

Like Christ

Andrew Murray

Abstract: This article is composed of selected sections from Andrew Murray's book, "Like Christ: Developing the character of Jesus in your life." The book was written towards the end of the 19th century in Wellington, Western Cape. An edited version of the complete book was published in 1981 by Whitaker House in Springdale, Pennsylvania.

Contents

Introduction: on preaching Christ our Example

- 1. Like Christ.... because we abide in Him**
- 2. Like Christ.... he Himself calls us**
- 3. Like Christ.... as one that serves**
- 4. Like Christ.... our Head**
- 5. Like Christ.... in suffering wrong**
- 6. Like Christ.... crucified with Him**
- 7. Like Christ.... in His self-sacrifice**
- 8. Like Christ.... not of the world**
- 9. Like Christ.... in His heavenly mission**
- 10. Like Christ.... in His love**
- 11. Like Christ.... in His praying**
- 12. Like Christ.... in His use of Scripture**
- 13. Like Christ.... in forgiving**
- 14. Like Christ.... in His humility**
- 15. Like Christ.... in the likeness of His death**
- 16. Like Christ.... in the likeness of His resurrection**
- 17. Like Christ.... led by the Spirit**

Introduction: on preaching Christ our Example

“Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). In these words of the Council of Creation, with which the Bible history of man opens, we have the revelation of the eternal purpose to which man owes his existence – the glorious, eternal future to which he is destined. God proposes to make a Godlike creature, a being who will be His very image and likeness, the visible manifestation of the glory of the Invisible One.

To have a being, at once created and yet Godlike, was indeed a task worthy of infinite wisdom. It is the nature and glory of God that He is absolutely independent of all else, having life in Himself, owing His existence to none but Himself alone. If man is to be Godlike, he must bear His image and likeness in this, too – he must become what he is to be of his own free choice. He must make himself. On the other hand, it is the nature and glory of man to be dependent, to owe everything to the blessed Creator. How can the contradiction be reconciled – a being at once dependent and yet self-determined, created and yet Godlike. In man, the mystery is solved. As man, God gives him life, but endows him with the wonderful power of a free will. It is only in the process of a personal and voluntary appropriation that anything so high and holy as likeness to God can really become his very own.

When sin entered and man fell from his high destiny, God did not give up His purpose. Of His revelation to Israel, the central thought was: “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44). Likeness to God in that which constitutes His highest perfection is to be Israel’s hope. Redemption had no higher ideal than creation had revealed. It could only take up and work out the eternal purpose.

It was with this in mind that the Father sent to the world the Son who was the express image of His person. In Him, the Godlikeness to which we had been created, and which we personally had to appropriate and make our own, was revealed in human form. In looking upon Him, the desire after our long lost likeness to God was to be awakened. To accomplish the renewal of our image, there was a twofold work that Christ had to do. The one was to reveal in His life the likeness of God so that we might know what a life in that likeness was, and understand what it was we had to expect and accept from Him as our Redeemer. When He had done this, and shown us the likeness of the life of God in human form, He died that He might win for us, and impart to us, His own life as the life of the likeness of God, that in its power we might live in the likeness of what we had seen in Him.

And when He ascended to heaven, it was to give us, in the Holy Spirit, the power of that life He had first set before us and then won to impart to us. The one depends on the other. For what as our Example He had in His life revealed, He as our Redeemer by His death purchased the power. His earthly life showed the path. His heavenly life gives the power in which we are to walk. What God has joined together no man may separate. Whoever does not stand in the full faith of the redemption, does not have the strength to follow the Example. And, whoever does not seek conformity to the image as the great object of the redemption, cannot fully enter into its power. Christ lived on earth that He might show forth the image of God in His life. He lives in heaven that we may show forth the image of God in our lives.

The church of Christ has not always maintained the proper relationship of these two truths. In the Protestant churches, the truth of God’s pardoning and quickening grace took its rightful place. However, the danger of one-sidedness was in most cases not avoided. The doctrine that Christ lived on earth, not only to die for our redemption, but to show us how we were to live, did not receive sufficient prominence. While no evangelical church will deny that Christ is our Example, the absolute necessity of following the example of His life is not preached with the same distinctness as that of trusting the atonement of His death. Great pains are taken, and that most justly, to lead men to accept the merits of His death. What is not right, is that equally great pains are not taken to lead men to accept the following in His footsteps as the one mark and test of true discipleship.

It is hardly necessary to point out what influence the way this truth is presented will exercise in the life of the church. If atonement and pardon are everything, and the life in His likeness something

secondary, it follows as a matter of course that the chief attention will be directed to the former. With the attaining of pardon and peace, there will be a tendency to rest content. If, on the other hand, conformity to the image of God's Son is the chief object, and the atonement the means to secure this end as the fulfilment of God's purpose in creation, then, in all the preaching of repentance and pardon, the true aim will always be kept in the foreground. Faith in Jesus and conformity to His character will be regarded as inseparable. Such a church will produce true followers of the Lord.

In this respect, Protestant churches still need to go on to perfection. Only then will the church put on her beautiful garments, and truly shine in the light of God's glory – when these two truths are held in that wondrous unity in which they appear in the life of Christ Himself. In all He suffered for us, He left us an example that we should follow in His footsteps. As the banner of the cross is lifted high, the atonement of the cross and the fellowship of the cross must equally be preached as the condition of true discipleship.

It is remarkable how distinctly this comes out in the teaching of the blessed Master Himself. In fact, in speaking of the cross, He gives its fellowship more prominence than its atonement. How often He told the disciples that they must bear it with Him and like Him. Only thus could they be disciples, and share in the blessings His cross-bearing was to win. It is not only I who must die, He said, but you, too. The cross, the spirit of daily self-sacrifice, is to be the badge of our allegiance to Christ.

That Christ bore the cross for us is not all. It is only the beginning of His work. It opens the way to the full exhibition of what the cross can do as we are taken up into a lifelong fellowship with Him, the Crucified One. And, in our daily life, we experience and prove what it is to be crucified to the world. And yet, how many earnest and eloquent sermons have been preached on glorifying in the cross of Christ, in which Christ's dying on the cross for us has been expounded, but our dying with Him, in which Paul so gloried, has been forgotten!

The main reason why the conformity to Jesus is so little seen, and in fact so little sought after among a large majority of Christians, is undoubtedly to be found in erroneous views as to our weakness, and what we may expect divine grace to work in us. Men have such strong faith in the power of sin, and so little faith in the power of grace, that they at once dismiss the thought of our being expected to be just as loving, just as forgiving, and just as devoted to the Father's glory as Jesus was. They think of it as an ideal far beyond our reach – beautiful indeed, but never to be realised. According to them, God cannot expect us to be or do what is so entirely beyond our power. They confidently point to their own failure in earnest attempts to curb temper and to live wholly for God as proof that it cannot be done.

It is only by the persistent preaching of Christ our Example, in all the fullness and glory of this blessed truth, that such unbelief can be overcome. Believers must be taught that God does not reap where He has not sown, that the fruit and the root are in perfect harmony. God expects us to strive and think and act exactly like Christ, because the life that is in us is exactly the same as that which was in Him. We have a life like His within us. What could be more natural than that the outward life should be like His, too? Christ living in us is the root and strength of Christ's acting and speaking through us, shining out from us so as to be seen by the world.

1. Like Christ... because we abide in Him

“He that saith he abide in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked” (1 Jn. 2:6).

Abiding in Christ and *walking like Christ*: these two blessings of the new life are presented here in their essential unity. The fruit of a life *in* Christ is a life *like* Christ.

To the first of these expressions, *abiding in Christ*, we are no strangers. The wondrous parable of the vine and the branches, with the accompanying command, “Abide in Me, and I in you” (Jn. 15:4), has often been a source of rich instruction and comfort. And though we feel as if we have only imperfectly learned the lesson of abiding in Him, yet we have tasted something of the joy that comes when the soul can say: “Lord, you know all things. You know that I do abide in You.” And, He also knows how often the fervent prayer still arises: “Blessed Lord, do grant me the complete, unbroken abiding.”

The second expression, *walking like Christ*, is no less significant than the first. It is the promise of the wonderful power which abiding in Him will exert. As the fruit of our surrender to live wholly in Him, His life works so mightily in us that our walk – the outward expression of the inner life – becomes like His. The two are inseparably connected. The *abiding in* always precedes the *walking like* Him. The heavenly Giver will bestow the fullness of His grace if He sees that the soul is prepared to use it according to His design.

There are two vital lessons to be learned from these closely related truths:

The first lesson they teach is: He who seeks to abide in Christ *must walk even as He walked*. We all know that it is a matter of course that a branch bear fruit of the same sort as the vine to which it belongs. The life of the vine and the branch is so completely identical that the manifestation of that life must be identical, too. When the Lord Jesus redeemed us with His blood, and presented us to the Father in His righteousness, He did not leave us in our old nature to serve God as best we could. No, in Him dwells eternal life – the holy, divine life of heaven – and everyone who is in Him receives that same eternal life in its holy, heavenly power.

The mighty life of God in the soul does not, however, work as a blind force compelling us ignorantly or involuntarily to act like Christ. On the contrary, the walking like Him must be the result of a deliberate choice sought in strong desire and accepted by a living will. With this view, the Father showed us in Jesus’ earthly life what the life of heaven would be when it came down into the conditions and circumstances of our human life. The whole earthly life of the Master is the rule and guide of all our conduct. If we abide in Jesus, we may not act other than He did. “Like Christ” gives, in one, all-inclusive expression, the blessed law of the Christian life. He is to think, to speak, to act as Jesus did.

The second lesson is the complement of the first: He who seeks to walk like Christ, *must abide in Him*. With some Christians there is the earnest desire and effort to follow Christ’s example. And yet, they have no sense of how impossible it is to do so without a deep, real abiding in Him. They fail because they seek to obey the high command to live like Christ, without the only power that can do so – the living *in* Christ. With others, there is the opposite error. They know their own weakness, and think that walking like Christ is an impossibility. Those who seek to do it and who fail need the lesson as much as those who do not seek it because they expect to fail. To walk like Christ one must abide in Him. He who abides in Him has the power to walk like Him; not in himself or his own efforts, but in Jesus, who perfects His strength in our weakness.

It is when I feel my utter weakness most deeply, and fully accept Jesus in His wondrous union to myself as my life, that His power works in me. Then, I am able to lead a life completely beyond what my own power could obtain. I begin to see that abiding in Him is not a matter of moments or special seasons, but the deep life process in which – by His keeping grace – I continue without a moment’s intermission. And I feel encouraged to really take Him as my entire example, because I am sure that the hidden, inner union and likeness must work itself out into a visible likeness in walk and conduct.

Dear reader! If God gives us grace, in the course of our meditations, to truly enter into the meaning of His words and what they teach about a life like Christ's, we will more than once cry out, "How can these things be?" If the Holy Spirit reveals the heavenly perfection of the humanity of our Lord as the image of the unseen God, and speaks, "so, even so ought ye also to walk," the first effect will be that we will begin to feel how far we are from Him. We will be ready to give up hope and to say with so many, "There's no reason to even try, I can never walk like Jesus." At such moments, we will find our strength in the message, *He that abideth in Him, he must, he can, also walk even as He walked*. The word of the Master will come with new meaning as the assurance of sufficient strength: "He who abide in Me bears much fruit."

Therefore, brethren, abide in Him! Every believer is in Christ. But, not everyone abides in Him in the consciously joyful and trustful surrender of his or her whole being given up to His control and influence. You know what abiding in Him is. It is to consent with our whole soul to His being our life, to depend on Him to inspire us in all that goes to make up life, and then to absolutely give up everything so that He may rule and work in us. It is resting in the full assurance that He does, each moment, work in us what we are to be. He himself enables us to maintain that perfect surrender, in which He is free to do all His will.

Prayer: "Blessed Saviour, You know how often I have said, Lord, I do abide in You! And yet, I sometimes feel that the full joy and power of a life in You is lacking. Your word this day has reminded me of what the reason for my failure might be. I sought to abide in You more for my own comfort and growth than for Your glory. I did not fully understand how the hidden union with You had for its object perfect conformity to You. I didn't realise how only he who wholly yields himself to serve and obey the Father as completely as You did can fully receive all that the heavenly love can do for him. Lord, thank You for the discovery. With my whole heart I accept Your calling, and yield myself in everything to walk even as You walked. To be Your faithful follower in all that You were and did on earth is the one desire of my heart. Blessed Lord, he who truly yields himself to walk as You walked, will receive grace to wholly abide in You. O my Lord, here I am. To walk like Christ, for this I do indeed consecrate myself to You. To abide in Christ, for this I trust in You with full assurance of faith. Perfect in me Your own work. And, let the Holy Spirit help me, o Lord, each time I meditate on what it is to walk like You, to hold fast the blessed truth: as one who abides in Christ, I have the strength to walk like Christ. Amen."

2. Like Christ... He Himself calls us

“I have given you an example, that ye should do, as I have done to you” (Jn. 13:15).

It is Jesus Christ, the beloved Redeemer of our souls, who speaks thus. He had just humbled Himself to do the work of the slave by washing His disciples' feet. In doing so, His love demonstrated to the body the service which was lacking at the supper table. At the same time He showed, in a striking symbol, what He had done for their souls in cleansing them from sin. In His twofold work of love He set before them, just before parting, the whole work of His life as a ministry of blessing to body *and* soul. And as He sits down, He says: “I have given you an example, that ye should do, as I have done to you.” All that they had seen in Him and experienced from Him is thus made the rule of their life.

The word of the blessed Saviour applies to us, too. To each one who knows that the Lord has washed away his sins, He commands with all the touching force of one who is going out to die, “Even as I have done to you, so do ye also.” Jesus Christ does indeed ask everyone of us in everything to act just as we have seen Him do. What He has done to us, and still does each day, we are to do over again to others. In His condescending, pardoning, saving love, He is our example.

At once, we think: “Alas, how seldom I have lived like Christ. How little I have even known that I was expected to live thus!” And yet, He is my Lord; He loves me, and I love Him. I must not entertain the thought of living in any other way than He would have me. I must open my heart to His Word, and fix my gaze on His example, until it exercises its divine power upon me, and moves me to cry: “Lord, even as You have done, so will I do also.”

There is one thing I must not forget. It is not the remembrance of what Jesus has done to me, but the living experience of what He is now to me, that will give me the power to act like Him. His love must be a present reality – the inflowing of a life and a power in which I can love like Him. It is only through the Holy Spirit that I can realise what Jesus is doing for me, how He does it, that it is He who does it, and that it is possible to me to do to others what He is doing to me.

“Even as I have done to you, do ye also!” What a precious word! What a glorious prospect! Jesus is going to show forth in me the divine power of His love, so that I may show it forth to others. He blesses me, that I may bless others. He loves me, that I may love others. He saves and cleanses me, that I may save and cleanse others. He becomes a servant to me, that I may become a servant to others. He gives Himself wholly for and to me, that I may wholly give myself for and to others. I have only to be doing to others what He is doing to me – nothing more. I can do it because He is doing it to me. What I do is nothing but repeating, showing forth, what I am receiving from Him (see Num. 10:32).

Wondrous grace, which thus calls us to be like our Lord in that which constitutes His highest glory. Wondrous grace, which fits us for this calling by Himself first being to us and in us what we are to be to others. Our whole heart will joyously respond to His command, Yes, blessed Lord, even as You do to me will I also do to others.

Prayer: “Gracious Lord, what can I now do but praise and pray? My heart feels overwhelmed with this wondrous offer: that You will reveal all Your love and power in me if will yield myself to let it flow through me to others. Though with fear and trembling, yet in deep, grateful adoration, with joy and confidence, I accept the offer and say: Here I am. Show me how much You love me, and I will show it to others by loving them even so. Grant me, by Your Holy Spirit, a clear insight into Your love for me, that I may know how You love me. And also grant me to see, as often as I feel how little love I have, that it is not with the love of my little heart, but with Your love shed abroad in me, that I have to fulfil the command of loving like You. Am I not Your branch, O my heavenly Vine? It is the fullness of Your life and love that flows through me in love and blessing to those around. It is Your Spirit that, at the same moment, reveals what You are to me, and strengthens me for what I am to be to others in Your name. In this faith, I dare to say, Amen, Lord, even as You do to me, I also do. Yes, Amen.”

3. Like Christ... as one that serves

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (Jn. 13:14).

“I am among you as He that serveth” (Lk. 22:27).

In the last chapter, we spoke of the Lord’s right to demand and expect that His redeemed ones follow His example. Now, we will more deeply consider in what it is we have to follow Him. “Ye also ought to wash one another’s feet,” is the word we want to fully understand. The three main thoughts are:

- the *form* of a servant in which we see Him,
- the *cleansing* which was the object of that service, and
- the love which was its main power.

Firstly, the *form* of a servant. All was ready for the last supper, down to the very water to wash the feet of the guests, according to custom. But, there was no slave to do the work. Each one waited for the other: none of the twelve thought of humbling himself to do the work. Even at the table, they were concerned with who should be greatest in the kingdom they were expecting (Lk. 22:26-27).

All at once, Jesus rises (they were still sitting at the table), lays aside His garments, girds Himself with a towel, and begins to wash their feet. O wondrous spectacle, on which angels gazed with adoring wonder! Christ, the Creator and King of the universe, at whose beck legions of angels are ready to serve Him, might have said, lovingly, which one of the twelve must do the work. But, Christ chooses the slave’s place for His own, takes the soiled feet in His own holy hands, and washes them. He does it in full consciousness of His divine glory, for John says, “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God, rose” (Jn. 13:3). For the hands into which God had given all things, nothing is common or unclean. The lowliness of a work never lowers the person. The person honours and elevates the work, and imparts his own worth even to the most meagre of service.

In such deep humiliation, as we men call it, our Lord finds divine glory, and is in this the leader of His church in the path of true blessedness. It is as the Son that He is the servant. Just because He is the beloved of His Father, in whose hands all things are given, it is not difficult for Him to stoop so low. In thus taking the form of a servant, Jesus proclaims the law of rank in the church of Christ. The higher one wishes to stand in grace, the more it must be his joy to be the servant of all. “Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Mt. 20:27). “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Mt. 23:11). The higher I rise in the consciousness of being like Christ, God’s beloved Child, the deeper I will stoop to serve all around me.

A servant is one who is always caring for the work and interests of his master. He is ever ready to let his master see that he only seeks to do what will please or profit him. Thus Jesus lived: “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:45). “I am among you as He that serveth” (Lk. 22:27).

Thus I must live, moving among God’s children as the servant of all. If I seek to bless others, it must be in the humble, loving readiness with which I serve them, not caring for my own honour or interests, but only to be a blessing to them. I must follow Christ’s example in washing the disciples’ feet. A servant is not ashamed or humiliated by being regarded as an inferior: it is his place and work to serve others.

The reason why we so often do not bless others is because we want to show that we are superior to them in grace or gifts, or at least their equals. If only we would learn from our Lord to associate with others in the blessed spirit of a servant, what a blessing we would become to the world! Once this example is restored to the place it ought to have in the church of Christ, the power of His presence will soon make itself known.

Secondly, the work that the disciple is supposed to perform in this spirit of lowly service. The foot washing speaks of a double work – for the cleansing and refreshing of the body, and for the saving of the soul. During the whole of our Lord's life on earth, these two things were ever united: "The sick were healed, to the poor the gospel was preached" (see Lk. 7:22). Blessing to the body was the type and promise of a life given up to the Spirit.

Although the salvation of the soul is the first object in the disciple's holy ministry of love, he should remember that the external and bodily is the gate to the inner and spiritual life. He should seek the way to the hearts of people by the ready service of love in the little and common things of daily life. It is not by reproof and scolding that he shows that he is a servant. No, it is by friendliness and kindness with which he proves, in daily activity, that he is always thinking about how he can help or serve. He thus becomes the living witness of what it is to be a follower of Jesus.

From someone such as this, the word, when spoken, comes with power and finds easy entrance into the hearts of those who listen. And then, when he comes in contact with the sin, perverseness and contradiction of men, instead of being discouraged, he perseveres because he knows how much patience Jesus has borne with him, and still daily cleanses him. He realises himself to be one of God's appointed servants, to stoop to the lowest depth to serve and save men, even to bow at the feet of others if this be needed.

Thirdly, the spirit which will enable one to live such a life of loving service can be learned from Jesus alone. John writes, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end" (Jn. 13:1). For love, nothing is too hard. Love never speaks of sacrifice. To bless the loved one, however unworthy, it willingly gives up all. It was love that made Jesus a servant. It is love alone that will make the servant's place and work such a blessing to us that we will persevere in it at all costs. We may perhaps, like Jesus, have to wash the feet of some Judas who rewards us with ingratitude and betrayal. Only love, a heavenly unquenchable love, gives the patience, the courage, and the wisdom for this great work the Lord has set before us in His holy example: "Wash ye one another's feet."

Try, above all, to understand that it is only as a son that you can be truly a servant. It was as the Son that Christ took the form of a servant. In this, you will find the secret of willing, happy service. Walk among men as a son of the most high God. A son of God is only in the world to show forth his Father's glory, and to prove how Godlike and blessed it is to live only and at any cost to find a way to offer love to the hearts of the lost.

O my soul, your love cannot attain to this. Therefore, listen to Him who says, "Abide in My love" (Jn. 15:10). Our one desire must be that He may show us how He loves us, and that He Himself may keep us abiding in His love. Live every day as the beloved of the Lord, in the experience that His love washes, cleanses, bears, and blesses you all the day long. His love flowing into you will flow out again from you, and make it your greatest joy to follow His example in washing the feet of others.

Do not complain about the lack of love and humility in others, but pray much that the Lord would awaken His people to their calling. Pray that they would follow in His footsteps, that the world may see that they have taken Him for their example. And, if you do not see it as soon as you wish in those around you, let it only urge you to more earnest prayer. In you, at least, the Lord may have one who understands and proves that to love and serve like Jesus is the highest blessedness and joy, as well as the way, like Jesus, to be a blessing and a joy to others.

Prayer: "My Lord, I give myself to You to live this blessed life of service. In You, I have seen it. The spirit of a servant is a kingly spirit, come from heaven and lifting up to heaven, the Spirit of God's own Son. Your everlasting love dwell in me, and my life will be like Yours, and the language of my life to others as Yours, 'I am in the midst of you as He that serveth.' O glorified Son of God, You know how little of your Spirit dwells in us, how this life of a servant is opposed to all that the world deems honourable or proper. But, You have come to teach us new lessons of what is right, to show us what is thought in heaven of the glory of being the least, of the blessedness of serving. O You who not only gives new thoughts, but implants new feelings, give me a heart like Yours, a heart full of the Holy Spirit, a heart that can love as You did. O Lord, Your Holy Spirit dwells within me. Your fullness is my

inheritance; in the joy of the Holy Spirit, I can be as You are. I do yield myself to a life of service like Yours. Let the same mind be in me which was also in You when You made Yourself of no reputation, took upon You the form of a servant, and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Yourself. Yes, Lord, that very same mind be in me, too, by Your grace. As a son of God, let me be the servant of men. Amen."

4. Like Christ... our Head

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps... who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness” (1 Pet. 2:21-24).

The call to follow Christ's example and to walk in His footsteps is so high that there is every reason to wonder, How can sinful men be expected to walk like the Son of God? The answer that most people give is based on human reasoning – it cannot really be expected. The command sets before us an ideal, beautiful but unattainable.

The answer Scripture gives is different. It points us to the wonderful relationship in which we stand to Christ. Because our union to Him stirs within us a heavenly life with all its powers, the claim that we should live as Christ did may be made in downright earnest. The realisation of this relationship between Christ and His people is necessary for everyone who is serious in following Christ's example.

And what is this relationship? It is threefold. Peter speaks in this passage of Christ as our *Surety*, our *Example*, and our *Head*.

Christ is our *Surety*. “Christ also suffered for us... who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” As Surety, Christ suffered and died in our stead. He bore our sin, and at once broke its curse and power. As Surety, He did what we could not do, what we now need not do.

Christ is also our *Example*. In one sense, His work is unique. In another, we have to follow Him in it; we must do as He did, live and suffer like Him. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.” His suffering as my Surety calls me to a suffering like His as my Example. But is this reasonable? In His sufferings as Surety, He had the power of the divine nature, and how can I be expected in the weakness of the flesh to suffer as He did? Is there not an impassable gulf between these two things which Peter unites so closely, the suffering as Surety and the suffering as Example? No, there is a blessed third aspect of Christ's work which bridges that gulf, which is the connecting link between Christ as Surety and Christ as Example, which makes it possible for us to suffer and die like Him.

Christ is also our *Head*. In this, His Suretyship and His Example have their root and unity. Christ is the second Adam. As a believer, I am spiritually one with Him. In this union, He lives in me and imparts to me the power of His finished work, the power of His sufferings, death and resurrection. It is on this ground that we are taught, in Romans 6 and elsewhere, that the Christian is indeed dead to sin and alive to God. The very life that Christ lives – the life that passed through death and the power of that death – works in the believer. Thus, he is dead, and has risen again with Christ. It is this thought that Peter utters when he says: “Who His own self bore our sins upon the tree,” not only that we, through His death, might receive forgiveness, but “that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.”

As we have part in the spiritual death of the first Adam, having really died to God in him, so we have part in the second Adam, having really died to sin in Him. In Him, we are made alive again to God. Christ is not only our Surety who lived and died for us, our Example who showed us how to live and die, but also our Head, with whom we are one, in whose death we have died, in whose life we now live.

These three truths may not be separated from each other. And yet, this happens much too often. There are some who wish to follow Christ's Example without faith in His atonement. They seek to find within themselves the power to live like Him: their efforts are in vain. There are others who firmly believe in the Suretyship but neglect the Example. They believe in redemption through the blood of the cross, but neglect the footsteps of Him who bore it. Faith in the atonement is indeed the foundation of the building, but it is not all. Theirs, too, is a deficient Christianity, with no true view of sanctification, because they do not see how, along with faith in Christ's atonement, following His Example is indispensably necessary.

To follow His footsteps is a duty. It is the natural result of the wonderful union between Head and members. It is only when this is correctly understood that the blessed truth of Christ's Example will take its rightful place. There is nothing that weakens the power of Christ's Example so much as the thought that we cannot really walk like Him. Do not listen to such thoughts. The perfect likeness in heaven is begun on earth, can grow with each day, and will become more visible as life goes on.

As certain and mighty as the work of Surety which Christ, your Head, completed once and for all, is the renewal after His own image, which He is still working out. Let this double blessing make the cross doubly precious: Our Head suffered as a Surety, that in union with us He might bear sin for us. Our Head suffered as an Example, that He might show us the path on which, in union with Himself, He would lead us to victory and to glory. The suffering Christ is our Head, our Surety and our Example.

And so, the great lesson I have to learn is the wonderful truth that it is in that mysterious path of suffering – in which He worked out our atonement and redemption – that we are to follow His footsteps. The full experience of that redemption depends on the personal fellowship in that suffering. "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example." May the Holy Spirit reveal to me what this means.

Prayer: Precious Saviour, how can I thank you for the work You have done as Surety? Standing in the place of me, a guilty sinner, You have borne my sins in Your body on the cross. The cross was my due. You took it, and were made like me, that thus the cross might be changed into a place of blessing and life. And now You call me to the place of crucifixion as the place of blessing and life. There, I may be made like You, and may find in You power to suffer and to cease from sin. Precious Saviour, I confess that I have not fully understood this. Your Suretyship was more to me than Your Example. I rejoiced much that You had borne the cross for me, but too little that I, like You and with You, might also bear the cross. The atonement of the cross was more precious to me than the fellowship of the cross. The hope in Your redemption was more precious than personal fellowship with You. Forgive me this, dear Lord, and teach me to find my happiness in union with You, my Head, and not more in Your Suretyship than in Your Example. And grant that, in my meditations as to how I am to follow You, my faith may become stronger and brighter: Jesus is my Example because He is my life. I must and can be like Him, because I am one with Him. Grant this, blessed Lord, for Your love's sake. Amen."

5. Like Christ... in suffering wrong

“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God” (1 Pet. 2:19-20).

Peter uttered these weighty words concerning Christ as our Surety and Example in connection with a very common matter. He is writing to servants who, at the time, were mostly slaves. He teaches them “to be subject with all,” not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh and cruel. For, so he writes, if anyone do wrong and be punished for it, to bear it patiently is no special grace. But, if one does well, suffers it, and takes it patiently, this is acceptable with God; such bearing of wrong is Christlike. In bearing our sins as Surety, Christ suffered wrong from man. Following His example, we must be ready to suffer wrongfully, too.

There is almost nothing harder to bear than injustice from our fellow-men. Besides the sense of pain, there is the feeling of humiliation and injustice, and the consciousness of our rights being violated. In what our fellow-men do to us, it is not easy to at once recognise the will of God, who thus allows us to be tried, to see if we have truly taken Christ as our Example. Let us study that Example. From Him, we may learn what it was that gave Him the power to bear injuries patiently.

Christ believed in suffering as the will of God. He found in Scripture that the servant of God should suffer. He made Himself familiar with the thought, so that when suffering came, it did not take Him by surprise. He expected it. He knew that thus He must be perfected. And so, His first thought was not how to be delivered from it, but how to glorify God in it. This enabled Him to bear the greatest injustice quietly. He saw God’s hand in it.

Christian, do you want to have strength to suffer wrong in the spirit in which Christ did? Accustom yourself, in everything that happens, to recognise the hand and will of God. This lesson is of more importance than you think. Whether there is some great wrong done to you, or some little offence that you meet in daily life, before you fix your thoughts on the person who did it, be still and remember, God allows me to come into this trouble to see if I will glorify Him in it. Let me first recognise and submit to God’s will in it, then I will receive wisdom to know how to behave in it. With my eyes turned from man to God, suffering wrong is not as hard as it seems.

Christ also believed that God would care for His rights and honour. There is an innate sense of right within us that comes from God. But he who lives in the visible wants his honour to at once be vindicated here below. He who lives in the eternal is satisfied to leave the vindication of his rights and honour in God’s hands. He knows that they are safe with Him. It was thus with the Lord Jesus. Peter writes’ “He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. 2:23). It was a settled thing between the Father and the Son – the Son was not to care for His own honour, but only for the Father’s. The Father would care for the Son’s honour. Let the Christian follow Christ’s example in this, and it will give him such rest and peace. Give your right and your honour into God’s keeping. Meet every offence that man commits against you with the firm trust that God will watch over and care for you. Commit it to Him who judges righteously.

Further, Christ believed in the power of suffering love. We all admit that there is no power like that of love. Through it, Christ overcomes the enmity of the world. Every other victory only gives a forced submission. Love alone gives the true victory over an enemy, by converting him into a friend. We all acknowledge the truth of this as a principle, but we shrink from the application. Christ believed that by silence and submission, and by suffering and bearing wrong, He would win the cause because love would have its triumph.

And this is what He desires for us, too. In our sinful nature, there is more faith in might and right than in the heavenly power of love. But, he who wants to be like Christ must follow Him in this also, that He seeks to conquer evil with good. The more another does him wrong, the more he feels called to love

him. Even if it is necessary for the offender to be punished by law, he makes sure that there is no personal vendetta involved. As far as he is concerned, he forgives and loves.

Ah, what a difference it would make in Christendom and in our churches if Christ's example were followed! If each one who was reviled, "reviled not again"; if each one who suffered, "threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23). Fellow Christians, this is literally what the Father would have us do. Let us read and read again the words of Peter, until our soul is filled with the thought, "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

In ordinary Christian life, where we mostly seek to fulfil our calling as redeemed ones in our own strength, such a conformity to the Lord's image is an impossibility. But, in a life of full surrender, where we have given all into His hands in the faith that He will work all in us, there is the glorious expectation that the imitation of Christ is indeed within our reach. Would you not love to be like Jesus, and in bearing injuries act as He Himself would have acted in your place? Is it not a glorious prospect in everything, even in this, too, to be conformed to Him? It is too high for our strength, but in His strength it is possible.

Only surrender yourself to Him daily to be just what He would have you be. Believe that He lives in heaven to be the life and the strength of each one who seeks to walk in His footsteps. Yield yourself to be one with the suffering, crucified Christ, so that you may understand what it is to be dead to sins, and to live unto righteousness. And you will joyfully experience the wonderful power there is in Jesus' death, not only to atone for sin, but to break its power; and in His resurrection, to make you live unto righteousness. You will find it just as blessed to fully follow the footsteps of the suffering Saviour, as it has been to trust fully and only in that suffering for atonement and redemption. Christ will be as precious as your Example as He has been as your Surety. Because He took your sufferings upon Himself, you will lovingly take His sufferings upon yourself. And, bearing wrong will become a glorious part of the fellowship with His holy sufferings. It will be a glorious mark of being conformed to His most holy likeness, and a most blessed fruit of the true life of faith.

Prayer: "O Lord my God, I have heard Your precious word: If any man endure grief, suffering wrongfully, and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. This is indeed a sacrifice that is well-pleasing to You, a work that Your own grace alone has worked, a fruit of the suffering of Your beloved Son, of the example He left, and the power He gives in virtue of His having destroyed the power of sin. O my Father, teach me and all Your children to aim at nothing less than complete conformity to Your dear Son in this trait of His blessed image. Lord my God, I would now, once and for all, give up the keeping of my honour and my rights into Your hands, never again to take charge of them myself. You will care for them most perfectly. May my only care be the honour and the rights of my Lord! I especially beseech You to fill me with faith in the conquering power of suffering love. Let me fully comprehend how the suffering Lamb of God teaches us that patience and silence and suffering avail more with God, and therefore with man, too, than might or right. O my Father, I must, I would, walk in the footsteps of my Lord Jesus. Let Your Holy Spirit and the light of Your love and presence be my guide and strength. Amen."

6. Like Christ... crucified with Him

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me... God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 2:20; 6:14).

The Lord Jesus always spoke of taking up the cross as the test of discipleship. On three different occasions (Mt. 10:38; 16:24; Lk. 14:27), we find the words repeated, "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me." While the Lord was still on His way to the cross, this expression of taking up the cross was the most appropriate to indicate the conformity to Him to which the disciple is called. But after His crucifixion, the Holy Spirit gives another expression in which our entire conformity to Christ is still more powerfully set forth – the believing disciple is himself crucified with Christ. The crucified Christ and the crucified Christian belong to each other. One of the chief elements of likeness to Christ consists of being crucified with Him. Whoever wishes to be like Him must seek to understand the secret of fellowship with His cross.

At first sight, the Christian who seeks conformity to Jesus is afraid of this truth. He shrinks from the painful suffering and death with which the thought of the cross is connected. As his spiritual discernment becomes clearer, however, this word becomes his entire hope and joy. He glories in the cross because it makes him a partner in a death and victory that has already been accomplished, in which the deliverance from the powers of the flesh and of the world has been secured to him. To understand this, we must carefully notice the language of Scripture.

"I am crucified with Christ," Paul says, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Through faith in Christ we become partakers of Christ's life. That life is a life that has passed through the death of the cross, and in which the power of that death is always working. When I receive that life, I receive, at the same moment, the full power of the death on the cross working in me in its never-ceasing energy. The life I now live is not my own life. The life of the Crucified One is the life of the cross. Being crucified is a thing past and done. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. 6:6); "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" (Gal. 5:24); "I glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). These texts all speak of something that has been done in Christ, and into which I am admitted by faith.

It is of great consequence to understand this and to give bold utterance to the truth: I have been crucified with Christ; I have crucified the flesh. I thus learn how perfectly I share in the finished work of Christ. If I am crucified and dead with Him, then I am a partner in His life and victory. I learn to understand the position I must take to allow the power of that cross and that death to manifest itself in mortifying, or making dead, the old man and the flesh, in destroying the body of sin (Rom. 6:6).

For there is still a great work for me to do. But, that work is not to crucify myself: I have been crucified; the old man was crucified, so Scripture says. But, what I have to do is to always regard and treat it as crucified, and not to suffer it to come down from the cross. I must maintain my crucifixion position. I must keep the flesh in the place of crucifixion. To realise the force of this I must notice an important distinction. I have been crucified and am dead: the old Adam was crucified, but is not yet dead.

When I gave myself to my crucified Saviour, sin and flesh and all, He took me wholly. I with my evil nature was taken up with Him in His crucifixion. But, here a separation took place. In fellowship with Him, I was freed from the life of the flesh. I myself died with Him. In the innermost centre of my being, I received new life: Christ lives in *me*. But the flesh, in which I yet am – the old man that was crucified with Him – remained condemned to an accursed death, but is not yet dead. And now it is my calling, in fellowship with and in the strength of my Lord, to see that the old nature be kept nailed to the cross, until the time comes when it is finally destroyed. All its desires and affections cry out, "Come down from the cross. Save yourself and us." It is my duty to glory in the cross, with my whole heart to maintain the dominion of the cross, to set my seal to the sentence that has been pronounced, to make every uprising of sin dead, already crucified, and not to allow it to have dominion.

This is what Scripture means when it says, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:5). Thus, I continually and voluntarily acknowledge that in my flesh dwells no good thing. My Lord is Christ the Crucified One, and I have been crucified and *am dead* in Him. The flesh has been crucified and, though not yet dead, has been forever given over to the death of the cross. And so, I live like Christ, in every deed crucified with Him.

In order to fully enter into the meaning and the power of this fellowship of the crucifixion of our Lord, two things especially are necessary to those who are Christ's followers. The first is the clear consciousness of their fellowship with the Crucified One through faith. At conversion, they became partakers of it without fully understanding it. Many remain in ignorance all their life long because of a lack of spiritual knowledge. Brother and sister, pray that the Holy Spirit may reveal to you your union to the Crucified One. "I am crucified with Christ." "I glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me." Take such words of holy Scripture, and, by prayer and meditation, make them your own with a heart that expects and asks the Holy Spirit to make them living and effectual within you. Look upon yourself in the light of what you really are, "crucified with Christ."

Then you will find the grace for the second thing you need to enable you to live as a crucified one, in whom Christ lives. You will always be able to look upon and to treat the flesh and the world as nailed to the cross. The old nature continually seeks to assert itself, and to make you feel as if it is expecting too much to always live this crucifixion life. Your only safety is in fellowship with Christ. "Through Him and His cross," says Paul, "I am crucified to the world." In Him, the crucifixion is an accomplished reality. In Him, you have died, but also have been made alive: Christ lives in you. The deeper this fellowship of His cross is in you, the better. It brings you into deeper communion with His life and His love. To be crucified with Christ means freed from the power of sin – a redeemed one, a conqueror. Remember that the Holy Spirit has been specially provided to glorify Christ in you, to reveal within you, and make your very own, all that is in Christ for you.

Do not be satisfied, as so many others, to only know the cross in its power to atone. The glory of cross is, not only to Jesus, but to us, too, the path to life. But, each moment it can become to us the power that destroys sin and death, and keeps us in the power of the eternal life. Faith in the power of the cross and its victory will day by day make dead the deeds of the body, the lusts of the flesh. This faith will teach you to regard the cross, with its continual death to self, as all your glory. The banner under which complete victory over sin and the world is to be won is the cross.

Above all, remember what still remains the chief thing. It is Jesus, the living, loving Saviour, who Himself enables you to be like Him in all things. His sweet fellowship, His tender love, and His heavenly power make it a blessedness and joy to be like Him, the Crucified One. They make the crucifixion life a life of resurrection-joy and power. In Him, the two are inseparably connected. In Him, you have the strength to always be singing the triumphant song: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Prayer: "Precious Saviour, I humbly ask You to show me the hidden glory of the fellowship of Your cross. It is long since I knew the power of the cross to redeem me from the curse of sin. But how long I strove in vain as a redeemed one to overcome the power of sin, and to obey the Father as You have done! I could not break the power of sin. But now I see, this comes only when Your disciple yields himself entirely to be led by the Holy Spirit into the fellowship of Your cross. There You let him see how the cross has broken forever the power of sin, and has made him free. There You, the Crucified One, live in him and impart to him Your own Spirit of wholehearted self-sacrifice, in casting out and conquering sin. Oh, my Lord, teach me to understand this better. In this faith I say, "I have been crucified with Christ." Oh, You who loved me to the death, not Your cross, but Yourself the Crucified One, You are He whom I seek and in whom I hope. Take me, Crucified One, hold me fast, and teach me from moment to moment to look upon all that is of self as condemned, and only worthy to be crucified. Take me, hold me, and teach me, from moment to moment, that in You I have all I need for a life of holiness and blessing. Amen."

7. Like Christ... in His self-sacrifice

“Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour” (Eph. 5:2).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn. 3:16).

The incarnation of the Lord Jesus was self-sacrifice. His life of self-denial was proof of it. Through this, He was prepared for the great act of self-sacrifice in His death on the cross. Thus it is with the Christian. His conversion is, to a certain extent, the sacrifice of self, though a very partial one due to ignorance and weakness. From that first act of self-surrender arises the obligation to the daily exercise of self-denial. The Christian's efforts to do so show him his weakness, and prepare him for that new and more entire self-sacrifice in which he finds strength for more continuous self-denial.

Self-sacrifice is of the very essence of true love. The very nature and blessedness of love consists in forgetting self, and seeking happiness in the loved one. Where there is a want or need in the beloved, love is impelled, by its very nature, to offer up its own happiness for that of the other, to unite itself to the beloved one, and at any sacrifice to make him the sharer of its own blessedness.

Who can say whether or not this is one of the secrets which eternity will reveal: that sin was permitted because otherwise God's love could never have been so fully revealed? The highest glory of God's love was manifested in the self-sacrifice of Christ. It is the highest glory of the Christian to be like his Lord in this. Without entire self-sacrifice, the new command, the command of love, cannot be fulfilled. Without entire self-sacrifice, we cannot love as Jesus loved. “Be ye imitators of God,” says the apostle, “and walk in love, even as Christ hath loved us, and given Himself a sacrifice for us” Let all your walk and conversation be, according to Christ's example, in love. It was this love that made His sacrifice acceptable in God's sight, a sweet-smelling savour. As His love exhibited itself in self-sacrifice, let your love prove itself to be conformable to His in daily self-sacrifice for the welfare of others. Thus will it also be acceptable in the sight of God. “We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Even in the daily affairs of home life, in the discourse between husband and wife, and in the relationship between master and servant, Christ's self-sacrifice must be the rule of our walk. “Likewise, ye husbands, love your wives, even as also Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5:25).

And especially notice the words, “hath given Himself *for us* an offering *to God*” (Eph. 5:2). We see that self-sacrifice has two sides. Christ's self-sacrifice had a Godward as well as a manward aspect. It was *for us*, but it was *to God* that He offered Himself as a sacrifice. In all our self-sacrifice, there must be these two sides in union, though, at times, the one may be more prominent than the other.

It is only when we sacrifice ourselves to God that we will find the power for an entire self-sacrifice. The Holy Spirit reveals to the believer God's claim on us, how we are not our own, but His. The realisation of how absolutely we are God's property, bought and paid for with blood, of how we are loved with such a wonderful love, and of what blessedness there is in the full surrender to Him, leads the believer to yield himself a whole burnt offering. He lays himself on the altar of consecration, and finds it his highest joy to be a sweet-smelling savour to his God – God-devoted and God-accepted. And then, it becomes his first and most earnest desire to know how God wants him to show his entire self-sacrifice in life and walk.

God points him to Christ's example. He was a sweet-smelling savour to God when He gave Himself a sacrifice for us. For every Christian who gives himself entirely to His service, God bestows the same honour as He did for His Son – He uses him as an instrument of blessing to others. Therefore, John says, “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 Jn. 4:20). The self-sacrifice in which you have devoted yourself to God's service binds you also to serve your fellow-men. The same act which makes us entirely God's makes you entirely theirs.

It is this surrender to God that gives the power for self-sacrifice towards others, and even makes it a joy. When faith has first appropriated the promise, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Mt. 25:40), I understand the glorious harmony between sacrifice to God and sacrifice for men. My fellowship with my fellow-men, instead of being, as many complain, a hindrance to unbroken communion with God, becomes an opportunity of offering myself unceasingly to Him.

Blessed calling, to walk in love even as Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us a sacrifice and sweet-smelling savour to God. Only thus can the church fulfil its destiny, prove to the world that she is set apart to continue Christ's work of self-sacrificing love, and fill up that which remains behind of the afflictions of Christ.

But does God really expect us to deny ourselves so entirely for others? Is it not asking too much? Can anyone really sacrifice himself so entirely? Christian, God does expect it! Nothing less than this is the conformity to the image of His Son, to which He clearly calls you. This is the path by which Jesus entered into His glory and blessedness, and by no other way can the disciple enter into the joy of his Lord. "Walk in love, as Christ loved."

It is a great thing when a believer sees and acknowledges this. That God's people and even God's servants understand it so little is one great cause of the weakness of the church. We need to lift on high the banner of Christ's example, and to restore the truth of the power of Christ's resurrection as it makes us partakers of the life and the likeness of our Lord. Christians must not only believe in the full union with their Surety for their reconciliation, but with their Head as their example and their life. They must really represent Christ on earth, and let men see in the members how the Head lived when he was in the flesh. Let us earnestly pray that God's children everywhere may be taught to see their holy calling.

And all you who already long for it, oh, fear not to yield yourselves to God in the great act of a Christlike self-sacrifice! In conversion, you gave yourself to God. In many an act of self-surrender since then you have again given yourselves to Him. But, experience has taught you how much is still wanting. Perhaps you never knew how entire the self-sacrifice should and could be. Come now and see in Christ your example, and in His sacrifice of Himself on the cross, what your Father expects of you. Come now and see in Christ – for He is your Head and life – what He will enable you to be and do. Believe in Him, that what He accomplished on earth in His life and death as your example, He will now accomplish in you from heaven. Offer yourself to the Father in Christ, with the desire to be, as entirely and completely as He, an offering and a sacrifice unto God, given up to God for men.

Expect Christ to work this in you and to maintain it. Let your relationship to God be clear and distinct – you, like Christ, wholly given up to Him. Then, you will walk in love. Your fellowship with the brethren and with the world will be the most glorious opportunity of proving before God how completely you have given yourself to Him, an offering and a sacrifice for a sweet-smelling savour.

Prayer: "O my God, who am I that You should have chosen me to be conformed to the image of Your Son in His self-sacrificing love? In this is His divine perfection and glory, that He loved not His own life, but freely offered it for us to You in death. And in this I may be like Him. In a walk in love I may prove that I, too, have offered myself wholly to God. O my Father, Your purpose is mine. At this solemn moment I reaffirm my consecration to You – not in my own strength, but in the strength of Him who gave Himself for me. Because Christ, my example, is also my life, I venture to say it: Father, in Christ, like Christ, I yield myself a sacrifice to You for men. Father, teach me how You would use me to manifest Your love to the world. Fill me with Your love. May I walk in love, even as Christ loved us. May I live every day as one who has the power of the Holy Spirit to enable me to love everyone I come into contact with. Under every possible circumstance, let me love with a love which is not of me, but of Yourself. Amen"

8. Like Christ... not of the world

“These are in the world... The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world... They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (Jn. 17: 11, 14, 16).

“As He is, so are we in this world” (1 Jn. 4:17).

If Jesus was not *of* the world, why was He *in* the world? If there was no sympathy between Him and the world, why was it that He lived in it, and did not remain in that high, holy and blessed world to which He belonged? The answer is – the Father had sent Him into the world. In these two expressions, “in the world” and “not of the world” we find the whole secret of His work as Saviour, of His glory as the God-man. Christ was:

- *in the world*, in human nature, because God wanted to show that this nature belonged to Him, and not to the god of this world (Satan; 2 Cor. 4:4), and that this nature was most fit to receive the divine life and in this divine life to reach its highest glory;
- *in the world, in fellowship with men*, to enter into a loving relationship with them, to be seen and known of them, and thus to win them back to the Father;
- *in the world, in the struggle with the powers which rule the world*, to learn obedience, and so to perfect and sanctify human nature;
- *not of the world, but of heaven*, to manifest and bring near the life that is in God, which man had lost, that men might see it and long for it;
- *not of the world*, witnessing against its sin and departure from God, its inability to know and please God;
- *not of the world*, founding a kingdom entirely heavenly in origin and nature, entirely independent of all that the world holds desirable or necessary, and with principles and laws the very opposite of those which rule in the world;
- *not of the world*, in order to redeem all who belong to Him, and bring them into that new and heavenly kingdom which He had revealed.

The two expressions, “in the world” and “not of the world” reveal to us the great mystery of the person and work of the Saviour. He is not *of* the world as He judges and overcomes the world in the power of His divine holiness; but He was *in* the world that through His humanity and love He could seek and save the lost. The most entire separation from the world, with the closest fellowship with those in the world – these two extremes meet in Jesus. In His own person He has reconciled them. And, it is the calling of the Christian in his life to prove that these two dispositions, however much they may seem at variance, can in our life, too, be united in perfect harmony. In each believer, there must be a heavenly life shining out through earthly forms.

To take one of these two truths and exclusively cultivate it is not so difficult. So you have those who have taken “not of the world” as their motto. From the earliest ages, when people thought they must fly to cloisters and deserts to serve God, to our own days, when some seek to show the earnestness of their piety by severity in judging all that is in the world, there have been those who counted this the only true Christianity. There was separation from sin, but then there was also no fellowship with sinners. The sinner could not feel that he was surrounded with the atmosphere of a tender, heavenly love. It was a one-sided, and therefore a defective, faith.

Then, there are those who, on the other hand, stress “in the world.” They think that by showing that Christianity does not make us unfriendly or unfit to enjoy all that there is to enjoy, they will induce the world to serve God. It has often happened that they have indeed succeeded in making the world very religious, but at too high a price – Christianity became very worldly.

The true follower of Jesus must combine both concepts. If he does not clearly show that he is not of the world, and prove the greater blessedness of a heavenly life, how will he convince the world of sin, prove to them that there is a higher life, or teach them to desire what they do not yet possess? Earnestness, holiness, and separation from the spirit of the world must characterise him. His heavenly spirit must manifest that he belongs to a kingdom not of this world.

And still, he must live as one who is “in the world.” He was expressly placed here by God, among those who are of the world, to win their hearts, to acquire influence over them, and to communicate to them of the Spirit which is in him. The great study of his life must be how he can fulfil this mission. He will not succeed – as the wisdom of the world would teach – by yielding, complying, and softening down the solemn realities of Christianity. No, he will succeed only by walking in the footsteps of Him who alone can teach how to be *in* the world and yet not *of* the world. Only by a life of serving and suffering love, in which the Christian distinctly confesses that the glory of God is the aim of his existence, and in which, full of the Holy Spirit, he brings men into direct contact with the warmth and love of the heavenly life, can he be a blessing to the world.

Oh, who will teach us the heavenly secret of how to unite *in* the world but not *of* the world in our daily lives? He who has said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,” can do it. That “even as” has a deeper meaning and power than we know. If we allow the Holy Spirit to unfold that word to us, we will understand what it is to be in the world as He was in the world. We will discover the divine secret that the more entirely one is not of the world, the more fit he is to be in the world. The freer the church is of the spirit and principles of the world, the more influence she will exert in it.

The life of the world is self-pleasing and self-exalting. The life of heaven is a holy, self-denying love. The weakness of the life of many Christians who seek to separate themselves from the world is that they have too much of the spirit of the world. They seek their own happiness and perfection more than they seek anything else. Jesus Christ was not of the world, and had nothing of its spirit. This is why He could love sinners, could win them and save them.

The believer is as little of the world as Christ. In his new nature, he is born from heaven and has the life and love of heaven in him. His supernatural, heavenly life gives him the ability to be in the world without being of it. The disciple who fully believes in the Christlikeness of his inner life will experience the truth of it. He cultivates and gives utterance to the assurance: Even as Christ, so am I not of the world, because I am in Christ. He understands that only in close union with Christ can his separation from the world be maintained. In as far as Christ lives in him can he lead a heavenly life. He sees that the only way to answer to his calling is, on the one hand, as crucified to the world to withdraw himself from its power; and, on the other, as living in Christ to go into it and bless it. He lives in heaven and walks on earth.

Christians, see here the true imitation of Jesus Christ. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.” Then the promise is fulfilled, “I will dwell in them and walk in them” (2 Cor. 6:16-17). Then Christ sends you, as the Father sent Him, to be in the world as the place ordained of your Father to glorify Him, and to make known His love. A truly unworldly, heavenly spirit manifests itself not so much in the desire to leave earth for heaven, as in the willingness to live the life of heaven here on earth.

“Not of the world” is not only separation from and testimony against the world, but it is the living manifestation of the spirit, the love, and the power of the other world – of the heaven to which we belong, in its divine work of making this world partaker of its blessedness.

Prayer: “O great High Priest, who in Your high-priestly power did pray for us to the Father as those who, like Yourself, do not belong to the world, and still must remain in it, let Your all-prevailing intercession now be effectual in our behalf. The world still has entrance to our hearts, its selfish spirit is still too much within us. Through unbelief, the new nature has not always had full power. Lord, we beseech You, as fruit of Your all-powerful intercession, let that word be fully realised in us: “Not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Our only power against the world is our likeness to You. Lord, we can only be like You when we are one with You. We can only walk like You when we abide in You.

Blessed Lord, we surrender ourselves to abide in You alone. A life entirely given to You is one which You entirely take possession of. Let the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, unite us so closely with You that we may always live as not of the world. And let Your Spirit so make known to us Your work in the world, that it may be our joy in deep humility and fervent love to exhibit to all what a blessed life there is in the world for those who are not of the world. May the proof that we are not of the world be the tenderness and fervency with which, like You, we sacrifice ourselves for those who are in the world. Amen.”

9. Like Christ... in His heavenly mission

“As though hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world” (Jn. 17:18).

“As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you” (Jn. 20:21).

The Lord Jesus lived here on earth under a deep consciousness of having a mission from His Father to fulfil. He continually used the expression, “The Father hath sent Me.” He knew what the mission was. He knew the Father had chosen Him, and sent Him into the world with the one purpose of fulfilling that mission. He knew the Father would give Him all that He needed for it. Faith in the Father having sent Him was the motive and power for all that He did.

In earthly matters, it is a great help if an ambassador clearly knows what his mission is. That way, he has nothing to do but to care for its accomplishment, and to give himself undividedly to do this one thing. For the Christian, it is no less important that he should know that he has a mission, what its nature is, and how he is to accomplish it.

Our heavenly mission is one of the most glorious parts of our conformity to our Lord. He says it plainly in the most solemn moments of His life, that even as the Father sent Him, so He sends His disciples. He says it to the Father in His high-priestly prayer, as the basis upon which He asks for their keeping and sanctification. He says it to the disciples after His resurrection, as the basis on which they are to receive the Holy Spirit. Nothing will help us to know and fulfil our mission more than to realise how perfectly it corresponds to the mission of Christ, how they are, in fact, identical.

Our mission is like His in its object. Why did the Father send His Son? To make known His love and His will in the salvation of sinners. He was to do this not alone by word and precept, but in His own person, disposition, and conduct, He was to exhibit the Father’s holy love. He was so to represent the unseen Father in heaven, that men on earth might know what the Father was like.

After the Lord had fulfilled His mission, He ascended into heaven, and became to the world like the Father, the Unseen One. And now He has given His mission to His disciples, after having shown them how to fulfil it. They must so represent Him, the Invisible One, that from seeing them men can judge what He is like. Every Christian must so be the image of Jesus – must so exhibit in his person and conduct the same love to sinners and desire for their salvation – that from them the world may know what Christ is like. Oh my soul, take time to realise these heavenly thoughts.

Believer, whoever you are, and wherever you dwell, the Lord who knows you and your surroundings, has need of you and has chosen you to be His representative in the circle in which you move. Fix your heart on this. He has fixed his heart on you and saved you, in order that you should bear and exhibit to those who surround you the very image of His unseen glory. Oh, think of the origin of your heavenly mission in His everlasting love, as His had its origin in the love of the Father. Your mission is, in very truth, just like His.

The fitting for our mission also corresponds to that of Christ. Every ambassador expects to be supplied with all that he needs for his embassy. “He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone” (Jn. 8:29). That word tells us how, when the Father sent the Son, He was always with Him, His strength and comfort. It is even so with the church of Christ in her mission: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...” has the promise: “Lo, I am with you always” (Mt. 28:19-20).

The Christian need never hold back because of unfitness. The Lord does not demand anything which He does not give the power to perform. Every believer may depend on it. As the Father gave His Holy Spirit to the Son to fit Him for all His work, so the Lord Jesus made the same provision for His disciples to be endued with the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8).

Our mission is also like that of Christ in the consecration which it demands. The Lord Jesus gave Himself over entirely and undividedly to accomplish His work. He lived for it alone: “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work” (Jn. 9:4). The

Father's mission was the only reason for His being on earth. For this alone he would live – to reveal to mankind what a glorious, blessed God the Father of heaven is.

As with Jesus, so with us. Christ's mission is the only reason for our being on earth. Were it not for that, He would take us away. This heavenly mission is so great and glorious that without an entire consecration to it we cannot accomplish it. Without this, the powers which fit us for it cannot take possession of us. Just as with Jesus, our heavenly mission demands nothing less than entire consecration. Am I prepared for this? Then I indeed have the key through which the holy glories of this word of Jesus will be revealed to my experience: "As the Father sent Me, even so send I you."

Prayer: "O Lord Jesus, You descended from heaven to earth to show us what the life of heaven is. You could do this because You were of heaven. You brought with You the image and Spirit of the heavenly life to earth. Therefore, did You so gloriously exhibit what constitutes the very glory of heaven – the will and love of the unseen Father. Lord, You are now the Invisible One in heaven, and send us to represent You in Your heavenly glory as Saviour. You ask that we so love men that from us they may form some idea of how You love them in heaven. Blessed Lord, our heart cries out: How can You send us with such a calling? How can You expect it of us who have so little love? How can we, who are of the earth, show what the life of heaven is? Precious Saviour, our souls do bless You that we know You do not demand more than You give. You who are the life of heaven live in Your disciples. Blessed be Your holy Name, they have from You the Holy Spirit from heaven as their life breath. He is the heavenly life of the soul. Whoever surrenders himself to the leading of the Spirit can fulfil his mission. In the joy and power of the Holy Spirit we can be Your image-bearers, can show to men in some measure what Your likeness is. Lord, teach me and all Your people to understand that we are not of the world, as You were not of the world, and therefore are sent of You, even as You were sent of the Father, to prove in our life that we are of that heavenly world full of love, purity and blessing, like You. Amen."

10. Like Christ... in His love

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (Jn. 13:34).

“This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn. 15:12).

It is not the commandment of a law which convinces us of sin and weakness; it is a new command under a new covenant, that is established upon better promises. It is the command of Him who asks nothing that He has not provided, and now offers to bestow. It is the assurance that He expects nothing from us that He does not work in us. As I have loved you, and every moment am pouring out that love on you through the Holy Spirit, even so, love one another. The measure, the strength, and the work of your love will be found in My love to you.

As I have loved you – that word gives us the *measure* of the love with which we must love each other. True love knows no measure: it gives itself entirely. It may take the time and measure of showing it into consideration, but love itself is ever whole and undivided. This is the greatest glory of divine love that we have – the Father and Son, two persons, who, in love, remain one Being, each losing Himself in the other. This is the glory of the love of Jesus, who is the image of God, that He loves us as the Father loves Him. And, this is the glory of brotherly love, that it will know of no other law than to love as God and Christ.

He who desires to be like Christ must unhesitatingly accept this as his rule of life. He knows how difficult, how impossible it often is to thus love brethren, in whom there is often so much that is offensive or unamiable. Before going out to meet them in circumstances where his love may be tried, he goes in secret to the Lord. With his eye fixed on his own sin and unworthiness, he asks: How much do you owe your Lord? He goes to the cross and seeks to fathom the love with which the Lord has loved him. He lets the light of the immeasurable love of Him who is in heaven, shine in on his soul, until he learns to feel that divine love has only one law: love seeks not its own; love gives itself wholly.

And, he lays himself on the altar before his Lord: even as You have loved me, so I will love the brethren. By virtue of my union with Jesus, and in Jesus with them, there can be not question of anything less: I love them as Christ did. Oh, that Christians would close their ears to all the reasonings of their own hearts, and fix their eyes only on the law which He who loves them has emulated in His own example. Then, they would realise that there is nothing for them to do but this – to accept His commands and to obey them.

Our love may recognise no other measure than His, because His love is the strength of ours. The love of Christ is no mere idea or sentiment. It is a real, divine life power. As long as the Christian does not understand this, it cannot exert its full power in him. But, when his faith rises to realise that Christ's love is nothing less than the imparting of Himself and His love to the beloved, and he becomes rooted in this love as the source from which his life derives its sustenance, then he sees that his Lord simply asks that he allow His love to flow through him. He must live in a Christ-given strength. The love of Christ constrains him, and enables him to love as He did.

From this love of Christ, the Christian also learns what the work of his love to the brethren must be. We have already had occasion to speak of many manifestations of love – its loving service, its self-denial and its meekness. Love is the root of all these. It teaches the disciple to look upon himself as really called to be, in his little circle, just like Jesus, the One who lives solely to love and help others. Paul prays for the Philippians: “That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgement” (Phil. 1:9).

Love does not at once comprehend the work that it can do. The believer who prays that his love may abound in knowledge, and really takes Christ's example as his rule of life, will be taught what a great and glorious work there is for him to do. The church of God and every child of God, as well as the world, has an unspeakable need of love – of the manifestation of Christ's love. The Christian who really takes the Lord's word, “Love one another, as I have loved you,” as a command that must be

obeyed, carries about a power for blessing and life for all those he comes in contact with. Love is the explanation of the whole wonderful life of Christ, and of the wonder of His death. Divine love in God's children will still work its mighty wonders.

"Behold, what manner of love!" (1 Jn. 3:1). "Behold how He loved!" (Jn. 11:36). These words are the superscription over the love of the Father and of the Son. They must yet become the keywords to the life of every Christian. They will be so where, in living faith and true consecration, the command of Christ to love as He loved, is accepted as the law of life. As clearly as the call of Abraham, this principle was deposited as a living seed in God's kingdom, that what God is for us, we must be for others. "I will bless thee," and "thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2). If "I have loved you" is the highest manifestation of what God is for us, then "Even so love ye" must be the first and highest expression of what the child of God must be. In preaching, as in the life of the church, it must be understood: The love which loves like Christ is the sign of true discipleship.

Beloved Christians, Christ Jesus longs for you in order to make you, amid those who surround you, a very fountain of love. The love of heaven would gladly take possession of you, so that, in and through you, it may work its blessed work on earth. Yield to this rule. Offer yourself unreservedly to its indwelling. Honour it by the confident assurance that it can teach you to love as Jesus loved. As conformity to the Lord Jesus must be the chief mark of your Christian walk, so love must be the chief mark of that conformity.

Do not be disheartened if you do not attain it at once. Only keep a firm hold of the command, "Love, as I have loved you." It takes time to grow into it. Take time in secret to gaze on that image of love. Take time in prayer and meditation to fan the desire for it into a burning flame. Take time to survey all around you, whoever they may be, and whatever may happen, with this one thought, "I must love them." Take time to become conscious of your union with your Lord, that every fear as to the possibility of thus loving may be met with the word: "Have not I commanded you: Love as I have loved?" Christian, take time in loving communion with Jesus, your loving example, and you will joyfully fulfil this command, too, to love as He did.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus, who has loved me so wonderfully, and now commands me to love even as You, behold me at Your feet. Joyfully I accept Your commands, and now go out in Your strength to manifest Your love to all. In Your strength, O my Lord! Therefore, be pleased to reveal Your love to me. Shed abroad Your love in my heart through the Holy Spirit. . Let me live each moment in the experience that I am the beloved of God. Lord, let me understand that I can love, not with my own, but with Your love. You live in me; Your Spirit dwells and works in me. From You, there streams into me the love with which I can love others. You only ask that I understand and accept my calling, and that I surrender myself to live as You did. You want me to look on my old nature with its selfish and unlovingness as crucified, and in faith prepare to do as You command. Lord, I do it. In the strength of my Lord, I want to love even as You have loved me. Amen."

11. Like Christ... in His praying

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mk. 1:35).

“And He saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while” (Mk. 6:31).

In His life of secret prayer, too, my Saviour is my example. He could not maintain the heavenly life in His soul without continually separating Himself from man, and communing with His Father. The heavenly life in me has the same need of entire separation from man – the need not only of single moments, but of time enough for fellowship with the Fountain of Life, the Father in heaven.

The event which so attracted the attention of His disciples happened at the beginning of His public ministry. In the silence of the night, Jesus had gone out to seek a place of solitude in the wilderness. When the disciples found Him there, He was still praying.

Why did the Saviour need these hours of prayer? Did He not know the blessedness of silently lifting up his soul to God in the midst of the most pressing business? Did the Father not dwell in Him? And did He not, in the depth of His heart, enjoy unbroken communion with Him? Yes, that hidden life was indeed His portion. But that life, as subject to the law of humanity, had need of continual refreshing and renewing from the fountain. It was a life of dependence. Just because it was strong and true, it could not bear the loss of direct and constant communion with the Father, with whom and in whom it had its being and its blessedness.

What a lesson for every Christian! Much fellowship with man is dissipating and dangerous to our spiritual life. It brings us under the influence of the visible and temporal. Nothing can atone for the loss of secret and direct communion with God. Even work in the service of God is exhausting. We cannot continue to bless others without renewing our power from above. I need every day to have communion with my Father in secret. Like Christ, my life is hid in heaven, in God. It needs time day by day to be fed from heaven. It is from heaven alone that the power to lead a heavenly life on earth can come.

And what may have been the prayers that occupied our Lord there so long? If I could hear Him pray, how I might learn how I too must pray! God be praised! We have more than one of His prayers recorded, that in them, we might learn to follow His holy example. In the high-priestly prayer (Jn. 17) we hear Him speak, as in the deep calm of heaven, to His Father. In His Gethsemane prayer, a few hours later, we see Him calling out of the depths of trouble and darkness unto God. In these two prayers we have all: the highest and the deepest there is to be found in the communion of prayer between Father and Son.

In both these prayers, we see how He addresses God. Each time it is *Father! O My Father!* In that word lies the secret of all prayer. The Lord knew that He was a Son, and that the Father loved Him. With that word, He placed Himself in the full light of the Father's countenance. This was to Him the greatest need and greatest blessing of prayer – to enter into the full enjoyment of the Father's love. Let it be thus with me, too. Let the principle part of my prayer be the holy silence and adoration of faith, in which I wait on God until He reveals Himself to me, and gives me, through His Spirit, the loving assurance that He looks down on me as a Father – that I am well pleasing to Him.

He who, in prayer, does not have time in quietness of soul, and in full consciousness of its meaning to say Abba Father, has missed the best part of prayer. It is in prayer that the witness of the Spirit – that we are children of God and that the Father draws nigh and delights in us – must be exercised and strengthened. “If our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we obey His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 Jn. 3:21).

In both these prayers, I also see what He desired: that the Father may be glorified. He speaks: “I have glorified Thee; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.” That, most assuredly, was the

spirit of every prayer – the entire surrender of Himself only to live for the Father’s will and glory. All that He asked had only one object, that God might be glorified. In this, too, He is my example. I must seek to have the spirit of each prayer I offer: “Father, bless Your child, and glorify Your grace in me, only so that I may glorify You.” Everything in the universe must show forth God’s glory. The Christian who is inspired with this thought, and avails himself of prayer to express it until he is thoroughly imbued with it, will have power in prayer. Even of His work in heaven our Lord says: “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (Jn. 14:13). O my soul, learn from your Saviour before you pour out your desires in prayer, first to yield yourself as a whole burnt offering, with the one object that God may be glorified in you.

Then, you have sure ground on which to pray. You will feel the strong desire, as well as the full liberty, to ask the Father that in each part of Christ’s example – in each feature of His image – you may be made like Him, so that God may be glorified. You will understand how, only in continually renewed prayer, the soul can surrender itself to wait for God to work in it what will be to His glory.

Because Jesus surrendered Himself so entirely to the glory of His Father, He was worthy to be our Mediator. He could, in His high-priestly prayer, ask such great blessings for His people. Learn like Jesus to seek only God’s glory in prayer, and you will become a true intercessor, who can not only approach the throne of grace with his own needs, but can also pray for others the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much. He who in every prayer makes God’s glory the chief object will also, if God calls him to it, have strength for the prayer of Gethsemane, “Thy will be done.”

Every prayer of Christ was intercession because He had given himself for us. All He asked and received was in our interest. Every prayer He prayed was in the spirit of self-sacrifice. Give yourself, too, wholly to God for man, and, as with Jesus, so with us, the entire sacrifice of ourselves to God in every prayer of daily life is the only preparation for those single hours of soul struggle in which we may be called to some special act of surrender of the will that costs us tears and anguish. But, he who has learned the former will surely receive strength for the latter.

O my brethren, if you and I want to be like Jesus, we must especially contemplate Jesus praying alone in the wilderness. That is the secret of His wonderful life. What He did and spoke to man was first spoken and lived through with the Father. In communion with Him, the anointing with the Holy Spirit was each day renewed. He who desires to be like Him in his walk and conversation, must simply begin by following Jesus into solitude. Even though it might cost the sacrifice of night rest, of business, of fellowship with friends, the time must be found to be alone with the Father.

Besides the ordinary hour of prayer he will feel, at times, irresistibly drawn to enter into the holy place, and not to come away until it has once again be revealed to him that God is his portion. In his secret chamber, with closed door, or in the solitude of the wilderness, God must be found every day and our fellowship with Him renewed. If Christ needed it, how much more we! What it was to Him, it will be for us.

What it was to Him is apparent from what is written of His baptism: “It came to pass, that Jesus also being baptised, *and praying*, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him; and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased” (Lk. 3:21-22). Yes, this will be to us the blessing of prayer: the opened heaven, the baptism of the Spirit, the Father’s voice, and the blessed assurance of His love and good pleasure. As with Jesus, so with us; from above, must it all come in answer to prayer.

Christlike praying in secret will be the secret of Christlike living in public. O let us rise and avail ourselves of our wonderful privilege – the Christlike boldness of access into the Father’s presence, the Christlike liberty with God in prayer.

Prayer: “O my blessed Lord, You have called me and I have followed You, that I may bear Your image in all things. Daily, I seek Your footsteps that I may be led by You wherever You go. This day, I have found them, wet with the dew of night, leading to the wilderness. There, I have seen You kneeling for hours before the Father. There, I have heard You, too, in prayer. You gave up all to the

Father's glory, and from the Father You ask, expect, and receive all. Impress, I beseech You, this wonderful vision deep in my soul: my Saviour rising up a great while before day to seek communion with His Father, and to ask and obtain in prayer all that He needed for His life and work. O my Lord, who am I that I may thus listen to You? Yes, who am I that You call me to pray, even as You have done? Precious Saviour, from the depths of my heart I beseech You, awaken in me the same strong need of secret prayer. Convince me more deeply that, as with You so with me, the divine life cannot attain its full growth without much secret communion with my heavenly Father, so that my soul may indeed dwell in the light of His countenance. Let this conviction awaken in me such burning desire that I may not rest until each day afresh my soul has been baptised in the streams of heavenly love. O You my Example and Intercessor, teach me to pray like You! Amen"

12. Like Christ... in His use of Scripture

“That all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me” (Lk. 24:44).

What the Lord Jesus accomplished here on earth as man He owed greatly to His use of the Scriptures. In them, He found the way in which He had to walk, the food and the strength on which He could work, and the weapon by which He could overcome every enemy. The Scriptures were indeed indispensable to Him through all His life and passion: from the beginning to the end of His life was the fulfilment of what had been written of Him in the volume of the Book.

It is scarcely necessary to give proof of this. In the temptation in the wilderness, it was by His “It is written...” that He conquered Satan (Mt. 4:4). In His conflicts with the Pharisees, He continually appealed to the Word: “What saith the Scripture? ... Have you not read? ... Is it not written?” In His fellowship with His disciples it was always from the Scriptures that He proved the certainty and necessity of His sufferings and resurrection: “How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?” (Mt. 26:54). And in His communion with His Father in His last sufferings, it is in the words of Scripture that He pours out the complaint of being forsaken, and then again commends His spirit into the Father’s hands. All this has a very deep meaning.

The Lord Jesus was Himself the living Word (Jn. 1:1-4, 14). He had the Spirit without measure (Jn. 3:34). If anyone could have done without the written Word, it would have been Him. And yet, we see that it is everything to Him. More than anyone else, He thus shows us that the life of God in human flesh and the Word of God in human speech are inseparably connected. Jesus would not have been what He was, could not have done what He did, had He not yielded Himself step by step to be led and sustained by the Word of God.

Let us try to understand what this teaches us. The Word of God is more than once called Seed (Lk. 8:11-15; 1 Pet. 1:23). It is the seed of the divine life. We know what seed is. It is that wonderful organism in which the life, the invisible essence of a plant or tree, is so concentrated and embodied that it can be taken away and made available to impart the life of the tree elsewhere. This use may be twofold. As fruit we eat it, for instance, in the corn that gives us bread. The life of the plant becomes our nourishment and our life. Or, we sow it, and the life of the plant reproduces and multiplies itself. In both aspects, the Word of God is seed.

True life is found only in God. But that life cannot be imparted to us unless it is set before us in some shape in which we know and recognise it. It is in the Word of God that the invisible, divine life takes shape, brings itself within our reach, and become communicable. The life, the thoughts, the sentiments, and the power of God are embodied in His words. And, it is only through His Word that the life of God can really enter into us. His Word is the seed of the heavenly life.

As the bread of life we eat it, we feed upon it. In eating our daily bread, the body takes in the nourishment which visible nature – the sun, water and the earth – prepared for us in the seed corn. We assimilate it, and it becomes our very own, part of ourselves; it is our life. In feeding upon the Word of God, the powers of the heavenly life enter into us, and become our very own; we assimilate them. They become a part of ourselves, the life of our life.

Or, we use the seed to plant. The words of God are sown in our heart. They have a divine power of reproduction and multiplication. The very life that is in them, the divine thought, disposition, or powers that each of them contains, takes root in the believing heart and grows up. And, the very thing of which the word was the expression is produced within us. The words of God are the seeds of the fullness of the divine life.

When the Lord Jesus was made man, He became entirely dependent upon the Word of God. He submitted Himself wholly to it. His mother taught it to Him. The teachers of Nazareth instructed Him in it. In meditation and prayer, in the exercise of obedience and faith, He was led, during His silent years of preparation, to understand and appropriate it. The Word of the Father was to the Son the life of His

soul. What He said in the wilderness was spoken from His innermost personal experience: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4). He felt that He could not live except as the Word brought Him the life of the Father. His whole life was a life of faith, depending on the Word of the Father. The Word was not a replacement for the Father, but a vehicle for living fellowship with the living God. And, He had His whole mind and heart so filled with it that the Holy Spirit could, at each moment, find within Him, all ready for use, the right word He needed to hear.

Child of God, do you want to become a man of God, strong in faith, full of blessing, rich in fruit to the glory of God, full of the Word of God? Like Christ, make the Word your bread. Let it dwell richly in you. Have your heart full of it. Feed on it. Believe it. Obey it. It is only by believing and obeying that the Word can enter into our inward parts, into our very being. Take it day by day as the Word that proceeds – not has proceeded, but proceeds – out of the mouth of God. Regard it as the Word of the living God, who, in it, holds living fellowship with His children and speaks to them in living power. Take your thoughts of God’s will, God’s work, and God’s purpose not from the church or from Christians around you, but from the Word taught by the Father – and, like Christ, you will be able to fulfil all that is written in the Scripture concerning God’s will for you.

In Christ’s use of Scripture, the most remarkable thing is this: He found Himself there. There, He saw His own image and likeness. And, He gave Himself to the fulfilment of what He found written there. It was this that encouraged Him under the bitterest sufferings, and strengthened Him for the most difficult work. Everywhere, He saw the divine waymark traced by God’s own hand: *through suffering to glory*. He had only one thought: to be what the Father had said He should be, to have His life correspond exactly to the image of what He should be as He found it in the Word of God.

Disciple of Jesus, in the Scriptures your likeness can also be found – a picture of what the Father means you to be. Seek to have a deep and clear impression of what the Father says in His Word that you should be. Once this is fully understood, it is inconceivable what courage it will give to conquer every difficulty. I have seen what has been written concerning me in God’s book. I have seen the image of what I am called in God’s counsel to be. Knowing that likeness to Christ is ordained of God, inspires my soul with a faith which conquers the world.

The Lord Jesus found His own image not only in the institutions, but especially in the believers of the Old Testament. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, and the prophets were types. And so, He is Himself again the image of believers in the New Testament. It is especially in Him and His example that we must find our own image in the Scriptures. To be “changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). We must gaze in the Scripture-mirror on that image as our own. In order to accomplish His work in us, the Spirit teaches us to take Christ as our Example, and to gaze on every feature as the promise of what we can be.

Blessed is the Christian who has truly done this – who has not only found Jesus in the Scriptures, but also in His image the promise and example of what he is to become. Blessed is the Christian who yields himself to be taught by the Holy Spirit not to indulge in human thoughts about the Scriptures and what it says of believers, but in simplicity to accept what it reveals of God’s thoughts about His children.

Child of God, it was “according to the Scriptures” that Jesus Christ lived and died. It was “according to the Scriptures” that He was raised again. All that the Scriptures said He must do or suffer He was able to accomplish, because He knew and obeyed them. All that the Scriptures had promised that the Father would do for Him, the Father did. O give yourself up with an undivided heart to learn in the Scriptures what God says and seeks of you. Let the Scriptures in which Jesus found the food of His life be your daily food and meditation. Go to God’s Word each day with the joyful and confident expectation that, through the blessed Spirit who dwells in us, the Word will indeed accomplish its divine purpose in you.

Every word of God is full of a divine life and power. Be assured that when you seek to use the Scriptures as Christ used them, they will do for you what they did for Him. God has marked out the

plan of your life in His Word. Each day, you will find some portion of it there. Nothing makes a man stronger and more courageous than the assurance that he is living out the will of God. God Himself will see to it that the Scriptures are fulfilled in you if, like His Son, you will surrender yourself to this as the highest object of your life.

Prayer: “O Lord, my God, I thank You for Your precious Word, the divine mirror of all unseen and eternal realities. I thank You that I have in it the image of Your Son, who is Your image, and also, o wonderful grace, my image. I thank You that as I gaze on Him I may also see what I can be. O my Father, teach me to rightly understand what a blessing Your Word can bring me. To Your Son, when here on earth, it was the manifestation of Your will, the communication of Your life and strength, the fellowship with Yourself. In the acceptance and the surrender to Your Word, He was able to fulfil all Your counsel. May Your Word be all this to me, too. Make it to me, each day afresh through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the Word proceeding from the mouth of God, the voice of Your living presence speaking to me. May I feel with each word of Yours that it is God coming to impart to me something of His own life. Teach me to keep it hidden in my heart as a divine seed, which in its own time will spring up and reproduce in me in divine reality the very life that was hid in it. Teach me above all, my God, to find in it Him who is its centre and substance, Himself the eternal Word. Finding Him, and myself in Him, as my Head and Exemplar, I will learn, like Him, to count Your Word my food and my life. I ask this, O my God, in the name of our blessed Christ Jesus. Amen.”

13. Like Christ... in forgiving

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col. 3:13).

In the life of grace, forgiveness is one of the first blessings we receive from God. It is also one of the most glorious. It is the transition from the old to the new life – the sign and pledge of God’s love. With it, we receive the right to all the spiritual gifts which are prepared for us in Christ. The redeemed saint can never forget, either here or in eternity, that he is a forgiven sinner. Nothing works more mightily to inflame his love, to awaken his joy, or to strengthen his courage than the experience, continually renewed by the Holy Spirit as a living reality, of God’s forgiving love. Every day, every thought of God reminds him: I owe all to pardoning grace.

This forgiving love is one of the greatest marvels in the manifestation of the divine nature. In it, God finds His glory and blessedness. And, it is in this glory and blessedness that God wants His redeemed people to share. When He calls upon them, as soon and as much as they have received forgiveness, they are also to bestow it on others.

Have you ever noticed how often and how expressly the Lord Jesus spoke of it? If we thoughtfully read our Lord’s words in Matthew 6:12, 15; 18:2-25; and Mark 11:25, we will understand how inseparably the two are united: God’s forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of others. After the Lord was ascended to grant repentance and forgiveness of sins, the Scriptures say of Him just what He had said of the Father, we must forgive like Him. As our text expresses it, “even as Christ has forgiven you, so also do ye.” We must be like God, like Christ, in forgiving.

It is not difficult to find the reason for this. When forgiving love comes to us, it is not only to deliver us from punishment. No, much more. It seeks to win us for its own, to take possession of us, and to dwell in us. And when it has thus come down to dwell in us, it does not lose its own heavenly character and beauty. It is still forgiving love seeking to do its work towards us, in us, and through us, leading and enabling us to forgive those who sin against us. So much so is this the case, that we are told that not to forgive is a sure sign that one has himself not been forgiven. He who only seeks forgiveness from selfishness and as freedom from punishment, but has not truly accepted forgiving love to rule his heart and life, proves that God’s forgiveness has never really reached him. He who, on the other hand, has really accepted forgiveness, will have in the joy with which he forgives others, a continual confirmation that his faith in God’s forgiveness of himself is a reality. From Christ to receive forgiveness, and like Christ to bestow it on others: these two are one.

Thus the Scriptures and the church teach: but, what do the lives and experiences of Christians say? Alas, how many hardly know that thus it is written, or who, if they know it, think it is more than can be expected from a sinful being. How many think that if they agree in general to what has been said, they will always find a reason, in their own particular case, why it should not be so? Others might be strengthened in evil; the offender would never forgive had the injury been done to him. There are many eminent Christians who do not forgive, and excuses for their behaviour are not wanting. And yet, the command is so very simple, and its sanction so very solemn: “Forgive one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32). “If ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you” (Mark. 11:26).

The Word of God is made of no effect by human reasoning. It is only through forgiving love that God seeks to conquer evil, and therefore we have to forgive even unto seventy times seven. The rule of my conduct should not be determined on what the offender has done to me, but on what Christ has done. Conformity to the example of Christ Himself is a sign that I have truly received forgiveness of sins.

Alas, where is there a church or Christian group in which the law of forgiving love is not grievously transgressed? How often in our church assemblies, in humanitarian endeavours, as well as in ordinary social dealings, and even in domestic life, it is evident that to many Christians the call to forgive just as Christ did, has never yet become a ruling principle of their conduct.

Because of a difference of opinion, opposition to a course of action that we considered to be correct, some real or imagined slight, or because of some unkind or thoughtless word, feelings of resentment, contempt, or estrangement have been harboured, instead of loving, forgiving, and forgetting like Christ. In such, the importance of the law of compassion, love, and forgiveness has never yet taken possession of mind and heart. That law, in which the relationship of the Head to the members is rooted, must rule the whole relationship of the members to each other.

Beloved followers of Jesus, called to manifest His likeness to the world, learn that as forgiving of your sins was one of the first things Jesus did for you, forgiveness of others is one of the first that you can do for Him. And remember that to the new heart there is a joy even sweeter than that of being forgiven – the joy of forgiving others. The joy of being forgiven is only that of a sinner on earth. The joy of forgiving is Christ's own joy, the joy of heaven. Oh, come and see that it is nothing less than the work that Christ Himself does, and the joy with which He Himself is satisfied, that you are called to participate in.

It is thus that you can bless the world. It is as the Forgiving One that Jesus conquers His enemies, and binds His friends to Himself. It is as the Forgiving One that Jesus has set up His kingdom and continually extends it. It is through the same forgiving love, not only preached but shown in the life of His disciples, that the church will convince the world of God's love. If the world see men and women loving and forgiving as Jesus did, it will be compelled to confess that God is truly with them.

And, if it still appears too hard and too high, remember that this will only be as long as we consult the natural heart. A sinful nature has no taste for this joy, and can never attain it. But, in union with Christ we can do it. He who abides in Him walks even as He walked. If you have surrendered yourself to follow Christ in everything, then He will, by His Holy Spirit, enable you to do this, too. Before you come into temptation, accustom yourself to fixing your gaze on Jesus, in the heavenly beauty of His forgiving love as your example. "Beholding... the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Every time you pray or thank God for forgiveness, make the vow that to the glory of His name you will manifest the same forgiving love to all around you. Before there is a question of forgiveness of others, let your heart be filled with the love to Christ, love to the brethren, and love to enemies. A heart full of love finds it blessed to forgive. Let, in each little circumstance of daily life when the temptation not to forgive might arise, the opportunity be joyfully welcomed to show how truly you live in God's forgiving love. Rejoice in how glad you are to let its beautiful light shine through you and others. How blessed a privilege it is to be able to thus bear the image of your beloved Lord.

Prayer: "To forgive like You, blessed Son of God, I take as the law of my life. You who have given the command, also give the power. You who loved me enough to forgive me, will also fill me with love, and teach me to forgive others. You who gave me the first blessing in the joy of having my sins forgiven, will surely give me the second blessing, the deeper joy of forgiving others as You have forgiven me. For this reason, fill me with faith in the power of Your love in me, to make me like Yourself, to enable me to forgive the seventy times seven, and so to love and bless all around me. O my Jesus, Your example is my law. I must be like You. And, Your example is my gospel, too. I can be as You are. What You demand of me by Your example, You work in me by Your life. I will forgive like You. Lord, only lead me deeper into my dependence on You, into the all-sufficiency of Your grace and the blessed keeping which comes from Your indwelling. Then, I will believe and prove the all-prevailing power of love. I will forgive even as Christ has forgiven me. Amen."

14. Like Christ... in His humility

“In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves... Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God... made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:3-8).

In this wonderful passage, we have a summary of all the most precious truths that cluster around the person of the blessed Son of God. First, there is His majestic Deity: “In the form of God... equal with God.” Then comes the mystery of His incarnation in that word of deep and inexhaustible meaning: “He made Himself of no reputation.” The atonement follows with the humiliation, obedience, suffering, and death from which it derives its worth: “He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” And all is crowned by His glorious exaltation: “God also hath highly exalted Him” (Phil. 2:9). Christ as God, Christ becoming man, Christ as man in humiliation working out our redemption, and Christ in glory as Lord of all: such are the treasures of wisdom this passage contains.

Much has been written on these words. And yet, sufficient attention has not always been given to the connection in which the Holy Spirit gives this wondrous teaching. Its primary importance is not as a statement of truth for the refutation of error, or the strengthening of faith. The object is a very different one. There was still pride and lack of love among the Philippians. It is with the distinct view of setting Christ’s example before them, and teaching them to humble themselves as He did, that this portion of Scripture was given: “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves... Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

He who does not study this portion of God’s Word with the wish to become lowly as Christ was, has never used it for the one great purpose for which God gave it. Christ descending from the throne of God, and seeking His way back there as man through the humiliation of the cross, reveals the only way by which we can ever reach that throne. The faith which, with His atonement, also accepts His example is alone true faith. Each soul that truly wants to belong to Him must have His Spirit, His disposition, and His image in union with Him.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God... made Himself of no reputation, and... as man humbled Himself.” We must be like Christ in His self-emptying and self-humiliation. The first great act of self-denial, in which as God He emptied Himself of His divine glory and power and laid it aside, was followed by the no less wondrous humbling of Himself as man – the death of the cross. And in this amazing, twofold humiliation, the astonishment of the universe and the delight of the Father, Holy Scripture very simply says that we must, as a matter of course, be like Christ.

And do Paul, the Scriptures, and God really expect this of us? Why not? Or rather, how can they expect anything else? Indeed, they know the fearful power of pride and the old Adam in our nature. But, they know also that Christ has redeemed us not only from the curse but from the power of sin, and that He gives us His resurrection life and power to enable us to live as He did on earth. They say that He is not only our Surety, but our Example as well. We not only live through Him, but like Him. And further, not only is He our Example, but also our Head who lives in us, and continues in us the life He once led on earth. With such a Christ, and such a plan of redemption, can it be otherwise? The follower of Christ must have the same mind as was in Christ. He must especially be like Him in His humility.

Christ’s example teaches us that it is not sin that must humble us. This is what many Christians think. They consider daily falls to be necessary in order to remain humble. This is not so. There is indeed a humility that is very lovely, and of such great value as the beginning of something more, which consists in the acknowledgement of transgression and shortcomings. But, there is a humility which is more heavenly still, and which consists, even when grace keeps us from sinning, in the self-

abasement that can only wonder that God should bless us. It delights to be as nothing before Him to whom we owe all.

It is grace we need, and not sin, to make and keep us humble. The heaviest laden branches always bow the lowest. The greatest flow of water makes the deepest riverbed. The nearer the soul comes to God, the more His majestic presence makes it feel its smallness. It is this alone that makes it possible for each Christian to esteem others better than himself. Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God, is our example of humility. It was because He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God and went to God, that He washed the disciples' feet. It is the divine presence, the consciousness of the divine life and the divine love in us, that will make us humble.

To many Christians, it appears impossible to say: "I will not think of self; I will esteem others better than myself." They ask grace to overcome the worst outbursts of pride and vainglory, but an entire self-renunciation, such as Christ's, is too difficult and too high for them. If they only understood the deep truth and blessedness of the word, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Lk. 14:11); and: "He who loses his life for My sake shall find it" (Mt. 16:25), they would not be satisfied with anything less than entire conformity to their Lord in this. And, they would find that there is a way to overcome self and self-exaltation. There is a way to see it nailed to Christ's cross, and there keep it crucified continually through the Spirit (see Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13). Only he who heartily yields himself to live in the fellowship of Christ's death can grow to such humility.

To attain this, two things are necessary. The first is a fixed purpose and surrender to be nothing and seeking nothing for oneself, but to live only for God and our neighbour. The other is the faith which appropriates the power of Christ's death as being our death to sin and our deliverance from its power. This fellowship of Christ's death brings an end to the life in which sin is too strong for us. It is the commencement of a life in us in which Christ is too strong for sin.

It is only under the teaching and powerful working of the Holy Spirit that one can realise, accept, and keep hold of this truth. Oh, that we may fully trust ourselves to His guidance. He will guide us; it is His work. He will glorify Christ in us. He will teach us to understand that we are dead to sin and the old self, that Christ's life and humility are ours.

Thus Christ's humility is appropriated in faith. This may take place at once. But, the appropriation in experience is gradual. Our thoughts and feelings, our very manners and conversation, have been so long under the domination of the old self, that it takes time to saturate and permeate and transfigure them with the heavenly light of Christ's humility. At first, the conscience is not perfectly enlightened, the spiritual taste and the power of discernment have not yet been exercised. But with each believing renewal of the consecration in the depth of the soul: "I have surrendered myself to be humble like Jesus," power will go out from Him. It will fill the whole being, until in face, voice, and action the sanctification of the Spirit will be observable, and the Christian will truly be clothed with humility.

The blessedness of a Christlike humility is unspeakable. It is of great worth in the sight of God: "He giveth grace unto the humble" (Jas. 4:6). In the spiritual life, it is the source of rest and joy. To the humble, all that God does is right and good. Humility is always ready to praise God for the least of His mercies. Humility does not find it difficult to trust. It submits unconditionally to all that God says. The two people in the Bible whom Jesus praises for their great faith are those who thought least of themselves. The centurion said, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof" (Mt. 8:8). The Syro-phoenician woman was content to be numbered with the dogs (Mt. 15:25-28). In fellowship with men, it is the secret of blessing and love. The humble man does not take offence, and is very careful not to give it. He is always ready to serve his neighbour, because he has learned from Jesus the divine beauty of being a servant. He finds favour with God and man.

Oh, what a glorious calling for the followers of Christ! To be sent into the world by God to prove that there is nothing more divine than self-humiliation. The humble glorifies God, leads others to glorify Him, and he will at last be glorified with Him. Who would not want to be humble like Jesus?

Prayer: “O Lord, You descended from heaven, and humbled Yourself to the death of the cross. You call me to take Your humility as the law of my life. Lord, teach me to understand the absolute need of this. I cannot and may not be a proud follower of the humble Jesus. In the secrecy of my heart, my closet, in my house, in the presence of friends or enemies, and in prosperity or adversity, I want to be filled with Your humility. O my beloved Lord, I feel the need of a new and deeper insight into Your crucifixion, and my part in it. Reveal to me how my old proud self is crucified with You. Show me in the light of Your Spirit how I, God’s regenerate child, am dead to sin and its power, and how, in communion with You, sin is powerless. Lord Jesus, who has conquered sin, strengthen in me the faith that You are my life, and You will fill me with Your humility if I will submit to be filled with Yourself and the Holy Spirit. Lord, my hope is in You. In faith in You, I go into the world to show how the same mind that was in You is also in Your children, and teaches us in lowliness of mind each to esteem others better than ourselves. May God help us. Amen.”

15. Like Christ... in the likeness of His death

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection... For in that He died, He died unto sin once... Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6: 5, 10, 11).

We owe our salvation to the death of Christ. The better we understand the meaning of that death, the richer our experience of its power will be. In these words, we are taught what it is to be one with Christ in the likeness of His death. Let everyone who truly longs to be like Christ in his life, seek to correctly know what the likeness of His death means.

Christ had a double work to accomplish in His death. The one was to work out righteousness for us. The other was to obtain life for us. When Scripture speaks of the first part of this work, it uses the expression: “Christ died for our sins.” He took sin upon Himself and bore its punishment. Thus, He made atonement and brought us a righteousness in which we could stand before God.

When Scripture speaks of the second part of this work, it uses the expression: “He died to sin.” Dying *for* sin refers to the judicial relationship between Him and sin. God laid our sin upon Him, and through His death, atonement is made for sin before God. Dying *to* sin also refers to a personal relationship through His death – the connection in which He stood to sin was entirely dissolved. During His life, sin had great power to cause Him conflict and suffering: His death ended all of this. Sin no longer had power to tempt or hurt Him. He was beyond its reach. Death had completely separated Him and sin. Christ died to sin.

Like Christ, the believer has also died to sin – he is one with Him in the likeness of His death. And, as the knowledge that Christ died for sin as our atonement is indispensable to our justification, so the knowledge that Christ – and we with Him in the likeness of His death – is dead to sin, is indispensable to our sanctification. Let us endeavour to understand this.

It was as the second Adam that Christ died. With the first Adam, we had been planted together in the likeness of *his* death. He died spiritually, and we with him, and the power of his death works in us. We have in very deed died in him, as truly as he himself died. We understand this. Likewise, we are one plant with Christ in the likeness of His death: He died to sin, and we in Him. And now, the power of His death works in us. We are indeed dead to sin, as truly so as He Himself is.

Through our first birth, we were made partakers in Adam’s death. Through our second birth, we became partakers in the death of the second Adam. Every believer who accepts Christ is partaker of the power of His death, and is dead to sin. But, a believer may be ignorant of much of what he has. In their conversion, most believers are so occupied with Christ’s death *for sin* as their justification, that they do not seek to know what it means that in Him they are dead *to sin*. When they first learn to feel their need of Him as their sanctification, then the desire is awakened to understand this likeness of His death. They find the secret of holiness in it – that as Christ, so they also have died to sin.

The Christian who does not understand this always imagines that sin is too strong for him, that sin still has power over him, and that he must sometimes obey it. But, he thinks this because he does not know that he, like Christ, is dead to sin. If he only believed and understood what this means, his language would be: “Christ has died to sin. Sin has nothing more to say to Him. In His life and death sin had power over Him. It was sin that caused Him the sufferings of the cross and the humiliation of the grave. But He is dead to sin. It has lost all claim over Him, and He is entirely and forever freed from its power. Even so I as a believer. The new life that is in me is the life of Christ from the dead, a life that has been begotten through death, a life that is entirely dead to sin.” The believer, as a new creature in Christ Jesus, can glory and say: “Like Christ, I am dead to sin. Sin has no right or power over me whatever. I am freed from it, therefore, I need not sin.

And, if the believer still sins, it is because he does not use his privilege to live as one who is dead to sin. Through ignorance, unwatchfulness, or unbelief, he forgets the meaning and the power of this

likeness of Christ's death, and sins. But, if he firmly believes in what his participation with Christ's death signifies, he has the power to overcome sin. He truly understands that it is not said, "Sin is dead." No, sin is not dead. Sin still lives and works in the flesh. But, he himself is dead to sin, and alive to God. And so, sin cannot for a single moment, without his consent, have dominion over him. If he sins, it is because he allows it to reign, and submits himself to obey it.

Beloved Christian, who seeks to be like Christ, take the likeness of His death as one of the most glorious parts of the life you want to lead. First of all, appropriate it in faith. Believe that you are indeed dead to sin. Let it be a settled thing. God says it to every one of His children, even the weakest. Say it before Him, too, "Like Christ, I am dead to sin." Do not be afraid to say it; it is the truth. Ask the Holy Spirit to earnestly enlighten you with regard to this part of your union with Christ, so that it may not only be a doctrine, but power and truth.

Endeavour to more deeply understand what it means to live as dead to sin, as one who, in dying, has been freed from its dominion, and who can now reign in life through Jesus Christ over it. Then, the conformity to His death will follow the likeness of His death. It will be gradually and increasingly appropriated as Christ's death manifests its full power in all the faculties of your life (see Phil. 3).

In order to have the full benefit of this likeness of Christ's death, notice two things in particular. The one is the obligation under which it brings you: "How can we who are dead to sin live in it any longer?" Endeavour to enter more deeply into the meaning of this death of Christ into which you have been baptised. Regard yourself as dead and therefore released from the power of sin. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death?" (Rom. 6:3). Let the Holy Spirit baptise you continually deeper into His death, until the power of God's Word – dead to sin until the conformity to Christ's death – is discernible in all your walk and conversation.

The other lesson is this: The likeness of Christ's death is not only an obligation, but a power. O Christian longing to be Christlike, if there is one thing you need more than and above all else, it is this: know the exceeding greatness of God's power which works in you. It was in the power of eternity that Christ, in His death, wrestled with the powers of hell and conquered them. You have part with Christ in His death; you have part in all the powers by which He conquered. Yield yourself joyfully and believingly to be led more deeply into the conformity to Christ's death. Then, you can do nothing other than become like Him.

Prayer: "O my Lord, how little I have understood Your grace. I have often read the words, 'planted into the likeness of His death,' and seen that as You died to sin, so it is said to Your believing people, 'Likewise also ye.' But I have not understood its power. And so, not knowing the likeness of Your death, I did not know that I was free from the power of sin, and as a conqueror could have dominion over it. Lord, You have indeed opened to me a glorious prospect. The man who believingly accepts the likeness of Your death, and according to Your Word considers himself dead to sin, will not be dominated by sin. He has power to live for God. Lord, let the Holy Spirit reveal this to me more perfectly. I wish to take Your Word in simple faith, and take the position You assign to me as one who in You is dead to sin. Lord, in You I am dead to sin. Teach me to hold it fast, or rather to hold You fast in faith, until my whole life is a proof of it. O Lord, take me up and keep me in communion with Yourself, that, abiding in You, I may find in You the death unto sin and the life unto God. Amen."

16. Like Christ... in the likeness of His resurrection

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection... that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:5, 4).

Of necessity, the likeness of His death is followed by the likeness of His resurrection. To speak alone of the likeness of His death – of bearing the cross, and of self-denial – gives a one-sided view of following Christ. It is only the power of His resurrection that gives us strength to go on from that likeness of His death, which we at once receive by faith, to that conformity to His death, which comes as the growth of the inner life. Being dead with Christ refers to the death of the old life of sin and worldliness. Risen with Christ refers to the new life through which the Holy Spirit expels the old. To the Christian who earnestly desires to walk as Christ did, the knowledge of this likeness of His resurrection is indispensable. Let us see if we do not here get the answer to the question as to where we must find strength to live in the world as Christ did.

Oh, that through the Holy Spirit God might reveal to us the glory of the life in the likeness of Christ's resurrection! In it, we find the secret of power for a life of conformity to Him. To most Christians this is a mystery, and therefore their life is full of sin and weakness and defeat. They believe in Christ's resurrection as the sufficient proof of their justification. They think that He had to rise again to continue His work in heaven as Mediator. But, they have no idea that He rose again, so that His glorious resurrection life might now be the very power of their daily life. Hence, their hopelessness when they hear of following Jesus fully, and be perfectly conformed to His image.

They cannot imagine how a sinner can be required to act as Christ would have acted in all things. They do not know Christ in the power of His resurrection, or the mighty power with which His life now works in those who are willing to count all things but loss for His sake (see Phil. 3:8; Eph. 1:19-20). Come, all you who are weary of a life unlike Jesus, and long to walk always in His footsteps. You will begin to see that there is, in the Scriptures, a better life for you than you have thus far known. Come and let me try to show you the unspeakable treasure that is yours in your likeness to Christ in His resurrection. Let me ask three questions.

The first question is: Are you ready to surrender your life to the rule of Jesus and His resurrection life? I do not doubt that the contemplation of Christ's example has convinced you of sin in more than one point. In seeking your own will and glory in stead of God's, in ambition, pride, selfishness, and want of love towards man, you have seen how far you are from the obedience, humility, and love of Jesus. And now it is the question of whether or not, in view of all these things which you have acknowledged as sin, you are willing to say: If Jesus will take possession of my life, then I resign all right or wish ever to have the least to do with my own will. I give my life, with all I have and am entirely to Him, always to do what He through His Word and Spirit commands me. If He will live and rule in me, I promise unbounded and hearty obedience.

Faith is needed for such a surrender. Therefore, *the second question is:* Are you prepared to believe that Jesus will take possession of the life entrusted to Him, and that He will rule and keep it? When the believer entrusts his entire spiritual and temporal life completely to Christ, then he learns to correctly understand Paul's words: “I am dead; I live no more: Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20). Dead with Christ and risen again, the living Christ in His resurrection life takes possession of and rules my new life. He Himself will, from day to day and hour to hour, see to it and ensure that I live as one who is risen with Him. He does it through the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of His risen life. The Holy Spirit is in us, and will, if we trust Jesus for it, continually maintain the presence and power of the risen Lord within us. We need not fear that we never can succeed in leading such a holy life as becomes those who are temples of the living God. We are indeed not able. But, the living Jesus, who is the resurrection, has shown His power over all our enemies. He Himself, who so love us, will work it in us. He gives us the Holy Spirit as our power, and He will perform His work in us with divine faithfulness if we only trust Him. Christ Himself is our life.

And now comes *the third question*: Are you ready to use this resurrection life for the purpose for which God gave it to Him, and gives it to you, as a power of blessing to the lost? All desires after the resurrection life will fail if we are only seeking our own perfection and happiness. God raised up and exalted Jesus to give repentance and remission of sins. He always lives to pray for sinners. Yield yourself to receive His resurrection life with the same aim. Give yourself wholly to working and praying for the perishing. Then, you will become a fit vessel and instrument in which the resurrection life can dwell and work out its glorious purposes.

Brethren, your calling is to live like Christ! To this end you have already been made one with Him in the likeness of His resurrection. The only question is now whether or not you desire the full experience of His resurrection life, whether or not you are willing to surrender your whole life so that He may manifest resurrection power in every part of it. I beg you, do not draw back. Offer yourself unreservedly to Him, with all your weakness and unfaithfulness. Believe that as His resurrection was a wonder above all thought and expectation, so He as the Risen One will still work in you exceedingly abundantly above all you could think or desire.

Oh brethren, who have not yet experienced the resurrection life, who are troubled and weary because you are called to walk like Christ and cannot do it, come and taste the blessedness of giving your whole life to the Risen Saviour in the assurance that He will live it for you.

Prayer: “O Lord, my soul adores You as the Prince of life! On the cross, You conquered each one of my enemies – the devil, the flesh, the world, and sin. As Conqueror, You rose to manifest and maintain the power of Your risen life in Your people. You made them one with yourself in the likeness of Your resurrection. Now, You will live in them, and show forth in their earthly life the power of Your heavenly life. Praised be Your name for this wonderful grace. Blessed Lord, I come at Your invitation to offer and surrender my life and all it implies, to You. Too long have I striven in my own strength to live like You, and not succeeded. The more I sought to walk like You, the deeper was my disappointment. I have heard of Your disciples who tell how blessed it is to cast all care and responsibility for their life on You. Lord Jesus, I do believe in You! Be pleased to make Yourself known to me as my life. You alone can do it and I trust You for it. And so, my resurrection life will be like Your own – a continual source of light and blessing to all who are needing You. Amen.”

17. Like Christ... led by the Spirit

“And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness” (Lk. 4:1).

“Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14).

From His very high birth, the Lord Jesus had the Spirit dwelling in Him. But, there were times when He needed special communications of the Spirit from the Father. Thus it was with His baptism. The descent of the Holy Spirit on Him – the baptism of the Spirit, given in the baptism with water – was a real transaction: He was filled with the Spirit. He returned from the Jordan full of the Holy Spirit, and experienced more manifestly than ever the leading of the Spirit. In the wilderness, He wrestled and conquered, not in His own divine power, but as a man who was strengthened and led by the Holy Spirit. In this also “In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren” (Heb. 2:17).

The opposite of this truth also holds good: the brethren are in all things made like unto Him. They are called to live like Him. This is not demanded from them without their having the same power. This power is the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, whom we have of God. Even as Jesus was filled by the Spirit, and then led by the Spirit, so must we also be filled with the Spirit and be led by the Spirit.

More than once, in our meditations on the different traits of Christ's character, it has seemed almost impossible to be like Him. We have lived so little for it. We feel so little able to live thus. Let us take courage in the thought: Jesus Himself could only live thus through the Spirit. It was after He was filled with the Spirit that He was led forth by that Spirit to the place of conflict and of victory. And this blessing is ours as surely as it was His. We may be filled by the Spirit; we may be led by the Spirit. Jesus who was Himself baptised with the Spirit to set an example of how we are to live, has ascended into heaven to baptise us into likeness with Himself. He who would live like Jesus must begin here: he must be baptised with the Spirit. What God demands from His children He first gives. He demands entire likeness to Christ because He will give us, as He did Jesus, the fullness of the Spirit. We must be filled with the Spirit.

Here we have the reason why the teaching of the imitation and likeness to Christ has so little prominence in His church. Men sought it in their own strength, with the help of some workings of the Holy Spirit. They did not understand that nothing less than being filled with the Spirit was needed. No wonder they thought that real conformity to Christ could not be expected of us, because they had mistaken thoughts about being filled with the Spirit. It was thought to be the privilege of a few, and not the calling and duty of every child of God. It was not sufficiently realised that, “Be ye filled with the Spirit” is a command to every Christian. Only when the church first gives the baptism of the Spirit, and Jesus, as the Saviour, baptises with the Spirit each one who believes in Him, only then will likeness to Christ be sought after and attained. People will then understand and acknowledge: to be like Christ we must be led by the same Spirit; and, to be led by the Spirit as He was, we must be filled with the Spirit. Nothing less than the fullness of the Spirit is absolutely necessary to live a truly Christian, Christlike life.

The way to arrive at it is simple. It is Jesus who baptises with the Spirit. He who comes to Him desiring it, will get it. All that He requires of us is the surrender of faith to receive what He gives.

The surrender of faith. What He asks is whether or not we are indeed in earnest to follow in His footsteps, and for this to be baptised of the Spirit. Do not let there be any hesitation as to your answer. First, look back on all the glorious promises of His love and of His Spirit, in which the blessed privilege is set forth: Even as I, ye also. Remember that it was of this likeness to Himself in everything that He said to the Father: “The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them” (Jn. 17:22). Think how the love of Christ and the true desire to please Him – how the glory of God and the needs of the world – plead with us not, through our laziness, to despise the heavenly birthright of being Christlike. Acknowledge the sacred ownership Christ has in you, His blood-bought ones. Let nothing prevent

you from answering: "Yes, dear Lord, as far as is allowed to a child of dust, I will be like You. I am entirely Yours. I must, I will, in all things bear Your image. It is for this that I ask to be filled with The Spirit."

The surrender of faith – only this, and nothing less than this, does He demand. Let us give what He asks. If we yield ourselves to be like Him in all things, let it be in the quiet trust that He accepts, and at once begins in secret to make the Spirit work more mightily in us. Let us believe it although we do not immediately experience it. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must wait on our Lord in faith. We can depend on the fact that His love desires to give us more than we know. Let our surrender be made in this assurance.

And, let this surrender of faith be entire. The fundamental law of following Christ is this: "He who loses his life shall find it." The Holy Spirit comes to take away the old life, and to give, in its place, the life of Christ in you. Renounce the old life of self-working and self-watching, and believe that, as the air you breathe renews your life every moment, so naturally and continually the Holy Spirit will renew your life. In the work of the Holy Spirit in you, there are no breaks or interruptions. You are in the Spirit as your vital air, and the Spirit is in you as your life breath. Through the Spirit, God works in you both to will and to do according to His good pleasure.

Oh, Christian, have a deep reverence for the work of the Spirit who dwells within you. Believe in God's power, which works in you through the Spirit, to conform you to Christ's life and image moment by moment. Be occupied with Jesus and His life, in the full assurance that the Holy Spirit knows, in deep quiet, to fulfil His office of communicating Jesus to you. That life is, simultaneously, your example and your strength. Remember that the fullness of the Spirit is yours in Jesus. It is a real gift which you accept and hold in faith, even when you do not feel its presence, and on which you count to work in you all that you need. The feeling may be weakness, fear, and much trembling, and yet the speaking, working, and living may be in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (see 1 Cor. 2:3-4).

Live in the faith that the fullness of the Spirit is yours, and that you will not be disappointed if, looking to Jesus, you rejoice every day in the blessed trust that the care of your spiritual life is in the hands of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. Thus, with the loving presence of Jesus in you, the living likeness to Jesus will be seen on you. With the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus dwelling within, the likeness of the life of Christ Jesus will shine around.

And, if it does not appear that in thus believing and obeying your desires are fulfilled, remember that it is in the fellowship with the members of Christ's body, and to the full surrender to Christ's service in the world, that the full power of the Spirit is made manifest. It was when Jesus gave Himself to enter into full fellowship with men around Him, and like them to be baptised with water, that He was baptised with the Holy Spirit. And, it was when he had given Himself in His second baptism of suffering, a sacrifice for us, that He received the Holy Spirit to give to us.

Seek fellowship with God's children, who will pray with you and believe for the baptism of the Spirit. The disciples received the Spirit not singly, but when they were with one accord in one place. Band yourself with God's children around you to work for souls. The Spirit is the power from on high to prepare you for that work. The promise will be fulfilled to the believing, willing servants who want Him not for their enjoyment, but for that work.

Christ was filled with the Spirit so that He would be able to work and live and die for us. Give yourself to such a Christlike living and dying for men, and you may depend on a Christlike baptism of the Spirit, a Christlike fullness of the Spirit, to be your portion.

Prayer: "Blessed Lord, how wondrously You have provided for our growing likeness to Yourself, in giving us Your own Holy Spirit. You have told us that it is His work to reveal You, to give us Your real presence within us. It is by Him that all You have won for us, all the life and holiness and strength we see in You, is brought over and imparted and made our very own. He takes of Yours, shows it to us, and makes it ours. Blessed Jesus, we do thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit. And now, we beseech You, fill us, fill us full with the Holy Spirit! Lord, nothing less is sufficient! We cannot be led

like You, we cannot fight and conquer like You, we cannot love and serve like You, we cannot live and die like You, unless like You we are full of the Holy Spirit. Blessed, blessed be Your name! You have commanded, You have promised it – it may, it can, it will be. Holy Saviour, draw Your disciples together to wait and plead for this. Let their eyes be opened to see the wondrous unfulfilled promises of floods of the Holy Spirit. Let their hearts be drawn to give themselves, like You, to win men for Your kingdom. We know it will be Your delight to fulfil Your office as He that baptises with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Glory be to Your name. Amen.”