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SOUL HABITS

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INTRODUCTION

Roy S. Nicholson

Here is a book that is of vital importance to those of today who are struggling to keep spiritual amidst the chaos and confusion incident to affairs that whirl about us. It has always required an effort to keep spiritual; and under the present stress and strain it is doubly more so. Surely those interested in spiritual values will appreciate this booklet on "Soul Habits." It is from the pen of an able pastor, who is a clear thinker, and whose admirable manner of expressing challenging truths ought to enable us to develop more symmetrical Christian characters.

Having heard the delivery of most of these messages from my pastor, and sensing that he had brought them to us from his quiet retirement and meditation; realizing that they had been soul-food to many hearts, strengthening them in their determination to be "more like the Master;" it was felt that they ought to be re-preached by the printed page, thus enlarging an otherwise fruitful ministry. Now that they are given to the public, it is desired that these strong messages on

"Forgiveness," "Tenderness," "Humility," and "Courage;" as well as other equally important truths discussed, will be a means of grace to perplexed travelers on life's road.

It is a pleasure to commend these chapters on Soul Habits to all who love the truth, to all who aspire to greater spiritual attainments, and to all who wish to be proper examples of the grace of God. Your own soul will be blessed by these spiritual meditations, and you will thereby be prepared to bless others whose lives you will touch in these difficult and dangerous days.

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PREFACE

This little booklet is sent forth with the earnest prayer that it may be used of God to bless those who love Him with all their hearts. It makes no pretension to literary merit, neither does it make, any claim for unusual talent. It was written, as the date at the bottom of his page will show, during troublous times. The times being what they are, the writer feels that just such a message as this is needed. These are not effeminate habits of the soul but they are strong graces. The greatest exemplar of them all was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. If they are worthy of Him then they are worthy of us His followers. If it was necessary that He manifest them then it is necessary that we cultivate them and give them a chance to come to full fruition in our lives.

A word of thanks is due Rev. Roy S. Nicholson, who not only wrote the Introduction, but kindly consented to read the manuscript. He made some valuable suggestions that are deeply appreciated.

"So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck." Proverbs 3:22.

Shady Grove
Colfax, N. C.
January 1st, 1942

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Chapter 1

THE GRACE OF FORGIVENESS

Matthew 18:21-35

In this series of messages on Soul Habits we wish to notice some of the graces of the Spirit that should characterize a Spirit-filled life. We do not mean to say that the life of the Spirit is one of mere habit and routine but we do wish to say that some of these things will become a set practice of the life. Just as surely as sin becomes a habit of life and fastens itself upon a man so that it is hard to change the set of his way, just so surely ought the grace of God and the Spirit of God to so possess a man that he will become set in the ways of God. This is what we mean when we speak of these Habits of the Soul. We hope to be able to help Spirit-filled men and women to walk more closely with Him and to develop in the things of the Spirit. Saving and sanctifying grace is the work of God that is instantaneously wrought in the heart of a man by faith in Jesus Christ, while these habits of soul become the work of a lifetime.

This Grace of Forgiveness is one of the graces of the Spirit-filled life that is supposed to be very common. Everyone that is enjoying the initial experience of grace is expected to use and practice it. Yet sometimes we may wonder if it is as common as we think. Has it been neglected because it is supposed to be so common and universal?

Now we shall each find occasion to use this grace quite often as we travel the Christian life. The poet said we were all going "to have giving to do and forgiving." We cannot escape being wronged and we are almost ready to say that we cannot escape wronging others. Our human infirmities may cause us to wrong some one ignorantly. It also may cause someone to wrong us ignorantly. This can be truthfully said, the worst thing that we can do to ourselves and to our children is to keep an old grudge in our hearts. The quickest way to be lost is to do this. A person is meaner than the one that wronged him if he does not forgive.

There is an untold danger in allowing anything to stay in our hearts that has a tendency to corrode and canker. Better to have your right eye plucked out, lose your right arm, or even to have your physical heart to cease to beat, than to harbor in your soul the spirit of unforgiveness.

This is a foundational grace. We must have this to get any measure of grace and we must keep its spirit in our hearts to retain any measure of grace. It must become a set practice of the life if we are to be victorious Christians.

Jesus reveals to us His attitude toward this problem in this Parable of the Unjust Steward. He tells us also of the attitude that we must take if we are to measure up to His standard. Peter was greatly moved by what Christ had just said about reconciliation of enemies. He wants to know what limits are to be imposed upon his generosity. Jesus plainly taught that there were to be no limits. Peter states a very generous allowance when he says, "till seven times seven." Jesus takes away all limits when He says, "until seventy times seven."

From this we learn that we are all God's debtors. Some of us are more deeply in debt than others but we are all in debt. We have no coin that is receivable to discharge this debt. We are all unable to pay. God very graciously worked out a plan whereby He could be just and yet forgive all our sins. Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins.

When we receive this forgiveness our obligation is to forgive others. In fact we do not receive the initial forgiveness of God the Father till we are ready and willing to forgive others. This forgiveness was to have no limit to it. The Jewish Rabbis were fond of defining and limiting moral obligations. They seemed to think they could be prescribed by number. Jesus forever destroys this and gives us the measure of the grace of forgiveness.

Let us repeat again that this is a foundational grace. We lay the foundation for our own blessing by forgiving others. Could it not be true that the failure of so many to keep a vital living experience of grace would be found in this very thing? This is the basis for getting victory and it is the basis for keeping victory. We may profess a lot of grace but if we have not the grace of forgiveness, we will eventually fail.

Not only is this a part of the foundation of an experience but it is to be woven into the warp and woof of our Christian experience. It is the condition of our maintaining the favor and blessing of God. When a man falls into enmity against his fellow man he falls from grace. He cancels his own pardon and passes into enmity with God. We do not have to get wrong with God to lose out in our souls. When we allow ourselves to get wrong with others we are on the road to losing out with God.

The foundation of this forgiveness must be deeper than the mere repeating of the language of forgiveness: "If ye from the heart." Forgiveness then must be real and sincere. It is not to be a thing of pretension and a mere outward show. There must not only be no outward act of revenge but there must be no inward malice that will store up evil passions for future expression. There will be further occasions that will call forth any malice that we may keep stored away in our hearts. The fountain must be clean as well as the outlet. Our conduct must be the same as our heart feeling and our heart feeling must be the same as our conduct.

There are a number of reasons why we need this grace in our hearts. We must realize that our sin against God is vastly larger than our brother's sin against us. Jesus is teaching this in the picture of the Unjust Steward. He was forgiven a large amount and then refused to forgive another a smaller amount. He was given a wonderful opportunity to show that his lord's forgiveness was not wasted. He had a chance to show that the generosity of his master would be revealed in his conduct toward others. He failed as we know by reading the parable. We need to remember the pit from whence we have been dug when we have to deal with a trespassing brother. Our trespasses were mountain high and his is only a mole hill. Many reverse the order and the size of the hills.

Then too, we must realize that we are creatures of infirmity. Our sins of ignorance are many. We may not feel they are but that does not change the fact that they are. It does not matter if we are saved and sanctified and are up to par in our experience. We will be more or less guilty of wrong to others. They will not come from malice or enmity but they will come from infirmity of mind and of judgment. A vision of this truth will keep us in the spirit of forgiveness. We will not need to have actual or original sin in our lives to keep us humble if we see our own infirmities.

There are many blessings that will be ours if we keep this grace working continually in our hearts. We shall have a sense of Divine approval. This will be ours though the other party may not have forgiven us. We do not have to even know that they have accepted our forgiveness to secure this feeling of approval. Some in their stubborn attitude may never accept our apology and they may not acknowledge our forgiveness. They may not even care whether we forgive them or not. If this habit of soul is ours however and it has become a fixed principle of the life we shall never be void of the sense of His approval. This is worth all that it may cost us.

We shall have freedom in the presence of the one who may have wronged us. We shall have this feeling of soul that will make us feel easy in their presence. They will be able to detect whether we have forgiven from the heart or not. The soul who has cultivated this habit will be free in the presence of every man wherever he may meet them. This will give us more influence over them and over others. You cannot hide an unforgiving spirit. Your neighbors will know about it and your friends will detect it if you have such a spirit within you.

This spirit of forgiveness will enable us to keep in a state of reconciliation with God. There is no need to say we are justified and sanctified when we are not in possession of this grace. This is the basis of acceptable praying. The Lord's Prayer teaches this and in many other places Jesus says almost the same thing.

This assures us of the unbounded mercy of God. He requires that we forgive without limit and he assures us of His unbounded mercy. There is no limit to His pardoning mercy if there is no limit to our forgiveness. There is no danger of a man losing his soul as long as he keeps a heart of compassion and mercy for others. When the springs of his own compassion begin to dry up and the stream of mercy for others becomes a trickle then it is that he must begin to examine his own soul.

We can be assured that opportunity will be given us to manifest this grace. The man in the parable went out and soon found one upon whom he might exercise the same kind of compassion that had been shown to him. We shall find that sometimes it may be longer than that before we are allowed to show to others that we have truly forgiven. Be patient and keep a heart full of compassion. The day will come when you will be privileged to show what is in your heart. The thing we need is to be sure that this thing has become a habit of the soul. It must be a fixed principle of the heart. When the opportunity is presented we shall avail ourselves of it as though it were the natural thing to do. What is done then will not call attention to us but to the grace of God that abides in our hearts. Any other attitude on our part may make people wonder if we are sincere. We must let our acts of kindness and compassion be the natural outflowing of a heart of kindness and compassion. There must be no forced forgiveness nor paraded forgiveness.

A traveler in Burma after fording a river found his body covered with leeches that were sucking his blood. His first impulse was to tear them from his flesh, but his servant told him of the danger that parts of them would remain and poison his body. They must be made to drop off voluntarily. The servant then arranged a bath of certain herbs and when the man bathed the leeches dropped off. Each unforgiven injury allowed to remain in the heart is a leech that will suck away the life of the Spirit. Human determination will not rid you of them but a bathing of your whole being in the pardoning mercy of God will cause them to drop off. A purging of the herb of hyssop will take the nature of sin away and there will be in the soul the spirit of forgiveness, the grace of

forgiveness. The miller running the mill and finding some "turns" harder to grind than others goes out quietly and turns on more water. When injuries seem large and the process of forgiving becomes harder, when the demand for forgiveness grows great and the power of it is small in the heart, go to the closet and ask for an experience of more of His forgiving mercy and you will turn on more water and the stones will grind out the last grain of the hard trial and you will be free.

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Chapter 2 THE GRACE OF KINDNESS II Samuel 9:1-13

All of us are born with the tendency within us to harshness and unkindness. A few favored souls may receive from their parents a better disposition than others but they are the exception to the rule. Then life as it is in this world of ours has such an influence upon us that we are tempted to get hard and harsh in dealing with our fellow man. We are caught frequently using and hearing such words as hard-boiled, merciless, unkind, etc.

This kindness that is revealed here by David is a soul habit that grows by practice. It grows in the soil of cheerful thoughts, kindly feelings and big-heartedness. If we think cheerful thoughts about anyone we feel kindly toward that person. Feel kindly toward anyone and we feel our heart growing in size. This is a kind of enlarged heart that is never fatal. The poet has well said:

"If I thought that a word of mine
Perhaps unkind and untrue
Would leave its trace on a loved one's face,
I'd never speak it--
Would you?"

"If I thought that smile of mine
Might linger the whole day through
And lighten some heart with a heavier part,
I'd not withhold it--
Would you?"

--Anon.

This kindness of which we speak has its well springs in God Himself. David realized this and so he said that he wanted to show the kindness of God to him.

We need this grace more than ever in these days. The spirit abroad in the world is breeding everything but kindness. It has reached the point now that if you are kind you are considered soft and effeminate. Some would almost go so far as to think that you were a "sissy." It is true that more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of and it is also true that more people might be influenced by a kind deed than we think. A girl said to a man in the

crowded department store, "You must be a minister." When she was asked why she thought that; she said that he was kind and considerate of her and the work she was trying to do. Ministers are not the only ones that are called upon to show kindness in all the dealings of life.

David is a good example of such kindness. His brand of kindness found its source in God. He knew that the kindness that would last and make an impression would have to come from the heart of God. He called in a friend to help in the carrying out of the thing he wished to do. The one selected to receive this kindness was repulsive physically. He did not have the bodily grace to sit at a king's table. Yet David said that he was to stay there as long as he lived. This man was a member of a family that was an enemy of David.

David had been very busy for several years now getting the kingdom established and the work of the nation on a good sound footing. When there is time he remembers that he promised Jonathan to take care of the family of Saul. He has his servant to look for the descendants of Saul and he finds Mephibosheth. The servant reports his condition and immediately David orders him to come that he may fulfill his covenant with Jonathan. He arranged so that his kindness would be a thing that would last through the years.

This kindness is needed in every circle of society today. It is needed at home and among the children of the family fireside. Some one said that Ingersoll became an infidel because of the gruffness and unkindness of his professing Christian father. Whether that is true or not we may make practical atheists out of our own children unless we manifest this practical Christian virtue in our own homes. There is no place in all the world where we are treated better and there is no place on earth where we are tempted to be so unkind. We live in such close contact in the home that our nerves become frayed and the infirmities of our loved ones grate on our feelings. O shall we pray for more of the kindness of God in the home! Our loved ones that are lost may be saved. Our children will respond and even the domestic animals will find that we have the religion that we profess to have.

This kindness is needed in the business world. Men in business say that more and more people are getting harder to please. They have no patience with delay. They manifest an unkind spirit over the telephone and when they contact each other in the stores of shops, they do not practice this grace. The telephone companies are recognizing it for in the telephone directories they are urging that people cultivate a kind and pleasing voice. If it is essential for us to do this that we may succeed in the business world, why is it not essential that we cultivate this habit of soul so that we may succeed in the realm of the spirit filled life?

This grace of kindness is needed in the Church of Jesus Christ. Our churches need to be run on business principles when it comes to receiving and accounting for the money they handle but they need the kindness of God in dealing with one another. There are so many weak ones in the Church. They need special treatment that they may become strong. If we treated the babes in our homes as some treat the babes in Christ we would soon be extinct as a race. It is needed in dealing with the wayward and backslidden. Paul tells us in Galatians that we are to restore them in the spirit of meekness considering ourselves lest we also be tempted. Being too hard and harsh has lost more to the Church of Christ than being too kind and compassionate. In fact we doubt if it is possible to be too kind and compassionate. The Church is called to reveal God to a world that

needs to see Him. Here is one of the best ways to let the world know about God and His goodness and mercy. This grace of kindness is needed in the Church so that the world may see that we have the Spirit of Christ.

Manifold will be the blessings that come to our hearts if we secure this habit of soul. We shall find our foes disarmed. The Wise Man said that a soft answer turns away wrath. No man can long be a foe of a kindly-souled man. The milk of human kindness mixed with the kindness of God will turn our enemies into friends and dull the sharp pointed shaft of harsh criticism. This is what David did. He manifested this grace of soul to an enemy. Logic may silence a doubter and argument may half-way convince a man, but only kindness will completely convert him. Our missionaries know this. They practice this grace upon the most unlikely of characters and it is surprising how they respond to its appeal. The worst enemy a man may have might be won by the use of this means. Go out of your way to do him a kind deed and see if there is not a response. "Overcome evil with Good" is another way of saying that we are to manifest the kindness of God.

We shall find ourselves securing more friends if we manifest this soul habit. No man has too many friends. We all need more than we have. There are those that will be our friends if they feel that we have a heart that appreciates them and a soul that loves them. Some that we think are not worthy of being our friends may blossom into unusual characters if they are warmed with a heart of another who is friendly.

We shall keep the friends that we have. Some people can make friends but cannot keep them. They have a veneer of kindness and friendliness but it is not heart deep. This thing must be a part of the soul-life if it is to be fruitful in the securing and keeping of friends. A man is rich beyond computation who is able to make and keep a host of friends. We are not speaking of this just to teach us how to secure so many friends but we want to see that we may secure these friends and tie them to Jesus Christ. We make ourselves friendly for His sake. We manifest this for His glory. We win men to ourselves that we may win them to Christ. This may sound unreasonable but most men are won to an individual before they are ever won to Christ. They see in some soul what they feel that they would like to see in themselves and thus they become united to that heart and eventually find their way into the heart of Christ. It is not a sin to be popular for the sake of Jesus Christ and the Gospel He died to provide. Any real follower of Christ will see this truth. He will not only see it but he will never use the power of the grace of God nor the kindness of God that comes through that grace to merely advance his own selfish interests.

What an influence such a soul wields! He finds men coming to him for help. He is able to restore fallen and backslidden souls into the kingdom of God. All the community where he lives will beat a track to the door of a man who manifests the kindness of God. Men are not finding this in the business world. They are not finding it in the social world. About the only place there is any of it left is in the religious world. If we do not keep close to the heart of God and live in Him and imbibe His Spirit we shall not long possess it. His counsel is sought in many matters. The writer once knew a saintly woman who always kept a store of this grace on hand. The young people flocked to her for advice. They seemed to know that she would understand. They brought their burdens to her. When one of them strayed away she was always the first to seek them. When they wanted to find God again they went to her. She was a power for good. She had not the learning of this world but she had the heart of Christ in her and everybody sensed it. It was a

privilege to be her pastor. She seemed to know how to work her way into the hearts of the people and thus pave the way for the pastor to get into their hearts. People sobbed out to her their failures and their sins. She manifested the kindness of God. Let this truth grip us as we close this chapter. This is the kindness of God. We must have Him living in our hearts and we must live in His heart to manifest it. Paul prayed to be able to reveal the compassion and tender mercies of the Lord Jesus. We must keep company with Him in real communion if we are to have such feelings for men. We must see them as God sees them. We need the kindly eyes of God so that we may see and feel as He feels. Saving and sanctifying grace will lay a foundation for this grace but much prayer and communion will build it into our hearts. We shall need to be treated unkindly by some so that we may know how others feel when they are treated unkindly. Our own hearts must break before we shall ever take an outcast Mephibosheth into our hearts. David knew this kind of treatment and thus he was able to sense the needs of others. The closer we are to God the more this grace will grow and blossom and bear fruit in our lives. This is a sign, of growth in holiness. A beginner in the way of holiness may upbraid others because they do not see the way, but a ripened soul will be kindly-affectioned toward the erring and the weak. May God help us to manifest the Kindness of His grace and blessing to all mankind.

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Chapter 3

THE GRACE OF TENDERNESS

Isaiah 42:1-12; Matthew 12:20

This Grace of Tenderness is a strong grace. It is a manifestation of a strong love. There is nothing weak or effeminate in it. It is a beautiful adorning for the woman who by nature manifests it easier than man. Yet it is a habit of soul that can be manifested by a man of strong character and will. It is a robe of honor and strength to such a man.

In the Scriptures above referred to, we find a word picture of the Christ. He is here revealed as the gentle, tender Christ. It says here that His methods shall be quiet and gentle. He does not advance His teachings by noise or clamor. There is a marked unobtrusiveness in all His works. When He cleansed the leper he told him to tell no man, but to go and show himself to the priest. When He opened the eyes of two blind men they were told to tell no man of the miracle of received sight. When He healed all who followed Him He told them not to tell who did the work. He was the unassuming Christ. He has none of the nature of destruction about Him. He does not lift up His hand against nature. He does not cast aside the reed that is bruised. He does not put out the smoking flax. Such a tender compassionate Christ. How we need to be like Him!

Here is a revelation of the attitude of Christ toward those that manifest any desire for Him or have had any measure of grace. He does not cast aside the bruised reed that has lost its harmony. We are not here teaching eternal security. Neither do we believe that the Prophet intended to teach this. He is picturing the care of Christ for those who have lost the harmony of heaven out of their hearts. We will not have to travel far to find many broken reeds. They have been bruised by a thousand things. They are weak and depressed in spirit. They are lowly and dejected in heart. He deals tenderly with such and not with violence. The smoking flax He does not quench. Where the flame of devotion burns at all, no matter how feebly or dimly, He takes

care not to quench it. He desires to tend it and trim it. He adds fresh oil that causes it to burn more brightly. He encourages every spark of love no matter how small and dim it may be. This means that He allows for the weaknesses and infirmities of individuals. There is no room for sin in His dealing but there is room for the fainting and the weary. He has insight into the heart and He knows the desires of the heart. We see the outward appearance but He sees the heart. We crush the bruised reed and quench the smoking flax many times but He deals tenderly and they are restored to strength and usefulness.

He sets before us an attitude of heart and soul that we need to have. The closer we come to His heart and the more we commune with Him, the more this habit of soul will be ours. The Apostle Paul prayed that he might have the tender mercies of the Lord Jesus in his own life. If he needed to pray for such tenderness then we too need to pray for it.

This tenderness then is born of communion. We get into His heart and feel His concern. We look at men through His eyes. This gives us the eyes of a dove. We see men then as He sees them. We feel their needs as He feels them. We glimpse their weaknesses as He sees them. We know or feel something of the struggle they are putting up to win. We understand some of their anguish when they fail. The trouble with so many of us as Christian workers is this -- We never get beneath the outward veneer that men have. We are shallow ourselves and our work and dealings with others are just as shallow. When we plumb the depths of His heart by communion with Him we shall take a more compassionate attitude to men.

This tenderness then is born of a right conception of the feelings of others. We ought to put ourselves in the place of others and try to understand them and their battles. Many are struggling with infirmities that we do not know about. Many are facing trials that we do not understand. They might be stronger Christians than we are if they were in our place. We are not pleading for failure in this but we are pleading for understanding and compassion. We are not excusing men but we are attempting to show where we can help men. We are not condoning sin but we would try to conserve men for the kingdom of God and the work of the Church.

This habit of soul should be manifested to several different groups. The young people of our day need it. They are facing hard problems that call for tender counsel. This is revealed by the number of letters that are written in to our newspapers when someone offers to give advice without revealing names. They want help but many times they do not know where to go to get it. Thrice blessed is the pastor, Sunday School teacher, or Christian worker that has the ability to make them feel that they understand. It is better for them to go to someone who will give Christian counsel than it is for them to go to the world and get worldly counsel.

These young people may be long on zeal and courage but they are short on experience. They want to do but they do not know how to do. If they can be shown how to work and carry on for God they will make useful workers in the vineyard of the Lord. If we tell them harshly they will not respond. If we let them alone they may make shipwreck. Here is where sympathetic understanding comes in. They can get plenty of advice but they cannot get plenty of tender care and nurture. Advice must be the cheapest thing on earth for there is plenty of it that can be had for the asking. It is not just advice they need but counsel born of experience and saturated with tenderness. They will seek help when they feel that they will get this kind of understanding.

The old people need this tenderness. The infirmities of age are theirs. They are not seeing as well as they used to see. We do not mean with their eyes either. They have lost or are losing some of the keenness of their faculties. Many of them are not abreast with the times. Some are living in the past. They will appreciate the sympathy and care that is their due. We are prone to forget them in the hurry and rush of our tasks. The tide of the world seems to push them aside and they are forgotten in the rush for things. Yet many of them are the salt of the earth. They may not know the latest scientific theory but they have a knowledge of God and His grace. If you want to go half-way to heaven some day try ministering to some of them and listening to their story of test and trial and victory. We shall some day be in their condition and then we shall want some of the same tender care that they should be receiving now.

The backslider needs this tenderness. Telling him of his failure and censuring him for his faults will not help now. He needs someone to help him back to God. He knows that he has failed. He has already wept in seclusion over it. Jesus knew how to look at Peter and help him. He spoke to them when they had gone back to the nets and said, "Children have ye any meat?" Jesus had only stern judgment for the hypocrite but He always had a tender word for the backslidden. He condemned the careless and unconcerned but He always spoke with compassion to the erring and the weak. When one gets up close to the heart of the Christ he will feel and act differently toward those who have strayed from the fold. They are lost sheep and they may not know much more than a sheep does as to how to come back into the fold. Condemnation will drive them farther away. Love and compassion will bring them back if they can be brought back at all. When love, tenderness, tears, sympathy and compassion fail to win men then they cannot be won.

The troubled need it. There are more troubled perplexed souls in the world than we think there are. There has been so much teaching and so little truth presented until many do not know what to do. They are seeking an answer to some of their problems. They would like to know the way out of their difficulty. They would call on us if they thought that they would secure anything when they called. Their troubles may seem small and petty to you but they are large and real to them. We ought to offer them a sensitive plate so that they would feel free to talk out all their hearts. During the recent depression Case Workers learned that the best thing to do was to allow the troubled to talk out all their heart. There is relief in the telling of trouble. There is help in a sympathetic listener.

The discouraged need this tender understanding. They are down and they know they are down. They desire to be out in the sunshine again. It will cost us something to help them. It is much easier to contribute a dollar to charity than to drain ourselves to meet the needs of discouraged men and women.

Many will say that the writer is pleading for softness and ease in the matter of such habits of soul. The only request that we have to make is that you try to cultivate these graces of soul by practice and see if it is not one of the hardest things you ever tried. Try to put yourself out in understanding and sympathy and see if it does not drain you physically as no other work will do. Try to be tender and compassionate to all who need your help and see how much more praying you have to do to keep yourself blessed and strong. You will likely come to this conclusion. The reason they are not more prominent in the Church and home is that they are so costly. We have

learned how to shirk responsibility. We let the other man look for the lost sheep. Our feet are never bruised by many a thorn as we go to the far mountain looking for men. "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering." Colossians 3:12. R.V.

It will be harder for you to be tender than it will for you to be harsh. You will never have to repent for being too compassionate but if you are not careful you may have to repent for being too harsh. It requires no grace at all to condemn but it will require grace to lift the fallen and encourage the faint. It requires no grace at all to break bones but it requires skill and practice to reset bones. This is to be a Habit of Soul. It is to be a set practice of the life. We shall grow in grace and in holiness if we endeavor to let it become a part of our life.

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Chapter 4 THE GRACE OF CONFIDENCE Hebrews 3:14; 10:32-39

Confidence is the foundation of everything. Back of every religion there must be confidence. Back of every nation there must be confidence in its government. Back of every system of finance there must be confidence. The success of every local Church is based upon this very grace. In every home where love dwells and is to remain there must be this habit of soul.

Without this grace religion becomes a mockery. Without it nations and their governments fail. Apart from it local churches become little centers of criticism and fault finding. In the home where it is gone we usually find almost a hell on earth.

Many allow the least little thing to wreck their confidence. The first thing they hear against a party they cast away their confidence in that party. Many times it is done without any regard to the consequences either to themselves or to the other party. One rule should govern in all things of this nature. Never lose confidence in anyone over small matters. It is better to trust one too long and suffer for it than not trust one long enough and suffer for it.

There are some things that we must believe in if we are to keep balanced in an unsettled world. We must have faith in God. One said in World War I that he was betting his life that there was a God. That is one way of saying it. Possibly the real Christian would say it differently from that. It must be conceded that today there are many things happening that would almost wreck our faith in God. We must look beneath the surface of things if we are to discover and believe in God. God has never made Himself real to the surface thinker nor to the careless thoughtless one. We must plumb the depths if we are to find Him and understand His purpose. The writer once saw a certain type of glass over a vault. It was of such a type that only by putting water on it could you see through and inside the vault. Sometimes we only find God through the scalding tears of suffering but He must be found and we must hold our faith in Him.

We must have confidence in ourselves. The Bible tells us that we are to think soberly of our selves. There is no place where the Bible minimizes individuality. Always God is seeking

for a man. A man of supreme faith in God and of humble confidence in himself. If that man did not possess all that he needed of this confidence in himself, God gave him some demonstration of Himself to not only increase his faith in the God of the heavens but to encourage him to believe that through that God he would be able to do what needed to be done. God clothed Himself with Gideon and He is still clothing Himself with men of confidence in themselves. We are not pleading for arrogance nor pride but we are pleading for humble confidence in ourselves. God will bless and use such men wherever they are found. This confidence here is born of a consciousness of the fact that God lives in the soul. There is, no more confident man than the man who possesses God. This man has a heart that is clean and a soul that desires only His glory. He trusts himself because he wants to succeed for the glory of God. Any other kind of confidence is vain. Any other kind is certain of failure.

We must keep confidence in our fellow man. Here is where so many fail. Confidence is shaken and fellowship is broken. Seeing our own infirmities and mistakes will help us to be charitable toward our brother. A good dose of personal humiliation and a consciousness of need is good for the best of us occasionally. Is it any wonder that we are allowed to fail sometimes that we may be able to see the weakness of our brother and thus give him a hand of confidence and good cheer so that he may recover himself. Let us say again that it is better to trust one too long than to be guilty of mistrusting one too soon. Some are always surmising evil and some are always suspecting that their brother has some ulterior motive in what he does or says. A healthy soul will not stoop to notice little things. They say that when men begin to break down with certain kinds of mental trouble they first reveal their state by being suspicious of everybody. How true this is in the realm of the habits of the soul. When we begin to fail then we begin to suspect that all others are failing. These mental cases too many times suspect the best friend that they have. We had better look to our own household of faith when we find ourselves quickly losing faith in everybody. The best people on earth fill up the ranks of Full Salvation. They are human but they have religion. They have their faults but they also have many virtues that outweigh their faults. Some do not have a very large vision but they belong to the Lord of heaven and earth. They are God's little ones and lest we destroy them with our distrust and in the doing of it destroy ourselves, let us be careful.

We must have confidence in the ultimate triumph of righteousness. God is working out His purpose. We do not see it all. Since the beginning of this little booklet our nation is embroiled in another tragic world war. It is hard to understand why all this comes about. It is hard to see where God can be honored or where there is a place for Him. He is disregarded in the councils of state. He is left out of the plans of men. There is no room for Him anywhere now. It is doubtful if He had to be born again if even they would allow Him to use a stable for His ward. Sometime ago in reading Habakkuk we ran across this same perplexing problem. The prophet is concerned as to why God does not answer his cry and come to the rescue of the people. God says, "Behold ye among the nations, and look, and wonder marvelously; for I am working a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you." Hab. 1:5. R.V. When the prophet went to his tower and waited on God he received the answer. He learns that the just shall live by his faith. God is working out His plan. He must let the nations of the earth try everything only to come to complete failure. Then we shall see God's plan. The King is coming some day to reign and in that day the "earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." Righteousness is coming some day. We are to reign with Him. We shall not evolve it but He

shall bring it. We shall not work it up by our own ability but He shall bring it with ten thousand of His saints. The day of His eternal triumph is coming. It is hastening toward the end. We need to read it, believe it and run the race with our confidence fixed in the Word of the eternal God. His day of triumph is coming!

So many things happen to us when we lose confidence. Men who lose faith in God go into despair. Some sink deeper and ever deeper into sin. Some become practical atheists and live as though they would never have to give an account. Some never sink beneath the level of morality but they give Him no praise. They have lost the sense of the presence of God. They seem to think that He has failed them. He has not failed but they have failed. When that failure is acknowledged and repentance is genuine He will come back to the soul again with renewed blessing and confidence will again become the bulwark of the soul.

When men lose confidence in themselves they lose hope and cease to try. Some have said that they have tried again and again till they have decided to cease trying. Better to die trying than to die without a ray of hope. The only complete failure you will ever find is the man that has completely quit trying. No one is lost as long as he honestly tries. If a person keeps on there will be a time when success will crown his efforts and then confidence will begin to return. When confidence is restored the battle is won.

When confidence is lost in our brethren then we become bitter and cynical. It is then that the innocent are indicted with the guilty. Every act of others is interpreted as being done from a selfish motive. Looking for the bad instead of the good becomes a habit of the soul. Suspicion reigns in the heart. The gall of bitterness takes root in the life. The soul soil is ruined so far as the growing of confidence is concerned. If there are no good folk then God is not a reality for He is the One that makes folk good. We may go on to lose confidence in everything. We must guard the citadel of our soul against such evil habits. Cultivate confidence and confidence will bring its own reward.

Where is the cure if we have failed along this line? Seek God till He becomes a reality. Seek purity till the soul is cleansed of every thing sinful. Search the heart till the certainty comes to the soul that all is well. Keep a sense of God's presence and have within the assurance of His help. He is able to make the weak to stand. He is able to restore confidence. He brings peace back to the heart and the soul at peace with itself will be at peace with others.

This is a time when we need to have confidence in God and confidence in our fellow man. Shall we not go forth to practice this habit of soul? To do this and to make our practice effective we must live so that others will have confidence in us.

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Chapter 5
THE GRACE OF CHEERFULNESS
Acts 27; Proverbs 15:13; 17:22

The Bible is a true index of human character. It tells of the good things about great men that we may emulate them. It is just as faithful in describing their weaknesses that we may avoid them. Then too, the Author of the Bible wanted us to know that the characters that it describes are human beings. They were men of like passions as we are. There are a number of men pictured in the Bible that had their days of discouragement and despondency. Read of Elijah and the cry of discouragement born of weariness when he thought that he was the only one left that loved and served God. Moses undoubtedly had his hours of disappointment when it would have been easier to quit than for him to carry on the God assigned task. Job cursed the day he was born because of the intense suffering that came to him. David had his times when his soul was cast down within him and he had a disquieted spirit. It is good to read the account of Jeremiah when he too reached the bottom so far as human emotions and feelings were concerned. He decided that he would preach no more nor speak in His name. They all had their battles and their hours of discouragement. The Bible gives us a group of men that faced most if not all the common problems of mankind not only in their day but in any day of history. We can find someone in the Bible that faced most any problem that we have to face today. That is one of the useful things about it. It gives us examples so that we need not faint nor be weary.

We are living in a sick world. It is sick economically, sick financially, sick morally and sick spiritually. Here is the worst part of our trouble. We need a medicine that will cure us morally and spiritually. When the world finds that remedy we will recover from most of our other troubles.

This is a good time for us as Christians to manifest the spirit of Jesus who was never perturbed by any of the forces that beat around Him. The world has a right to demand of us that we reveal a different attitude than they do themselves. We need not expect anything from the world but we will be expected to give them something. That something is a cheerful life that goes about doing good and constantly by its very attitude lifts men to a higher plane of living. A lot of speculation is not what the world wants. It is not what she needs. The world is looking for a positive life of cheerfulness and confidence that leaves an atmosphere of hope among men.

There is then the duty of cheerfulness. We owe it to ourselves to have this habit of soul. The wise man said that it would save many from the suffering of disease. Scientists tell us that our bodies undergo a chemical change when we are either blue or angry. Digestion is slowed up and other bodily changes take place. You cannot give way to despondency and to feelings of envy and hatred without these leaving a mark on your physical body. If a soft answer turns away wrath then a cheerful spirit turns away disease.

We shall find our mental health better if we cultivate this habit of soul. The institutions for mental disorder are filled with men and women who are there because of worry and fretting. They are mentally sick because of these things. They have worried and fretted over things that they cannot help. As the old lady in the mountains said one time, "I just worried and worried, till I got mad." This leads eventually to the loss of the power of control over the emotions. Then mental disorder starts. If we can change a thing let us go to work and do it and if we cannot let us forget it. At least forget it enough till we refuse to worry and fret about it.

This will help us spiritually. The inner man and the outer man are more closely connected than we think. Whatever affects the outer man more than likely will affect the inner man. It is also true that what affects the inner man will react on the outer man. We are not asking for a spirit of carelessness in reference to our needs nor to the needs of others. We are asking for a release from the morbid and the despondent attitude toward life. The worldling finds relief in the fleeting pleasures of life. The Christian ought to find it in the spirit of the Christ who walked among men. The Bible does say that He was a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but it does not say that He was overcome by them. If we are truly Christian we shall be very sensitive to the troubles of the world but we will not let them get us down. We must keep the spiritual tone of our own soul up or we shall never raise the spiritual tone of others. We must see in holiness and purity the thing that will cheer our fainting spirits and lift our hearts above the waves or no one will seek such an experience. We must be able in the midst of the deepest troubles of life to sing as the colored man in the South sings, "Nobody knows de trouble I sees! Glory hallelujah!" We sing the first part of the verse but we do not reach the last part. We must keep the habit of our soul on a plain of cheerfulness and on a note of victory or we shall never remain spiritual ourselves.

We owe this to our fellow man. It is surprising how many we meet every day that are in dire need of a smile and a kind word. They may not ask us for it and they may not thank us when they receive it. Still our reward is found in seeing a life grow happier and more friendly. There are not many who do not love the sunny singing soul. The world wants such a type of Christianity as this. The world wants men and women who are prodigal with their smiles and cheerfulness and stingy with their tears and troubles. Most everyone has enough trouble of their own but not many have too much good cheer and happiness.

The question even now is being asked, How can we be cheerful when the world is in the state it is in? This can be answered by a question. How could the martyrs go singing to the stake? How have the saints in the ages past kept their faith and endured the struggles of life? This habit of soul has a foundation. When that is discovered then we shall be able to maintain it no matter what may come.

It is based on a right perception or view of God's dealings with us. We must learn to see God in everything. "All things" must include all things. God wants us to see that the hard things of life can work for us just as much as the pleasant things of life. In fact it might be said that many times the more unpleasant they are the more earnestly they work for us. It takes the contrast to bring out the object. It takes the shadows to bring out the light. It takes hunger to make us appreciate a good meal. It takes trouble to help us to see His consolation. It takes heartache to make us to understand the heartache of others. What a blessing it would be to all of us if we began to practice today this very thing. From this moment on let every one of us try to look for the workings of God in every thing. We may not see it now and it may be that we shall not see it tomorrow. There is one thing certain we shall see it when we see Him face to face. Look for it now. It may be that He will be pleased to give you a glimpse of His purpose for your life. It may be that He will reveal the reason for all that has happened to you. You will find your spirits rising and the habit of your soul will be that of cheerfulness if you will.

Another basis for this habit of soul is a strong elastic faith that can stand sudden strains. This may sound paradoxical but we mean just this very thing. A baby takes a tumble and is not

hurt. We take the same tumble and a bone is broken. They tell us that the babe's bones are still soft and pliable and that ours are set and hard. The buildings in Southern California that withstood the recent earthquake were those that had been constructed to give a rebound to the shock. This is faith. It is a shock absorber. It takes care of the sudden jars and shocks of life. It is like a rubber ball. Life, we must remember is not a well-paved macadam highway but a rock strewn pathway. We may travel from one side of the country to the other in our car and never get off the pavement but we cannot travel the road of life like that. It has not been paved yet. All the detours have not yet been marked. There is no travel bureau that can issue you a map that tells you exactly where they are. Only faith can help us to travel this road and keep a cheerful spirit.

We will be helped by a life of complete submission to the will of God. We are usually cross when our wills are crossed. We must let the will of God gird us round till all our nature is swallowed up in His will. This is the normal life of holiness. Yet how many who profess this grace are constantly fretting at the will of God. The fretting many times is never seen but it is felt. The spirit chafes and the nerves tingle. A life of cheerfulness and victory is spoiled. Sooner or later sourness of disposition becomes a reality to more than just our closest friends. Some may think that consecration is a worn out word but it is not a worn out experience if we go into it with all our hearts for time and for eternity. It brings us to complete abandonment to all the will of God both that which is revealed and that which is not yet revealed.

There must be a life of prayer if this grace is to find firm rootage in the soul. This living communion with God is of such a nature that it trusts God and waits for Him. This is the highest type of prayer. The prayer that believes and expects even though the answer may be long delayed. God desires that we pray and continue to pray but we are not to struggle nor doubt Him. Jesus spoke of a certain type of fasting and praying that was unknown to those about us. He speaks of that cheerful mien and countenance that looks to Him and expects to be heard and answered. Praying people are cheerful people. They have imbibed some of the spirit of Christ and they are sure of the purposes of God. There is no distrust to mar their happiness. There is no bitterness to sour their spirits. They have talked to God about the matter and He has the case in hand. They have carried the problem to him and He has the solution ready. They have carried the burden to Him and He has assumed it. They have carried their cares to Him and He has banished them. They have learned more than to say a prayer, they have learned the life of prayer. Prayer for them has ceased to be a form and is now a living communion. It has ceased to be a burden or a task. They find it a delightful fellowship. They see the Invisible One and though the present is dark they endure. The pleasures of sin are forgotten and even the reproaches of Christ are cheerfully assumed for they are possessed of the long look. They have a telescope that is stronger than any man has ever invented. They look at the unseen and see it! They look for the Invisible One and find Him! Present trouble then does not mar their experience. Present sorrow is but for a moment and they continue to look and see the Unseen One. You can see that it is no trouble for such a one to manifest this Grace of Cheerfulness. They live and move and have their being in God.

There must be a growing friendship and companionship with Jesus Christ. He has some of the deeper lessons of life to teach those who will companion with Him all the way. Those who go the second mile always get into His heart. Those who are completely His always get His secrets. "The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear Him." Holiness is the main entrance into such close friendship but it takes growth in holiness and a proven life of devotion to get into His heart.

Very few are leaning on His breast. This companionship helps us to secure some of His patience and some of His cheerfulness. The weary world seeks a new thrill to ease the aching of its heart and morbidity of its mind but the saint has Christ and His companionship. He is all in all. He satisfies and thus the life is cheerful and free from worry and fretting. "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." Romans 8:28

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Chapter 6 THE GRACE OF COURAGE Joshua 1:1-18

Here is a grace that is needed as badly in the army of the Lord as it is in the army of the nation. In fact we need moral courage more than we need physical courage. If we had more of the first then there would not be so much work to muster the latter. Every nation that has failed in the past has done so because she first lost moral courage. We are working to preserve our way of life. We need also to work to encourage men to be true to the highest and best within them.

The Christian life is a warfare. The Bible tells us that in more than one place. We are exhorted to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. All the attitudes of a soldier are used to describe the Christian life. We are not to entangle ourselves. We are to war a good warfare. We are to use weapons that are spiritual. We are in a holy war. Jesus in this age promises to the Church a sword and not an olive branch. The Church is here spoken of by many as the Church militant. Jesus tells us that we must expect enemies in unexpected places. He mentions them of our own household. This world is not a friend to grace to help us on to God. If a person has not courage and is not willing to seek it, then he must resign himself to this fact. He is headed for failure in the Christian race. It takes more courage to be a real Christian than it takes to be anything else in all the world.

Let us cultivate this habit of courage. We are not speaking of rashness nor of stubbornness. We are not pleading for these but we are speaking of this grace of the soul that gives real moral courage and backbone in the midst of an age where men are caving in on every side.

This type of courage of which we speak is needed in many ways and in different forms. We need to have courage enough to be ourselves. Joshua might have been tempted to follow Moses and do just as Moses did, but God wanted a Joshua now. Had he wanted Moses he would have kept him on the job for he was well preserved. If God wants a man of a certain character or manner to do a task He calls him. Our preaching must not be a mere aping of someone else. It must be straight and clear in its truth but it need not conform to the mold of some other. Bricks are all the same size but stones are of different sizes. God never did liken us to bricks. We are called living stones. That means that some of us are big and some of us are little. What a tragedy to see a little stone trying to be a big one! Better to chink up the small holes in the spiritual house of God's building than to try to be a window ledge and fail.

It takes courage to give your enemies a fair and square deal. The Bible commands us to love and pray for our enemies. It also says that vengeance belongs to God and that He will repay. Here is where courage enters in. We settle it to let God do the avenging and not we ourselves. The temptation is to rush in and do the job so that they will never harm or hurt us again. It takes courage to resist this temptation and even smart under the wrong treatment till God gets ready to vindicate you. He is usually slower in His vindication than we want Him to be but He is always more thorough in it than we can ever be. It will take courage to leave the whole matter in His hands and trust Him to do what is right for you and those who may oppose you.

We need this courage even though we may be strongly tempted to be afraid. The Psalmist said, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." Being courageous does not necessarily mean the total absence of fear but it does mean that courage predominates and conquers the tendency to succumb to fear. The enemy of the soul will drop into the mind nameless fears and dread. He will speak of the future and make it dark. He enlarges upon the troubles that never happen! He would have us cross bridges that we shall never have to cross. As one has well said, "We may not know what is in the future but we can and do know Who is in the future." Many are filled with nameless dreads and fears. God is able to bolster the heart. Holiness casts out fear of the judgment. If we are not afraid of that then what is left for us to fear?

This is needed to resist temptation. Daniel manifested it when they offered him the wine of the king. Moses had it when he left the pleasures of sin and the riches of Egypt to lead a slave people to liberty. Jesus manifested it when He would not take the short cut to world dominion. We need it when we are tempted to round the corners and trim our sails to suit the passing fancies of men. This is an age of conforming to conventions. Others do it and therefore it is all right for us to do it. In fact the cry is this: Since they do it we must do it or be counted as outcasts of society. The billboards would make us think that some sins are universal and the latest radio program seems to make it certain. We must resist the drift of the age or else we will be forever lost.

We need courage to face life's struggles unafraid. "Life is real and life is earnest" and we may find that it has its struggles as well. Suffering and sorrow may come. Suffering is the common lot of all mankind. "Man is born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward." Sorrows will some day meet us on the pathway of life. Losses must inevitably come to us. Shall we become stoics and act as though they were not present? Shall we eat and drink knowing that tomorrow we may die? Neither of these will satisfy the cry of the soul. God has grace to help in time of trouble. We, if we have courage of heart, will persist till we find His balm. We shall not be submerged but we shall ride out the storms of life if He is with us. God's message is this to the fearful hearted, "Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you."

We need courage to persist in the life of holiness. There is much land to possess. There are hills and valleys yet unexplored. Hebron is still ahead for most of us. Many are still at Gilgal. They are yet at the place of a "circle," for they say that is what Gilgal means. Holiness is more than a Jordan crossing. It is a life. It is more than a strip of land up and down the banks of the Jordan. It is a country to be explored and taken. For that matter it is more than just an experience that is to be held and testified to. It is a conquering march into the land of Canaan that leads us to take all the land. Do not misunderstand us. It is an experience to be sought and obtained just as

truly as the children of Israel came to the Jordan and crossed but it is also a life to be lived and a country to explore. There are infirmities to overcome and weaknesses to conquer. These are not sinful but if they are not overcome and conquered they may lead us back into sin. There is the keeping under of the body and legitimate appetites lest they get us under. The life of holiness is not a picnic nor a dress parade. The children of Israel found that out at Ai. Self confidence has slain more than one possessor of holiness.

It will take this habit of soul to cross the opinions and notions of others. One has well said, "Physical courage which despises all danger, will make a man brave in one way; and moral courage, which despises all opinion, will make a man brave in another. The former would seem necessary for the camp; the latter for the council; but to constitute a great man both are necessary." This is not of course a mere flouting of the opinions of others but when conviction and opinion meet headlong we must stand by our convictions. We must be sure that our convictions have a basis in the Word of God. When they do then we can confidently stand. We can be assured that He will see us through.

It took courage for Joshua to ferret out the trouble at Ai. He was praying about it and God told him to go and search the camp. When he found the evil he uprooted it and saved the nation. There are times when no planting or building can be done till there has been a razing of the structure of evil that exists. When these are torn down then a real foundation can be laid. This is not to be done with rashness. Rashness is not courage. There is a time to tear down and there is a time to not tear down. A courageous soul will abide God's time. He will be on his face in prayer when God tells him to go to work and destroy. The trouble with the folk who make a mess of destroying is that they do not go from the closet to the task. They went before they prayed and they went before God sent them.

It takes a cultivation of this habit of soul to cause one to do right when the flags are not flying and drums are silent. When we do right for righteousness' sake then are we honoring God. When we do right because there is an inwrought principle of righteousness within then are we manifesting a real courage. When we do right when the crowd does not see, or seeing does not care, then are we really manifesting the Grace of Courage.

There is a real basis for such courage as this. It is found in the Scripture reading that is at the head of this chapter. God calls Joshua's attention to the Word of God. He is to meditate in it. He is to not allow it to go out of his mouth. He is to be careful to observe to do all of its commandments. The Word of God in the heart gives poise and courage to the life. The Bible tells us of the faithfulness of God. That is the basis for real courage. If God never fails the courageous trusting soul then we can take heart and press on. If God has kept His word to faithful men of the past it gives us courage to believe that He will keep His word to us today. If "men of like passions" have been true then we too can manifest the courage of soul that we need to manifest.

God gave to Joshua another promise that helped him. He said that He would never forsake. He promised to be with him "whithersoever thou goest." The presence of God was to be with him. "Thou God seest me" would be a good motto for many. A consciousness of the presence of God would be a help to many a wavering soul. This will strengthen till we can endure as seeing Him who is invisible. This will give us implicit trust in Him.

There must be a fixed determination to do the will of God no matter what it costs. This will mean that we will not stop to count what the consequences will be to us but we will only stop to find out what the will of the Lord is in the matter at hand. There is such a thing as a holy cheek. This is a set determination to carry on for Him. This means that God and His cause comes first. Our wills must enter into this thing. Our wills must be sanctified. A sanctified will is adamant when it comes to the will of God. It has no time for argument with the Devil. It has no time for the seeking of the expedient thing to do. It is concerned only with what is God's will. It takes only time to find that out. When it is settled in that then the die is cast.

Living close to the heart of Christ will give us this soul habit. When we secure some of His calmness in danger; when we secure some of His set purpose; when we secure some of His will to do His Father's will; then we shall possess the Grace of Courage. Paul possessed it at Lystra when he arose from the ground where he had been stoned and left for dead. He went back to the stones. Thomas had a little inkling of it when he said, "Let us go back and perish with Him." Keeping company with Christ will bring courage to our hearts. When courage comes we shall go out into the world to do the courageous thing no matter what the consequences. "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." Psalm 31:24

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Chapter 7
THE GRACE OF HUMILITY
Philippians 2:1-14

If forgiveness is the foundational grace of the soul then this grace is the crowning grace of the soul. It certainly is the effect of Divine grace on the heart and soul. This habit of soul always characterizes the true Christian. It is not a virtue that can be put on and off at will as one puts on and off a garment. It is a habit of soul. People today have many conceptions as to what humility is. Some seem to think that it is their duty to reveal to others just how humble they are. They do the same thing that the fanatic did but in a different way. He, to prove himself humble, placed himself in the door for a mat. Many in the dark ages secluded themselves, wore horsehair shirts and did many other things of an ascetic nature to show forth their humility. This is a grace that cannot be talked about by the person possessing it; for in the talking he immediately loses it. It must bloom in the shade and be only noticed by the few who are seeking for its beauty and perfume. There are a number of things that we might say about this crowning grace of the soul but we shall confine ourselves to only five of them.

There are some things that humility does not compel us to do or say. It does not compel a man to wrong the truth, nor himself, by entertaining a meaner or worse opinion of himself than he deserves. The Bible says nothing against a correct opinion of oneself. It only prohibits higher thinking of oneself than is deserved. Every man is urged to think soberly and in that thinking to find his place in the kingdom of God. This thinking must of necessity be done after the heart has been cleansed from sin. A man is not able to "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" till his consecration is complete and his heart has been cleansed. Such a man is able

to think soberly and if he keeps the cleansing blood flowing over his heart, he will secure a correct opinion of himself and of his powers to do good. It does not help to belittle oneself till all who hear know that it is affected. Better to say nothing at all than to do this. It is best to do all that is required of you in the best way that you can and give God the glory for results.

This grace of humility does not force a man to give everybody the preference to himself. A wise man cannot believe himself inferior to the ignorant multitude. The virtuous man cannot believe himself not so good as those who live vicious lives. If these were so then anybody could take the place of the skilled surgeon. The man who could not read his own name would be able to settle the latest theological question at once. John Wesley was very careful to warn us lest we ignore the men and women who had ability and substitute for it the so-called inspiration of the Spirit. There is a tuition of learning and there is an intuition of the Spirit. They both have their place. Of course it must be said that this gives no room for the exaltation of the learned nor for bigotry on the part of those who are trained. This grace will save us from these things.

This grace does not compel a man to treat himself with contempt in his words or actions. It looks or at least borders on affectation, when a man says such things in his own dispraise as others know and he himself believes to be false. This is done possibly many times to bait the hook so that praise may be given to one. A false humility is the bait that is used. We must remember that every real grace of the soul has its counterfeit. In the cultivation of the genuine we must be careful to weed out the false. In the securing of the real we must reject the unreal. In finding the pattern we must be sure we have the right one. If we have any to reveal at all we want to be sure that it is genuine. It is better to have a little humility and all of it real than to have a lot of what will finally be proven as false. People are able sooner or later to see what is real and what is not real. It is tragic when they discover that humility is being used as a cloak to secure undue praise.

Humility has some things about it that makes men know that we possess it. A humble person does not assign any excellence or good to himself that he does not possess. Humility forbids any over-rating of ourselves. If we have some good about us it will be discovered and if we do not have it there is no need to pretend that we have it. Many say that the world has not yet recognized their ability. Some say that the Church has never given them the place that they deserve. Yet if some of these were given places that they want the results would be tragic. They do not have the excellency they thought they possessed. Most of us are just about as far up the ladder of success as we have the ability to climb. There may be a few that success has missed but they are very few.

Humility consists in not over-rating anything that we do. To hear some reports the latest revival was the greatest that was ever held. The trouble with most of these is that you cannot find the results in three months after the report is made. If all had been done that is reported we would almost have a millennium upon earth now. It takes grace to be conservative in our statements. Sometimes it takes more grace than many of us possess. We hope we will not be misunderstood. The successes in the work of God should be reported for the encouragement of those who are working in hard places. They should be reported that God may be glorified and His power revealed to men. We are now speaking of over-statement. It is better to be known as one that under states than to be known as one that over states.

This grace consists in not taking an excessive delight in ourselves. Here is the cause for much peevishness and discouragement. We are not appreciated. We are not noticed as much as we think we should be. If we are excessively taken up with ourselves we shall be continually complaining of the way men treat us. There is no quicker road to ruin than this constant thinking about ourselves. Jesus said that we would have to forget ourselves to such an extent that we would lose ourselves before we would ever be able to save ourselves.

This grace consists in not taking more praise to ourselves in an action than is our due. When we have what is coming to us let us be content. If you are worrying because some other is receiving more praise than you, console yourself with the thought that at least you are not receiving more than is your due. Some praise has to be left for the other side of the journey. God wants to say "Well done" and if it is all said here then He has no chance to give praise. For some all the praise they will ever know is in this life. They had better be getting all they can now for they will get none in the world to come.

Humility consists in an inward sense of our imperfections, infirmities and failures. We need to see the weakness of our understanding. We must constantly plead for the blood to cover our sins of ignorance. The Psalmist prayed for deliverance from presumptuous sins and to be held back from secret sins. We need to be careful lest our weaknesses lead us into known sin. We need also to be mindful that we have infirmities of mind, body and soul. Some would say that we must sin to be humble but if we get a proper glimpse of our own infirmities we shall have enough to keep us in our place.

Humility consists in ascribing all that we have and are to God and to His Grace. He is the One that is to be praised. He is the One that has made us what we are. There is no telling what we would be were it not for the grace of God. If we were not libertines we would likely be practical atheists or at the best only moral creatures without God and without hope in the world. He is our Saviour. He brought us out of the miry clay. He is the One that broke the power of sin. He cleaned us up from the habit that is wrecking others. Shall we not give Him praise while we stay in the dust of humility before Him? Paul said he was less than the least of all saints, but he had the privilege of declaring the gospel of God. If he was the least and as he says less than the least where is there room left for our boasting?

True humility does express itself. It is expressed by the modesty of our appearance. By this we mean as to our age, our ability, and our character. The younger will not lord it over the elder. The inexperienced will not tell the experienced how it should be done. The learner will not endeavor to instruct the teacher. The poor will not try to be rich. The beginner in the school of Grace will not act as though he had already finished. There will be deportment in keeping with age, experience, and ability.

It will be expressed by the modesty of our work. We will not aim at that which is above our strength. We shall recognize the fact that a good name is better than a great name. It is better to do the things we can do well than to fail in trying to do the things we cannot do. There is plenty of work to be done. Much of it is of the kind that is modest. The obscurity of it does not mean that it is unimportant. A preacher said one day that he found a man sweeping the church steps. He spoke to him and in conversation the man who was sweeping said he was called to keep the church

clean. Not many are bragging about being called to be a janitor! Yet there may be churches that need someone to be called to keep them clean!

It is expressed by the modesty of our conversation and behavior. We shall not be obstinate if we are humble. There will be no forwardness of spirit if true humility is reigning in the life. This grace is accompanied with contentment, peace, and submission to the will of God. Men who are full of pride are envious, discontented, and carnally ambitious. They are never satisfied with what God or man provides for them.

There are many advantages that come to the soul that has secured or developed this grace of humility. This is a thing that is well pleasing to God. Peter in his First Epistle says this: "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." God is pleased. The soul that loves Him is satisfied when that is accomplished. The humble soul lives with only one motive in mind after all and that is to please and bring honor to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ.

It will help us in the discharge of our duties if we are humble. This temper of soul makes us faithful. If we are noticed we shall be faithful and if we are not noticed we shall still be faithful. If we are appreciated we shall go ahead in the performance of our work and if we are not appreciated we shall do the same. The humble soul does not expect much praise anyway and thus it will carry on and do its work without praise.

It brings to the soul a promise of more grace. "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." James 4:6. The Psalmist said this: "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." We need grace and we need more grace. We need guidance and we need to be taught the way. God will give us what we need if we manifest this grace of soul. He will meet our need with abundant supplies of grace if we maintain an attitude of meekness and humility.

It is a wonderful thing to keep us in tranquillity and contentment. The humble soul is a contented soul. Again the Psalmist says, "The humble soul shall see this, and be glad; and your heart shall live that seek God. For the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners." Even affliction shall not disturb this contentment and tranquillity. Job says, "The Lord. gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Here is patience that is born of real humility. The humble soul is a patient soul. No amount of loss nor of trouble will make this soul charge God foolishly. He will not sin by murmuring and complaining.

It is a wonderful help to the soul for it enables one to exercise moderation in everything. "Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand."

There are many reasons given in the Scripture for the cultivation of this habit of soul. Jesus Christ set the great example. He took seven steps down in His humiliation. He made Himself of no reputation. He took the form of a servant. He was made in the likeness of man. He was found fashioned as a man. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. He humbled Himself and became obedient to the most shameful death that man could die, the death of the cross. He is

our example. If He went this road then we too should travel the same road. This same mind should possess us and this same spirit should order our lives.

When we think of the price that God paid for our redemption it ought to bring us to the dust of humility. We were unworthy and unlovely and yet Christ died for us. God gave us a picture of His love when He sent His only begotten Son to be born of a woman and made under the law. He assumed all our guilt and paid all our penalty. The just suffered for the unjust. The free became a captive that the imprisoned might be made free. The Son of God became the Son of Man that we might be made sons of God. What condescension on the part of Deity!

We must remember that we are dust. We are compassed about with infirmities of mind and body. God takes this into account. He knows of our weaknesses. He loves us and uses us in spite of them. All this should tend to make us humble and meek in our spirits. We must still remember that we are creatures. If we ever attain to a place of honor at His right hand, it will be because of His grace and not because of any merit of our own. If we render to Him any service we must still remember that we are as yet unprofitable servants. Let us by the grace of God cultivate this tender plant of humility. May it grow in our hearts to the praise and honor and glory of God.

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CONCLUSION

There is set forth in this little booklet seven habits of soul that are desirable for us to practice. God desires that we live ideal, happy and holy lives. All these graces of soul are related one to the other. To be a well-rounded Christian all of them need to live and thrive in the soul. We may be noticed more if we are eccentric but we shall bring more glory to God if we are well balanced. God has grace to make all these abound in the soul. He is able to help us to manifest them all in their due proportion. Our forgiveness must be genuine, our kindness must be real, our tenderness must be full of compassion, our confidence must be unbounded, our cheerfulness must be exuberant, and our humility must be self-effacing. Then will come to pass the word of the Wise Man in the book of Proverbs where he said, "So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck."

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THE END