange law that scourged Jesus I, too, must be scourged, for the Scriptures affirm that *I cannot be received without chastisement*, out of which is produced the fruit of righteousness.

“There was a scar on yonder mountain-side,  
Gashed out where once the cruel storm had trod;  
A barren, desolate chasm, reaching wide  
Across the soft green sod.

“But years crept by beneath the purple pines,  
And veiled the scar with grass and moss once more,  
And left it fairer now with flowers and vines  
Than it had been before.

“There was a wound once in a gentle heart,  
Whence all life’s sweetness seemed to ebb and die;  
And love’s confiding changed to bitter smart,  
While slow, sad years went by.

“Yet as they passed, unseen *an angel stole,*  
*And laid a balm of healing on the pain,*  
Till love grew purer in the heart made whole,  
And peace came back again.”

Lively company, worldly pleasures and mirth cannot heal the stripes of the scourge. As the communicating of a joy increases the joy, the communicating of a sorrow lightens its burden; but neither this world’s practices nor good friends can do in these great moments of sorrow. *The balm must come from above.*

“How does God send the Comforter?  
Ofttimes through byways dim,  
Not always by the beaten path

Of sacrament and hymn;  
Not always through the gates of prayer,  
Or penitential psalm,  
Or sacred rite, or holy day,  
Or incense, breathing balm.

“How does God send the Comforter?  
Perchance through faith intense;  
Perchance through humblest avenues  
Of sight, or sound, or sense.  
Haply in childhood’s laughing voice  
Shall breathe the voice divine,  
And tender hands of earthly love  
Pour for thee heavenly wine!

“How will God send the Comforter?  
Thou knowest not, nor I!  
His ways are countless as the stars  
His hand hath hung on high.  
His roses bring their fragrant balm,  
His twilight hush its peace,  
Morning its splendour, night its calm,  
To give thy pain surcease!”

## ANOTHER

There can be no true friendship between God and me except there is included another—some acquaintance or friend or stranger or enemy—anybody, but certainly somebody, *who needs to be helped*, and I must be the helper. Whatever I may have accumulated in grace or self-control or patience or knowledge or money or influence, all these are *for the use of others*, and to use them alone for my own pleasure is personal ruin to myself and an injury both to God and to those around me.

“For I, a man, with men am linked  
And not a brute with brutes; *no gain*  
*That I experience must remain*  
*Unshared”*

All the world needs help; I need it from another and another needs it from me. *No one can live alone*. I live at my best when I am living for others. God sends the troubled to me; I in turn am sent to them, and there is *no such letter of introduction as human grief*. At once we are on common ground. The appeal of the world's poverty-stricken masses must lower my ear to the tale of their burdens, must check my extravagance and must set me practicing economy, not alone for my own good, but for the good of others as well, for the peril of my brothers involves me. I cannot say to them, “You have brought this condition upon yourselves and therefore suffer,” and then, withholding my help, turn away to drown the memory in the pleasures of plenty. The condition exists and *God is here*.

“And when I sit at the banquet  
When the feast and the song are high,  
Amid the mirth and the music  
I can hear that awful cry.

“And hollow and haggard eyes  
Look into the lighted hall;  
And wasted hands are extended  
To catch the crumbs that fall.

“For within there is light and plenty,  
And odours fill the air;

And without there is cold and darkness  
And hunger and despair.”

But money is the least of all help, for the ear of mankind is more hungry for sympathy than the mouth for bread. Another wants to feel that *I am his brother*, and then he can bear the burden. It is left to me to satisfy the hunger of his heart.

Many of the heaviest burdens in life are in homes where there is plenty and *the lack of love* has dried up all the cords and there is a constant aching as though the heart were alone made for pain. Others are standing amid sudden calamities as though smitten by a scourge, and I am needed in order that I may keep my face in the shadow of another's grief, to stand firmly by one's side while the very foundations are being swept from under stumbling feet, to make my heart a poultice for the broken-hearted and my shoulder a crutch to the fallen. To do this cheerfully deepens the intimacy of the friendship between God and me. To take another's burden lessens my own and puts me in the royal service of fulfilling the law of Christ.

Around me are the discouraged, the defeated and the dejected, and God has set me here to help. My task is more vital than those at the life-saving stations, who go out amid the breakers to rescue the drowning, and God has so made my heart that in matters of sympathy it rightly knows no economy. Not to sympathize is failure; to be *a spendthrift in love is right*. I must fully give myself until all is gone, and love will refill the vessel to be emptied into another's bosom. Because one is ungrateful, another is dissipated and others are indolent, I must not stop; I might be as they are were I like them, and I would not

want to be forsaken; but these hindrances must make me heroically practice *the gospel of help*, for not to be sympathetic to the extent of giving myself to another is heresy of the worst type. Then I am really bad, and I have foolishly cut off the draft to the soul fire, for my being is designed to bear God to the unloved, the unlovable, the tempted, the troubled and to all mankind—my kin—to pour out love like the sun pours out light and to bring the warm April breezes for the roots of dead flowers; this is my debt to another.

## FORGIVENESS

Out of God's forgiveness of me, a sinner, who have done violence to all His goodness and love, I must forgive everyone, irrespective of what has been done to me. Harsh words, ill-treatment, false accusations, impugning of motives, taking one's property by fraud—these things are hard to bear, but I will *boldly ask* for such divine grace as shall enable me to heartily practice forgiveness, for it is one of the fundamental principles in the friendship between God and me. There is no alternative—I *must*.

It is sometimes hard to do—harder for my heart than any problem in geometry is for my mind—but by certain laws I mastered the problem in mathematics, although while working at it I failed often. It is so in practicing forgiveness. I have sometimes failed, but *I will not be discouraged*. It is weak and mean not to forgive. I will hush the murmurs of resentment in my bosom. I will practice nobility of soul until generosity to others shall be my normal condition. God gives me the power, and I am a weakling not to use it. *I can forgive, and I will*.

I must not abuse one who has wronged me and then

forgive him; that is cowardice, and I need myself then to ask his pardon. If I am wronged and one asks my pardon, I must bury the transgression as God has buried mine; that means that I must try *never to mention it* again directly or indirectly, for if I do otherwise I am asking God to uncover some of my old sins against Him. If one who has wronged me does not ask my pardon, I still have no right to keep unforgiveness in my heart. There is no sense in irritating a sore. It must be healed if there would be health. I must try not to mention the wrong, for repetition of it strengthens resentment and harbors unforgiveness. If it is wise to mention it, I must find in it *a place for mercy* for the wrongdoer. This brings one of the greatest issues into my life; not to forgive makes me unhappy; forgiveness of another gives me peace and makes me kind.

There is simply no limit to God's forgiveness. He and I are friends, and I must practice His principles. He has taught me that seventy times seven—four hundred and ninety—times is not too often for me to forgive the same person for the same wrong. He has done that with me and I must practice that with others. *Not to speak* to another because I have been wronged is unbrotherly and unmanly. To keep in my heart the rubbish of unforgiveness—storing away old grudges— is *a filthy practice*. I need a heart-cleaning day, for I must keep friendship with God. My heart must be His chamber—kept sweet and clean—*where He can rest at ease*. Unforgiving thoughts and words grieve His love, but suffering unjustly is suffering with Christ, and it is at once an opportunity for me to pass to the higher grade *in His school of discipline*. Unforgiveness lowers my standard; forgiveness exalts me.



## DEATH

The end of my pilgrim road is called death—a word that sends a shudder through some; but, since God and I are in the league of friendship, it is to me *the hour of triumph*. It matters not when or where the road terminates, God will be there, as He now is with me here, and he will make my exit out of this world more glorious than I have ever dreamed of; for me, in common with all in the league of friendship, He has taken the sting out of death, whatever that may mean, and there will be no soul pain at that hour. I will not then be afraid, for there can be no danger, since God will be with me—He is so gentle and so strong—neither will that home of my soul be strange to me, for He has told me much about it in His word—as much as I can understand—and it is enough to know that it is God's home and mine, so that death will simply be *my home-going*. Out of the battle of temptation, weary with the daily rounds of disappointment and heart aching with sorrow, who would not want to go home, where there will be absolute safety and peace and joy? It would be so if one was in a distant land, away from the earthly home of love and plenty, receiving ill treatment at the hands of enemies. That condition which makes the earthly home so sweet is a prophecy of the perfect home above.

Death is only the separation of the soul and the body. The former will be borne in the company of angels and loved ones into the bosom of God, for their heavenly faces will be looking down upon my dying pillow, waiting, when at the last sigh, my soul, freed from this tenement of clay, shall greet them in perpetual joy. I may see them as others have done, and call some of them by name before I leave the flesh, but whether I do or not, they shall

crowd about me, and I shall go with them, for I shall be willing "*to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.*" Out of the friendship will have come the complete cure of my soul—eternal health, perfected soul! Friends in the flesh standing about my dying bed shall say, "He is dead," but the angels and loved ones gone before shall shout throughout heaven, "He is alive forevermore."

My body—this temple of the Holy Spirit—shall be put into the grave to await its cure. Angels shall guard it, whether it be in a neglected country graveyard or a well-kept city cemetery, until the morning of the resurrection, when the trumpet shall sound and my body shall be changed—the physical shall have become spiritual and this corruptible flesh shall have put on the incorruptible form—eternal health, perfected body—body and soul reunited in eternal felicity—at last glorified humanity like Jesus!

Death was once my enemy, but like all the other evil that God has overruled for my good, *even death will be made my friend*—no longer the jailer of the grave and the unknown, but to me, by the friendship of God, death will become the doorkeeper of heaven. It will be dying out of a world of sin, heartaches and sorrow—many have prayed for the exit. Paul said, "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, for it is very far better." It will be being born into a world of love, peace and joy—many have had their countenances illuminated by this expectation. To me death will be the flower bursting the calyx—all heaven in blossoms without the touch of frost. It will only be *a period* in my life, which began when God and I became friends. Death will take me out of the company of enemies into the company of friends, out of the prison

into the palace, and out of the storm into the haven of rest. It will be the end of school, and there will be *no more practicing*. Tired and toiling, I shall be glad to go home; the exile will become a citizen, the captive will become a freeman. Death does not argue displeasure, for the first man to die was Abel, who was innocent and righteous, and Jesus died in early manhood.

Nothing in all my earthly vision is so beautiful as *the close of the day*—or must I say, that tint of the morning light? In the autumn the leaves of the forest are painted with the glory of death in shades of gold and crimson, and a gentle breeze lowers them to their grave. It is the time of ripeness, and all my experiences of trials, service, disappointments, successes, sorrows and joys tend to ripen me for God's autumnal harvest. Green fruit falls heavily, but when ripe it drops easily. All things that ripen are commentaries on death, and God will make my going as easy as the tides go out or the sun goes down.

“I cannot see the distant shady trail  
That winds among the gnarled oaks and ferns;  
And yet I know that, *on beyond the blue,*  
*For me a quenchless love-light burns.*

“And so I climb and feast among the flowers,  
And at the mid-noon dream beneath the pine;  
While, at the flaming sundown red, I sip  
My own eve star's ambrosial wine.

“And when at last I mount the far-off crag,  
I *know* that, on the happy, wind-blown crest,  
The wished-for hand shall flash the long-sought light,  
And in the splendour *I shall rest.*”

## HEAVEN

Nineveh and Babylon fell into ruins and are covered beneath sand drifts, Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried beneath the ashes and lava of Mount Vesuvius, Lisbon and San Francisco were shaken into ruins by an earthquake, but *God is the architect and maker of a city* that hath foundations that can never be destroyed. Geographically, I do not know its location, but the Scriptures tell me that I am so close to it now that only *a veil*—that thinnest of fabrics, which moves at the touch of the wind—separates it from me.

“I know not where His islands lift,  
Of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death  
His mercy underlies.

And so beside the silent sea  
I wait the muffled oar;  
*No harm from Him can come to me  
On ocean or on shore.*

“I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
*I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care.*

And thou, O Lord, by whom are seen  
Thy creatures as they be,  
Forgive me if too close I lean  
My human heart on Thee.”

Jesus said that He was *going there* to prepare a place for me and would *return here* for me, and Jesus never

forgets. John, looking through his apocalyptic lens, said it is a place where there are no death, no tears, no mourning, no pain, no curse, no night, and the throne of God is there. It is *a commonwealth* of priests and princes—my unworthy self to wear a crown—where reigns an exalted fellowship with the most gifted spirits of the earth, whose lamps were lighted in love amid the darkness of this world by the tender hand of God. I shall be at the banquet, and with the other guests *I shall be known and I shall know* those who divided my cares and doubled my joys. This acquaintance, this friendship between God and me, this mutual love, all of which has been so sweet, will then be the chief memory of my earthly pilgrimage. All the smoke and dust upon the glass through which I shall have so long looked will have been wiped away, and *I shall see Him face to face*.

He tells me now that I am a son—adopted. He does not tell me what I shall be—*only I shall be like Him*. There will then to me be no place for prayer, for I shall have no wants. My mind shall sweep the universe with perfect freedom and thought shall never tire, my energies shall move unclogged with divine activity, and all my being shall render perpetual adoration unto Him with whom I have walked and suffered long, and then we will walk unhindered together and talk as friend talks with friend. His presence will be my chiefest glory, and to praise Him will be my highest joy. Then I shall move at His dictates like the tides of the sea and the stars of the sky, and no more discord shall ever come between God and me.

## **AN EVENING PRAYER**

MY Father, the day is done, with its toils, vexations, privileges and service, and weary in soul and body, I come to Thy holy throne of peace and pity.

Thou hast shared my cares, felt each pang that cut my heart and stood for me in every strife. Forget my wrongs, and let this day's sunset be the seal to my forgiveness of every one who has wronged me.

Out of Thy grace, give me the secret of never being discouraged, teach me how to strengthen all my weaknesses, and make me to see that my sacrifice for another and the control of myself belong to my ministry of love. Cover my bed with Thy unseen glory, and let me fall to sleep with a consciousness that Thine eyes are over me and that my room is aglow with Thy presence.

Then I shall rest, and out of my repose I shall be ready to serve Thee better in the morning of the morrow.

Amen.