THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:38-58

"I am the bread of life." No claim could be greater. On the lips of any other than Jesus it would be sheer madness. But on His lips it is supreme sanity. This is in part what Paul meant when he said, "For me to live is Christ." That is, Christ is the author of my life. But He is not only its author. He is also the Sustainer. He is to me the bread of life. This has been the testimony of countless thousands. It may be ours if we are willing to receive Him.

Help us, Lord, to take Thee seriously as Thou dost say even to us, "This is my body," my very all, "which is given for you." Amen.
A COURAGEOUS QUESTION

John 6:59-67

"Will ye also go away?" Here for once this supreme preacher lost His congregation. At first there was a vast throng. But when He refused to say what the people wanted to hear, they walked out. "Nothing to that," said one listener on the outskirts of the crowd to his friend. And with that the two strolled away together. Others quickly followed, first in tens, then hundreds, then thousands. Soon only twelve frightened men were left. To these Jesus turned and asked with steady voice, "Will ye also go away?"

To face such seeming failure required courage of the highest order.

Lord, give us the courage to stand even if the crowd melts away. Amen.
A WISE ANSWER

John 6:68-71

"To whom shall we go?" Simon does not pretend that he has not seen the deserting crowds. No more does he pretend that he has not felt the tug of these crowds upon his own wavering heart. He did not like to be a part of a small minority any better than we. How then has he managed to stand? He is sure that every step of these deserters is toward death. He prefers to stand with the few and live rather than follow the majority and die. Therefore, he gives this wise answer, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the sayings of life."

Grant us, Lord, to dress our lives by
Thy mirror and not by that of the majority. Amen.
A HOT ARGUMENT

John 7:1-13

"The crowd disputed about Him hotly." (Moffatt)

Too bad! It seldom pays to argue about anything, matters of religion least of all. Yet through the centuries men have grown hot and angry with each other as they disputed about the Christ who came to build them and their fellows into a brotherhood. We congratulate ourselves that we are far more tolerant than our fathers. Yet I wonder just how much that passes for tolerance is not in reality indifference. To dispute hotly about Christ is bad enough, but to be so indifferent as not to think Him worth disputing about is even worse.

Help us, Lord, to be deeply convinced
and yet tolerant of others. Amen.
HOW TO KNOW
John 7:14-24

"If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know." Here is a wide open road to spiritual certainty. This certainty is not simply for the few, but for the many. Every man may know God for himself. Let any man begin here and now to live up to the light he has and God will bring him into the fuller light. This is not theory, it is experience. This certainty may come with the suddenness of a flash of lightning or like the slow dawning of day, but its coming is sure if we persist in our willingness to obey.

We thank Thee, Lord, that all of us may say, "I know whom I have believed."

Amen.
"Where I am, ye cannot come." Every man who takes Jesus seriously must believe in some kind of hell. By far the most lurid words on this subject were spoken by Him. But even the picture of Dives begging for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue is no more impressive than these quiet words, "Where I am, ye cannot come." There is an atmosphere so rare that it tortures the lungs. There is also an atmosphere created by the presence of Jesus that only the twice-born can breathe. Hence separation becomes a necessity, and that separation, as long as it lasts, spells hell.

Grant us, Lord, so to live with Thee now that we may live with Thee through eternity.

Amen.
LIFE'S OVERFLOW

John 7:37-44

"Out of his inner life shall flow rivers of living water." Here is one who has not only found satisfaction for himself, but something to share with others. His very presence breaks the drought of the heart and sets its fields to flowering. He is possessed of an overflow more precious than the life-giving waters of the Nile. How has he attained? He has heard and accepted this invitation from the lips of Jesus, "Come to me and drink." That same invitation is extended to you and me. If we accept, we too can change human deserts into gardens.

We thank Thee, Lord, for the rich overflow that comes from Thine indwelling presence. Amen.
"Why have ye not brought Him?" This question was put to certain officers who had failed to make an arrest. They failed because Jesus, the man whom they were to arrest, had cast His spell over them. This He did for all unbiased souls. His was the spell of a man who was alive. Men were constantly asking Him about life. His was also the spell of one who knew — "Never man spake like this man." His was the spell of a man who cared. Men felt in His presence the tug of a love that would not let them go.

We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou dost still cast Thy spell upon our sinful hearts.

Amen.
"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone." Just where this story belongs in the life of Jesus the critics do not know, but that it belongs I have no slightest doubt. The wisdom and tenderness here displayed are the very wisdom and tenderness of God. "Here is an outcast," they say. "Shall we stone her or not?" "By all means," Jesus answers, "if you have never sinned. But if you have sinned in any fashion, you are a sinner even as she. So why should one sinner stone another?" That paralyzed every arm there even as it does today.

Save us, Lord, from the wicked folly of stoning our fellow sinners. Amen.
"Go and sin no more." When this soiled soul was flung at the feet of Jesus, He was too much of a gentleman to increase her shame even by a look. Hence He stooped and wrote on the ground. But when her brutal accusers were all gone He stood erect and asked, "Hath no man condemned thee?" When she answered, "No man, Lord," then He said this amazing word, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." By this He meant, "Go and you will sin no more because you are trusting me and I am trusting you. We have become friends."

Lord, make us strong through the realization of Thy friendship.

Amen.
"I am not alone." These are the words of Jesus. He lived His whole life in the conscious presence of His Father. "I am not alone." So the greatest of the saints have through the centuries steadied themselves in their hours of sorrow and danger. "At my first defense," writes Paul, "no man took my part. Nevertheless the Lord stood with me and gave me inward strength." But this is a word not only for the great, but for ordinary souls like you and me. All of us may claim the constant fellowship of God. Even now I dare say for myself, "I am not alone."

We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou dost make good Thy promise; I will never leave Thee nor forsake Thee. Amen.
"The truth shall make you free." This is a favorite word to inscribe over the doors of temples of learning. But Jesus is not affirming that truth in general gives freedom. Germany knew the truth about military tactics beyond any nation of her day, but that knowledge did not make her free. It made her a wreck. The truth that frees is the truth revealed by the personality of Jesus. It is Jesus Himself. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The freedom that He brings is above all else freedom from sin. "He that committeth sin is a slave;"

"Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Amen.
THE SINLESS CHRIST

John 8:37-47

"Which of you convinceth me of sin?" In Jesus we are brought face to face with a sinless man. He calls on all men to repent, but He Himself never repented. He teaches all to pray for forgiveness, but not once did He ask forgiveness for Himself. This fact cannot be explained by saying that He was the best of men. For it so happens that it is from the lips of the best of the saints rather than from those of the worst of sinners that we hear the most poignant confessions of sin. Jesus was more than good. He was perfect.

"O what amiss may we forgive in Thee, Jesus, 'good' paragon, thou crystal Christ.

Amen.
THE ETERNAL CHRIST

John 8:48-59

"Before Abraham was, I am." What an incredible claim! Little wonder that those who heard it sought to stone Him who made it. They had either to worship Him or stone Him, so they chose to do the latter. Our Lord was the one man whose life did not begin at His birth. "In the beginning was the Word." "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The coming of Jesus into the world was the coming of God Himself. Jesus is therefore the sinless and eternal Christ. As such He is able to save all who come to God by Him.

We thank Thee, Lord, that in Thee we see the living God. Amen.
"Who did sin?" Here was tragedy, the tragedy of blindness, who was to blame? The disciples had but one explanation, somebody's sin. But while sin is back of the vast majority of suffering, it does not account for it all. It did not explain the suffering of this blind man. Jesus indicates that there was a loving purpose back of his blindness. His darkness was to be a pathway to a fuller light. The truth of the matter is that while we cannot explain all suffering, we can use it all by the help of God for our own enrichment and that of others.

Teach us, Lord, the fine art of changing our losses into gains. Amen.
FROM NIGHT TO LIGHT

John 9:1-7

"He went his way therefore and washed and came seeing." When this blind man believed enough to obey, he passed from darkness to light. Jesus healed another blind man by touching his eyes. He healed yet another by a word. Had these three met in a testimony meeting they would have all differed as to how Jesus cures. Perhaps they would have gone out and organized three separate churches. Yet on things fundamental they were in perfect agreement. They had all trusted Jesus. As a result, all, though once blind, could now see. Therefore they should have been at home in the same church.

Save us, Lord, from creating division in the body of Christ by majoring on minors. Amen.
THE CENTRAL CERTAINTY

John 9:8-25

"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." This healed man is being hard pressed by unfriendly critics. He is one against many. His foes are men of the schools while he is rated as one of the rabble. But in spite of this, he more than stands his ground. He is the real victor. How did he win? He was evidently quite intelligent, but that was not enough. His one weapon both of offense and defense was his experience. Steadied by this central certainty, "I know that whereas I was blind, now I see," he was simply invincible.

Lord, grant us the courage that comes from being able to say I know whom I have believed. Amen.
PRAYING SINNERS

John 9:26-31

"We know that God heareth not sinners." Then we are without hope for all have sinned. Yet this is true when taken as this healed man meant it. God will gladly hear the worst of sinners provided that sinner is willing to give up his sin. But to pray while in wilful rebellion is sheer futility. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." No amount of praying on the part of the prodigal would have availed had he remained in the swine pen. God woos us in the far country, but he feeds us at home.

Lord, help us to realize that we must either give up sin or give up prayer. Amen.
"For judgment am I come into this world." Yet
judgment is not the primary purpose of Jesus. "I
have not come to judge the world", He affirms, "but to
save the world." To all He offers Himself as Savior.
But if we refuse Him as Savior, then we must have Him
as Judge. This is a part of the constant agony of our
Lord that, in spite of His eagernall to help, He so
often has to hurt. What a tragedy that He who comes as
the Light of the World can bring only deeper darkness
to those who refuse to see.

Save us, Lord, from the bitter hell
of receiving harm from Thy infinite good.

Amen.
"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." (Moffatt) Some time ago I sat by the bedside of an invalid who was doing a slow fade-out from a wasting disease. His cheeks were hollow, his eyes sunken, his voice hushed to a whisper, his hands weak and useless. Life was still present, but it had lost all beauty. Everything, in fact, except the capacity for pain. There are spiritual invalids who are just as wretched but with far less excuse. This is the case because there is always One infinitely near who is able to give life to the full.

Help us, Lord, so to surrender to Thee that we may know life in its fullness.

Amen.
"There shall be one flock." (Not "one fold" as the Authorized Version translates it.) It will doubtless be a long time before God can bring all his sheep into the same fold. In fact, it is doubtful that that will ever take place in our world. Perhaps such is not necessary though it is necessary for the churches to come closer together. But regardless of our differing folds, real Christians are more alike than any people in the world. Since we have all been made partakers of the divine nature, we are essentially one flock with one Shepherd.

Help us, Lord, to realize our oneness with each other and with Thee. Amen.
"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." Jesus was not the unwilling victim of evil men. His enemies did not tear His life from His clutching hands. He laid it down of Himself. As He faces His murderers, they and not He are the ones that are on trial. The Jews are in confusion and Pilate is afraid. Jesus alone is poised and self-possessed. This is the case because He is sure that in thus giving Himself, He is not suffering a defeat at the hands of evil but is winning a mighty victory for good.

As Thou didst lay down Thy life for us, help us, Lord, to lay down our lives for others. Amen.
SECURITY
John 10:22-30

"No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." How secure are those who submit themselves to God's keeping. It was this sense of security that led Peter to sing: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again...to an inheritance...reserved in heaven for you who are kept through faith unto salvation." So long as we meet our foes within the will of God the worst of them can do us nothing but good.

We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou art able to keep all that we commit unto Thee. Amen.
A BRACING MEMORY

John 10:31-41

"And He went...into the place where John at first baptized." Life had grown hard for the Master. They had tried to make Him king. They had also sought to stone Him. Both these dangers He had escaped, but at the cost of weariness of spirit. He needed a fresh supply of strength. Hence He went back to that remembered spot where He had seen the heavens open and the dove of God's peace descend upon Him. Even so, Herbert Simpson reminds us, we need at times to go back to the best in our yesterdays. Thus memory becomes an ally of faith.

We thank Thee, Lord, for those experiences of yesterday that make it easier for us to trust Thee today.

Amen.
A BEAUTIFUL PRAYER

John 11:1-6

"Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick." These words are more than a bit of news. They are a prayer, one of the most beautiful that I know. Seeing that their brother was dangerously ill, these two sisters turned naturally to their Friend. But they did not tell Him what to do. They simply told Him their story with the conviction that they could trust His wisdom, His power, and His love. Had they asked for their brother's recovery, even had their request been granted, they, as well as we, would have missed something. They were wise to leave all to their Lord.

Grant us, Lord, to take our burden to Thee and leave it there. Amen.
A LOYAL FRIEND

John 11:7-16

"Let us also go that we may die with Him." Thomas found a sunny faith difficult. He clung to the gloomy side of things as vines cling to old ruins. But if he was weak in faith, he was strong in love. He was sure that Jesus was headed toward disaster, certain that His was a lost cause. Yet, in spite of this gloomy conviction, there was for him no shrinking, no turning back. He would be grimly and grandly loyal to the end. "Doubting Thomas," we call him. Yet he still believed enough to be willing to lay down his life for his friend.

Lord, grant us the courage to dare in
spite of our doubts. Amen.
THE IMMEDIACY OF LIFE

John 11:17-27

"I am the resurrection and the life." When Jesus sought to console Martha for the loss of Lazarus by telling her, "Thy brother shall rise again," she was not thrilled. Instead she answered almost peevishly; "I know he shall rise again - at the last day." But that, she seems to imply, is so far away. Then it was that Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." That is, "I am not far off; I am in the here and now."

We thank Thee, Lord, that possessing
Thee we possess life eternal. Amen.
ARRESTING TEARS
John 11:28-36

"Jesus wept." In spite of the fact that this is the shortest verse in the Bible, it seems to many to fill the whole book. Hence these regard Jesus as a man who never laughed and seldom smiled. But it is my conviction that our Lord was the sunniest of men. Little children fairly fought their way into His arms. They are not thus drawn to a thunder cloud. "Be of good cheer," is the word that was often on His lips. Surely He did not commend to others what He Himself did not possess. His tears are therefore all the more arresting because He was usually so joyous.

So save us, Lord, from the burden of self
that we may share Thy joy. Amen.
"Said I not unto thee?" Our Lord was constantly amazed and grieved at the lack of faith on the part even of His dearest friends. Here was Martha to whom He had given a promise. But when He asked her cooperation in making that promise good, she began to offer objections. She was only saved by being reminded of what Jesus had said. Even so, our Lord would speak to us. Whatever our need, He has promised to meet it. Does He not say unto us: "My grace is sufficient...my strength is made perfect in weakness." Remember that His word is sure.

Save us, Lord, from being so obsessed
by our difficulties that we forget
Thine infinite adequacy. Amen.
RECEIVING HIS ANSWER

John 11:41-44

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me."

Jesus had won the victory before He reached the grave of Lazarus. He, therefore, came as a victor to receive the spoils of His conquest. We often make prayer a preparation for the battle. But with Jesus prayer, in a very real sense, was the battle. There were times when our Lord was obviously fighting hard. At other times He moved with a poise and serenity that amazes us to this day. When were His times of struggle? Always they were His prayer periods. Having won in the secret place, all else came as a matter of course.

Lord, teach us to pray.
TRAGIC BLINDNESS

John 11:45-57

"If we let him thus alone all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." Thus in their blindness they sought to save themselves by rejecting Christ. By so doing they chose the surest way of wrecking themselves. Jesus foresaw their doom and sought in vain to avert it. "He beheld the city and wept over it, saying; 'If thou hadst known...the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes!'" Thus in blindness they went to their doom as does every nation that is against God.

Grant us, Lord, this day to know the things that belong to our peace. Amen.
LAZARUS ALSO
John 12:1-11

"They came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead." No one is ever so attractive as Jesus. He is the fairest of ten thousand the One altogether lovely. But there is another whom everybody is eager to see and that is the man whom Jesus has raised from the dead. The world can never be quite listless in the presence of one who through utter surrender to Christ has passed out of death into life. Such a man possesses a thrilling interest akin to His who raised him from the dead.

Lord, grant us the winsomeness of those who live abundantly. Amen.
ANDREW, THE INTRODUCER

John 12:12-23

"Philip cometh and telleth Andrew." Andrew was a member of a quartet who had been partners in fishing. All four became disciples of Jesus. Three of them - Peter, James and John - won their way to the inner circle, but Andrew was left out. In fact, what reputation Andrew had seems to have been in his brother's name. He is generally referred to as Simon Peter's brother. Perhaps he had little ability as a preacher, but as a personal worker he was superb. He introduced to Jesus Simon, the lad with the lunch, those hungry-hearted Greeks, and no telling how many others. What a triumph!

Grant us, Lord, the grace to do our job,
whether it seems large or small. Amen.
"But if it die." Then what? Here is a grain of wheat, brown, hard, lifeless. In spite of the fact that there is a germ of life within it, it can never really live except under one condition. It must fall into the ground and die. As long as that grain of wheat refuses to die, just so long will it refuse to live. The same is true for you and me. Life cannot come except at the price of life laid down. In the very nature of things, to save life is to lose it, while to lose is surely to find.

Grant us, Lord, so to die to self that we may truly live. Amen.
THE SUPREME CHOICE

John 12:27-29

"What shall I say?" Jesus must take one of two roads, pray one of two prayers. The first that suggested itself was this: "Father, save me from this hour." That is, "At any cost spare me the cross." But Jesus refused that cowardly and ruinous prayer for this: "Father, glorify Thy name," even at the cost of the cross. His choice must be ours if we are to find life.

Give us the grace, Our Father,
always to pray, "Glorify Thy name."

Amen.
THE MATCHLESS MAGNET

John 12:30-34

"And I, if I be lifted up...will draw all men unto me." Jesus knew what was in man. He knew as did none other the chivalry of the human heart. For this reason He was sure of the appeal of His Cross. He was certain that in thus dying, He would cast His supreme spell upon the hearts of men. In this He was not mistaken. This strange man on His Cross has been the matchless magnet of the centuries. He is so today. So winsome He is, that truly to see Him is to be drawn to Him in glad surrender.

We thank Thee, Lord, for a love that will not let us go. Amen.
CHILDREN OF LIGHT

John 12:35-36

"That ye may be the children of light." How beautifully suggestive. There are those who are sons of darkness. By their very presence they dim the brightness and increase the gloom of those they influence. Then there are others who are sons of radiance. I am thinking of one such now. Whenever he came into any company it was like turning on a bright and pleasing light. Gloom and discouragement had a way of feeling at his presence as if afraid. He was a son of the Light because of his close fellowship with Him who is the Light of the world.

We thank Thee that Thou hast made it possible for us to be children of light. Amen.
BLINDED EYES

John 12:37-41

"He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart."

Who did this terrible thing? God did it. But He did not
do it of set purpose. He was seeking to give the seeing eye
and the tender heart. But by their refusal to see, they
little by little lost their capacity to see. By refusing
to respond they lost their sensitiveness to the divine appeal.
The inevitable penalty of our refusal to hear the divine
call is a deaf ear and a hardened heart. But as we live up to
the light, we have come more and more into the fullness of
light.

Give us the grace, O Lord, to live up to
the best we know. Amen.
THEIR FIRST LOVE

John 12:42-50

"They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." "They loved the praise of men" - certainly, who does not? If you do not enjoy the praise and appreciation of your fellows, you are abnormal. We love praise as flowers love sunshine. But while the praise of our fellows is important, it is not of supreme importance. The one matter of infinite importance is that we please God - please Him always in all ways.

Help us, Lord, always to put Thee first.

Amen.
HUMILITY

John 13:1-5

"He...took a towel and girded himself." Here is humility at its beautiful and perfect best. What is humility? It is not, as many seem to think, making a mean estimate of one's self. Notice Jesus' state of mind as He did this deed. "Jesus knowing...that He was come from God and was going to God...took a towel." At the very time when He was most keenly conscious of His divine origin and of His divine destiny, He stooped to serve. Humility, therefore, is not self-contempt; it is rather self-forgetfulness in the service of others.

Help us, Lord, to learn of Thee the grace of humility. Amen.
PRIDE

John 13:6-11

"Thou shalt never wash my feet." Simon is on the defensive. He has been too proud to do what his Master is doing. He now knows that he is wrong, but he hates to acknowledge it. "Even if I did refuse to take upon myself the role of a slave," he reasons, "I am still far too good to allow my Master to humiliate Himself for me." But at the answer of Jesus, Simon's pride gave way to love. Had such not been the case, he could never have accepted as Savior a man who so humbled himself as to die on a cross.

Save us, Lord, from the ruinous sin of pride. Amen.
"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." There are those who perish for lack of knowledge. But among us there are far more who perish for their failure to live up to the knowledge they have. To know that in humility and love we should serve one another is not enough. We only find blessedness and bring blessedness to others as we put that knowledge into practice. The truth is that the knowledge that we refuse to use has a way of changing from a blessing into a curse. There is no blessedness save in obedience.

Help us, Lord, to do today what we know we ought to do. Amen.
THE TRAITOR

John 13:21-30

"He then...went immediately out and it was night." This short sentence tells the tragedy of a soul. It has a fatal finality about it that awes the heart. How did Judas come to this terrible end? He certainly was not born a traitor. No more did Jesus choose him for that ugly role. He chose him for his fine possibilities, even as He chose the other disciples. But Judas made a wrong choice, persisted in it, went down a step at a time, till he "became a traitor." There is the same possibility in us. Therefore, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Give us to realize, O Lord, that our one hope is in Thee. Amen.
THE SURE MARK

John 13:31-35

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if..." If what? Not if you belong to a certain denomination, measure up to a certain standard or orthodoxy. But, "...if ye have love one to another." The one sure mark of a Christian is love. All else, however impressive, fails to arrive without love. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Just as nothing however great arrives without love, the least arrives with it.

Lord, live in, and love through us.
AT HOME

John 14:1-4

"In my Father's house are many mansions." These words have put their arms of comfort round more grief-burdened shoulders and their touch of healing on more hurt hearts than any others in the Bible or out of it. We complain that our fathers were too other-worldly. Surely we have gone to the other extreme. We are too higher-worldly. But even we are sometimes forced to think of what lies beyond death. Some dear one passes into the silence. Then we, too, are glad to listen to that voice of authority that says, "Let not your heart be troubled."

We thank Thee, Father, for our everlasting home. Amen.
"Master," said Philip, "show us the Father: that is all we need." (Weymouth) If Philip's prayer shows some degree of blindness, it also shows keen insight. He has discovered what life must have, to be counted life at all. That is God. This desire to see God is the oldest cry of the human heart. It is the very mother of religion. But if it is the oldest longing of the heart, it is also the newest. Every man, consciously or unconsciously, is thirsting for God. We see God in Jesus Christ.

We thank Thee, Father, that in Jesus we are Thyself. Amen.
THE HELPER

John 14:15-21

"I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper." (Goodspeed) I like "Helper" as a name for the spirit better than "Comforter." A comforter's function is to give consolation. A helper stands by for any and all needs. There is absolutely no need that this infinite Helper cannot supply. How may He be ours? We must feel our need of Him. We must feel our need so deeply that we are willing to commit our all into His hands. He gives Himself only to those that obey Him.

We thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast not left us orphans. Amen.
"My peace I give unto you." What a gift for a feverish and worried world like ours! How shall we find peace? Not by getting into an ideal situation, not by finding a place of sheltered security; we find it through rightness with God. "The Kingdom of heaven is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." We find it as we learn to pray. "In everything by prayer and appreciation...let your requests be made known unto God, and so shall the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Lord, "drop Thy still dews of quietness

till all our strivings cease." Amen.
A REAL CHRISTIAN

John 15:1-8

"What is it to be a Christian?" Sometimes it means so little. Always it ought to mean so much. Here is John's answer. A Christian is one who is related to Christ as the branch is related to the vine. As the branch shares the nature of the vine, so we are to be in constant contact with Christ. As the branch receives all its life from the vine, so we are to receive all our life from our living Lord. He is the vine, we the branches.

Lord, help us to claim our privileges in Thee. Amen.
"As the relationship between the vine and the branch is one of mutual dependence, so is the relationship between Christ and ourselves. The branch is absolutely dependent upon the vine. So long as it continues in contact with the vine, it is both beautiful and fruitful. Even so in the fellowship of Christ we enjoy the freshness of an abiding springtime. But apart from Him we become withered and useless. As we are dependent upon Christ, so has He made Himself dependent upon us. The vine bears all its fruit through its branches, even so Christ bears His fruit through you and me.

Lord, make us worthy of the confidence Thou hast placed in us. Amen.
FULLNESS OF JOY
John 15:9-12

"That your joy might be full." It is remarkable how little Jesus seems to care for our comfort and how deeply He cares for our joy. In His last prayer with His disciples, He refused to ask God to give them an easy place, but He did pray that the joy that was His might be theirs. Why is He so concerned about our joy? Because He loves us. Because there is no vital Christianity without joy. Because the joy of the Lord is our strength. It is our strength for resisting temptation. It is also our strength for winning others.

Forgive us, Lord, for having made discipleship seem ugly by our lack of joy. Amen.
"Ye are my friends." What a privilege is friendship! When someone asked Charles Kingsley for the secret of his radiant life, he answered in a sentence, "I had a friend." Our Lord has called us into friendship with Himself. Since as a friend He stoops to share our interests, we must rise to share in some measure what interests Him. Since He puts all He has into this friendship, we must put all we have into it. We can be friends on no other terms. When we give all, He gives all.

Lord, we thank Thee for Thy friendship.

Amen.
"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples; if—" If what? What is the one test of our Christianity? It is not the particular denomination to which we belong. It is not some particular interpretation of the Scripture. It is not how nor when we were baptized. It is not how much we give nor how hard we work. Here is the one test: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another." All else without love will leave us only "faultily faultless, sicily regular and splendidly null." To have love is to fulfill the law.

Teach us, O, Lord, so to live with Thee and to live with our fellows that we may truly love one another. Amen.
"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did." Then what? They would never have known the joy of salvation. That is true for millions, thank God. But that is not true of His ministry for these of whom Jesus is speaking. With them He had failed. He did them no good at all. Not only so, but He did them positive harm. He left them worse than He found them. What a heartache for Jesus! What doom for themselves!

Save us, Lord, from turning our very light into darkness. Amen.