

## Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!

SUNDAY.

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. – Romans 12:1.*

Note this, O note this, my dear Christian! When desiring to admonish us Christians through the Holy Ghost to sanctify ourselves and to serve God, the Apostle Paul does not say: "Thou shalt!" as the Law does, but he implores us "by the mercies of God."

Believing and remembering that one great deed of mercy and the thousand mercies of God in Christ Jesus which we have experienced, we should be willing to consecrate both body and soul to God and to serve Him. The compulsion exercised by the Law produces no results within us that are acceptable and well pleasing to God. But when the Holy Ghost implores us by the mercies of God, and thus admonishes us to serve God henceforth, then we really do so, provided we do not belie the name we bear: children of God; and God will graciously accept what thus we do.

– But how should we serve God? What should we do? We should offer praises glorifying the merciful God. What kind of praise offerings? Fruits of the field? Tithes of all we possess? Something much better than that! We should present our bodies a sacrifice to God; we should place our whole life, whatever we may do and purpose to do, at God's service. Would you make an exception with regard to anything? Is there anything you would not place at God's service? Surely not!

Such praise offerings we should bring in true faith, through the Holy Ghost, actuated by a fervent love to our merciful God. This, then, will be a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, though it may have many, yes, a thousand imperfections. This should be our reasonable service, the proper service of the heart and mind, but a service, too, that determines and regulates our every action. Permit yourself, my dear Christian, to be thus sought and entreated by the mercies of God.



Illustration: The Fiery Furnace

A Devotional for the

Week of the Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

*PRAYER.* – Indeed, O Lord, most merciful God, I, too, will do what is well pleasing to You; I, too, will place my whole life at Your service, and bring myself, both body and soul, as a praise offering to You. But since it is not in my power to do this. I humbly implore You to grant me Your Holy Spirit, that through the Gospel, He may illumine my heart to see the magnitude of Your grace; and impel and persuade me inwardly, through the glad tidings of Your grace, to dearly love You. And graciously accept these praise offerings of a poor sinner, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Hymn 349, 1.

THEE will I love, my Strength, my Tower,  
Thee will I love, my Hope, my Joy,  
Thee will I love with all my power,  
With ardor time shall ne'er destroy.  
Thee will I love, O Light divine,  
So long as life is mine!

MONDAY.

*Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. – Romans 12:2.*

Dear Christian, hear! You art no longer a part of the wicked, unbelieving world, which is ever intent upon doing what pleases the flesh. Surely, you are a child of God through Jesus Christ: you have learned to know the wonderful mercy of God, and this prompts you to serve God with all your heart.

Now, therefore, be not conformed to this world. Do not demean yourself as does the world, which is carnal and unrestrained in morals. Do not take part in the thousand things the world has invented to gratify the desires of the flesh. Be transformed! Be different from the wretched world! But let your transformation be from within. Be transformed by the daily renewing of your mind, remembering every day that you are a child of God.

Therefore, prove everything, examine everything, but not like hypocritical Christians do. How do they prove everything? They prove it to see whether they may not do it, or neglect to do it, as the case may be,

without being convicted of a manifest sin. What a carnal mind does this betray!

Do institute an altogether different test. How so? Always prove what the will of God is with regard to the matter in hand. Always and in every instance inquire what is good, perfectly good, and therefore acceptable in the sight of God, your dear Father. Where must you inquire about this? In the Word of God. But in the Word of God you must search and inquire with eyes that have been rendered keen by the new sense which you possess, the heartfelt desire to live in accordance with the will of God. Alas! the flesh still clings heavily to us Christians. And yet, all true Christians truly yearn to do God's will.

*PRAYER.* – Renew me, O my God, by Your Holy Spirit! Daily illumine my poor carnal heart with the light of Your mercy, that from my whole heart I may desire to do Your will, Your good and acceptable and perfect will, in everything. Forgive my sins for Jesus' sake! Surely You do this. And because You do it, grant me grace to love You all the more, and do Your will ever more perfectly. Amen.

Hymn 350, 1. 3.

RENEW me, O eternal Light,  
And let my heart and soul be bright,  
Illumined with the light of grace  
That issues from Thy holy face.

Create in me a new heart, Lord,  
That gladly I obey Thy Word,  
And naught but what Thou wilt desire;  
With such new life my soul inspire.

TUESDAY.

*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. – Romans 12:10.*

How does God want us Christians to be minded toward one another and to deal with one another? We should have brotherly love for and among one another: for we are brethren. We have *one* heavenly Father. We have *one* head, the Savior, and hence are members of *one* body. We have *one* Holy Spirit, who rules within us all. We are going toward that *one* house of the Father, toward *one* eternal home.

Ties of blood-relationship are as nothing when compared with our spiritual relationship. Therefore we should cherish brotherly love for one another. And in this brotherly love we should be kindly affectioned one to another. We should deal kindly with one another. In a truly affectionate manner we should rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. (v. 15.) And our brotherly love must be active, or it is not kindly affectioned. We should distribute to the necessity of the brethren, and be given to hospitality. (v. 13.) We should not let the weaknesses, mistakes, infirmities, and insults of our brethren embitter us. Are we better than they?

We should respect the brethren. Each one should esteem the other better than himself. Thus we should in honor prefer one another. We should treat the lowliest brother just the same as we do the most prominent one. (v. 16.) If our brother treats us ill, we should not be overcome with evil, abandoning brotherly love, but overcome evil with good, with love. Thus we children of God should be minded toward one another; thus we should deal with one another. Let this be the goal for which we strive in the Holy Spirit.

*PRAYER.* – Dear Heavenly Father, teach me inwardly, through Your Word and Your Holy Spirit, to love the brethren. My heart, indeed, is depraved and selfish and hateful. But create a new thing within it, O Lord, and change it, so that brotherly love may sprout and grow within it, which, in yonder eternal home, will bear perfect fruit. Hear my prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Hymn 260, 3.

Thou sweetest Love, grace on us bestow,  
Set our hearts with heavenly fire aglow,

That with hearts united we love each other,  
Of one mind, in peace with every brother.  
Lord, have mercy!

WEDNESDAY.

*Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer. – Romans 12:12.*

Dear Christian, child of God, you are an heir of eternal salvation. And you can and must be sure, yes, altogether sure of eternal salvation. Do but abide by the Word of Jesus in true faith; abide with Jesus! Then you will be saved. Jesus says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give to them eternal life."

Are you troubled with doubts, my dear Christian? Do you think that the devil, the world, and your flesh might, after all, pluck you out of Jesus' hand? Indeed they might, as far as *you* are concerned, but not when you consider *Jesus*. He furthermore says concerning you and all His sheep: "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." (John 10:27-30.)

You can and must be sure of eternal salvation, indeed, of eternal salvation. What a blessed hope! At the end of your earthly pilgrimage, which may be a very miserable one, this hope glitters like a beautiful, cheering, beckoning star, illumining your heavenward path. Rejoice in hope, in this hope! Yes, indeed, this hope, growing out of faith, cannot but make us rejoice, exceedingly so, yes, so exultingly as to make our body and soul fairly quiver with joy. God, O God, make us, Your children, rejoice in hope. And make us patient in tribulation; yes, indeed, patient in tribulation. Tribulation will have to be borne for a brief time only, and then we shall enjoy that bliss which will endure forever. And tribulation works for your good, for your salvation. Hence be patient, right patient in tribulation!

And continue instant in prayer! Pray to God for help against

everything that troubles you, and for everything you need for the eternal salvation which He has so solemnly promised to give you. Will He deny to give you what you pray for? That is impossible. Therefore, rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, continue instant in prayer!

*PRAYER.* – My God, my God, I see right well that You desire me to rejoice in hope and to be patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer, and You are willing, yes, You surely will help me to enter eternal joy and bliss. Here, then, am I, O gracious God: fill me with the fullness of Your grace! Amen.

Hymn 503, 14. 15.

Where'er I do but think of Thee,  
Thy dews drop down and solace me;  
Whene'er I hope in Thee, my Friend,  
Thy comfort and Thy peace descend.

Whene'er in grief I pray and sing,  
I feel new courage in me spring;  
Thy Spirit witnesses that this  
Is foretaste of th' eternal bliss.

#### THURSDAY.

*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye. – Romans 14:1.*

Who is he that is "weak in the faith"? O Christian, a child of God is meant, who desires, yes, earnestly desires, to serve God, but who believes that in order to do this, he must abstain from certain things, though God has not forbidden them, and that he must by all means do certain things, though God has not commanded them. Hence, a person who thinks he must make certain props and crutches for the life he should lead as a Christian, notwithstanding God has not provided them, is weak in faith.

In the first congregation of Christians in Rome, for instance, there were some who believed that they must not eat any meat nor

drink any wine, because their body would become too voluptuous and consequently unfit to serve God as they should. They also considered it a duty to set apart certain days on which to study the Word of God and to pray in seclusion and with special earnestness.

Similar dear Christian souls may be found today, though not as many as in the days of the Apostle, These are weak in faith. For what is the truth of the matter? Whatsoever God has not forbidden must not be condemned, and the use of it dare not hinder us in the service of God; and whatsoever God has not commanded is of no value in the sight of God, and the doing of it cannot be of assistance to us in serving God.

Our Christian life must move within the limits which God has drawn in His Word, and in no other, and every day our whole life should be a constant service of God. If this is our faith, then our faith is right; everything else is weakness. But mark! we must not despise the weak in faith, but receive them as our brethren with sincere love and esteem. And we must not offend nor confuse them, nor tempt them to do something that in their opinion is wrong, and so to sin against their weak conscience, by inconsiderately doing in their presence what otherwise would be permissible. Read Romans 14 attentively!

*PRAYER.* – Dear Lord, should I despise my brother, when out of fervent love to You and from a desire to serve You, he does things which according to Your Word he need not do? Far be it from me! On the contrary, O Lord, forgive me my slothfulness in Your service. And give to me Your Holy Spirit, that I may be fervent and diligent in Your service, and esteem my weak brother better than myself. Amen.

Hymn 339, 3.

Spirit of life, of love and peace,  
Unite our hearts, our joy increase,  
Thy gracious help supply;  
To each of us the blessing give,  
In Christian fellowship to live,  
In joyful hope to die.

FRIDAY.

*We, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. – Romans 15:1.*

Here weak Christians are meant that are different from those mentioned yesterday, Christians who are weak with regard to their daily walk and conduct, who soon stumble and fall, who are easily led into some sin, or give way to sin, such as anger, untruthfulness, intemperance, and the like, or who do not succeed in breaking away altogether from some habitual sin, though they greatly desire to do so. Such Christians, indeed, are weak: they lack spiritual strength. And it must be admitted that it is their own fault. Or would you say that it is God's fault?

– The Church of God is full of such weak Christians. Now if you are strong, if you show great spiritual strength to rule over the sin tempting you from within, and do not permit it to prevail with you, but always overcome and conquer it, and always walk steadfastly in the ways of God – But wait! Let me put a question: Are you really such a strong Christian? Or are you, too, one of the weak ones?

If you actually are strong, what, then, should be your attitude toward the weak? You must bear their infirmities. "Bear"? What does that mean? Overlook? Tolerate? Let them pass? More than that! You must help the weak in faith as any decent man will help the physically weak and infirm on the street. You must take the infirmities of the weak upon yourself and help them to get strong. You must not be pleased with yourself, not concern yourself about yourself alone, much less pride yourself on your strength, you wretched man, who stands only by the power of God. Your demeanor should be such as to please your neighbor for his good, to edification. And humble, brotherly love will teach you how to go about this.

*PRAYER.* – Lord, my God, what shall I say? What shall I pray? If by Your grace I have mastered a sin, and then see a brother that is weak, help me not to judge him, not to forsake him, not to leave him alone, but most lovingly to help him, as You do help me, O gracious God! Amen.

Hymn 370.

I AM trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,  
Trusting only Thee!  
Trusting Thee for full salvation,  
Great and free.

I am trusting Thee for pardon,  
At Thy feet I bow;  
For Thy grace and tender mercy,  
Trusting now.

I am trusting Thee for cleansing  
In the crimson flood;  
Trusting Thee to make me holy  
By Thy blood.

I am trusting Thee to guide me;  
Thou alone shalt lead,  
Every day and hour supplying  
All my need.

I am trusting Thee for power,  
Thine can never fail;  
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me  
Must prevail;

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,  
Never let me fall;  
I am trusting Thee for ever,  
And for all.

SATURDAY.

*Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

*– Ephesians 6:10.*

You must be strong, Christian, or you will be lost; for your enemies are strong. And since with power of yours nothing can be

done, you must be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the armor, take up the weapons of offense and defense which God supplies, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, yes, of the devil. For we Christians wrestle not only against enemies of flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of sin in this world, against the wicked spirits that set themselves between us and heaven.

Therefore, O Christian, take up the whole armor which God provides, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand ready, enter the lists of spiritual warriors, having your loins girded about with truth, having your breast protected with the breast-plate of righteousness in your walk and conversation, and your feet shod, prepared to run the way which the Gospel of peace maps out for you.

In short, be a true Christian in the power of the Holy Spirit. For if the devil notices that you are dishonest and addicted to a sin, he will soon inflict a fatal wound upon you. But above all, take the shield of faith, of faith in your Savior, Jesus Christ, a faith kindled within you, and made strong and an impenetrable shield by the Holy Ghost. With this you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. For if you hold this faith, God dwells within you and encamps round about you.

And cover your head with the helmet of salvation, the helmet of the joyous, certain, and confident hope of victory and of eternal salvation. And then lay about yourself boldly with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and against which no devil can stand. Yes, one little word can fell him. And cry, pray, cry to God to help you! The victory will be yours.

*PRAYER.* – O God, Heavenly Father, You know the danger in which I am, You know my enemies, You know my inability. Therefore I heartily beg You that You would arm me with Your Word and Your Holy Spirit, that I may be strong in You and in the power of Your might, that in the evil hour I may be able to stand, and to carry the day, and to obtain eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

Hymn 380, 1-4.

SOLDIERS of Christ, arise,  
And put your armor on;  
Strong in the strength which God supplies,  
Through His eternal Son.

Strong in the Lord of hosts,  
And in His mighty power;  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts  
Is more than conqueror.

Stand then in His great might,  
With all His strength endued;  
But take, to arm you for the fight,  
The panoply of God;

That having all things done,  
And all your conflicts past,  
Ye may overcome through Christ alone,  
And stand entire at last.

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