

F.B. Meyer:

I will give thee riches. 2 Chronicles 1:11,12

SOLOMON had chosen wisdom and knowledge that he might honour God in the sight of his people. And in return God honored him, and supplemented his choice with abundant wealth.

This reminds one of the constant teaching of Jesus. He who seeks his life loses it; but to lose it is to save it in the best and deepest sense. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added.

The conception of life given in the Bible differs by a whole heaven from the maxims and practices of some good and earnest people. Their notion is that they must work for their living, "keep the wolf from the door," educate their children for successfully meeting the demands of life. These objects are legitimate; but they were never meant by God to be the supreme aim of his servants.

His object in our creation, redemption, and regeneration, was that we might serve his redemptive purposes in the world, manifest his character, do his will, win souls for his kingdom, administer the gifts with which He had entrusted us. He asks us to rise to this high calling, and give our whole life to its realization. He will be responsible for all else. It is surely his will that we should give ourselves to useful trades, and fill our days with honest toil; but the main purpose should ever be his glory, and the exemplification in word and act of his holy character. If we ask for wisdom to do this well, we shall get all else into the bargain. God is a being of perfect honour and integrity. And if we dare to make his service the main end of life, we shall find that no good thing will fail. He paves the streets of heaven with gold, and will not withhold it from his children, if they really need.

Because the Lord loveth His people, He hath made thee King over them. 2 Chronicles 2:11 (R.V.).

HOW truly might these words be addressed to our blessed Lord! Because God loved the world, He gave his only-begotten Son, his well-beloved, to be both Prince and Saviour. And it is in knowing, loving, and serving Him that we can realize our supreme blessedness.

God's loving appointment in making Jesus King will be apparent when we remember how beautiful He is in his personal character; how closely He is identified with our nature; the might of his arm with which He shields, the patience wherewith He bears, the redemption which He has wrought out and brought in for all who believe. What could God's love have done better to approve itself?

Is He your King? Never till He is so, will you know the fullness of God's love. Those who question or refuse his authority are always in doubt about the love of God to themselves and to the world. Those, on the other hand, who acknowledge his claims, and crown Him as King, suddenly find themselves admitted to a standpoint of vision in which doubts and disputations vanish, and the secret love of God is unfolded. Then they experience the wise and gentle tendance of the Divine love in its most entrancing characteristics. All is love where Jesus reigns.

Nothing is more indicative of God's benevolence than his incessant appeal to men to make Jesus King. The demand may sometimes involve severe agony and suffering for those who have acknowledged other lords too long; but God persists in his demand, because only in serving Jesus can the human heart be truly blessed.

"Go, spread your trophies at his feet,

And crown Him Lord of all!"

He set up the pillars before the Temple, . . . Jachin and Boaz. 2 Chronicles 3:17

THE meaning of these names is significant â€ˆ He shall establish, and In it is strength. Each speaks of Him of whom the whole temple was a type. The Lord Jesus has established the work of redemption so that it shall never be removed; has established the covenant, ordered in all things and sure; has established his Church, so that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it; has established us before the face of his Father for evermore.

There is much in the New Testament about the established life. It is the desire of Peter that the scattered saints

should be perfected, established, and strengthened. Paul desires to see the Roman Christians, that he may impart some spiritual gift so that they may be established: he desires that the Colossians may be built up in Christ, and established in the faith. The Epistle to the Hebrews says that it is good for the heart to be established with grace. Let us ask that Jesus should establish us in the Divine life, rooting and grounding us in love and faith, so that we may not be moved away from the Gospel, but abound therein with thanksgiving.

It is only as we abide in Jesus, that we shall become steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding.

But Christ is also our strong Helper. We have no strength of our own; but He is strong; and in Him we have righteousness and strength. Let it make our refuge in Him, as the conies, who are a feeble folk, do in the rock. They who abide in Jesus derive from Him fresh supplies of strength for each moment's need. They hear Him saying, "Fear not, I will strengthen, yea, I will help thee"; and they learn to say with Paul: "I can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth me."

The Weight could not be found out. 2 Chronicles 4:18

THIS was as it should be. There was no attempt to keep an accurate account of what was given to the service of God. Even Solomon's left hand did not know what his right hand did. There is a tendency in all of us to keep a strict account of what we give to God. We note it down in our ledgers; we rigorously observe the compact into which we have entered with Him; but the loftiest form of devotion overleaps such calculation.

This liberality of the people reminds us of Mary's. She never thought of the great cost of the precious spikenard which she broke over the Master's person. It was her joy to give her all; and it was only when Judas came on the scene, that we learn how many hundred pence it was worth. Thus the churches of Macedonia abounded from their deep poverty unto the riches of their liberality, so that, beyond their power, they gave to the cause of God.

This lavish generosity is the reflection of God's. There is no measure in his bounty. It is heaped up, pressed down, and running over. He never says, I will give up to a certain amount, and hold my hand; but He continues to give like the overflowings of the river of Egypt, or the abundance of the spring flowers, which cover the earth as with a carpet. Ah, what a God is ours, who loves with a love that passeth knowledge; and when He gives, exceeds abundance, however much we may have asked or thought. How truly may we say with the psalmist, "Many, O Lord my God, are the wonderful works that Thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us a ward. They cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."

Then the house was filled with a Cloud. 2 Chronicles 5:13

THIS was the bright Shekinah cloud, the symbol of the Divine Presence, which had shone for Moses in the bush, and led the march through the desert. It was as though God had found a rest. And as it settled upon the Most Holy Place, it was as though God said, This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.

The Most Holy Place is the symbol of our spirit, meant to be the abiding place and home of God; and shall we not invite the blessed Shekinah cloud to enter thither, addressing it in the words of the Psalm, "Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place, Thou and the ark of thy strength." Because where He comes to abide He abundantly blesses the provision, and satisfies the poor with bread; He clothes his priests with salvation, and makes his saints shout aloud for joy; He erects the horn of strength and prepares the lamp of light. What were the conditions of this incoming? â€ˆâ€ˆ

First, UNITY. â€ˆâ€ˆ "The trumpeters and singers were as one." We must put away strife, divisions, variance, and evil speaking. Our heart and life must be full of love. When the disciples were with one accord, in one place, the Spirit descended.

Second, HEARTINESS. â€ˆâ€ˆ "They lifted up their voice." There was every symptom of sincerity and fervor.

Third, THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE. â€ˆâ€ˆ "They praised the Lord, saying, He is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." No refrain occurs oftener in the Bible than this. It is an exquisite expression of the heart's joy and rest in God. Let us sing it in our darkest, as well as gladdest hours, full of trust, thanksgiving, and praise.

When Thou teachest them the good way wherein they should walk. 2 Chronicles 6:27 (R.V.).

THIS sentence is exactly parallel with the previous one, When Thou dost afflict them. The obvious meaning then is, that God sometimes taught Israel the good way wherein they should walk, by afflicting them and shutting up the heaven so that there was no rain. This was notably the case in the days of Elijah. Possibly, these words were in his heart, when he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not for the space of three years and six months. Perhaps the prophet felt that in no other way could the people be brought back to their senses, and reconciled to God, except by learning the futility of idolâ€™worship. So he asked God to teach them the good way, by shutting up the bad one.

What a lesson for ourselves: God often teaches us by bitter disappointment and pain. Our familiar paths are barricaded by thorns, our familiar hiding places are blocked up, our fountains are poisoned, and all our pleasant things are laid waste. We sometimes suppose that this is in wrath; may it not rather be in love? God is reaching us the good by us the evil; is urging us to tread in the pleasant ways of wisdom, by allowing us to prove the sharp flints and thorns of transgression. Then Ephraim bemoans himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a calf unaccustomed to the yoke: turn Thou me, and I shall be turned. Then the soul cries, I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.

Sit in God's school, and learn from his Word and Spirit, that He may not be compelled to have recourse to such severe measures as these. Why shouldst thou be afflicted, when He is willing to instruct and teach thee in the way that thou shouldst go!

The fire came down from Heaven, and consumed the Burntâ€™Offering. 2 Chronicles 7:1

IT was a very gracious and immediate response to the prayer of King and people. If we make room for God, He always comes and fills. If we seek Him, He is instantly with us. Directly the soul confesses, it is forgiven; or consecrates itself, it is accepted; or claims deliverance from the power of sin, it is cleansed. Do you really want the Lord to come to you? His glory has even now begun to shine in on you, to grow and enlighten you for evermore.

The fire stands for the Divine Presence. Oh to have always a consciousness of it! Nothing would so soon arrest and destroy the impurity and evil within; as sunshine does fungusâ€™growth. We are told that the fire was to be kept burning on the altar: it was never to go out. Thus, we should always perpetuate and practice the presence of God, feeding the fire with the fuel of prayer and meditation.

Fire also stands for the Divine Purity. As the Plague of London was stamped out by the Great Fire which destroyed the nests where it had bred: and as the furnace rids the ore of dross â€™â€™ so the Holy Spirit in thy heart and mine is a guarantee of holiness and righteousness all our days.

Fire also stands for Divine Fellowship. It consumed that part of the offering which was placed on the altar; and it seemed as if the Divine nature was therefore feeding upon the sacrifice, whilst the remainder of it was consumed by the offerer. Thus, also, we have communion with God, as we eat the bread and drink the wine in the Lord's Supper. We feed on Christ in adoration, faith, and identification. God feeds on the completeness of Christ's obedience, and the glory of his character. Thus we have fellowship with the Father and the Son, by the Holy Ghost.

The places are holy, whereunto the Ark of God hath come. 2 Chronicles 8:11

ON this account Solomon said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David, king of Israel. What a fatal admission! She was the daughter of Pharaoh, and therefore it was no doubt considered a splendid match for the young king; and yet she could not dwell within the precincts of the old city of David, hallowed by the presence of the Ark. "He brought her out of the city of David, into the house that he had built for her." So from the very outset there was division of interests, making way no doubt for much of the waywardness of Solomon's character in after life, so that we are told "his wives turned away his heart."

One of the first questions that youth and maiden should put in considering the question of marriage is, whether there can be perfect sympathy in the best and deepest things; for how can two walk together except they be agreed?

The blessedness of the marriage tie depends on whether the twain are one in spirit, in a common love for Christ, and endeavor for his glory. Nothing is more terrible than when either admits in the secrecy of the heart, concerning the other, My husband or my wife cannot accompany me into the holy places where I was reared, and in which my best life finds its home.

All friendship should follow the same law. We must abide together in the secret place of the Most High, if our friends and we are to be friends indeed. All places may be made holy where the Ark of God's covenant comes. Where it goes, love may safely follow; but woe to the love that cannot! Its inability proves its lack of elements of permanence and perfect satisfaction.

She came to prove Solomon with hard questions. 2 Chronicles 9:1

SHE came to the right place, for Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in wisdom; and all the kings of the earth sought his presence, to hear the wisdom that God had put into his heart. Bring your hard questions to Christ; He is greater than Solomon. To Him is given riches and wisdom, and He is made unto us wisdom. Before the touch of his light the darkest perplexities must resolve themselves. Though He speak no audible word, the hardest questions are answered to the eyes and ears

of such as wait before Him.

She came in the right spirit, bringing him gold and spices and precious stones. Those who would get from Christ must be willing to give to Him. There must be a reciprocity; and if we hope to receive from Him from those infinite stores of which He has the key, we must count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and must be prepared to count them as refuse if only we may win Him.

She came to a right conclusion. He answered all her questions, and she returned congratulating his servants and blessing God. To each of us life is full of perplexities, to which we can find no solution, however much we strain our eyes and weary our minds. But away there in the light Christ stands, with the perfect plan of every maze in his possession, with a key for every riddle, and solution for every enigma. Wait patiently. Each tough knot will be untied; and there will come into our hearts a radiancy, a bounding joy like that with which the Queen of Sheba turned to go to her own home. The half of the greatness of thy wisdom, O Word of God can never be told!

For it was brought about of God. 2 Chronicles 10:15 (R.V.).

THIS revolt must have seemed to be the result of an unfortunate mistake on the part of the illâ€‘advised young king. He and the young men that gathered around him thought that the best way of ruling people was by showing a strong hand, and adopting a policy of noncompliance with their very natural requests. But as the result, the Ten Tribes, never very closely bound to David's line, sprang away from it, leaving, as Ahijah had foretold, only two out of the twelve pieces of the rent garment. Here, however, a deeper explanation is given: "It was brought about of God." It seemed to be altogether a piece of human folly and passion; but now we are suddenly brought into the presence of God, and told that beneath the plottings and plannings of man He was carrying out his eternal purpose.

To detect this Divine purpose lying beneath the crossâ€‘currents of human affairs is the prerogative of the saints. In a recent book, the Duke of Argyll has argued from the purposeâ€‘iveness of nature. With as much certainty we may apply that word to history, politics, the course of current events. All is under law. God doeth according to his will among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Without contravening the action of man's free choice He carries out his great designs and works his sovereign will. Let us trust in this Almighty Providence, which underlies all events and catastrophes, and pursues its beneficent objects undeterred by our sins. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and weaves the malignant work of Satan into his plans.

Such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 11:16

ALL the tribes were represented in those great convocations around the Temple and Ark of God. The territory of the northern tribes was now under Jeroboam; the gulf between the two kingdoms was marked and distinct. Everything was done by the son of Nebat to make it difficult for his people to cross the frontier; but their spiritual affinities prevailed. They were stronger than the antipathy which Rehoboam's haughty behavior had excited; stronger than the fear of incurring odium with their own king; stronger than the inconvenience of the long journey. In spite of everything, those whose hearts were set on seeking the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers.

Does not this foreshadow the unity of the Church of Christ? Territorial distinctions, the risk of incurâ€‘ring

disfavor, the necessity of making a sacrifice — these things are as nothing compared with the attraction of our common Lord. Amid wide disunion and disparity of every kind, there is one mighty bond, which draws believers of every nation, kindred, tribe, and people together. Each morning we all ascend the steps of the same temple of prayer; each evening we join in one great hymn of praise; at each Lord's Supper we sit at the same table. Eating of one Bread, we know that we are one Loaf; drinking of one Cup, we profess our indebtedness to the same precious Blood for our hope and ground of acceptance (1 Cor. x. 17, R.V., marg.).

We must set our hearts, if we desire to execute any great purpose in our life: otherwise we shall be daunted and checkmated by the strong opposition of men and things.

He did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord. 2 Chronicles 12:14

IN the margin of the A.V. for prepared the alternative rendering fixed is suggested. The R.V. gives set, "he set not his heart to seek the Lord." This is very true of all of us. Before temptation comes we almost always have a warning of some kind. The barometer falls; the sea birds come in to the shore; the leaves of the trees are bent back. The Spirit of God contrives to give the soul some signal that at any moment it may expect an assault. The question always is at such a time, Is the heart set on seeking and doing the will of God? If it be, if without reserve the whole nature is determined to do God's will at any cost, there is no fear of the enemy effecting an entrance. All day the thunder of its artillery may boom around, but from every side the foe will be repelled, until presently the storm will roll far down the wind.

If, on the other hand, there is any vacillation; if, whilst ostensibly avowing our determination to do the right thing, we secretly whisper in our deepest consciousness that we intend to go as far as we can in self-indulgence, and would be almost thankful if circumstances compelled us to yield — we are almost certain to fall. The will must be whole in its resolves; the heart must be consecrated in its most secret determinations; no traitor may be harbored, who may open the postern gate. Oh to say with David, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed"! But this steadfastness is one of those preparations of the heart which can only be obtained through the gracious indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Hence we pray with David, "Renew a steadfast spirit within me." And while we pray, we must never forget our Lord's command to watch also.

Behold, the battle was before and behind. 2 Chronicles 13:14

ABIJAH'S address is full of true and noble utterances, especially when he describes God as being the Captain of the Host; and this spirit soon permeated his people, so that when the battle was sorest, and they were hemmed in by their foes, it was natural for them to turn to the Lord, and for the priests to give a blast on the trumpets, like that with which the new moon and the solemn feasts were inaugurated.

The point for us to remember is that our enemies may shut us in on all sides, preventing reinforcements from north, south, east, and west; but no earthly power can ever shut off God from above us. The way upwards is always kept clear; the ladder which links the beleaguered soul with God and heaven can never be blocked, except by transgression and sin.

The Priest is always with thee, child of God. His help is always at hand. Neither death, nor life, nor height, nor depth, nor principalities, nor powers, can ever separate thee from the down-coming of God's love.

The battle is often before and behind. From behind come memories of past failure, the consequences of mistakes, the misunderstandings which have alienated us from others, and made it difficult for us to live as we would; on the other hand perplexities and anxieties seem to bar our future path. But when the battle is before and behind, remember that God besets his people behind and before, and covers them with his hand. The invisible film of his protection makes the soul invulnerable. The life that is hid with Christ in God is beyond the reach of harm.

Lord, there is none beside Thee to help. 2 Chronicles 14:11 (R.V.)

REMINDE God of his entire responsibility. — "There is none beside thee to help." The odds against Asa were enormous. There were a million of men in arms against him, beside three hundred chariots. It seemed impossible to hold his own against that vast multitude. There were no allies who would come to his help: his only hope therefore was in God. There was none beside to help. It may be that your difficulties have been allowed to come to so alarming a pitch that you may be compelled to renounce all creature aid, to which in lesser trials you have had recourse, and cast yourself back on your Almighty Friend.

Put God between yourself and the foe. "To Asa's faith, Jehovah seemed to stand between the might of Zerah and himself, as one who had no strength. Nor was he mistaken. We are told that the Ethiopians were destroyed before the Lord and before his host, as though celestial combatants flung themselves against the foe in Israel's behalf, and put the large host to rout, so that Israel had only to follow up and gather the spoil. Our God is Jehovah of Hosts, who can summon unexpected reinforcements at any moment to the aid of his people. Believe that He is there between you and your difficulty, and what baffles you will flee before Him, as clouds before the gale.

Identify your cause with his. "In thy name are we come. . . . Let not man prevail against Thee." It is a great matter when a small State is so identified with a strong European power, as that an insult to one of its officials is deemed a *casus belli* by the more powerful Government; and whenever we are so delivered from selfish aims, as to be able to show that our cause and God's are one, we are invincible.

They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers. 2 Chronicles 15:12

WE hear but little talk in the present day of the covenant, the mention of which was dear to God's people of olden time. There is this difference between it and the covenants which we make with God. That is permanent, these evanescent. That is founded upon the oath and promise of God; these on the resolutions and endeavors of man. That is full of promises of what God will be and do; these recount what we are prepared to sacrifice and suffer. And though we sign them with blood drawn from our veins, they will disappoint and fail.

Do not think too much of entering into and keeping a covenant with God; but remember that the Lord Jesus, on our behalf, has entered into covenant relation with the Father, and the Father with us in Him. This is the new covenant. It is drawn out at length in Hebrews viii. Very little is said about our side, but it is full to overflowing of God's. Nothing is said of our fidelity to our obligations, because man has been too often weighed in the balances and found wanting; and because the Lord Jesus Christ, as our representative, has already fulfilled all the conditions of obedience and devotion on which its provisions depend. He has also graciously undertaken to realize those conditions by the Holy Spirit in us.

Every time we put to our lips the cup of the new covenant, we humbly remind God of all He has promised, and ask Him to do as He has said. At the same time we may confidently ask the great Surety of the covenant to accomplish in us such a mind as may love and keep our Father's law. And what He did for our fathers, who were naturally just such as we are, He will certainly do for us.

To show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. 2 Chronicles 16:9

THE emphasis is clearly on the word perfect. That was the point between Hanani the seer and Asa the king. Asa's mistake and sin lay in his resorting to Benhadad, king of Syria, as an ally against Baasha. Evidently he did not perfectly trust the delivering power of God; and in this failure of his faith, he forfeited the all-sufficient help which would have more than availed. As the seer said very truly, simple trust in God had brought deliverance from the Ethiopians and Lubim, though they were a much huger host than Baasha's; and the same attitude in respect of Baasha would have secured a like result. God was only awaiting the appeal of Asa's faith, to show Himself strong. What a mistake to send to Syria!

Now, dear reader, this is very pertinent for your life and mine. We often complain that we are bereft of help, and send off for Benhadad. And all the while the eyes of the Lord are looking pitifully and longingly at us. Nothing would give Him greater pleasure than to show Himself strong on our behalf. This, however, He cannot do until renouncing all other confidants and helpers, our heart is perfect in the simplicity and frankness of its faith. What an exquisite thought is suggested by the allusion to the eyes of the Lord running to and fro throughout the whole earth! At a glance He takes in our position; not a sorrow, trial, or temptation visits us without exciting his notice and loving sympathy. In all the whole wide earth there is not one spot so lonely, one heart so darkened, as to escape those eyes. Oh for the perfect confidence which will allow Him to act! It is for lack of this that we remain unhelped, and spend our days in the midst of wars and tumults.

His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. 2 Chronicles 17:6

SURSUM corda! Lift up your hearts! How beautiful is this ejaculation in the Communion Service of the Church of England, and the response, "We lift them up unto the Lord." I never hear it without the thrill of a holy impulse passing through me. It is possible, and it is meet and right, to lift up our hearts from the sordid cares and pressing responsibilities of daily life, into the calm, serene presence of God our Father.

Lift up your heart to God, as a child its face to be kissed. Lift it up free from mistrust and sinful stain, and unkind feeling towards any. Lift it up in holy joy and inspiration. Lift it up as a censer filled with the hot coals, from which sweet fragrance exhales. And God will bend down to lift it higher, and fill it with his peace and joy and purity.

In hours of depression look up, be lifted. Sursum corda! When the foe is pressing you most severely, look up, your redemption draweth nigh. When the river has to be crossed, when the last farewell must be said, when the flesh fails, let your mind and heart thither ascend, and there continually dwell where Jesus has entered as your Forerunner.

If you would lift up your heart, you must be in the ways of the Lord, as the good Jehoshaphat. You must seek the Lord God, and walk in his commandments. You must take away the high places and groves of idolatry and impurity. Beware of the world's birdlime! Shake yourself from the bands and bonds that would detain you. Oh, heart of mine, why is thy flight so low? Lift thyself up and sit down with Christ in the heavenly places! "Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Let not mine enemies triumph over me!"

I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil. 2 Chronicles 18:7

THIS was a very naive confession. Of course, Micaiah could not speak good of Ahab, whose life was diametrically opposed to all that was God-like and holy. Micaiah had no animosity towards the king of Israel; it was not a personal matter with him. He simply read from the page of the future as God opened it to his eyes, and in which the out-working of the king's evil life was disclosed in gloomy characters. It was as absurd to hate him because he read such dark lessons from the inevitable future, as for a householder to shoot his dog, that bays all night, to warn his master against the burglar engaged in rifling his home.

The Bible, the pastor, the whole Church of God, are hated by worldlings for the same reason, because they cannot speak hopefully of their future. It is as though a card-playing crew were to hate the watchman who told them that the course of their vessel was straight for the surf and rocks of the shore. If men will persist in violating God's law, in breaking through the hedge of thorns, and in pursuing their own wild ways, they cannot possibly expect the blessedness of the Beatitudes. However, their hatred against those who warn them is really directed towards God. They are indignant that they cannot have their way; their proud spirit would like to overturn the very order of the universe rather than that it should be thwarted. They cannot endure the contrast between God's children and themselves. Do not be surprised if the world hate you. It shows that you are no more of the world than your Master was. Jesus said: "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."

Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? 2 Chronicles 19:2

THIS looks back to xviii. 1, where we learn that Jehoshaphat, though he had riches and honour in abundance, joined affinity with Ahab. Riches and abundance are dangerous things. They usually weaken our character, and incline us to worldly alliances; and it was to their subtle and pernicious influences that Jehoshaphat fell a victim. Ah! what a fall it was to hear him saying, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people." Well might Jehu take up the role which his father had filled before Asa, and protest. But let us seriously question whether, though there are good things found in us, we may not be falling into the same mistake, and sin. Are there not ways in which we say to men of the world, with whom we mix, "I am as thou art"?

There is a great tendency in the present day to boast in the closeness with which we can approach the world without injury. We join in the social life, read the same books, go to the same amusements, talk of the same themes; and it is almost impossible in a drawing-room to tell the difference between the Jehoshaphats and the Ahabs. So also, in our methods of doing good. The real difficulty lies away back in our want of engagedness with Christ. It is of little use to find fault with the outward, as long as the heart is wayward. Love to the Lord Jesus is our only safeguard. The love of Christ must constrain us. Personal attachment to Christ will wean us away from this close identification with the world. But if we persist in identifying ourselves with the world, which God has doomed, we must not be surprised to find that wrath is on us from the Lord: and He will chasten us for love's sake.

He appointed singers unto the Lord, that should praise the beauty of holiness. 2 Chronicles 20:21

DOST thou praise the beauty of holiness? Is holiness beautiful to thee? Art thou in love with it as it is presented in the glorious Lord? Canst thou turn from the noise and anxiety of life's battle to dwell on the loveliness of God and of the devout life, and to praise Him whose mercy endureth forever? It is a rare accomplishment, acquired

only through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. In each of us there should be the priest's side of character as well as the warrior: the love for what is beautiful in holiness as well as for the strong and active in service.

But the special characteristic of this battle was that the good king put the singers in the forefront of the army, and praised for a victory which was only assured to him by faith. Yet so sure was he of it, that he could praise before he entered into the battle.

There is much to help us here in our daily combat for God and truth. Let us fill the morning hour with holy song, in the heart, if not with the voice; let a psalm or hymn be part of the daily reading; let there be the confidence that God is going to bless, which cannot restrain its jubilant expression. So in all prayer, wait on God till you feel that you can praise Him for what you have asked Him to bestow.

When they began to praise, the Lord did all the rest. Before the onset of his Divine reinforcements the enemy fled. His people had but to gather spoil, and then the praise which had anticipated the battle was consummated as they returned, in the valley of blessing.

'There's a song in the valley of blessing so sweet,

And angels would fain join the strain,

As with rapturous praises we bow at his feet,

Crying. 'Worthy the Lamb that was slain!'

The same time also did Libnah rebuild from under his hand. 2 Chronicles 21:10

AS long as the kings of Judah remained true to their allegiance to God they were able to keep in subjection the surrounding nations; but just so soon as they revolted from God these peoples revolted from them. It was as though power descended into them from the source of all power; and when the link between themselves and God was broken, that between them and their subordinates was broken also.

This applies very widely: To our passions. 'If they master you, rebelling against and revolting from your hand, it is because there is some flaw in your consecration, and you have forsaken to some extent the Lord God.

To our families. 'When the heads of a home are in perfect unity with each other and God, they may generally expect that their children will grow up submissive and obedient. Their authority will be recognized and honored. Revolt in the home indicates very often some lapse in obedience and loyalty to God.

To our influence over men. 'When the soul is in blessed fellowship with God, power flows into it from Him, before which strongholds are overthrown. "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord," said the prophet. "I am a man under authority, and have soldiers under me," said the centurion.

Give yourself entirely to Jesus. Obey Him absolutely; receive by faith from Him living power and grace; be a channel through which He may pour Himself; and you will find that men and things will fall into line at your bidding, and you shall receive power. Our Libnahs will not revolt unless we forsake the Lord God of our fathers.

Hid in the House of God. 2 Chronicles 22:12

SAFE from Athaliah, who would have ruthlessly destroyed him if she had had an inkling of his existence, the Young Joash was reared beneath the care of Jehoiada and his wife within the precincts of the house of God. He was hidden in the secret place of the Most High, and abode under the shadow of the Almighty. There let us also live. Let us know what it is to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life, and all this day. Let us cultivate the life which is hid with Christ in God.

It is well often to remind ourselves that we are in God, and that the film of his envining presence is about us like a wall of thick-ribbed steel. We are in Him as the jewel in the casket; as the chick under the feathers of the hen; as the child in the warm embrace of its mother. And so long as we stay there we are invulnerable. Therefore our great enemy is continually endeavoring to allure us into the open; he knows he can do as he likes with us, if only he can induce us to venture beyond our hiding-place. Therefore, beware of any temptation to worry, to amass this world's goods, or to seek the indulgence of appetite; it is by such lures and baits that

Satan seduces unwary souls from their safe hiding.

If a day in God's courts is better than a thousand, what must it be to dwell in the house of the Lord all one's days, to behold his beauty, and enquire in his temple. The rarest visions, the fairest fellowship, the most entrancing joys, the most confident outlook on life, and the hereafter, are the accompaniments of such a residence. The altar of incense, the laver of dairy cleansing, the light of the Shekinah, the holy psalm and song, the great altar of sacrifice, are familiar objects to the hidden soul.

And the city was quiet after they had slain Athaliah with the sword. 2 Chronicles 23:21

THIS was a great revolution, admirably planned and carried into effect. It was intolerable that such a woman as Athaliah should desecrate the throne and temple. Jehoiada, by his prudence and courage, deserved well of the entire nation in ridding the world of her presence. No half measures would have availed to meet the case.

There are times in every life when strong and strenuous action is inevitable if the cause of God is to be promoted and saved. In many of us there is a willingness to tolerate evil, rather than arouse ourselves to grasp it with a firm hand, and, if needs be, drag it up by its roots. Be strong, yea, be strong, is an injunction that has to be emphasized even to men who are greatly beloved. The easiest thing for Jehoiada would have been to shut himself up in the temple, and leave things to take their course. The noblest thing was to come forth, and boldly confront the rampant evil of his time. So God's call rings out for helpers in the great fight against sin. Its notes penetrate into the retirement of Christian homes, to noble women and devoted men, demanding that they should come forth to resist impurity, the love of strong drink, the strong tendency towards extravagance, luxury, and waste. The world is full of Athaliahs, and it is not befitting that the Jehoiadas should remain at their holy rites and services if there is a paramount need for action in the world's battlefield, in the strife against wrong.

The children of God are citizens of the New Jerusalem, but they are also certainly citizens here; and they must not stand aside from great public issues, allowing them to be decided by ungodly and wicked men.

The Spirit of God clothed itself with Zechariah the son of Jehoiada. 2 Chronicles 24:20 (R. V., marg.).

AS we put on a cloak or dress, so does the Spirit of God, as it were, hide Himself in those who surrender themselves to Him, so that it is not they who speak and act, but He within them. Have you at any time been conscious of having become the clothing of the Holy Spirit? Remember that cloth or leather must yield itself easily to the movements of its wearer, and not less pliable and supple must we be to the Spirit of God.

When the Spirit of God is thus within us, and speaks or acts for us, we may expect, as Zechariah found it, to come into collision with the entire drift and current of society around us, and to incur odium and hatred. Men do not like to be told that they cannot prosper because they have forsaken God; but we have no alternative than to witness against their sins. Does the Spirit clothe Himself with you my friend, as you anticipate the work of to-morrow? Are you using Him, or is He to use you? Are you seeking to clothe yourself with his power for some personal ambition, or are you desirous that He should array Himself in you, so that the glory may evidently be his? In the agony of battle, when great deeds are to be done, no one stops to think of the uniform of the soldier, but only of the might beneath it.

But for this you must be prepared to pay the cost, and be willing to cross the cherished purposes of men, as the Spirit of God by your voice or deed witnesses against them. They stoned Zechariah at the command of the king; but years after the Lord Jesus referred to it, for no faithful martyr seals his witness with his blood without some quick glance of recognition from the Master, and some record on the imperishable tablets of his heart.

The Lord is able to give thee much more than this. 2 Chronicles 25:9

AMAZIAH had many good qualities, but he did not clearly see how impossible it was for Israel to be allied with Judah without invalidating the special Divine protection and care on which Judah had been taught to rely. We must understand that God cannot be in fellowship with us if we tolerate fellowship with the ungodly. We must choose between the two. If we can renounce all creature aid, and trust simply in the eternal God, there is no limit to the victories He will secure; but if, turning from Him, we hold out our hand toward the world, we forfeit his aid. O child of God, let not the army of Israel go with thee! Do not adopt worldly policy, methods, or partnership. However strong you make yourself for the battle in alliance with these, you will fail. Indeed, God Himself will make you fall before the enemy, that you may be driven back to Himself.

But you say that you have already entered into so close an alliance that you cannot draw back. You have invested your capital; you have gone to great expenditures Yet it will be better to forfeit these than Him. Without these aids, and with only God beside you, you will be able to rout Edom, and smite ten thousand men. Would that men knew the absolute deliverance which God will effect for those whose hearts are perfect towards Him!

The soldiers of Israel committed depredations on their way back. This was the result of the folly and sin of Amaziah's proposal. We may be forgiven, and delivered, and yet there will be after consequences which will follow us from some illâ€‘considered act. Sin may be forgiven, but its secondary results are sometimes very bitter. We must expect to reap as we sow.

He was marvellously helped, till he was strong. 2 Chronicles 26:15,16

GREAT and marvelous are thy works, O God; that our soul knoweth quite well. Thou hast showed marvelous lovingâ€‘kindness. We must sing to Thee; for Thou hast done marvelous things. It is marvelous that Thou shouldst have set thy love upon us; that Thou shouldst have watched over our interests with unwearied care; that our sins, or unbelief, or declensions, have never diverted thy love from us. "Marvelous " is the only word we can use, as we think of the condescension of the wellâ€‘beloved Son to the mangerâ€‘bed; of the agony and bloodyâ€‘sweat; of the cross and passion â€‘â€‘ and all for us who were his enemies. But it is most marvelous of all that Thou least made us children, heirs, arid jointâ€‘heirs with Christ. To think that we shall shine as the sun in thy kingdom, that we are to sit upon his throne, and be included in that circle of love and life of which the throne of God and the Lamb is the center! Surely the marvels of thy grace will only seem the greater when eternity with its boundless ages gives us time to explore them.

The danger, however, is that we should become strong in our own conceit, and credit ourselves with the position which is due to the grace of God alone. Oh for the truly humble spirit of the little child, that we may never vaunt ourselves! The laden ship sinks in the water; the fruitâ€‘burdened bough stoops to the ground; the truest scientist is the humblest disciple. Oh to be submerged and abashed for the marvelous help of God!

God cannot trust some of us with prosperity and success, because our nature could not stand them. We must tug at the oar, instead of spreading the sail, because we have not enough ballast.

Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways. 2 Chronicles 27:6 (R.V.).

THERE is a lower sense in which this holds good in daily and business life. You can hardly imagine a really successful man being untidy and disorderly. Method is the law of success; and a truly holy soul is sure to be orderly. I do not remember ever meeting one who really walked with God who did not make orderliness one of the first principles of life.

The Lord Jesus would have the men sit down in rows before He broke the bread; and He wrapped together his graveâ€‘clothes before He left the sepulcher. It was, therefore, in keeping with the whole tenor of his example when the apostle prescribed that all things should be done decently and in order.

Clear handwriting, especially the direction of an envelope, to give the postman as little trouble as possible; the careful folding of our castâ€‘off garments, to save the maids needless work; the leaving our room that we have been occupying as little disturbed in its arrangements as may be; the gathering up of luncheon fragments from the green banks, where we have sat to view the entrancing prospect; the arrangement of papers, and accounts, and magazines, so that we can readily lay our hand upon whatever is required; the adopting of mental order in prayer and conversation, and in the thinking out of plans and purposes; neatness in dress â€‘â€‘ these are all part of the right ordering of life which makes for its success and comfort, and greatly for peace in the home. They are the habits of the soul that walks before God, and which is accustomed to think of Him as seeing in secret, and as considering all our ways. In this way we may become mighty, and by being faithful in that which is least come to great charges.

They clothed all that were naked, and gave them to eat and drink. 2 Chronicles 28:15

A GREAT burst of generosity was here, for Israel had every reason to be incensed against Judah for the raid made on their territory. But, instead of pushing their advantage to the uttermost, they returned good for evil, and anticipated the words of the apostle, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

Have you in your life people who have done you injury, and against whom you entertain hard thoughts? You do

not injure them in return, but you cannot pray for them. So far as you can, you avoid them; you make no attempt to overcome the evil that is in them. But to act thus is to come short of Christ's standard. It is your duty, not merely to keep at a distance and give a wide berth, but by love to destroy the evil, to transform the enemy into a friend, and to create love and friendship where hostility and alienation had reigned. It is God's way, and in this we are bidden to be perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect.

Will you try it? Will you begin by doing kind acts to those who have harmed you? Not because as yet you feel as you would, but because it is right. Then as you dig the trench in right doing, look up to God, and He will pour into your heart the warm gush of affection. If you sincerely will his will in this matter, and act as the Good Samaritan did to the Jew, and exercise faith, God will come to your aid whilst you clothe others and minister to them, you will find their hard heart melted, and yourselves clothed with the beautiful garments of salvation, and of a meek and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is of great price.

When the burntâ€‘offering began, the song of the Lord began also. 2 Chronicles 29:27

THIS chapter contains a parable of the cleansing of the heart, meant to be a temple for God; but the doors of prayer are unopened, the lamps of testimony unlit, the burntâ€‘offerings of selfâ€‘sacrifice neglected ; and, as the result, grass grows thick in courts which should have been trodden by the feet of Levite minstrels engaged in holy song. If ever that song is to break out again, it can only be after a thorough cleansing and renovation of the inner shrine. You tell me that you cannot sing the Lord's song; then I know you have gone into the strange land of backsliding. You acknowledge that for some time now you have taken no delight in God or his service; then I am sure that the temple is badly in need of renovation.

Cleanse the house of the Lord. Bring out all the uncleanness. By selfâ€‘examination, confession, and repudiation, be clean of all the filth which has accumulated through months and years of neglect. Resume the position of entire devotion, as a prepared and sanctified soul. Offer the sinâ€‘offering for the past, and prepare the burntâ€‘offering of entire consecration for the future. And when that is offered, when you determine to be wholly God's, lay yourself, with all the interests of your life, at the feet of Jesus, for his disposal; then the song of the Lord will begin again.

The music of your life is still, because you are out of accord with the will of God; but when by surrender and consecration there is unison, your heart will be filled with songs without words, and love like an ocean in the fullness of her strength. When the rich, selfish bachelor suddenly finds himself compelled to care for his dead brother's little children, he is startled to find that a new song has begun in his life.

The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God. 2 Chronicles 30:18,19

A VERY touching prayer, that opens up deep thoughts as to the progress of the true knowledge of God in Israel, and of the comparative value of heart preparation and ceremonial cleansing. Here were crowds of wellâ€‘meaning people who had come from all parts of the land in answer to Hezekiah's invitation. Unaccustomed to temple usage, strangers to the temple rites, they had participated in the festivities of this great Passover without submitting first to the necessary ablutions. Their heart was prepared to seek God, they were proud of the great past, they desired to stand right with the Lord God of their fathers; but they were sadly ignorant and careless. The only thing to be done was to pray that their ignorances and negligences might be forgiven.

It is thus that Jesus pleads in heaven; and there are many that obtain mercy on the ground of his merit, because when they sin they do so ignorantly, and from want of knowledge rather than from want of heart. The devout ritualist who lays an excessive stress on outward forms; the man who has sensuous and distorted views of Christ, but sincerely desires to be accepted through Him; the soul that touches the hem of the garment as though the healing power were independent of the willâ€‘power of the Redeemer; the dying malefactor, who, in his last hours, catches at some distorted representation of Christ which is filtered through to him from the chance word of an uninstructed preacher â€‘these are included in the fruitful pleading of the Great High Priest, who has compassion on the ignorant and on those who are out of the way. You may not understand doctrine, creed, or rite; but be sure to seek God. No splendid ceremonial nor rigorous etiquette can intercept the seeking soul.

He did it with all his heart and prospered. 2 Chronicles 31:21

THE man who does his business with all his heart, is sure to prosper. To put your heart into your work is like genius manipulating common materials, till their worth becomes priceless, just because of what has been put

into it.

The heart stands for the emotions and affections. What the furnace is to the factory or steamship, that the heart is in the economy of our nature. It is a great thing to love our life's work, to have an aim that kindles us whenever we think of it. Those who are so happily circumstanced, cannot be sufficiently thankful. But what of those who are bound to a work which they did not choose and do not like, who find their daily toil irksome and distasteful - is there any help for them? Can they possibly learn to do such work from their hearts? Certainly: because of Him who set it, and for whom it may be done.

Love performs the most onerous duties with all its heart, if they conduce to the comfort and help of those whom it loves more than itself. Does not a mother or wife perform tasks from which the hireling would shrink? She does them with all her heart, not considering for a moment the loathsomeness and hardness of the demand. So if we look at our life's work as God's appointed; if we realize that He has fixed it for us, who determined the orbits of the stars; if we can hear the voice of Jesus saying, "Do this for Me" - there is no further thought of hardship or distaste. Remember to do all your life's work for Jesus; do all in his name and for his glory; ask Him to fill your heart with submissive, loyal obedience, and you will find that when you introduce the personal element of Christ's service into the meanest acts, they will glisten like a piece of gold's tapestry.

Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, prayed and cried to heaven. 2 Chronicles 32:20

IT was the indignity done to Jehovah that stirred these two holy men to the heart. Not that their lives, and the lives of their people, and the beautiful holy city, were in danger; but that Sennacherib spake against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of man. Oh that we were possessed with a similar zeal for God, so that we might look at sin as it affects Him, and lament over the awful wrongs which are continually being perpetrated against his holy, loving nature! What an argument this would give us in prayer!

This constitutes a special reason why we should plead for a revival of religion throughout our land. Men speak and act so shamelessly, as though God had abdicated his throne, and was hardly to be taken account of. They sin against Him with so high a hand, and treat his laws with so much contumely. Are there no Hezekiahs and Isaiahs who will pray and cry to the God of our fathers to do again the great works He did in their days, and in the old time before?

Then the Lord would save us, and guide us on every side (22). There never was a more conspicuous and glorious deliverance than when the angel of God wrought for Israel against Assyria. The Lord became a place of broad rivers and streams across which the enemy could not pass. As the mother bird settling down on her nest, He covered the city with his outspread wings. And the rich spoils of the foe were left for the beleaguered garrison. Pray on, beloved; the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King ; He will save us.

When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God. 2 Chronicles 33:12

SO long as this story stands on the page of revelation, no sinner need despair of mercy. There was hardly a sin possible to man that Manasseh did not commit. "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel." And he made his people do worse than the heathen.

Then came awful sorrow. Bound in fetters, exposed to consummate cruelty and disgrace, he was carried to Babylon, and thrust into the dungeons, where other captive princes were immured, with little chance of liberation or permission to revisit his native land. But there the Spirit of God did his work. He humbled himself greatly, and prayed. What tears, and cries, and bursts of heart's broken penitence, were his! How those walls were saturated with the breath of confession, and those stone floors indented by his kneeling at perpetual prayer! And God came near to his low dungeon, and graciously heard his supplication, and brought him back again.

Yes, and He will do as much for you. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin; the grace of God is exceedingly abundant with faith and love; all sins and blasphemies may be forgiven to the sons of men. Turn to Him with brokenness of soul, and He will not only forgive, but bring you again; and give you, as He did Manasseh, an opportunity of undoing some of those evil things which have marred your past. For the rest, it is good not to wait for affliction to stir us up to seek God, but to abide in Him for love's dear sake.

I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. 2 Chronicles 34:15,18

IT is supposed that this was the Book of Deuteronomy; though we have no sympathy whatever with a modern notion with respect to its discovery. In our judgment that book is rightly ascribed to Moses. Apparently, however, it had long been missing, and the young king was filled with horror when he heard the list of evils that were associated with apostasy. "He rent his clothes."

We should read the Bible with a particular application to the days in which we live. It is well enough to accept its statements as being generally true and credible; but it is better to realize their pertinence to ourselves and our circumstances. The book of the law had been sadly neglected in the years preceding Josiah's accession; and through the neglect of God's Word the people had become indifferent to his commands, and deaf to the appeals of his prophets. Josiah turned the lantern on the evils of his time, and saw how God was feeling with respect to them.

The Bible is a book for all time. What it said, it says. What it was, it is. You tell me it was written so many centuries ago; but I reply the ink is still wet on its immortal pages. They have been read and pondered by generations; but the light of its eye is not dim, nor its natural force abated. Sin is the same, man the same, God the same, in all ages. And the Bible's claim to be God's Word is substantiated by the fact that it is possessed of living power, and of the same perennial freshness as the sun, or the spring, or the ocean, or the faces of the little children. Would that we might daily read it as we read the newspaper, damp from the press, realizing that it is our Father's great message for the life of every day!

Prepare. 2 Chronicles 35:4,6,10,14,15,16.

NO great court function can be carried through successfully, without careful preparation. And Josiah's Passover was so vast and rare a success because of the large amount of previous preparation, as is described in this chapter. The priests and Levites were prepared by careful washings and ceremonial rites. The course of the sacrifices was ordered according to the law of Moses. The routine of sacred song and praise was also provided for. Nothing was left to haphazard or chance.

We are taught to rely on the promptings and inspirations of the Holy Spirit; and it is certain that He would use us more on special errands, if we were to trust and obey Him better. But these extraordinary ministries should not lead us to a life of haphazard. We should prepare ourselves for service so far as we may, laying our plans, anticipating the calls and exigencies of coming days, and preparing for the demand which almost certainly will be made on us. We may have to give our special words and addresses and arrangements to the winds; but we shall always need that preparedness of heart which is necessary for those who are to be used of God.

Remember what is said of the vessels that were purged from uncleanness, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Be always in your own place, clean so far as you can be, filled with the Holy Ghost, with the handle of your life turned towards the Master's hand, that at any moment He may take hold of you, and use you for his holy service. By the diligent study of his Word, as well as by earnest prayer and waiting upon God, on will be prepared to do his will.

Rising up betimes. 2 Chronicles 36:15

WHAT a touching and graphic phrase! How did God yearn over that sinful and rebellious city! Sending his messengers, "rising up betimes, and sending " â€ˆâ€ˆ like a man who has had a sleepless night of anxiety for his friend or child, and rises with the dawn to send a servant on a mission of inquiry, or a message of love. How eager God is for men's salvation!

From God's eagerness, may we not learn a lesson of anxiety for the souls of men? We do not long after them enough, or rise betimes to urge them to repent. Did we realize what heaven is, or hell, what men are missing or incurring, what our duty is, as saved ourselves, we should rise up betimes to seek their eternal interests.

But if God rises betimes to seek men, should they not do the same to seek Him? Think you not, that when Adam heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden at morning prime, he would be up and away to meet Him on the upland lawns of Paradise? Can we wonder that our Master would rise up a great while before day, to meet his Father on some unfrequented height? Let us not cling to beds of sloth when God is awaiting us; let us heed his loving remonstranceâ€™s, that we may be saved in the overthrow of the world; and let us, like Lot, pass on the word to others enwrapped in fatal slumber around us, bidding them to escape to the mountains, before the sun rise on the earth, lest they be consumed.

Our Daily Homily - 2 Chronicles

It was the practice of Sir Henry Havelock, during his campaigns in India, always to have two hours for prayer and Bible study before the march. If the camp was struck at 6.00 a.m., he would rise at 4.00.