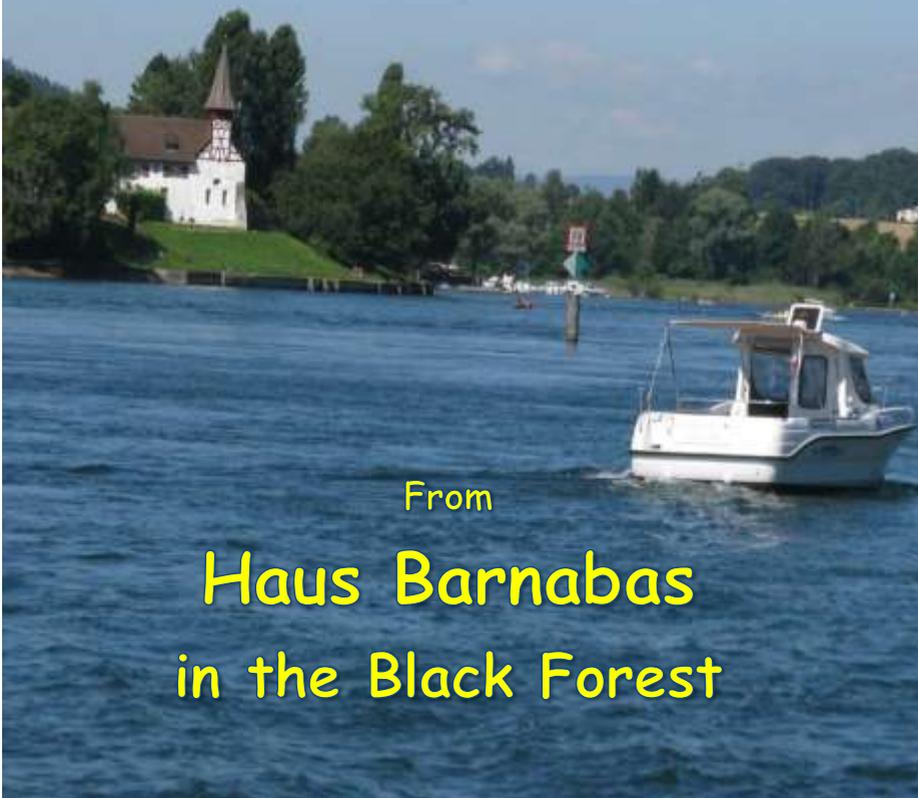


# Daily Manna

## June



From

**Haus Barnabas**  
in the Black Forest

# Explanation

These daily readings are intended to add a new dimension to the ministry of Haus Barnabas. Our aim is to make these notes available for all our guests to use personally as they may wish and also to use the Scripture readings for our communal prayer time after breakfast.

For many years we have used the Daily Light selection of Scriptures for our morning prayers in Haus Barnabas and the concept and format of the Daily Light, namely a range of short Scriptures based on a particular theme verse form the basis for our own new selection of Scripture readings. The Bible translation we have used is the New King James Version. We cannot emphasize too strongly that it should be these verses of Scripture itself which should be the kernel for our spiritual nourishment. The meditation that follows is but one line of thought from the theme verse and God might want to use the Scripture verses to say something quite different to you personally. Spend time with the Scripture verses. 'Chew' on them prayerfully during the day, in the same way as you will see Black Forest cows sitting chewing the cud!

We also expect the meditations to prove a blessing to many of you. We wouldn't dare to say this if we had written them ourselves! They all originate from C.H. Spurgeon's Morning and Evening devotions and we have taken the liberty of up-dating the language. Whilst we 'oldies' who already have a high regard for C.H.S probably don't find this necessary and perhaps question the audacity of attempting it, my prayer is that this slightly up-dated language will help to make these well loved, soul-nourishing devotional thoughts more acceptable to Christians of all denominations and age groups in this twenty-first century.

With a prayer that the Lord will use His Word to bless you in a wonderful way,

Len Holder.

## Scripture readings

### **So the evening and the morning were the first day**

The sun knows its going down. You make darkness, and it is night, in which all the beasts of the forest creep about. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God. When the sun rises, they gather together and lie down in their dens. Man goes out to his work and to his labour until the evening. O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all.

There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me, That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things.

I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. He has led me and made me walk in darkness and not in light. - I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.

Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." - He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

**Gen 1:5** - Ps 104:19-24 - Isa 45:5-7 - Lam 3:1-2; Isa 45:3 - John 8:12; Col 1:13

*Suggested additional reading: Isaiah 45*

## Meditation

### ***The evening and the morning were the first day.*** - Gen 1:5

Right from the very beginning, even on the first day it is here indicated that time on earth was divided by light and darkness! It's little wonder then that I also have changes in my circumstances from the sunshine of prosperity to the midnight of adversity. It won't always be the blazing light of noon even in those things that concern

my soul. I must expect times when I will mourn the absence of my earlier joys, and seek my beloved Jesus in the darkness of night. Nor am I alone in this, for all the Lord's children have had to sing the song of judgement mingled with mercy, of trial mingled with deliverance and of mourning mingled with delight. It is one of the arrangements of Divine providence that day and night shall not cease either in the spiritual or natural creation till we reach the land of which it is written, "*there shall be no night there.*" (Rev 22:5)

What our heavenly Father ordains is wise and good. How should we then respond to these changes? Learn first **to be content** with this divine order, and be willing, with Job, to receive evil from the hand of the Lord as well as good. (*Job 2:10*). Study next, to "***make the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice***". (Ps 65:8). Praise the Lord for the sun of joy when it rises, and for the gloom of evening as it falls. There is beauty both in sunrise and sunset, sing of it, and glorify the Lord. Like the nightingale, pour forth your song at all hours. **Believe that the night is as useful as the day.** The dews of God's grace fall heavily in the night of sorrow. The stars of His promise shine gloriously amidst the darkness of grief. **Continue your service** under all changes. If in the day your watchword is labour, at night exchange it for watch. Every hour has its duty, so continue in your calling as the Lord's servant until He shall suddenly appear in His glory. My soul, your evening of old age and death is drawing near, don't dread it, for it is part of the day; and it is promised, "*The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him, who shelters him all the day long.*" (Deut 33:12)

## Prayer

*For You are my lamp, O LORD; the LORD shall enlighten my darkness.*

*2 Sam 22:29*

## Scripture readings

### **For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh**

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. - For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin. - Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. - Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ... For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

I find then a law, that evil is present with me. ... For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!

**Gal 5:17** - Ps 19:12-13; Eccl 7:20; Matt 26:41 - John 3:6; Rom 8:5-6;13 - Rom 7:21-25

*Suggested additional reading: **Romans 7:7-25***

## Meditation

### ***For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.- Galatians 5:17***

In every believer's heart there is a constant struggle between the old nature and the new. The old nature is very active, and loses no opportunity of plying all the weapons of its deadly armoury against newborn grace; while on the other hand, the new nature is always on

the watch to resist and destroy its enemy. God's grace within us uses prayer, faith, hope and love, to cast out the evil. It takes up the "*whole armour of God*," (Eph 6:11) and wrestles earnestly. These two opposing natures will never stop fighting so long as we are in this world. In John Bunyan's famous book the battle of "Christian" with "Apollyon" lasted three hours, but the battle of Christian with himself lasted all the way from the Wicket Gate to the river Jordan. The enemy is so securely entrenched within us that he can never be driven out while we are in this body. But although we are closely beset, and often in sore conflict, we have an Almighty helper, even Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who is always with us, and who assures us that through Him we shall eventually come off more than conquerors. With such assistance the new-born nature is more than a match for its foes.

Are you fighting with the adversary to-day? Are Satan, the world, and the flesh, all against you? Don't be discouraged or dismayed. Fight on! For God Himself is with you. *Jehovah Nissi* is your banner, (Ex 17:15) and *Jehovah Rophi* is the healer of your wounds. (Ex 15:26). Have no fear, you shall overcome, for who can defeat Omnipotence? Fight on, "*looking unto Jesus*" (Heb 12:2); and although the conflict may be long and stern, sweet will be the victory, and glorious the promised reward.

*From strength to strength go on;  
Wrestle, and fight, and pray,  
Tread all the powers of darkness down,  
And win the well-fought day.*

## Prayer

*Look upon me and be merciful to me, as Your custom is toward those who love Your name. Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me. Ps 119:132-13*

## Scripture readings

### **These were the potters and those who dwell at Netaim and Gederah; there they dwelt with the king for his work.**

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ... If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. - "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."

God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

**1 Chron 4:23** - Eph 2:10 - John 15:4-8 - Matt 20:28; John 14:12 - 2 Cor 9:8-9

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Chron 4*

## Meditation

### ***These were potters, and those who dwell at Netaim and Gederah; there they dwelt with the king for his work.***

- 1 Chronicles 4:23

Potters were a very important class of workers, and because "*the king*" needed potters they were in royal service, although the material they used for their work was nothing but clay. We, too, may be engaged in the most menial aspects of the Lord's work, but it is a great privilege to do anything for "*the king*"; and so we should be

happy to stay in our calling, hoping that, *“though you lie down among the sheepfolds, (AV. pots), you will be like the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.”* (Ps 68:13).

The text goes on to tell us of those who *“dwelt at Netaim and Gederah”*, which the AV translates as *“among plants and hedges”*. This suggests those who were involved in rough, rustic, hedging and ditching work. They may have thought they would much rather live in the city, where there was more life, society, and refinement, but they stayed in their appointed places, for they also were doing the king’s work. The place where we live has been determined by God, and we shouldn’t move away from it out of mere whim and fancy, but seek to serve the Lord in it, by being a blessing to our neighbours and work companions.

These potters and gardeners had royal company, for they dwelt *“with the king for his work”*. So although they were working among hedges and plants, they were living with the king. No place or lawful occupation, however humble, can keep us from communion with our divine Lord. In working amongst the destitute, homeless, addicted and spiritually lost the King is with us. In all works of faith we may count on the fellowship of Jesus. When we are active in His work then we may reckon upon His smile. Remember this those of you who are occupied for your Lord amidst the dirt and wretchedness of the lowest of the low. Be of good cheer, for jewels have been found in dunghills; earthen pots have been filled with heavenly treasure, and ill weeds have been transformed into precious flowers. Live with the King for His work, and when He writes His chronicles your name will be recorded.

## Prayer

*For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Ps 84:10*

## Scripture readings

### **The kindness and the love of God our Saviour**

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

The LORD their God will save them in that day, as the flock of His people. For they shall be like the jewels of a crown, lifted like a banner over His land; for how great is its goodness and how great its beauty! - I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

**Titus 3:4** - Jer 31:3 - Zech 9:16-17; Isa 63:7 - Eph 2:4-7 - 2 Thess 2:16-17

*Suggested additional reading: Isa 63:7-19*

## Meditation

### ***The kindness and love of God our Saviour.*** - *Titus 3:4*

How precious it is to consider the ways in which the Saviour communes with His own beloved people! There can surely be nothing more thrilling than to meditate, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, on the theme of God's love to the believer. Begin by thinking back over the history of the Redeemer's love, and of the personal testimony of both Biblical and more recent saints as to their experiences of it and you will be amazed at the skill by which Christ

wins the affection of His followers. In a thousand different ways He weaves their hearts into His own and inter-twists the thoughts and emotions of the renewed soul with those of His own mind. As we consider the amazing “*kindness and love of God our Saviour*” in condescending, to us in this way, dying in order to redeem us from the clutches and power of sin and then working so graciously in our hearts and minds to redirect into the ways of holiness and happiness that our souls could almost faint for joy.

To understand and feel the full extent of this love is more than our earthly body, mind and soul could bear. If the partial sense of it, which the Holy Spirit is sometimes pleased to show us, is more than our soul can contain, how overwhelming must be a complete view of it! When in the world to come the soul will have the full understanding to discern all our Saviour has given us, the wisdom to fully estimate the value of this and the time to meditate on it, then we shall be able to rightly appreciate Jesus and all His kindness and love and to commune with Him in a more meaningful way than at present. But who can imagine the sweetness of such fellowship? It must be one of the things which have not entered into the heart of man, but which God has prepared for those who love Him. (*1 Cor 2:9*).

Oh, to burst open the door of our Joseph’s granaries, and see the plenty which He has stored up for us! This will overwhelm us with love. By faith we see, as in a glass darkly, the reflected image of His unlimited treasures, but when we shall actually see the heavenly things themselves with our own eyes, how deep will be the stream of fellowship in which our soul shall bathe! In anticipation of that day let’s direct even now our loudest, heartfelt songs of praise to Him who has loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood; Jesus Christ our Lord, whose love to us is wonderful, overwhelmingly surpassing all human love.

## Prayer

*Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.*

*Ps 40:11*

## Scripture readings

### **The LORD shut him in.**

Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. - He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust."

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling.

When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; for the LORD will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

**Gen 7:16** - Isa 26:20-21; Ps 91:1-2 - Ps 46:1-3 - Prov 3:24-26 - John 10:27-30

*Suggested additional reading: Gen 7*

## Meditation

### ***The Lord shut him in.*** - Genesis 7:16

Noah was shut into the ark away from all the world by the hand of divine love. The door of God's electing purpose stands between us and the world which lies under the influence of the wicked one. We are not of the world even as our Lord Jesus was not of the world. (*John 17:16*). Into the sin, the gaiety, the pursuits of the multitude we

cannot enter; we cannot play in the streets of Vanity Fair with the children of darkness, for our heavenly Father has shut us in.

Noah was shut in **with his God**. “*Come into the ark,*” (Gen 7:1), was the Lord’s invitation, by which He clearly showed that He Himself intended to stay in the ark with His servant and his family. Thus all the chosen dwell in God and God in them. Happy people to be enclosed in the same circle which contains God in the Trinity of His persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Let us never be inattentive to that gracious call, “*Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past.*” (Is 26:20).

Noah was so shut in that **no evil could reach him**. The floods lifted him nearer heaven and the winds blew him on his way. Outside of the ark all was ruin, but inside all was rest and peace. Without Christ we perish, but in Christ Jesus there is perfect safety.

Noah was so shut in that **he had no wish to come out**, and those who are in Christ Jesus are in Him for ever. They shall “*go out no more*” (Rev 3 12) for eternal faithfulness has shut them in, and infernal malice cannot drag them out. The Prince of the house of David “*shuts and no one opens*” (Rev 3:7); and when eventually, in the last days, as Master of the house He will rise up and shut the door, it will be in vain for those who merely profess to be Christians to knock, and cry “*Lord, Lord open to us*”, (Matt 25: 11), for that same door which shuts in the wise virgins will shut out the foolish ones for ever. Lord, shut me in now by Your grace.

## Prayer

*Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up ... there are many who fight against me, O Most High. Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?*

*Ps 56:1-4*

## Scripture readings

### **Behold, I am vile**

O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens. - We are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

There is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight. - This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. - All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, ... for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

**Job 40:4** - Ezra 9:6; Isa 64:6 - Rom 3:22-23; 1 John 1:8-10 - Ps 51:3-4; 1 Tim 1:15; Isa 53:6 - Rom 8:1-2

*Suggested additional reading: Job 42*

## Meditation

### ***Behold, I am vile. - Job 40:4***

The Hebrew word which Job uses here and which our translators have rendered as “*vile*”, describes the feelings that every member of the human race will feel when he stands in the presence of our holy God. Perhaps your feelings of unworthiness are keeping you from coming freely to God this morning. Take comfort; there is not a saint

living on earth who under the influence of the Holy Spirit has not at times felt that he is “vile”. If Job, and Isaiah, (*Isa 6:5*), and Paul (*1 Tim 1:15*) all expressed in their different ways this same awareness as they experienced God's presence, then why should you be ashamed to join them in the same confession? If our sovereign God has not chosen to eradicate by His Holy Spirit all sin from the believer here in this world, then how do you hope to achieve it yourself? If God loves His people while they are yet “vile”, then you don't need to be afraid that all your failures and unworthiness will stop Him loving you? Perhaps you are one of the outcasts of society, or feel that if your family, work colleagues or Christian friends knew your true character you certainly would be such. Have no fear, Jesus calls you to him and He has Himself declared “*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.*” (Luke 5:32)

Speak to Him now; say to Him, “You have died for sinners; that's me Lord Jesus, please accept me and let me find forgiveness through your death”. If you will confess your sin you will find pardon. If, now, with all your heart, you can say, “I am vile, wash me,” you shall be washed now. If you can cry from your heart: “*Just as I am, without one plea; but that Thy blood was shed for me, And that thou bidd'st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come!*” then you will get up from your devotions now with all your sins forgiven. Though you woke this morning with every possible sin on your conscience, you will rest peacefully to-night “*accepted in the Beloved*”. Those rags of sin, will be exchanged for a robe of righteousness, and God will see you as white as the angels. For “now,” mark it, “**now** is the accepted time.” (2 Cor 6:2). If you believe on Him who justifies the ungodly you are saved. (Rom 4:5) Oh! My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will give you this saving faith in Him who receives the vilest.

## Prayer

*I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Ps 23:4-6*

## Scripture readings

### **You who love the LORD, hate evil!**

Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. - I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness.

Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. ... I hate and abhor lying, but I love Your law.

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. - Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. - Take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

**Ps 97:10** - Ps 34:14; Ps 101:3-4 - Ps 119:104; 163 - Rom 12:9;21; 1 Thess 5:21-22; Eph 6:13 - 2 Tim 4:18

*Suggested additional reading: **Romans 12: 9-21***

## Meditation

### ***You who love the Lord, hate evil! - Psalm 97:10***

You have good reason to “*hate evil,*” for just consider what harm it has already done to you. What a world of damage sin has brought into your heart! Sin blinded you so that you couldn’t see the beauty of the Saviour; it made you deaf so that you couldn’t hear the Redeemer’s gracious invitations. Sin attracted you into the path to destruction and poured poison into the very fountain of your being. It contaminated your heart, and made it “*deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*” (Jer 17:9). What an awful mess you were in when evil had infiltrated its way through your whole being, before

God in His grace stepped in and rescued you. You were “*a child of wrath just like the others*” (Eph 2:3); you followed the crowd to do evil. (Ex 23:2). Such were all of us; but Paul reminds us, “*but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*” (1 Cor 6:11).

We certainly have good reason for hating evil when we look back and trace its deadly workings. Evil has done us so much damage that our souls would have been lost had not God's omnipotent love intervened to redeem us. Even now it is an active enemy, constantly watching for ways to harm us and, if it were possible, to drag us into hell. Therefore unless you are looking for trouble, O Christians “*hate evil,*”. Only if you are wanting to strew your path with thorns, and plant nettles in your death-pillow, should you neglect to “*hate evil*”! But if you want to live a happy life, and die a peaceful death, then follow the ways of holiness, hating evil, unto the end.

Finally if you truly love your Saviour, and want to honour Him, then “*hate evil.*” There is no greater means to enable a Christian to eradicate a love of evil than constant fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Live close to Him, talk to Him often, feed on His Word and the resulting healthy spiritual life will make it impossible for you to be at peace with sin.

## Prayer

*Deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

*Matt.6:13*

## Scripture readings

### **Many fell dead, because the war was God's.**

You shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. ... One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you. Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God.

Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles. And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

Thus says the LORD to you: "Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. ... You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!" Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

**1 Chron 5:22** - Josh 23:8-11 - 2 Chron 32:7-8 - 2 Chron 20:15;17 - Rom 8:31-32

*Suggested additional reading: 2 Chron 20:1-30*

## Meditation

***Many fell dead, for the war was God's.*** - 1 Chronicles 5:22

Christian believer, you are in a spiritual battle. But meditate on this verse with holy joy, for as it was in the days of old so it is now; under the banner of the Lord Jesus and with Him as our Commander-in-chief the war is God's and victory is certain.

The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh between them could hardly manage to gather forty-five thousand fighting men, and yet in their war with the Hagarites, they

slew “*one hundred thousand of their men*” (1 Chron 5:21) “*for they cried out to God in the battle. He heeded their prayer, because they put their trust in Him.*” (1 Chron 5:20). Believing like Saul's son Jonathan that “*nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few*” (1 Sam 14:6), it is part of our calling as believers to stand up for our Lord and to continue His ministry even if we are but a few in number. We don't need to fear for the Lord of Hosts is with us; He is our Captain. In the story before us these children of Israel didn't neglect buckler, sword, and bow, but neither did they put their trust in these weapons. Likewise we must use all suitable means, but our confidence must rest in the Lord alone, for He is the sword and the shield of His people. The great reason of their extraordinary success lay in the fact that “*the war was God's*”.

Christian soldier, in fighting with sin within you and without, with error doctrinal or practical, with spiritual wickedness in high or low places, with devils and the devil's allies, you are waging Jehovah's war, and until it is possible for Him Himself to be overcome, you don't need to fear defeat. Don't tremble before superior numbers; don't hold back in the face of difficulties or impossibilities; don't flinch at wounds even if they appear to be fatal, smite with the two-edged sword of the Spirit, and the slain shall lie in heaps. The battle is the Lord's and He will deliver His enemies into our hands. With steadfast foot, strong hand, dauntless heart, and flaming zeal, rush to the conflict, and the hosts of evil shall fly like chaff before the gale.

*Stand up! stand up for Jesus! The strife will not be long;  
Today the noise of battle, the next the victor's song:  
To him that overcometh, a crown of life shall be;  
He with the King of glory shall reign eternally.*

## Prayer

*O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You! Ps 84:12*

## Scripture readings

**The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad.**

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! for His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy. ... They cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way. ... Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!

Praise the LORD, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for He has done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!

That you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. ... For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name."

**Ps 126:3** - Ps 107:1-2;6-7;8 - Isa 12:4-6 - Eph 1:18-20 - Luke 1:46;49-55

*Suggested additional reading: Psalm 107*

## Meditation

***The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad.*** - Ps  
126:3

Some Christians are sadly prone to look on the dark side of everything, and to think far more about the trials they have had to go through than the wonderful things God has done for them. Ask them to talk about their experiences since they found faith in Christ and they will describe their continual struggles, their personal problems, their sad and difficult circumstances and the sinfulness they still find

in their hearts, with scarcely any comment on the mercy and help which God has shown them. But a Christian who is walking with Jesus each day will be able to see his life in a much more positive light and will honour God, perhaps not in quite the same language as David but certainly with the same sentiment: *“He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth - Praise to our God.”* (Ps 40:2-3). *“The Lord has done great things for me, whereof I am glad.”* (Ps 126:3)

It's God's grace that enables us to recognise and appreciate His hand of blessing on us, and for us to take every suitable opportunity to testify of it is the very least we should be doing to honour Him. It's true that we have had to endure trials, but it is just as true that we have been delivered out of them. It's true that we find corruption in our hearts, and we realise this to our sorrow, but it is just as true that we have an all-sufficient Saviour, who helps us to overcome these corruptions, and delivers us from their power. In looking back, it would be wrong to deny that we have at times been in the “Slough of Despond”, and have had to creep along the “Valley of Humiliation”. But it would be equally wrong to overlook the fact that we have been brought through them safely and have benefited spiritually from the experience. Our Almighty Helper and Leader has ensured that we haven't got bogged down in these places and that we can say: *“We went through fire and through water; but You brought us out to rich fulfillment.”* (Ps 66:12). The deeper our troubles, the louder should be our thanks to God who has led us through them all and preserved us until now. Our sadnesses don't spoil the melody of our praise, rather we reckon them to be the bass part of our life's song, *“He has done great things for us, and we are glad”*.

## Prayer

*All Your works shall praise You, O Lord, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.*

*Ps 145:10-13*

## Scripture readings

### **We live to the Lord**

Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. - Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness.

Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ... Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do.

Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

**Rom 14:8** - 1 Cor 6:19-20 - Titus 2:13-14; 1 Peter 2:24 - Rom 6:11-13 - John 14:12-13 - Col 3:23-24

*Suggested additional reading: 2 Cor 5:7-21*

## Meditation

### ***We live to the Lord.*** - *Romans 14:8*

If God had so purposed it, each of us could have been taken up to heaven at the moment of conversion. Is it absolutely necessary that we spend time here in order to be prepared for immortality? There have been instances when God's chosen people have only first found faith in Jesus on their death beds and have been taken straight to

glory. So it is clear that to lack the testing of our faith here on earth doesn't disqualify us from being "*partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light*" (Col 1:12). It's true that our sanctification is a long and continued process which in fact is never fully achieved until we leave these bodies and are carried by the angels into our Lord's presence; so, had our God so willed it, He might have changed us at once from imperfection to perfection and taken us immediately to heaven on our conversion.

Why then are we here? Does God want to keep His children out of paradise a single moment longer than is necessary? Why is the army of the living God still on the battle-field when one charge might give them the victory? Why are His children still wandering hither and thither through a maze, when a single word from His lips would bring them into the centre of their hopes in heaven? The answer is - they are here that they may "*live unto the Lord,*" and may bring others to know His love. We remain on earth as sowers to scatter good seed; as ploughmen to break up the fallow ground; as heralds publishing salvation. We are here as the "*salt of the earth*" (Matt 5:13), in order to be a blessing to the world. We are here to glorify our heavenly Father through a fruitful life. (*John 15:8*). We are here as workers for Him, and as "*workers together with Him.*" (2 Cor 6:1).

Let us aim to ensure that our life fulfills its purpose. Let us live earnest, useful, holy lives, to "*the praise of the glory of His grace*" (Eph 1:6). Meanwhile we long to be with Him, and daily sing:

*My heart is with Him on His throne,  
And can hardly bear delay;  
Each moment listening for His voice,  
"Rise up, and come away."*

## Prayer

*To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

*Rev 1:5-6*

## Scripture readings

### **We love Him because He first loved us**

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. - God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). - In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you." - We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. - The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" and he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." - I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.

**1 John 4:19** - John 3:16; Eph 2:4-5; -1 John 4:10 - Jer 31:3; 2 Thess 2:13; Rom 5:5 - John 21:17; Ps 116:1-2

*Suggested additional reading: 1 John:4*

## Meditation

### ***We love Him because He first loved us. - 1 John 4:19***

There is no light in the planet which didn't have its origin in the sun; and there is no true love to Jesus in the human heart which doesn't have its origin in the Lord Jesus. Our love to God springs from the overflowing fountain of the infinite love of God Himself. This fact will always remain one of the great and certain truths,

namely that we love Him for no other reason than that He first loved us. (*1 John 4:19*)

Our love to Him can be seen as His child, conceived in us through a revelation of His love to us. Anyone may have cold admiration when studying the wonders of nature and the works of God, but the warmth of love can only be kindled in our hearts by God's Spirit. What an amazing wonder that people like you and me should ever have fallen in love with Jesus! How marvellous that when we had rebelled against Him, He should show us love and not anger and seek to draw us back to Him. No! We would never have had a grain of love towards God unless it had been sown in us by the precious seed of His love to us.

Love, then, has for its parent the love of God "*shed abroad in our hearts*" (Rom 5:5), but after it is thus divinely born, it must be divinely nourished. Love is an exotic; it is not a plant which will flourish naturally in human soil, it must be watered from above. Love to Jesus is a flower of a delicate nature, and if it received no nourishment except that which could be drawn from the rock of our hearts it would soon wither. As love comes from heaven, so it must feed on heavenly bread. It cannot exist in the wilderness unless it is fed by manna from on high. Love must feed on love. The very soul and life of our love to God is His love to us.

*I love You, Lord, but with no love of mine,  
For I have none to give;  
I love You, Lord; but all the love is thine,  
For by Your love I live.  
I am as nothing, and rejoice to be  
Emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in thee.*

## Prayer

*Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day. Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, for they are from of old.*

*Ps 25:5-6*

## Scripture readings

### **You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting.**

I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent.

Talk no more so very proudly; let no arrogance come from your mouth, for the LORD is the God of knowledge; and by Him actions are weighed. - All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirits. Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established.

But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

**Dan 5:27** - Rev 3:1-3 -1 Sam 2:3; Prov 16:2-3 - Matt 22:11-12 - 1 Cor 3:11-13

*Suggested additional reading: **Phil 2:1-16***

## Meditation

### ***You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. -***

*Daniel 5:27*

It's good for us to frequently weigh ourselves on the scales of God's Word. You will find it a blessed exercise to read one or other of the Psalms of David, and, as you meditate on each verse, to ask yourself, "Can I say this? Have I felt as David felt? Has my heart

ever been broken on account of sin as his was when he penned Psalm fifty-one? Has my soul been full of true confidence in the hour of difficulty as his was when he sang of God's mercies in the cave of Adullam, (*Ps 57*) or in the holds of Engedi? (*Ps 142*). Do I "*take up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord?*" (*Ps 116:123*).

Then turn to the life of Christ, and as you read, ask yourselves how far you are conformed to His likeness. Endeavour to discover whether you have the meekness, the humility, the lovely spirit which He constantly inculcated and displayed. Take, then, the epistles, and see whether you can go with the apostle in what he said of his experience. Have you ever cried out as he did: "*O wretched man that I am! who will deliver me from the body of this death?*" (*Rom 7:24*). Have you ever felt his self-abasement? Have you seemed to yourself the chief of sinners (*1 Tim 1:15*) and "*less than the least of all the saints*" (*Eph 3:8*)? Have you known anything of his devotion? Could you join with him and say, "*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain?*" (*Phil 1:21*).

If we read God's Word in this way as a test of our spiritual condition, we will all find good reason to stop many times and say, "Lord, I feel I have never yet been here, O bring me here! Make me truly sorrow for my sins, as David was. Give me real faith; give me warmer zeal; inflame me with more fervent love; grant me the grace of meekness; make me more like Jesus. Please don't let me be *found wanting* when weighed in the scales of Your holy word, lest I be *found wanting* in the scales of of the final judgement." Judge yourselves that you may not be judged.

## Prayer

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

*Ps 139:23-24*

## Scripture readings

**Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." - Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. - For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation. Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

He who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

**Rev 22:17** - Isa 55:1 - John 7:37-38; John 4:13-14 - Rev 21:6; Isa 12:2-3 - John 6:35-38

*Suggested additional reading: Rev 22*

## Meditation

***Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.***

- Rev 22:17

Jesus says, "take freely." He wants neither payment nor preparation. Receiving the water of life is not dependant on any virtuous feelings or emotions. If you want it you may have it. That is the only condition. Come and take it. You are invited; therefore come! Perhaps you say you have very little faith and no real sorrow

for sin! Come just as you are. It's good that you don't pretend to be what you're not, take "freely," without money and without price. To receive the water of life is to receive Christ Himself. We can never be worthy of His presence in our lives, but having received Him we begin to experience a new source of inner energy to motivate us and effect the change that gives real satisfaction in a new relationship with the holy God. *"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."* John 4:14

The drinking fountains at the corners of the streets of London were valuable institutions in the previous centuries; and we can't imagine any one so foolish as to feel for his purse when he sees one and to complain that he hasn't got enough money for a drink. However poor the man is, there is the fountain, and he is entitled to help himself. Thirsty passers-by whether they are homeless beggars or business executives out for a jog were all entitled to freely relieve their thirst. The liberality of some good friends of the community had put the refreshing crystal there and all could take it with no questions asked. Perhaps the only people who had to go thirsty were the fine ladies and gentlemen in their carriages. They might also be very thirsty, but wouldn't dream of being so vulgar as to drink at a common drinking fountain: so they would ride by with parched lips. Here also we have a spiritual lesson! How many there are who feel themselves to be accepted by God because of their religious activities and charitable giving and see no need for Christ! "I will not be saved," they say, "in the same way as the prostitute or the blasphemer." What! go to heaven in the same way as a chimney sweep. Are you telling me I must take the same path to glory that led the thief and murderer there? I won't be saved that way. Such proud boasters must remain without the living water; but the call of *"the Spirit and bride"* remains there to challenge, humble and invite: *"Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."*

## Prayer

*You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life; Ps 36:8-9*

## Scripture readings

### **Delight yourself also in the LORD,**

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. - I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honourable, and shall honour Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth.

I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God. - I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. May my meditation be sweet to Him; I will be glad in the LORD.

Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

**Ps 37:4** - John 15:10-11; John 16:22 - Isa 58:13-14 - Ps 43:4; Ps 104:33-34 Song 2:3 - 1 Peter 1:8

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalm 37:1-20***

## Meditation

### ***Delight yourself also in the Lord.* - Psalm 37:4**

These words will sound unintelligible to anyone who has never had a personal encounter with God, but the hearts of all believers with a living faith will respond to them with an enthusiastic amen!

The true Christian knows God and finds delight in God, and his religion fills him with happiness and joy. Nominal Christians and unbelievers have never been able to see religion as a joyful thing; to them it is a service, a duty, or a necessity, but never a pleasure or delight. If they engage at all in some form of religious activity it is either that they hope to gain something by it or else because they are forced into it.

The thought of *delight* in religion is such a strange one to most men, that no two words stand further apart in most people's language than "holiness" and "happiness." But believers who know Christ, understand that "delight" and "faith" are so closely united that no power on earth or from hell can separate them. Those who love God with all their hearts, have found the path of wisdom, and prove the truth of the Holy Spirit's words through Solomon: "*her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.*" (Prov 3:17-18). Saints discover such joy, such satisfying happiness, in their relationship with their Lord that following and serving Him is their delight even though all the world despise them and openly reject their testimony.

We don't reverence and love God because of any compulsion. Our faith is no fetter. Our profession is no bondage. We are not dragged unwillingly towards holiness, nor driven to duty. No! our Christian lifestyle is our pleasure. Our hope is our happiness. Our duty is our delight. Delight and true religion are as united as root and flower; they are as indivisible as truth and certainty; they are, in fact, two precious jewels glittering side by side in a setting of gold.

*'Tis when we taste Thy love,  
Our joys divinely grow,  
Unspeakable like those above,  
And heaven begins below.*

## Prayer

*Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. Ps 73:25*

## Scripture readings

**And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me."**

"Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him."

My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant. ... For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

Behold, God will not cast away the blameless. ... He will yet fill your mouth with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing. - Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad.

I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

**Gen 21:6** - Gen 17:17-19 - Luke 1:46-50 - Job 8:20-21; Ps 126:2-3 - 3 John 3-4 - Luke 10:20

*Suggested additional reading: **Gen 21 1-21***

## Meditation

***And Sarah said, "God has made me to laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me."*** - *Genesis 21:6*

It was far beyond the normal power of nature, and even contrary to its laws, that the Sarah at her advanced age should have been honoured to conceive her son Isaac. In the same way it is also beyond all logic and natural laws that I, an ordinary human being,

with all my sinful tendencies and failures should be given the honour of becoming the temple of the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus. I, who was once in despair about my sin and, in regard to my spiritual life, felt myself to be as dry, withered and barren as the Sahara desert. even I have been made to bring forth fruit unto holiness. Well might I laugh in happiness about what God has done for me; I have found Jesus, the promised seed, and He is mine for ever. My joy should be no less than that of Mary. With the blessed human mother of Jesus will I also lift up a psalm of triumph to the Lord who has not rejected my unworthiness *“my soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour ... for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.”* (Luke 1:46-49).

I want everyone to hear of my great deliverance from hell, and the way that God has visited me from on high in love. Come and laugh for joy with me. I want to surprise my family with my new sense of peace. I want to delight my friends with my ever-increasing happiness. I want to edify and encourage the Church with my faith and impress the world with the cheerfulness of my daily life.

John Bunyan tells us that Mercy laughed in her sleep, and no wonder when she dreamed of Jesus. My joy shouldn't be less than hers as all day long I can think about my Beloved and His wonderful grace to me. The Lord Jesus is a deep sea of joy into which my soul can dive and be immersed in the delight of His company.

Sarah, on looking at her son Isaac, laughed with joy and happiness and all her friends laughed with her. Similarly, you, my soul, can look at your Jesus and invite heaven and earth to join with you in your joy unspeakable.

## Prayer

*All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Ps 145:10-12*

## Scripture readings

### **I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish**

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.  
- He who believes in the Son has everlasting life.

This is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day ... most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Saviour, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

**John 10:28** - John 3:16; John 3:36 - John 6:40;47 - Rom 6:23; Titus 1:2 - 1 John 5:13 - Jude 24-25

*Suggested additional reading: 1 John 5*

## Meditation

***And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.***

- *John 10:28*

For a Christian to think or speak lightly about a lack of trust and faith in his heavenly Father is a shameful thing, for it must be terribly upsetting to God to see His children mistrusting His love, His truth and His faithfulness. Do we really want to grieve Him in this way? Christian! it's totally against every promise of God's precious Word that you should ever be forgotten or left to perish. If it were possible,

how could the God “*who cannot lie*” (Titus 1:2) have said: “*Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you*” (Isa 49:15), and what would be the value of this further promise through the prophet Isaiah:- “*The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed, says the LORD, who has mercy on you.*” (Isa 54:10). Where would be the truth of Christ’s words - “*I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.*” (John 10:28-30).

If any of those for whom Christ died, and who have put their trust in Him, should be finally cast away where is God’s trustworthiness, His honour, His power, His grace, His covenant, His oath? Desponding believer you have every reason to banish for ever those unbelieving fears which so dishonour your Father. Get up from the ground where you’ve fallen, shake yourself from the dust and put on your beautiful clothes. Remember it is sinful to doubt God’s Word which promises you that you will never perish. Trust your Father’s faithfulness and allow that God given, eternal life within you to express itself in happy, confident rejoicing.

*The gospel bears my spirit up:  
A faithful and unchanging God  
Lays the foundation for my hope,  
In oaths, and promises, and blood*

## Prayer

*I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. For You, O God, have heard my vows; You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name. Ps 61:4-5*

## Scripture readings

### “Help, Lord”

Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head. - For strangers have risen up against me, and oppressors have sought after my life; they have not set God before them. Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with those who uphold my life.

Suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?"

Give us help from trouble, for the help of man is useless. - I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live. The pains of death surrounded me, and the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!" Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful.

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

**Ps 12:1** - Ps 3:2-3; Ps 54:3-4 - Matt 8:24-26 - Ps 60:11; Ps 116:1-5; 2 Peter 2:9

*Suggested additional reading: **Psalm 121***

## Meditation

### “Help, Lord.” - Psalm 12:1

Although this little prayer is remarkable in its simplicity it reveals much about the one who is praying. In its context here David is mourning the fewness of faithful men, and therefore lifts up his heart in supplication. When help from his created fellow beings failed, he flew direct to the Creator. He evidently also felt his own weakness or he would not have cried for help. But at the same time

he intended honestly to exert himself for the cause of truth and righteousness, for the word “help” requires that we ourselves do something.

In these two words there is directness, clear thinking and a request that gets straight to the point of the need, all of which honour God far more than the rambling of long prayers. The Psalmist runs straight to his God, with a well-considered prayer; he knows what he is seeking, and where to seek it. Lord, teach us to pray in the same blessed manner.

Appropriate moments for the use this prayer are with us every day. In the practical, emotional and psychological challenges of everyday life, when no one seems to either understand our need or to be a position to help we can lift our eyes heavenward with these simple words, “*Help, Lord.*”. When baffled and confused by doctrinal difficulties in reading the Scriptures, we can turn directly to the great Teacher Himself for light and understanding. The Christian life is a warfare and our spiritual enemy is strong and subtle and this same prayer can be our SOS call to the heavenly throne for reinforcements to find “*grace to help in time of need*” (Heb 4: 16). In fact “*Help, Lord*” will suit us living and dying, suffering or labouring, rejoicing or sorrowing. “*God is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble*” (Ps 46:1), we don't need to hesitate to cry to Him.

Finally we can be confident that if our prayer is sincerely offered through Jesus the answer is certain. The Lord's character assures us that He will not leave His people; His relationship as Father and Husband (*Is 54:5*) guarantees us His aid; His gift of Jesus is a pledge of every good thing (*Rom 8:32*); and His promise stands sure, “*Fear not, I WILL HELP YOU.*” (*Isa 41:13*)

## Prayer

*But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favour You will surround him as with a shield.*

*Ps 5:11-12*

## Scripture readings

### Your Redeemer

Thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine". - I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. - You, O LORD, are our Father; our Redeemer from Everlasting is Your name.

Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people. - I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus. - You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.

**Isa 54:5** - Isa 43:1; Jer 31:3; Isa 63:16 - Luke 1:68; Job 19:25-26 - Gal 3:13-14; 1 Peter 1:18-19 - Isa 54:5

*Suggested additional reading: Isaiah 54*

## Meditation

***"Your Redeemer."*** - *Isaiah 54:5*

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, is ours; altogether ours and ours for ever! All that He is, He is for us. He is king for us, priest for us, and prophet for us. Whenever we read a new title describing the Redeemer, we can recognise Him as ours under that name as much as under every other name. The shepherd's staff, the father's rod, the

captain's sword, the priest's mitre, the prince's sceptre, the prophet's mantle, all are ours. Jesus has no honourable status that He won't use for our benefit, and no privileges as Son of God and Son of Man that He won't exercise for our blessing.

His fulness of Godhead is our unfailing, inexhaustible treasure-house. His manhood also, which He took upon himself for us, is ours in all its perfection. Our gracious Lord credits to our account the spotless virtue of His stainless character; to us He gives the reward won by His obedient submission and incessant service. He makes the glorious garment of His perfect life a beautiful covering for us. The glittering virtues of His character are like ornaments and jewels to adorn us; and the superhuman meekness of His death is so much ours that we can boast and glory in it as the basis of a full salvation.

He bequeaths to us His manger, from which to learn how God came down to man; and His Cross to teach us how man may go up to God. All His thoughts, emotions, actions, utterances, miracles, and intercessions, were for us. He trod the road of sorrow on our behalf, and has made over to us as His heavenly legacy the full results of all the labours of his life. He is now today as much ours as He ever was; and He is not ashamed to acknowledge Himself "*our Lord Jesus Christ,*" though he is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Christ everywhere and every way is our Christ, for ever and ever most richly to enjoy. O my soul, by the power of the Holy Spirit! call Him this morning, "*your Redeemer.*"

## Prayer

*Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God? You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples. You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.*

*Ps 77:13-15*

## Scripture readings

### **They were all filled with the Holy Spirit**

John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire". - When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. - And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

That you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. - I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 2:4** - Luke 3:16; John 16:13-14 - Acts 4:31; Acts 13:52 - Eph 3:17-19; 1 Cor 1:4-5 - Rom 15:13

*Suggested additional reading: **John 16: 5-24***

## Meditation

***And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*** - Acts 2:4

If we were all filled with the Holy Spirit today, how blessed we would all be. It's impossible to overestimate the consequences of this sacred filling of our souls. Life, comfort, light, purity, power, peace; and so many other precious blessings come to us only through the

gracious influence of the Holy Spirit. As sacred **oil**, He anoints the head of the believer and sets him apart to the calling of the priesthood which belongs to all saints, and gives him the grace to execute this office aright. As the only truly purifying **water**, He cleanses us from the power of sin and sanctifies us unto holiness, working in us to will and to do of the Lord's good pleasure. (*Phil 2:13*). As the **light**, He initially made us aware that we were sinners and now He is daily directing us to the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, Friend and Shepherd and guides us in the way of righteousness. Enlightened by His pure celestial ray, we are no more darkness but light in the Lord. (*Eph 5:8*). As **fire**, He both purges us from dross, and sets our consecrated nature on a blaze. He is the sacrificial flame by which we are enabled to offer our whole souls as a living sacrifice unto God. As heavenly **dew**, He removes our barrenness and fertilizes our lives into fruitfulness. O that He would drop on us from above during these devotions today! Such morning dew would be a wonderful commencement for the day. As the **dove**, with wings of peaceful love He broods over His Church and over the souls of believers, and as a Comforter He dispels the cares and doubts which spoil the peace of His beloved. He descends upon the chosen as He did upon the Lord in Jordan, and assures them of their sonship by working in them a filial spirit by which they cry Abba, Father. As the **wind**, He brings the breath of life to men; blowing where He wishes (*John 3:8*) performing the quickening operations by which the spiritual creation is animated and sustained. Would to God, that we might feel His presence this day and every day.

## Prayer

*Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Ps 51:11-12*

## Scripture readings

**For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.**

I will sow them among the peoples, and they shall remember Me in far countries ... and they shall return. - "And it shall come to pass in all the land," says the LORD, "that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

**Amos 9:9** - Zech 10:9; Zech 13:8-9 - Luke 22:31-32 - Isa 43:2-3 - John 10:27-30

*Suggested additional reading: Zech 2*

## Meditation

***For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain will fall to the ground.*** - Amos 9:9

Every sifting comes by ***divine command and permission***. Satan had to ask permission before he could lay a finger on Job. (*Job 1:9-12*).

No, even more than this, in a very real sense our siftings are ***directly the work of heaven***, for the text says, *“I will sift the house of Israel”*. Satan, like a mere servant, may well be holding the sieve, hoping to destroy the corn; but the overruling hand of the Master is accomplishing the purity of the grain by the very process which the enemy intended to be destructive. God’s precious one, although you may feel to be sifted like grains of corn, be comforted by the blessed fact that the Lord is directing both flail and sieve to His own glory, and to your eternal profit.

The Lord Jesus will surely use the fan which is in His hand, and **He will “take out the precious from the vile”** (Jer 15:19). *“For they are not all Israel who are of Israel”* (Rom 9:6). The heap on the barn floor is not pure grain, and so the winnowing process is necessary. In the sieve true weight is the deciding factor. Husks and chaff having no substance will be caught by the wind and blown away and only solid corn will remain.

But, observe the **complete safety of the Lord’s wheat**; for even the smallest grain has a promise of being preserved. God Himself sifts, and therefore it is stern and terrible work; He sifts them in all places, “among all nations”; He sifts them in the most effective manner, “as grain is sifted in a sieve”; and yet for all this, not the smallest, lightest, or most shrivelled grain, is permitted to fall to the ground. Every individual believer is precious in the Lord’s sight. A shepherd wouldn’t willingly lose one sheep, nor a jeweller one diamond, nor a mother one child, nor a man one limb of his body. The Lord has the power to prevent such loss, and He will not lose one of His redeemed people. However little we may be, if we are the Lord’s, we may rejoice and be happy that we are preserved in Christ Jesus.

## Prayer

*For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; but You brought us out to rich fulfillment.*

*Ps 66:10-12*

## Scripture readings

### **You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips;**

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour. - He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ... that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell. - Being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, ... having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. - For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens.

All bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" - The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will see the land that is very far off.

**Ps 45:2** - John 1:14 - Heb 2:9; Col 1:15;18-19; Heb 1:3-4; Heb 7:26 - Luke 4:22; John 7:46 - Isa 33:17

*Suggested additional reading: Hebrews 1*

## Meditation

***“You are fairer than the sons of men.”*** - Psalm 45:2

The entire person of Jesus is like one single precious stone and His whole life from Bethlehem to Calvary but one single impression of the seal. He is altogether complete; not only in His several parts, but as a gracious all-glorious whole. His character is not a mass of

fair colours mixed in a muddled way, nor a heap of precious stones laid carelessly one upon another; He is a picture of beauty and a breastplate of glory. In Him, all the “things of good repute” are in their proper places, and serve to emphasise the glory of the other without conflict. Not one feature in His glorious person attracts attention at the expense of others; but He is perfectly and altogether lovely.

Oh, Jesus! Your power, Your grace, Your justice, Your tenderness, Your truth, Your majesty, and Your immutability make up such a man, or rather such a God-man, unseen anywhere else in heaven or on earth. Your infancy, Your eternity, Your sufferings, Your triumphs, Your death, and Your immortality, are all woven in one gorgeous tapestry, without seam or tear. You are music without discord; You are many, and yet not divided; You are all things, and yet not diverse. As all the colours blend into one resplendent rainbow, so all the glories of heaven and earth meet in You, and unite so wondrously, that there is no one else like You; nay, if all the virtues of the most excellent were bound in one bundle, they couldn't rival You. You are the reflector of all perfection. You have been anointed with the holy oil of myrrh and cassia, which Your God has reserved for You alone. Your fragrance is that of holy anointing oil, unlike anything the most skilled of human perfumers can ever produce. Each spice is fragrant, but the compound is divine.

*“Oh, sacred symmetry! oh, rare connection  
Of many perfects, to make one perfection!  
Oh, heavenly music, where all parts do meet  
In one sweet strain, to make one perfect sweet!”*

## Prayer

*We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness, in the midst of Your temple. According to Your name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.*

*Ps 48:9-10*

## Scripture readings

**He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory.**

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house. - Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together, - O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones.

"Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. - Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

**Zech 6:13** - 1 Peter 2:5; Eph 2:19-22 - Isa 54:11-12 - Rev 21:9-11 - Acts 20:32

*Suggested additional reading: Revelation 21*

## Meditation

***He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory. - Zechariah 6:13***

Christ Himself is the builder of His spiritual temple and He is building it on the mountains of His unchangeable love, His omni-

potent grace and His infallible truthfulness. But just as the materials needed careful preparation for Solomon's earthly temple, so is it here. There are the "Cedars of Lebanon," but they are not ready for the building until they are cut down and shaped and made into those planks of cedar, whose scented beauty will make glad the courts of the Lord's house in Paradise. There are also the rough stones, but they are still in the quarry; they must be cut out and squared. All this is Christ's own work. Each individual believer is being prepared, and polished, and made ready for his place in the temple and Christ's own hand is performing this preparation-work. Difficulties and afflictions cannot bring sanctification except as they are used by Him to this end. Our prayers and efforts cannot make us ready for heaven apart from the hand of Jesus, who fashions our hearts aright.

As in the building of Solomon's temple, "*no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.*" (1 Kings 6:7). All the building material was first made perfectly ready and then taken to the exact spot it was planned to occupy. It's the same with the temple which Jesus is building. The preparation work is all done on earth. When we reach heaven, there will be no continuing sanctifying work, no more masonry work through afflictions, no sanding and planing us through suffering. No, we must be made ready here. Christ will do it all beforehand and when He has done it, we shall be ferried by a loving hand across the stream of death, and brought to the heavenly Jerusalem, to abide as eternal pillars in the temple of our Lord.

*"Beneath His eye and care,  
The edifice shall rise,  
Majestic, strong, and fair,  
And shine above the skies."*

## Prayer

*We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness, in the midst of Your temple. According to Your name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.*

Ps 48:9-10

## Scripture readings

### **Ephraim is a cake not turned**

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." - "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And ... though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."

And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

**Hos 7:8** - Matt 23:27-28; Matt 6:24 - 1 Cor 13:1-3 - Rev 3:15-16 - 1 Kings 18:21

*Suggested additional reading: Matthew 23*

## Meditation

### ***Ephraim is a cake unturned.*** - Hosea 7:8

A cake not turned is ***uncooked on one side***; and so Ephraim was, in many respects, untouched by divine grace. Although there was some partial obedience, there was a lot of rebellion left. Think carefully about this. Can the same be said of you? Are you thoroughly sincere and in earnest in the things of God? Has God's

grace through His Spirit penetrated into the very centre of your being so that its divine influence is affecting every aspect of your character, all your actions, your words, and your thoughts? To be sanctified, spirit, soul, and body, should be your aim and prayer; and although sanctification won't be perfect in any part of you it should be showing itself universally in your character. There mustn't be the appearance of holiness in some places and yet sin still in full control in others. This would indicate that you too are "*a cake unturned*".

Secondly a cake unturned is *soon burnt on the side nearest the fire*. Although no one can have too much genuine religion, there are some who seem to be burnt black with bigoted zeal for some aspect of truth which appeals and are often charred to a cinder with a proud Pharisaic ostentation of particular religious performances which suit them. The appearance of superior holiness can frequently accompany a total absence of all vital godliness. Such a person is a saint in public but a devil in private. He deals in flour by day and in soot by night. The cake which is burned on one side, is uncooked dough on the other!

*If this is so with me, O Lord, turn me!* Turn my unsanctified nature to the fire of Your love and let it feel the sacred glow. Let my burnt side cool a little while I learn my own weakness and let me realise my need of heat when I am removed from Your heavenly flame. Please don't allow me to be a double-minded man, but bring me entirely under the powerful influence of reigning grace, for I know that if I am left like a cake unturned, and am not subject to Your grace on all sides I must be consumed for ever in your flames of judgement.

## Prayer

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Ps 139:23-24*

## Scripture readings

**A certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"**

"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" - And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

And it was told Him by some, who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You." But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." - "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. ... If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."

The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

**Luke 11:27-28** - Luke 1:42; Luke 1:46-48 - Luke 8:20-21; Matt 12:50 - John 14:21;23 - Ps 25:14

*Suggested additional reading: **Luke 1:39-56***

## Meditation

***A certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!***

*Luke 11:27, 28*

Some fondly imagine that Mary, the mother of Jesus must have had the tremendous privilege of looking into our Lord's heart and

understanding Him in a way we could never hope to. There is however no evidence that Mary had any advantage over any of us in this particular regard. What she experienced of her blessed son she thought over carefully and kept in her heart (*Luke 2:19 and 51*) but nothing we read in the Gospels would indicate that she was a better-informed believer than any other of Christ's disciples. All that she knew we may also know.

If this should surprise you think over these Scriptures: *"The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."* (Ps 25:14), and remember the Master's words: *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you."* (John 15:15). The Divine Revealer of secrets tells us His heart in such a loving way that He keeps nothing back which is profitable for us. Note His words of assurance to His disciples: *"If it were not so, I would have told you."* (John 14:2).

Doesn't He promise to manifest Himself to us in a way He doesn't to the world? (*John 14:21-24*). We don't need to cry out in envy: *"Blessed is the womb that bore You"* but with our thoughts firmly established in the Scriptures we can intelligently bless God that, having heard the Word and kept it, we have firstly as true a communion with the Saviour as the Virgin had, and secondly just as true an acquaintance with the secrets of His heart as she, His mother, could have obtained. What a blessed privilege we have!

## Prayer

*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes.*

Ps 119:11-12

## Scripture readings

### **Get up into the high mountain**

The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills.

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. - I ... count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him ... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bethel.

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago - whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows - such a one was caught up to the third heaven. ... He was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

He, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

**Isa 40:9** - Hab 3:19 - John 17:3; Phil 3:8-11 - Song 2:16-17 - 2 Cor 12:2-4 - Acts 7:55-56

*Suggested additional reading: **Philippians 3***

## Meditation

### ***Get up into the high mountain.* - Isaiah 40:9**

Growing in our Christian faith and particularly in our personal experience and knowledge of our Saviour is somewhat like climbing a mountain. Most of us have done this at some stage in our life, either in Wales, the Lake District or Scotland or perhaps the Belchen

here in the Black Forest!. When you start, although the countryside is beautiful, in reality your vision is very limited. The mountain itself appears only half as high as it really is and being confined within a small valley the main interest is the delightful little rippling brook dropping down the hillside into the bigger stream below. Climb the first rising knoll, and the valley lengthens and widens. Go higher, and you begin to see more and more the countryside opening out around you. Mount higher still, and the scene enlarges still further until at last, as you reach the summit, you can look east, west, north, and south and see a vast area of undulating hills and open plains stretching out all around you. Over there is a forest in some distant county, perhaps two hundred miles away, and here the sea, and there a shining river; villages nestle in the valleys and that haze and smog indicates the location of a far off larger city. You are emotionally stirred by the quietness and solitude of your situation. You are alone with God enjoying the beauty of the creation which so wonderfully expresses "*His eternal power and Godhead*" (Rom 1:20).

This experience can be likened to the Christian life. When we first believe in Christ we see but little of Him. The higher we climb the more we discover of His wonderful character and the significance of what He has done for us. But who has ever reached the summit? Who has known all the heights and depths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge? Paul, when he had grown old, sitting grey-haired, shivering in a dungeon in Rome, could say with greater emphasis than we can, "*I know whom I have believed*" (2 Tim 1:12), for each experience had been like climbing a hill, each trial had been like ascending another summit. However it will take the experience of physical death itself to bring us to the topmost peak and enable us to see the whole of the faithfulness and love of Him to whom we have committed our souls. Keep climbing believer! There are ever increasing experiences to enjoy on the way up and most of us have hardly yet left the lower slopes.

## Prayer

*I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Ps 63:2-3*

## Scripture readings

### Have you become like us?

"Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the reeds flourish without water? While it is yet green and not cut down, it withers before any other plant. So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, whose confidence shall be cut off, and whose trust is a spider's web." - The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment? Though his haughtiness mounts up to the heavens, and his head reaches to the clouds, Yet he will perish forever like his own refuse; those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?' He will fly away like a dream, and not be found; yes, he will be chased away like a vision of the night.

They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are unstable. I said, "You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High. But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes."

Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! For the uncircumcised and the unclean shall no longer come to you. - There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

**Isa 14:10** - Job 8:11-14; Job 20:5-8 - Ps 82:5-7 - Isa 52:1; Rev 21:27

*Suggested additional reading: **Matthew 7:13-29***

## Meditation

### ***Have you become like us?** - Isaiah 14:10*

Consider the terrible doom of the hypocrite, the man or woman who is professing to be a Christian but has inwardly rejected Christ. When his naked soul appears before God how will he be able to bear that voice, "Depart from Me, you cursed one; you have rejected me, and I reject you. You have played the harlot, and departed from Me and I also have banished you for ever from my presence. You have

rejected my mercy for so long and now the day of grace is over, there can be no more mercy.”

What will be this wretch’s shame at the last great day when, before assembled multitudes, his hypocrisy is unmasked? See how the profane, and sinners who never professed religion, raise themselves from their beds of fire to point at him. “There he is,” says one, “is he going to preach the gospel to us in hell?” “There he is,” says another, “he rebuked me for cursing, and was a hypocrite himself!” “Aha!” says another, “here comes a psalm-singing enthusiast; he hardly ever missed a religious meeting; he is the man who boasted of being sure of everlasting life; and here he is in hell!”

No greater eagerness will ever be seen from Satan's tormenting agents, than in that day when they drag the hypocrite’s soul down to eternal destruction. John Bunyan pictures this with massive but awful grandeur of poetry when he speaks of the back-way to hell. Seven devils bound the wretch with nine cords, and dragged him away from the road to heaven, in which he had professed to walk, and thrust him through the back-door into hell. Think carefully about that back-way to hell, professing Christian believer! Examine yourself, to be sure that you are truly in the faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to search you and to confirm to your spirit that you are sincerely trusting Christ alone for your salvation. It is the easiest thing in the world to give a casual, lenient verdict when you are judging yourself; but O, think sincerely and honestly about this. Be just to all, but be rigorous with yourself. Remember if you are not building on the rock Christ Jesus then your house will fall, and great will be the fall of it.

O may the Lord give you sincerity, constancy, and firmness. May you never fall from your faith and turn aside from following Christ, however strong the opposition and traumatic the circumstances.

## Prayer

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Ps 139:23-24*

## Scripture readings

### **Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler**

Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. - If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive; ... then the waters would have overwhelmed us, the stream would have gone over our soul. ... Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth. Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. - Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. - The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. - For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

**Ps 91:3** - 1 Tim 6:9 - Ps 25:15; Ps 124:2-7 - John 8:34; John 8:31-32 - 2 Cor 3:17; Isa 61:1; Gal 5:13

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Peter:5*

## Meditation

### ***Surely he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler***

*Ps 91:3*

There are two senses in which God delivers His people from the fowler's snare; '*from*' it and '*out of*' it. Firstly, He delivers them *from* the snare, that is He doesn't allow them to enter it; and secondly, if they should be caught in it then He delivers them *out of* it. The first promise is the more precious to some; the second for others.

*“He shall deliver you **from** the snare.”* How? The means by which God often delivers us is through sending trouble. God knows that our backsliding will soon end in our destruction, and He in mercy sends the rod. We might say, “Lord, why is this?” not knowing that our trouble has been the means of delivering us from far greater evil. Many have in this way been saved from ruin by their sorrows and their crosses. These various things have stopped us and turned us around before our feet could get fully entangled in the devil's snare. They have frightened us, the bird; away from the net.

At other times, God keeps His people *from* the snare of the fowler by giving them greater spiritual strength, so that when they are tempted to do evil they are able to say like Joseph, *“How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”* (Gen 39:9).

But if the believer should, in an evil hour, get entangled in the snare, what a blessing it is that God has here promised to rescue him **out of** it! O backslider, there is good reason for you to be cast down, regretful and depressed, but don't despair. Although you have wandered far from your God hear what your Redeemer says: *“Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.”* (Jer 3:22). But, you say you can't return, for you are a captive, full of guilt and yet imprisoned in this relationship, addiction or some other uncontrollable situation. Then listen to the promise: *“Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.”* Through Christ's power, who died for you, there is freedom, even for you; freedom from all the evil into which you have fallen. Return to Him and He will set you free. Although you will never stop regretting your backsliding, repenting of it and perhaps suffering consequences from it, yet He who has loved you will never reject you; He will receive you, and give you joy and gladness, that the bones which He has broken may rejoice. (*Ps 51:8*). No bird of paradise can die in the fowler's net.

## Prayer

*Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have enlarged; bring me out of my distresses! Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. Ps 25:16-18*

## Scripture readings

### **Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!**

"Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me," says the Lord. - "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith."

God --- delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds.)

You once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. - He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world - You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

**Ps 120:5** - Jer 9:6; Rev 2:13-14 - 2 Peter 2:7-8; Col 1:13-14 - John 17:15-16; Matt 5:13

*Suggested additional reading: 2 Peter 2*

## Meditation

### ***Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!*** - Psalm 120:5

As a Christian you have to live in the middle of an ungodly world, and it is of little use for you to cry "Woe is me." Jesus didn't pray that you should be taken out of the world, and what He didn't

pray for, you shouldn't want. It's far better in the Lord's strength to meet the difficulty, and glorify Him in it. The enemy is ever on the watch to detect inconsistency in your conduct; therefore be very *holy*. Remember that the eyes of all are watching you, and that more is expected from you than from other men. Aim in His strength to give no occasion for blame. Let the only fault they can discover in you to be your faithfulness in obeying God. Like Daniel, compel them to say of you, "*We shall not find any charge against this Daniel, unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*" (Daniel 6.5)

Seek to be *useful* as well as consistent. Perhaps you think, "If I were in a more favourable position I might serve the Lord better, but I can't do any good where I am". Don't you believe it, the worse the people are among whom you live, the more they need your godly influence; if they are crooked, there is more need for you to show what honesty is; and if they are perverse, there is more need for you to be a witness to God's truth to their proud hearts. Where would you expect to find the doctor, surely to be surrounded by sick people. Where is honour to be won by the soldier if it isn't in the hottest fire of the battle?

When you are worn out with the struggle of coping with the sin that confronts you on every hand, consider that all the saints have endured the same trial. They were not carried to heaven in comfort and you mustn't expect to travel more easily than they. They had to risk death in the most exposed places of the globe, and you won't be crowned till you also have endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. So! "*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*" (1 Cor 16:13)

## Prayer

*Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

*Matt 6:13*

## Scripture readings

### The upright love you

Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! - When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. - I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me.

Love rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. - We love Him because He first loved us.

Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

**Song of Solomon 1:4;** Ps 31:23; John 21:15 - Ps 116:1-2 - John 14:23; Prov 8:17 - 1 Cor 13:6-7; Rom 5:5; 1 John 4:19 - Eph 6:23-24

*Suggested additional reading: 1 Cor 13*

## Meditation

### *The upright love You - Song 1:4*

Believers love Jesus with a deeper affection than they dare to give to any other being. They would sooner lose father and mother than part with Christ. They hold all earthly comforts with a loose hand, but they carry Him fast, embrace in their hearts. They voluntarily deny themselves for His sake, but they can not be driven to *deny* Him. If in a moment of weakness some form of denial passes

their lips, it is their greatest sorrow and like Peter they repent with bitter tears.

It is scant love which the fire of persecution can dry up; the true believer's love is a deeper stream than this. Men have laboured to divide the faithful from their Master, but their attempts have been fruitless in every age. Neither crowns of honour, nor frowns of anger, have untied this more than Gordian knot. This is no every-day attachment which the world's power may at length dissolve. Neither man nor devil have found a key which opens this lock. Never has the craftiness of Satan shown itself so weak as when he has used it in trying to break apart this union of two divinely welded hearts.

It is written, and nothing can blot out the sentence, "*The upright love You.*" The intensity of the love of the upright, however, is not so much to be judged by how it appears as by how the upright long for to be. It is our daily sorrow that we don't love Him enough. Would that our hearts were capable of holding more, and reaching deeper. Like Samuel Rutherford, we sigh and cry, "*Oh, for as much love as would go round about the earth, and over heaven — yea, the heaven of heavens, and ten thousand worlds — that I might let all out upon fair, fair, only fair Christ.*"

Alas! the longest reach of our love is hardly longer than our arms and our affection is but as a drop of a bucket compared with what He deserves. Measure our love to our Lord by our intentions however and we are immediately in another scale. Our trust is that our Lord will understand our weaknesses and take notice of the cry of our heart to love Him more. Oh, that we could give all the love in all hearts in one great mass, a bringing together of all loves to Him who is altogether lovely!

## Prayer

*I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust. Ps 18:1-2*

## Scripture readings

**As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring.  
The rain also covers it with pools.**

Spring up, O well! All of you sing to it. The well the leaders sank, dug by the nation's nobles, by the lawgiver, with their staves."

My soul shall make its boast in the Lord. The humble shall hear of it and be glad. Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul. When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass.

The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. - Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And in that day you will say: Praise the Lord, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing to the Lord, for He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth.

**Ps 84:6** - Num 21:17-18 - Ps 34:2; Ps 66:16; Isa 66:14 - 2 Cor 1:3-4; Ps 66:16 - Isa 12:3-5

*Suggested additional reading: Numbers 21*

## Meditation

***Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well, the rain also fills the pools. - Psalm 84:6***

Using an illustration from biblical times, when wells in the earth dug out by one company of travellers are there to provide water for the next, this verse teaches us that the *comfort* we ourselves find may often provide invaluable help to those following us.

We may read a biography and find it full of encouragement. It is just like Jonathan's rod, dropping with honey. Ah! we think our brother has been here before us, and dug this well for our blessing. Some of Psalms are particularly helpful in this way; "Why are you cast down, O my soul?"

Travellers have been delighted to see a human footprint on a barren shore, and we love to see the waymarks of pilgrims while passing through the vale of tears.

In this verse pilgrims dug the well, but, strangely it fills from the top instead of the bottom. We use the means, but the blessing does not spring from the means. We dig a well, but heaven fills it with rain. "*The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the Lord.*" (Prov 21:31). The means are connected with the end, but they do not of themselves produce it. See here the rain fills the pools, so that the wells become useful as reservoirs for the water; labour is not lost, but at the same time it is only God's blessing which can make it successful.

Grace may well be compared to rain for its purity, for its refreshing and life-giving influence, for the fact it comes from above, and for the sovereignty with which it is given or withheld. May you experience showers of blessing, and may the wells others have dug be filled with water for you! But what are means and ordinances without the smile of heaven! They are as clouds without rain, and pools without water. O God of love, open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing!

## Prayer

*Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain! 1 Chron 4:10*

# Holidays and more in the Black Forest



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*Photo: River Rhine during an excursion from Haus Barnabas*