

In every action of life the true Christian is just what he desires those around him to think he is. He is guided by truth and uprightness. He does not scheme; therefore he has nothing to gloss over. He may be criticized, he may be tested; but through all, his unbending integrity shines out like pure gold. He is a friend and benefactor to all connected with him, and his fellow men place confidence in him, for he is trustworthy. Does he employ laborers to gather in his harvest? He does not keep back their hard-earned money. Has he means for which he has no immediate use? He relieves the necessities of his less-fortunate brother. He does not seek to enlarge his possessions by taking advantage of the untoward circumstances of his neighbor. He accepts only a fair price for that which he sells. If there are defects in the articles sold, he frankly tells the buyer, even though by so doing he may seem to work against his own pecuniary interests. . . .

Satan knows full well what a power for good is the life of a man of unbending integrity, and he puts forth zealous efforts to prevent men from living such lives. He comes to them with alluring temptations, promising them wealth, position, worldly honor, if they will but yield the principles of righteousness. And he has much success. . . . From the sad history of many who have failed we learn the danger of prosperity. It is not those who have lost their property who are in greatest danger, but those who have obtained a fortune. . . . Prayer is often requested for men and women in affliction, and this is right. But those in prosperity are more in need of the prayers of God's servants, for they are in greater danger of losing salvation. In the valley of humiliation men walk securely while they reverence God and make Him their trust. On the lofty pinnacle, where praise is heard they need the help of special power from above. —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 243.

God's work must be sustained by tithes and gifts and offerings. The Lord now calls for the means that He has entrusted to His stewards. There should be a constant stream flowing into the treasury, that the work may not be hindered. To some, God has entrusted earthly riches to be held in trust and to be returned to Him as they may be required to carry forward His work in the earth. He requires from His stewards a faithful tithe of all their capital, and in addition to the tithe, He calls for gifts and offerings.

The Lord Jesus requires nothing more from His followers than He Himself has performed. Those who practice self-denial and self-sacrifice for the cause of God are but following His example. He laid off His royal robe and kingly crown, and stepped down from His high command. He became poor, that through His poverty we might come into possession of the eternal treasures. He gave not only His riches, but His own life in self-denial and self-sacrifice, that He might remove every hindrance from those who seek an entrance into the kingdom of God. . . .

The Lord Jesus invites us to become laborers together with Him. He is the owner of and has claims upon all that we possess. By our willingness to help in His work, we may now show our love for Him. —*The Upward Look*, p. 113.

Those who would at last be received into heaven as members of the royal family must here give themselves, body, soul, and spirit, to the service of Him who paid the price of their redemption. All that we have and are belongs to the Lord. "Ye are not your own," the apostle declares. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). . . .

Have you consecrated yourself wholly to the Lord? Can He use you as a vessel unto honor? Are you faithfully acting your part in His cause? To every man God has given his work. He expects every believer to cooperate with Him in the work of soul-saving. When His cause is suffering for means, how can anyone set a price on his services, refusing to take up the cross daily, and practice self-denial for Christ's sake?

The fulfillment of the promise that we shall be joint-heirs with Christ rests upon our willingness to deny self. When Christ takes possession of His kingdom, it will be those who on this earth have followed Him in self-denial and sacrifice who will receive the reward of everlasting life.

Christ's call to sacrifice and unreserved surrender means crucifixion of self. In order to obey this call, we must have unquestioning faith in Him as the perfect Example, and we must have a clear realization that we are to represent Him to the world. Those who work for Christ are to work in His lines. They are to live His life. His call to unreserved surrender is to be to them supreme. They are to allow no earthly tie or interest to prevent them from giving Him the homage of their hearts and the service of their lives. Earnestly and untiringly they are to labor with God to save perishing souls from the power of the tempter.

Those who are thus connected with Christ learn constantly of Him, passing through the successive stages of progress in Christian experience. Difficulty and perplexity come to them, that they may learn more perfectly the will and way of Christ. But they pray and believe, and by exercise their faith increases.

"Take my yoke upon you," Christ said, as in human nature He lived and worked upon this earth. Constantly He wore the yoke of submission, meeting the difficulties that human beings must meet, bearing the trials that they must bear. The enemy will continually assault us as he assaulted Christ, bringing against us strong temptation. But for everyone there is a way of escape. —*The Upward Look*, p. 235.

The life of Christ was an ever-widening, shoreless influence, an influence that bound Him to God and to the whole human family. Through Christ, God has invested man with an influence that makes it impossible for him to live to himself. Individually we are -connected with our fellow men, a part of God's great whole, and we stand under mutual obligations. No man can be independent of his fellow men; for the well-being of each affects others. It is God's purpose that each shall feel himself necessary to others' welfare, and seek to promote their happiness. . . .

By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected. . . .

Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. . . . If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed. . . .

Character is power. The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. By revealing in our own life the character of Christ we co-operate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can co-operate with Him. And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do. When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world.

But never should it be forgotten that influence is no less a power of evil. To lose one's own soul is a terrible thing; but to cause the loss of other souls is still more terrible. . . . It is only through the grace of God that we can make a right use of this endowment. —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 231.

The religion of Jesus Christ works a reformation in life and character. The true Christian seeks constantly for the grace that changes the objectionable features of the natural character. Instead of speaking sharp, dictatorial words, he speaks the words of encouragement that Christ would speak were He in his place. He shows benevolence to all, not only to the few who may flatter him and exalt his wisdom. The purity and holiness revealed in Christ's life radiates from the life of the true Christian.

Christians are to be light bearers in the world, shining amid the darkness of sin and crime. In the kingdom of this world, the principalities and powers that take Satan as their leader must constantly be met. Following Christ's example of cross bearing and self-denial makes those who receive Christ children of God. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). They are victors in the battle of life; for they have put on the new man, "which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:10). —*The Upward Look*, p. 75.

Tuesday, September 08
Planning

Those who receive Christ by faith will be looked upon by Heaven as precious pearls for which the merchantman has paid an infinite price, and the human agents who find Christ will realize that they have found a heavenly treasure. They will be anxious to sell all that they have in order to buy the field which contains this treasure. As they contemplate the love of God, as the plan of salvation opens to their view, as the mystery of Christ's condescension becomes plainer to them, as they see the sacrifice that He made for them, they count nothing too dear to give up for His sake. The more they dwell upon the wonderful love of God, the vaster becomes its proportion, and the brightness of the glory of God becomes too glorious for mortal vision.

The Lord God of heaven collected all the riches of the universe, and laid them down in order to purchase the pearl of lost humanity. The Father gave all His divine resources into the hands of Christ in order that the richest blessings of heaven might be poured out upon a fallen race. God could not express greater love than He has expressed in giving the Son of His bosom to this world. This gift was given to man to convince him that God had left nothing undone that He could do, that there is nothing held in reserve, but that all heaven has been poured out in one vast gift. The present and eternal happiness of man consists in receiving God's love, and in keeping God's commandments.

Christ is our redeemer. He is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. He is the fountain in which we may be washed and cleansed from all impurity. He is the costly sacrifice that has been given for the reconciliation of man. The universe of heaven, the worlds unfallen, the fallen world, and the confederacy of evil cannot say that God could do more for the salvation of man than He has done. Never can His gift be surpassed, never can He display a richer depth of love. Calvary represents His crowning work.... The Lord would have His followers enraptured with God through the knowledge of His paternal character. —*Our High Calling*, p. 13.

Whenever God's people, in any period of the world, have cheerfully and willingly carried out His plan in systematic benevolence and in gifts and offerings, they have realized the standing promise that prosperity should attend all their labors just in proportion as they obeyed His requirements. When they acknowledged the claims of God, and complied with His requirements, honoring Him with their substance, their barns were filled with plenty. —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 347.

The psalmist's words, "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver," state that which is true from other than a religious point of view. They state an absolute truth, and one that is recognized in the business world. Even in this age of passion for money-getting, when competition is so sharp, and methods are so unscrupulous, it is still widely acknowledged that, for a young man starting in life, integrity, diligence, temperance, purity, and thrift constitute a better capital than any amount of mere money. . . .

That which lies at the foundation of business integrity and of true success is the recognition of God's ownership. The Creator of all things, He is the original proprietor. We are His stewards. All that we have is a trust from Him, to be used according to His direction.

This is an obligation that rests upon every human being. It has to do with the whole sphere of human activity. Whether we recognize it or not, we are stewards, supplied from God with talents and facilities, and placed in the world to do a work appointed by Him.

To every man is given "his work" (Mark 13:34)—the work for which his capabilities adapt him—the work which will result in greatest good to himself and to his fellowmen, and in greatest honor to God.

Thus our business or calling is a part of God's great plan, and, so long as it is conducted in accordance with His will, He Himself is responsible for the results. "Labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9), our part is faithful compliance with His directions. Thus there is no place for anxious care. Diligence, fidelity, care-taking, thrift, and discretion are called for. Every faculty is to be exercised to its highest capacity. But the dependence will be, not on the successful outcome of our efforts, but on the promise of God. The word that fed Israel in the desert, and sustained Elijah through the time of famine, has the same power today. "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink?" (Matthew 6:31, RV). . . .

He who gives men power to get wealth has with the gift bound up an obligation. Of all that we acquire He claims a specified portion. The tithe is the Lord's. . . . "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" (Malachi 3:10) is God's command. No appeal is made to gratitude or to generosity. This is a matter of simple honesty. The tithe is the Lord's; and He bids us return to Him that which is His own.

"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). If honesty is an essential principle of business life, must we not recognize our obligation to God—the obligation that underlies every other? —*Lift Him Up*, p. 304.

Thursday, September 10
Unity

Wherever there is life, there is increase and growth; in God's kingdom there is a constant interchange—taking in, and giving out; receiving, and returning to the Lord His own. God works with every true believer, and the light and blessings received are given out again in the work which the believer does. Thus the capacity for receiving is increased. As one imparts of the heavenly gifts, he makes room for fresh currents of grace and truth to flow into the soul from the living fountain. Greater light, increased knowledge and blessing, are his. In this work, which devolves upon every church member, is the life and growth of the church. He whose life consists in ever receiving and never giving, soon loses the blessing. If truth does not flow forth from him to others, he loses his capacity to receive. We must impart the goods of heaven if we desire fresh blessings.

As the knowledge of truth is imparted, it will increase. All who receive the gospel message into the heart will long to proclaim it. The heaven-born love of Christ must find expression. Those who have put on Christ will relate their experience, tracing step by step the leadings of the Holy Spirit—their hungering and thirsting for the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, the results of their searching of the Scriptures, their prayers, their soul agony, and the words of Christ to them, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

It is unnatural for any to keep these things secret, and those who are filled with the love of Christ will not do so. In proportion as the Lord has made them the depositaries of sacred truth will be their desire that others shall receive the same blessing. And as they make known the rich treasures of God's grace, more and still more of the grace of Christ will be imparted to them. They will have the heart of a little child in its simplicity and unreserved obedience. Their souls will pant after holiness and more and more of the treasures of truth and grace will be revealed to them to be given to the world. —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 63.

The graces of Christ's Spirit must be cherished and revealed by the sons and daughters of God. By their humility, their penitence, their desire to be like Jesus, to be conformed to His will by practicing His lessons in their daily life, they honor Him. . . .

"Ye are God's husbandry" (1 Corinthians 3:9). As one takes pleasure in the cultivation of a garden, so God takes pleasure in His believing sons and daughters. A garden demands constant labor. The weeds must be removed; new plants must be set out; branches that are making too rapid development must be pruned back. So the Lord works for His garden, so He tends His plants. He cannot take pleasure in any development that does not reveal the graces of the character of Christ. The blood of Christ has made men and women God's precious charge. Then how careful should we be not to manifest too much freedom in pulling up the plants that God has placed in His garden! Some plants are so feeble that they have hardly any life, and for these the Lord has a special care.

In all your transactions with your fellow men, never forget that you are dealing with God's property. Be kind; be pitiful; be courteous. Respect God's purchased possession. Treat one another with tenderness and courtesy. Exert every God-given faculty to become examples to others. —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 65.

Friday, September 11
For Further Reading

Our Father Cares, "The Meaning of Communion With God," October 25, p. 310.

Reflecting Christ, "What the Spirit of Liberality Will Do," September 13, p. 270.