

CHAPTER III

Loaded Words

There is an indescribable quality about words, even when they are printed, but more so when they are spoken. Words are chariots in which the quality of the heart and mind ride forth to other souls. The dominant heart-quality of a person will possess and accompany his words with absolute precision. If the spirit of a man is superficial, or narrow, or time-serving, or selfish, or trifling, these qualities will pervade his words, in spite of all the seriousness or sanctity he may try to put into them, whether they are written or spoken. If the heart is large and filled with the broad, tender love of Jesus and compassion for others, then the simplest expressions, which may seem common-place, will be freighted with these qualities.

All words are loaded with the quality of the soul out of which they proceed. It is eternally impossible for God to utter one word that is not loaded with divinity; and, on the other hand, it is impossible for the devil to utter one word which does not, in some way, contain a lie. Words are like eyes. Some eyes are inquisitive; others are pleading; others are brave; others are searching; others are mild and tender; and still others are low and mean. There is an invisible stream of soul-quality that flows out from people's eyes, and there is no way in the world to change the quality of that stream except by changing the eye, and the only way to change the eye is to change the immortal spirit that looks out through the eye.

The same thing is true of words. Our words are the eye-balls of the heart, in which others see the quality of our minds. The apostle speaks of "our words being seasoned with salt"; and Jesus tells us that we must "have salt in ourselves." In one sense, salt is sweeter than sugar, and far more essential to the chemistry of our blood than sugar is. Hence salt is a type of the indwelling Christ in us; and it is when we are salted through and through with the blessed Holy Ghost, that our words will be seasoned with the real Christ-life.

Our words cannot be loaded with the Holy Spirit after they leave our lips. If God is in them, they must proceed out of a Holy Spirit element in us. The drops of blood, or the tears, that you may shed, all contain salt; but that salt is in the stomach and the heart before it is in the blood-drops or the tear-drops. In like manner, if our words have a savor of life and power in them, they must get that quality from the inner depths of our spirit before they drop from our lips or pens. Jesus teaches that our words reveal our heart-character, and says: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

If we speak or write in the Holy Spirit, our words will be loaded with light. There will be a transparency and straightforward simplicity in them like unto clear glass. They will not be spoken for ostentation, or for sound, or in guile, or with double meaning. All such words are opaque.

Many a sermon is so preached, and many a religious book so written, that instead of revealing the truth to the simplest understanding, it obscures it. The only use of words is to

make the thought easily and perfectly intelligible, and when the Holy Spirit inspires them, they are like balls of clear glass, in which the very core of the thought can be seen and comprehended.

Another peculiarity about words loaded with the Spirit is an inexpressible warmth and magnetism in them. They seem to quiver with a heavenly electricity; they vitalize the mind; they penetrate the understanding; there is a love-quality in them, like the pungent, penetrating heat of sweet spices and aromatic oils. A piece of cedar-wood or sandal-wood will give forth a sweet, pungent odor for hundreds of years; and so there is a hot, burning flavor in the words which have come from minds aflame with divine love. It often happens that persons devoid of the interior flame of the Holy Ghost try to put a pathos or an unction into their prayers or sermons or conversation; but in spite of all their efforts, their words are insipid, milk and water, chilly and powerless, because they have not come from an interior furnace. It is only a painted fire, which dazzles the eye and freezes the hearer.

The Holy Spirit alone can put into our words that burning, warming sensation which kindles other souls into fervor. Only notice, when some person speaks in a religious meeting under the melting, burning love of Jesus, how their words strike the mind like a warm south wind in early spring; notice how the congregations listen to catch every word; how the fiery stream of speech will evoke a pleasant smile, or a flowing tear, or awaken conviction, or a sense of joy. Every mind in the congregation which loves the truth will be wide awake; there is a warmth in the expression of the people's eyes, and if you could see into their intellects, it would resemble a flower-garden blossoming into bright and glowing thoughts, and their affections melted into sweetness. Those burning words are being shot like red-hot bullets from a divine magazine of a fire-baptized heart. In comparison with such words, all human eloquence is like cold moonbeams on a frozen sea.

Another characteristic of Holy Ghost loaded words is a divine fitness in them as to time and place and matter. God often arranges to have His Spirit-led children speak words in such a juncture of circumstances, or at such times, and in such a tone of voice, as the speaker did not premeditate, which have accomplished vast and everlasting results. People will often say that you spoke a certain word to me years ago under such and such circumstances, which made a great change in my life.

Here is a young lady physician who has packed her trunk to leave a certain camp meeting. She is invited to lead a young people's meeting. An evangelist standing by, in an unpremeditated way, simply says: "Sister, the Lord wants you here; go, unpack your trunk, and lead that meeting." The words are loaded; they pierce the heart. The young lady leads the meeting and from that time on becomes a holiness evangelist.

A certain man is holding a meeting in North Georgia. A brother steps up and says: "I met you ten years ago in Augusta, when I was seeking sanctification, and walking in the street. I asked you several questions. You simply answered me: 'Brother, just leave yourself in the

hands of Jesus, and He will answer all your questions.' Your words were loaded, and in a few moments I was in spiritual liberty."

There are millions of instances where words have been spoken, under the guidance of the Spirit, just in the nick of time to accomplish great results.

Another quality about loaded words is that of durability; they have in them the element of immortality. Commonplace words, spoken out of the mere creature, glide away from us by the million; but certain words, appropriate to our needs and charged with the Spirit, bury themselves in our memories, and remain fresh with us through life.

Many years ago, I met an old negro, about an hundred years old. In his conversation, he said: "Man tell something you forgit; God tell you something you no forgit." I have often thought of that expression. If we want our prayers, or sermons, or testimonies, or written words, to abide in everlasting fruitfulness, they must be in the order of Divine will and under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

Some persons try of set purpose to speak wise and appropriate and powerful words. But all such is a failure. You can't speak loaded words by trying to, or for the occasion; it is only by having the very fountains of our being so melted and filled and united with the Holy Spirit that, without any premeditation or set purpose, every stray shot and our ordinary conversation will be just as full of holy gravity and fiery truth as our prayers and sermons. The power must be generic, and continually flowing through us from the indwelling Christ. A trifling preacher during the week cannot speak fiery and weighty words on Sunday. Let us in secret prayer bathe ourselves so long in the bright and warm presence of Jesus that when we go forth we shall unconsciously carry in our manners and words that inimitable quality of life and durability which can come alone from the Eternal One.

If in the past our words have been lacking in the Divine aroma of grace, let us go to the fountain and, by persevering prayer, get in such abiding relation with the real source of all holiness as to make our very words conductors of heavenly electricity. Our infinite, loving God will gladly utilize any little humble one on this earth as a channel of holy fire, if they will utterly yield themselves up to His will and the current of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER IV

Personal Love of Jesus

We have a revelation of God's personal feelings in the very nature of the first great commandment, that we are to love Him with all our heart.

The complaint that Jesus had against the Church at Ephesus was their lack of fervent, personal love for Him; they had "works" and "labor" and "patience," and great zeal in searching out heretics, and in bearing persecution and the scorn of their neighbors, and had not fainted under hardships.

If such a list of graces were now found in one person, he would be esteemed a great saint; and yet the infinite Searcher of hearts saw the lack of something for which all these massive virtues could not atone; and that was a warm deep, incessant, cleaving, tender passion of soul for the person of the Lord Jesus.

Very few Christians reach such an intimacy with our dear Lord as to receive and appreciate His individual feelings. Jesus is an infinite lover, and nothing will satisfy Him but a pure, sacred, passionate, and personal love. He loves to be loved. He loves those most who have the most personal affection for Him. There are so many things that are eminently religious, and brave, and enterprising, and reformatory, which display great zeal and orthodoxy, but which do not satisfy the longings of our Savior's heart.

There are so few Christians that are positively affectionate with Jesus. Personal love of Jesus is marked by several characteristics:

I. It is a unique and undefinable love for *His person* as the God-man. When we are filled with the Spirit, there will be unfolded in our minds a fixed apprehension of each person in the Godhead; and there will be individual love for each person in the Godhead, and a sweet, peculiar adoration and affection and worship for the Father and for Christ, and for the Holy Spirit. And there is something in our love for each of the Divine persons which is peculiar to their personality. In such a state, our love for Jesus is the blending of love for the eternal Son and the sacred humanity, so this affection is composed of the most ardent attachments which a creature can have for his God, and the strongest attachment which one creature can have for another.

The human soul and sacred body of Jesus are the highest of all things in the creation of God. His suffering and death render Him the most precious creature in the universe, both to Father and to us; and when this is joined with the eternal *Logos*, Who was our Creator, it puts Him in such relation to us that we can love Him with a kind of love as we cannot have toward another person, either divine or human. It is this compound love, this blending of affections, like the composition of the sweet spikenard, which Jesus wants us to pour forth on Him.

We can love Jesus with more different kinds of affection than any other person in the universe. Look at the number of tender relationships that He sustains toward a soul that is

perfectly wedded to Him by the Holy Spirit. As our Creator, we adore Him; as our Redeemer, we boundlessly trust Him; as our King, we obey Him; as our Judge, we fear Him; as our Master, we submit to Him; as our Savior, we praise Him; as a little Infant, we feel a fatherly and motherly love toward Him; as a Brother, we feel a brotherly and sisterly love for Him; as our spiritual Bridegroom, our hearts are passionately devoted to Him.

Every relation that He sustains to us calls forth a new form of love. There is no kind of affection possible to the human soul which Jesus should not receive. See in how many ways Eve was related to Adam; being builded out of his rib, she was his own daughter, and at the same time his own sister, and at the same time his bride; and he being the lord of the human family, she was his servant, and all these relations entered into her affections for him.

Jesus is to us, in a similar way, all that Adam was to Eve, with a great deal more besides. Now do we love our precious Lord in all these relationships! Is our love for Him an ever-flowing stream, which is made up from all these several rivulets? There is no one in the universe, to a divinely-illuminated mind, so lovable as our blessed, Divine Jesus.

II. Personal love for Jesus has in it the extremes of the most sacred fear and the most child-like familiarity. Some people think that those who have much sacred fear cannot have much love; and, on the other hand, that those who have a fond familiarity of love cannot have a reverential fear; but such people are greatly mistaken. Fear and love are the two equal wings to this soaring devotion. Those who have an awe which in the least hinders their love, have a slave's awe, and not that of a child. There is nothing more beautiful in the interior life than that sacred awe, that sweet and sacred dread, which the soul feels in the presence of its Lord. When we gaze at His beautiful and blazing majesty, when our whole soul feels a gentle trembling before Him, there is something in the very holy dread that draws us to a deeper and more tender love.

And, on the other hand, there is a spotless familiarity which the soul can take with Jesus—a boldness and liberty of thought and speech—which only serves to make our worship more true, so that, in reality, sacred fear and familiar love act and react on each other.

III. Personal love of Jesus is indicated by an extreme sensitiveness for His honor. The soul feels an insult at every dishonor that is shown to its Divine Husband. When Jesus is wounded, His name lightly used, His majesty disregarded, His precious blood ignored—when He is treated irreverently, or when He is in any way dishonored as to His person or merits or claims—this hot personal love will feel a delicate, divine indignation.

The heart is as sensitive to the preciousness and honor of Christ as the apple of the eye. The truly wedded soul is very touchy as to the glory of its husband. And, on the other hand, this kind of love is always elated and happy at every advancement of Christ's glory. It loves to see Him extended; it glories in the spread of His glory.

IV. This kind of love has an incessant yearning for all the dispositions manifested in the life of Jesus. This personal love of Jesus has large, bright eyes, and from the New Testament

records it can see marvelous things in the Christ-life. It has vast and penetrating visions into the depths of His lowliness, the vastness of His charity, the tenderness of His Spirit, the perpetual self-sacrifice of His will, the absolute courage of His obedience, the everlastingness of His kindness. It sees His whole inner life, like a magnificent city, all lit up with unspeakable attributes, and all bespangled with majesties and virtues and graces and sweetnesses, that charm and bewilder the soul, and make it leap with intensest desire to possess everything which it sees in its lovely Lord. No splendor in creation can compare with the dazzling charms which an ardently loving soul perceives in Jesus. It cries out, with St. Paul, "Oh, the depth of the riches!" It is this vision which makes the soul pine and pray, and weep loving tears, and dream over and over of the ineffable transformation of being made just like its heavenly Bridegroom.

V. This form of love is strongly attached to the possessions of Christ. There is a peculiar attachment which always goes with the possession of a thing. It is the affection of ownership. As soon as anything becomes our property, we have a peculiar attachment which never could exist previous to ownership. This is why Jesus said, "Where your possessions are, there will your heart be." He does not say the possessions will go where the heart is, but the heart will go where the possessions are. Hence the soul in perfect, loving union with Jesus will find itself taking hold of all His personal kingdom and all His property, as a young queen finds the affections of her heart stretching out to all the subjects and enterprises of her king's dominion.

VI. I should not omit to say that this personal love for Jesus has in it a fond, caressing spirit for Him. It twines its thoughts around Him. It folds Him round and round with the delicate embraces of the Spirit. It often finds itself, like John, leaning on His breast; or, like Mary, sitting at His feet; or, like Magdalene, bathing His feet with tears; and whatever posture the body may be in, the soul is often on its face before Him in perfect, penitential tenderness.

VII. The love of Jesus would not be complete if it did not include a longing for His personal appearing, and to see Him come in the glory of His kingdom. The Holy Spirit loves Jesus with an infinite love, and He alone can flood our being with fervent love for Christ; and the Holy Ghost has told us that we are to "love Christ's appearing." St. Paul speaks of a crown of righteousness for all those who love our Lord's appearing. Any love for Jesus which does not include an intense desire to see and be with Him is below the standard of affection which He requires of us. They please Him most who love Him personally and ardently up to their capacity.

CHAPTER V

Lukewarmness

The very thought of lukewarmness implies that the soul has previously been in a good, hot state of grace. Persons who have never known a good degree of fervor, either in a justified or sanctified state, will never have the malady of lukewarmness. It is like pestilential insects, which attack thrifty, living vegetables, and not dry, dead sticks. We never think of a dry, rainless desert as suffering from a drought. The very thought of suffering from drought implies that the ground has previously been well watered.

It often happens that those who have been the most richly blessed with divine grace, and who have been lifted into fervent love, will imperceptibly decline into lukewarmness. Very few Christians on earth entirely escape this miserable tepidity altogether. One of the worst features about lukewarmness is that it steals on the soul in such quiet, respectable ways. If the horrible thing had horns and hoofs, and a smack of criminality in it, it would alarm the soul; but, as a rule, lukewarmness of spirit is so decent and well-behaved, that it chloroforms its victim and kills him without a scream of terror. This is what makes it so awfully fatal. While open sin slays its hundreds, nice, respectable lukewarmness slays its tens of thousands.

Could we get a vision of a soul that has been all aglow with sanctifying grace, as it was beginning to get lukewarm, we would see a heart seemingly spotless and empty, with the heavenly dove and the good angels just on the outside, but with their faces turned away from it, as if about to leave; and, on the other hand, we would see unclean beasts and birds on the outside of the heart, but with their faces turned toward it, as if about to enter. We would see the eyes half-closed, as if about taking a nap, and a dull, expressionless mouth, reminding us of a winter fireplace where the fire burns low. Oh, could the soul but see the awfulness of such a condition!

Lukewarmness is indicated by a negligence in acts of piety, and a carelessness in fixed habits of devotion; such as daily reading God's Word, regular seasons of prayer, constant guarding of our conversation, seasons of fasting, and habits of divine and heavenly meditation. There is not only a carelessness in the performing of these acts, but a dullness of spirit, a slovenness of mind, in the doing of them. As nearly all tightrope walkers and lion-tamers sooner or later get killed in their foolish game by a little carelessness, so many Christians fall from elevated grace, and are devoured by lions, through a thoughtless and careless spirit in Christian duty.

Another symptom of lukewarmness is a trusting to the magic of former grace. The soul has experiences, by an instantaneous regeneration, or an instantaneous sanctification, such floods of light and love as seem to sweep it out on an irresistible tide, and everything religious seems so easy, that everything works like a charm. But this very flood-tide of holy ease becomes a snare to the soul. It leans upon these instantaneous blessings to work by a sort of

magic, and to take the place of patient, thoughtful perseverance. There are hundreds who are lazily expecting the mere blessing of sanctification to take them through, and do not perceive that the chilling frost is settling down in the edges of their souls. It is as if a captain of a fine ship, after getting her out to sea, with the sails all set, and fairly in the wind, should lash the helm, and tell the crew they might take a holiday, expecting the wind and the ship, the chart and the compass, to do the balance. There are more souls doing this than we dream of.

Another element in lukewarmness is a sort of indefinite contentment with the present level of the spiritual life. There is a quiet, unexpressed decision of the mind that the soul is getting on very well, and that it will settle down into its present thought and feelings. Most Christians have quietly decided to live the remainder of their days just about like they are now doing. They expect no further great epochs in their experience.

A great many holiness people are so afraid of what resembles a third blessing that they expect no great widening deluges of the Spirit, but nestle down in the thought that if they can only keep a clean heart, they will never bother themselves about the ocean-depths of boundless, melting, fiery love. Such souls are already on the decline, and do not know it. Their spiritual life resembles a quiet, lazy, drowsy summer Sunday afternoon. They feel the Saturday night's work has been well done up; the Sabbath morn religion has been nicely attended to; and they can't bear the thought of the duties of Monday morning, and so spend the time napping. Even holiness preachers settle down into this Sunday afternoon condition, with just enough spiritual fervor to brush the summer flies away.

It is amazing how few Christians are seriously determined to get beyond their present experience; and of course they do not get beyond. And this lukewarmness manifests itself by a disposition to criticize as heretics those who do push beyond. The legalist suspicions the man as being erratic who knows his sins are forgiven. The merely converted man looks upon the fully sanctified with a good deal of suspicion, and even many who are sanctified regard any greater enlargements in the Holy Ghost life as bordering on heresy. And so it goes on. Will there ever be any end to the narrowness and the littleness of our minds and faith?

Another element in lukewarmness is the secret fact in the mind that the soul has done so much for God, has fought so many battles, endured so many afflictions, had so many uplifts in grace, that it can put itself on the retired list of the army and draw full pay. This is a very subtle disposition, and the soul hardly dares to whisper it to itself, for the conscience feels that its meanness is like the gunpowder plot, which must not be breathed; and yet, where is the saint who has known much of God, into whose mind this low, sneaking thought has not crept? God only knows how many of His children, once hot with holy love, are living, like broken-down aristocracy, on the faded splendors of the past. Their experiences resemble faded photographs, or the withered flowers that were used at last week's funeral.

Another feature in lukewarmness is the hidden compliment which the soul takes to itself, that glowing fervor is only a juvenile thing which it has outgrown, and that it is now "serving

God on principle.” All states of toning down in spiritual life are accompanied by some sort of self-complacency. When the soul begins to think less of God, and of the precious blood, and of the Holy Ghost, it begins to think more of itself.

This thought of serving God on cold principle indicates a sad state: it may not be ruinous to one’s life, but it is ruinous to deep spirituality. One of the worst things about it is its respectability. It keeps in the beaten path of decent religion; no one can lay any charge against it; it can pass in and out around any circle of Christians; it does nothing to call down severe rebukes; it is an old, sober, well-behaved thing, keeping on good terms with everybody and everything in general. If only something terrific would happen to it; if it could be hurled to the dust in humiliation and mortification; if it could only be set weeping and wailing, it would be an infinite advantage to it. But such a miserable state of soul is so pleasing to the devil that he will not even tempt it to commit any great sin, lest it should be shocked into renewed repentance and fervor of grace. The devil likes to bury a hot religious experience in a smooth shroud of cold virtue.

There is one more symptom of lukewarmness, and that is a dull sense of inward breaking with God. The heart feels that something is not just right. The orthodoxy is all right; the outward life may be correct; the verbal testimony still kept up; and all Christian duties in a general way looked after; but the animating spirit is weakened. There is no conscious touch from God; no sense of fullness dilating the heart; no sweet vision of God’s attributes; no bright, far-away fields open to it in secret prayer; no lowly feeling of kissing the Savior’s feet; no rapt adoration of His majesty; no sweet hymns vibrating in the mind during the sleep; no melting, yearning love for the saving of souls; no spells of divine laughter rippling through the mind; no bullet-like piercing of the words of the Scripture; no whispering of the Holy Ghost as of old; no conscious grasp on the throne through prayer.

The flash has left the eye; the smile from the lips; the divine throb from the heart; the promptness has left the will; the gentleness has left the voice; the third heavens, with its retinue, have gone off somewhere. Some unpleasant, indefinable, inexplorable something has settled on the inner spirit; it has ceased to feel toward Jesus as a real lover; it is getting offensive to the Holy Spirit; and unless something can be done to rekindle its fading fires, it will nauseate the Infinite heart, and Christ will spew it out of His mouth. This is an awful metaphor, and indicates the awfulness of lukewarmness.

CHAPTER VI

Feeding Our Faith

Inasmuch as faith is the condition of all the spiritual life, of the entrance into that life, and the steps to progress in that life, it behooves us to give it all the nourishment possible. Faith can be strengthened, and fed, and thus will grow; but the growth of faith is often very opposite to our notions concerning it. We often suppose that faith is made strong by receiving great encouragement, by having quick and abundant answers to prayer, by high states of joy, by lofty visions of divine things; but in reality these things do not strengthen our faith as much as we fancy. Our faith is to be nourished on the promises of God. Those promises are contained in His written Word. They may be also promises communicated to the soul by the Holy Spirit, or through other souls who are in close fellowship with God, and who may speak to us great promises of what God has told them concerning us.

When God first called Abraham, He inundated his soul with a sea of promises; He spoke to him from the starry heavens, and from the soil of Canaan on which he walked, and by the visits of angels, and by the Holy Ghost in the deep of his nature. Abraham saw great fields of light—great possibilities of things for himself and his posterity. His soul drank in these promises, until his faith became wide and powerful, even before any of them were fulfilled. God deals with souls in a similar way; yet when He calls anyone to great degrees of perfection or of usefulness, He begins by opening up to them the promises of His Word, and the possibilities which they may achieve, even before there are any outward symptoms of their fulfillment. The heart that anchors itself in the promises of God, until those promises become as real as God Himself, will have strong faith.

Another nourishment to faith is the removing from the soul of natural and human props. Naturally we lean on a great many things in nature, and society, and the Church, and friends, more than we are aware of. We think we depend on God alone, and never dream of how much we depend on other things, until they are taken from us, and if they were not removed, we should go on, self-deceived, thinking that we relied on God for all things. But God designs to concentrate our faith in Him alone by removing all other foundations, and, one step after another, detaching us from all other supports. There are many souls which cannot endure this utter desolation of secondary supports, which would be more than they could bear, and they would react into open rebellion; so God allows them to have a junior faith, and to lean on other things more or less. But to those who are able to undergo the strain of faith, He allows all sorts of disappointments—the death of bright hopes, the removing of earthly friendships or destruction of property, the multiplied infirmities of the body and mind, the misunderstanding of dear ones, until the landscape of religious life seems swept with a blizzard, to compel the soul to house itself in God alone.

At the time the soul is having all secondary support removed, it does not perceive what is taking place within itself, but afterwards it finds that faith has been growing and expanding with every wave that has beat against it. Faith grows when we least expect it; storms and difficulties, temptations and conflicts, are its field of operation; like the stormy petrel on the ocean, faith has a supernatural glee in the howling of the storm and the dash of the spray.

Faith not only is nourished by the removal of earthly props, but by the seeming removal of divine consolation. Our answer to prayer seems too long delayed, and faith is tested to its uttermost, when it seems as if the Lord has turned against us and all we can do is to continue holding on, with the pitiful cry of "Lord, help me!" Even then faith is expanding and growing beyond all we are aware of, by the very extension of the delay of the answer. The longer the Lord delayed in answering the prayer of the woman of Syrophenicia, the more her faith became purified and intense. Long delays serve to purify our faith, till everything that is spasmodic and ephemeral and whimsical is purged out of it, and nothing is left to it except faith alone.

Another nourishment to faith is to get before the mind the great faith of other people—to read the lives of those who have been sorely tried, and who have believed God against all odds. Faith kindles faith; by understanding how God has dealt with other souls enables us to interpret His dealings with us. Our faith is inspired by reading the trials of the Bible saints more than by reading the pleasant and easy things.

Another nourishment to faith is that mode of dealing with us by which the Lord is constantly changing the providential channels through which He sends blessings to us. If God's blessings flow on us in a certain way, for any length of time, we unconsciously fix our trust on the way the benefactions come, more than on the invisible fountain. If the Lord gave the Jews water in the wilderness, sometimes it was from the rock, and sometimes it was from a well dug in the dry sand. (See Num. 21:16-18.)

When God sends us great spiritual refreshing, He will change the circumstances under which they come; when He sends temporal blessings in answer to prayer, He will change the channels through which they flow. He does not want us to become attached to any mode or phenomenon. He wants our faith perfectly united to Himself, and not to *His mode of doing things*, and hence He will disappoint us on the old lines of expectation, and reveal His favors from a new quarter, in a new way, and surprise us with some great and sweet device of His infinite wisdom. And thus our faith is strengthened by disappointment, until it reaches such perfect union with God that it never looks to anybody, or anything, or any mode, or any old channel, or any circumstances, or any frame of mind, or any meeting, or any set of feelings, or at any time or season; but keeps itself swung free from all these things, and dependent on God alone. This degree of faith can never be disappointed, can never be jostled, because it expects nothing except what God wills, and looks to no mode except infinite wisdom. Its expectation is from God only.

CHAPTER VII

The Benefit of Deep Crucifixion

The word crucifixion, as it applies to us in a Christian sense, may be defined as any pain or suffering which renders us dead to sin or to self, or to the things of time and sense. There may be many kinds of sorrow and suffering which do not serve the purpose of true crucifixion.

In order that suffering may be a thorough mortification to us, it must be put in the will of God, and yielded to the operation of the Holy Spirit. When we yield ourselves absolutely up to God, and trust Him to take charge of every particle of our being and life and circumstances, it is then that His omnipotence takes gentle and firm possession of all our trials and sufferings, and makes them work a true crucifixion in us.

It does not matter what the occasion of the suffering may be. It may come from our own sins, or poverty, or ill-health, or loss of friends, or separations, or terrible and protracted temptations, or assaults of evil spirits, or the hatred of others, or great disappointment, or divine chastisements; it may come from many of these sources; but let it come from any cause in the universe, if we give it over entirely into the hands of God, and sink ourselves into His will, with a perfect desire for Him to work His best will in us, He will make every pain, every groan, every tear, every particle of our suffering, work in us a death to sin and to self, and to all things on earth which will be for our highest perfection and for His glory.

The depth and power of the spiritual life in every person depends exactly on the degree of their crucifixion. There is a divine mystery in suffering, a strange and supernatural power in it, which has never been fathomed by the human reason. There never has been known great saintliness of soul which did not pass through great suffering. There is such a thing as suffering reaching a state of perfection. When we suffer so severe and so long that we become dead to it, and divinely indifferent as to how much we suffer or how long it will continue; when the suffering soul reaches a calm, sweet carelessness, when it can inwardly smile at its own suffering, and does not even ask God to deliver it from the suffering, then it has wrought its blessed ministry; then patience has its perfect work; then the crucifixion begins to weave itself into a crown.

It is in this state of the perfection of suffering that the Holy Spirit works many marvelous things in our souls. In such a condition, our whole being lies perfectly still under the hand of God; every faculty of the mind and will and heart are at last subdued; a quietness of eternity settles down into the whole being; the tongue grows still, and has but few words to say; it stops asking God questions; it stops crying, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" The imagination stops building air-castles, or running off on foolish lines; the reason is tame and gentle; it stops debating, and quits all dogmatism; the will ceases from its own activity; the bluster and zeal of self-action are taken out of it; the choices are annihilated; it has no choice in anything but the purpose of God. The affections are weaned from all creatures and all things; it loves nothing

but God and God's will in any given thing; it has no private ends to serve; it has no motives except to please God; it is so dead that nothing can hurt it, nothing can offend it, nothing can hinder it, nothing can get in its way; for, let its circumstances be what they may, it seeks only for God and His will, and it feels assured that God is making everything in the universe, good or bad, past or present, work together for its good.

Oh, the blessedness of being absolutely conquered! of losing our own strength, and wisdom, and goodness, and plans, and desires, and being where every atom of our nature is like placid Galilee under the omnipotent feet of our Jesus.

Among great blessings resulting from sanctified suffering is *that it gives a great wideness to the heart*, and a universality of love. This uttermost crucifixion destroys the littleness and narrowness of the mind; it gives an immensity to the sympathies, and an ocean-like divine love, which is beyond words. This is because creature-love is crucified, and divine love floods the whole being. It is as if every drop of blood had been drawn out of the body, and the blood of a divine being had been poured into all the veins. The heart which has been perfectly crushed with suffering until it is dead to all its desires will be so inundated with divine charity that it will stretch itself out, and wrap the world round with fold on fold of boundless, spotless, impartial love for every creature that God has made. This immensity of heart loves all nations alike; it is absolutely free from all bigotry, or caste, or natural prejudice, or political partisanship, or sectarian feeling. It is emphatically a citizen of Heaven; it takes as much interest in the kingdom of God in one place as another; it feels as much interest in souls being saved in one denomination or one country as in another.

This may seem strong meat, and many Christians will disagree with these words, but when they reach this condition, they will find the foregoing words perfectly true to their experience. When we reach the deepest death of self, we love all creatures with God's love, and as God loves them, up to our measure; it is not so much we that love others, as it is that God loves them through us. We become the channels through which the Holy Spirit flows; He pours His thoughts through our minds, His prayers and loves through our hearts, His choices through our wills. He breaks away all the banks and boundaries of our narrow education, or creed, or theology, or nationality, or race, and takes us up into the boundlessness of His own life and feelings.

Another great benefit of perfect suffering, *is an inexpressible tenderness*. It is the very tenderness of Jesus filling the thoughts, the feelings, the manners, the words, the tones of the voice. The whole being is soaked in a sea of gentleness. Everything hard, bitter, severe, critical, flinty, has been crushed into powder. Great sufferers are noted for their quiet gentleness. As we approach them, it is like going to a tropical climate in mid-winter; the very air around them seems mellow; their slow, quiet words are like the gentle ripple of summer seas on the sand; their soft, pathetic eyes put a hush upon our rudeness or loudness of voice. There are many souls who are earnest Christians—nay, many who are sanctified—who have an indescribable

something in them which needs the crushing and melting of some great crucifixion. Their tongues rattle so much, their spirit is dictatorial or harsh, they measure other people by themselves; there is something in their constitution which seems to need the grinding into fine flour. It is well worth the crushing of hearts with an overwhelming sorrow, if thereby God can bring us out into that beautiful tenderness and sweetness of spirit which is the very atmosphere of Heaven. This kind of tenderness cannot be voluntarily put on; it cannot come from training; neither is it a transitory sweetness, which is like a spring day intruding itself into winter; but it is that fixed and all-pervading gentleness of spirit which is like the fixed climate of the Torrid zone. It is the finest outgrowth of perfect suffering.

Another benefit of complete crucifixion is *the detachment from all earthly things* which it produces. The mind has a thousand-fold attachment to the things in this world, which it is not aware of until they are ground to pieces by suffering. Did you ever notice how your soul stretches itself out into ten thousand things of earth and time, and how the fingers of your thoughts grasp thousands of things! Just look at your mind; for every friend you have on earth, there is a distinct attachment; for every piece of property you own on earth, there is a distinct attachment; for the ten thousand recollections in your bygone life, there is a particular sentiment or attachment; for all the scenes of earth and associations of time, there is an attachment; and besides all these outward things, look at that vast, invisible world within your own self—your own desires, and hopes, and dreams and prospects, and gratifications for your self, your family, your Church, your nation, your particular party; see how you have become attached to your own thoughts, until your heart seems to have a million springs to it which flow round and round countless objects in this world!

I am not speaking of things positively wicked; I am not speaking of things which are stigmatized as sinful; but of those things which Christian people recognize as innocent, and yet, in a thousand ways, they fetter the heart and bind it to earth. Perfect suffering will untie the heart, and gently loosen every cord that binds us to our foes or friends—to all our possessions; to all the things of the past; to all attractive sights and sounds—and give us such perfect inward liberty from everything on earth that the things of Heaven can flow down into us, until we feel that we are citizens of the New Jerusalem a hundred times more powerfully than that we are the citizens of any earthly city or country. We feel deep in our hearts that, like St. Paul, we have already “come to an innumerable company of angels, and the Church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect.” The coming of the Lord is so real to us, our whole being is pervaded with the sweet, attractive powers of the world to come. Like the detached balloon, we float toward the supernatural. The heavenly world comes into us exactly in proportion as all the affairs of earth are emptied out of us, and nothing so perfectly empties us and detaches us as perfect suffering. It is in this way that God makes our perfect crucifixion our crown of unfading joy.

CHAPTER VIII

Fretting Over Ourselves

There are two extremes of feeling with regard to ourselves; one is the feeling of self-complacency, and the other is the feeling of self-aborrence; and between these two extremes there are any number of feelings with regard to ourselves in which these two sentiments may be more or less blended. When we begin in thorough earnestness to follow Christ, with a definite view of being made like Him, it will necessarily make us meditate a good deal on Jesus. The more we apprehend of Christ, His nature and disposition, the more we see the infinite disparity between Him and ourselves; and when at times we get a full view of ourselves, there seems to be so many things in us that are incorrigible that we are tempted to despair of ever becoming like Christ. There is a good way and a bad way of grieving over our frailties. It is the policy of Satan, if he cannot fill us with self-conceit and self-complacency, to try the opposite policy of making us fret over ourselves.

There are various causes which lead devoted souls to chafe over their imperfections. One cause is that, by a subtle self-love, the soul desires to be good and fair and grand in its own eyes; it would like to look into the mirror of God's law, and behold its reflection without a flaw, with the same sentiment that a handsome woman loves to behold the reflection of her beauty. This spirit of gloating over the beauty and symmetry of one's moral character is often alluded to in the Scriptures. The Lord says of such an one: "Thine heart was lifted up; because of thy beauty thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy appearance; I will bring thee to the ground" (Ezek. 28:17).

God watches the finest motives and intents of the heart, and if we desire great degrees of perfection for our own admiration, God will allow great trials and weaknesses to mortify us to all refined self-admiration.

Another reason why devoted souls fret over themselves is the failure to fully appreciate the most infinite meanness and blindness and deceitfulness of our human nature. There are capabilities of sin, and all sorts of unlovely things in our nature, which we have never dreamed of. Just to the extent that we see the ever-widening, deepening glory and beauty of Jesus, we see the opposite in ourselves.

When souls first begin in the way of perfection, they think their defects are very few and very shallow; and after months and years of walking with God, even though their hearts have been cleansed from sin, they discover certain defects and infirmities still adhering to them, which they thought would never annoy them beyond their first fervors of love. They find irresolution in the will, and dullness in the faculties and sluggishness in their nature; such a lack of heavenly cheerfulness, promptness, warm-heartedness; many narrow thoughts, such a liability to be agitated and jostled by simple trifles of the day; such a facility of forgetting lessons we have already learned, such babyishness, and faintness, and pusillanimity of spirit, as