

**THE
IMITATION
OF
CHRIST**

by

Thomas à Kempis

A Summary by

John Wright

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas à Kempis, 1380-1471, was born at Kempen, Germany. About 1392 Thomas went to Deventer, Netherlands, where he studied under the theologian Florentius Radewyns, who in 1387 had founded a congregation of Augustinian canons regular living in community and bound by vows.

Thomas joined the Windesheim congregation at Agnietenberg monastery, where he remained. He took his vows in 1408, was ordained in 1413, and devoted his life to copying manuscripts and to directing novices. He was the probable author of **The Imitation of Christ**, which has sold more copies than any other Christian book, apart from the Bible.

Thomas wrote, *'Love is a mighty power, a great and complete good; Love alone lightens every burden, and makes the rough places smooth. It bears every hardship as though it were nothing, and renders all bitterness sweet and acceptable. ... Love aspires to high things, and is held back by nothing base.'*

'We must imitate Christ's life and his ways if we are to be truly enlightened and set free from the darkness of our own hearts. Let this be the most important thing we do.'

Thomas lived before Martin Luther 1483 -1546 nailed in 1517 the 95 Theses to the door of Castle Church, Wittenberg which included **Salvation by Faith**. His fourth book was also concerned with the real presence of Christ in the Bread and Wine of the Communion Service, a doctrine not accepted by many in the Protestant Church. However it is interesting that two Charismatic Church Leaders, Bill Johnson of Bethel, USA and Joseph Prince of Singapore, have both recently produced books on the importance of daily Communion.

Sir Thomas More, England's famous Lord Chancellor, said it was one of the three books everybody ought to own. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, read a chapter from it every day. Methodist founder John Wesley said it was the best summary of the Christian life he had ever read.

So I hope that you will be blessed by reading this Summary.

John Wright

Foreword

'Be Holy for I Am Holy'. Leviticus 11:44

This Summary is the fruit from a time of affliction when the Lord took me back to the need for a deeper repentance than I had experienced before.

He reminded me that He is coming soon, so the Bride needs to be spotless! I have always been concerned at how easy it is to coast along, half immersed in the world, half responding to the call to holy obedience.

So the awful danger, without enough oil in our lamps, that we might hear the sad words of the Bridegroom, *"Truly, I tell you, I do not know you.'* Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Matthew 25:12-13.

The **Awesome Encounter** that follows, related by Leslie Barnard, gives us a fearful insight into the Holiness of God with whom we have to deal.

'The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom'. Psalm 111:10. Proverbs 9:10.

'Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall'. 1 Cor. 10:12.

John Wright
Advent 2020

The Awesome Presence of God

The Testimony of Leslie Barnard

'I had been preaching in South Wales. After the Service I was taken off to a Prayer Meeting. It must have been after 12.00 midnight when I cannot possibly describe exactly what happened - it defied even the most gifted to explain. Let me simply say that in this early hour of the morning, God came among us!!

I suddenly felt great waves of awesome awareness of God's utter holiness. My breath came panting like a runner in a race, my whole body trembled exceedingly and I was aware of my sin in such a manner that I could only cry for mercy. Things that I never counted as being contrary to the Lord became black and ugly. Things I hardly thought about became enormously wrong, whilst major sins I knew about but still did, totally overwhelmed me.

The worst thing of all was that I had lost the use of my legs, I seemed to be paralysed from my waist down. I, the preacher, was in total turmoil. I could only cry to God for mercy again and again. But I was a Christian, I was saved, born again, how could this happen?

The scriptures came into my mind "*who shall stand when He appeareth, for He is like a refiners fire*". **Malachi 3:2.**

I understood, even in my sad and sorry state, at the moment when God came upon us that I was covered and protected by the garment of my Saviour's righteousness. But God is so Holy that any action of mine would be tested in the fire of His perfection. That, I realised, was why people so needed to be saved and become a child of God.'

from **The Road to Antioch** available from **The Branch Press.**

The First Book

Admonitions for a Spiritual Life

Chapter 1 Contempt for all the Vanities of the World

'He that follows after me walks not in darkness', says the Lord. So we are called to imitate His life and behaviour. Only he that hath the Spirit will find in the teachings of Christ hidden manna. What does it profit to preach profoundly on the Trinity if thou lack humility and so offend the Trinity? All is vanity except to love God and to serve Him only. Vanity seeks after riches and trusts in them; vanity is to hunt after honours; vanity is to seek after the desires of the flesh, careless of the punishment that will follow; vanity is to set thy love on that which will speedily pas away, and not to go where everlasting joy abides.

Chapter 2 Keep a Humble Opinion of Ourselves

Of what use is knowledge without the fear of God? Those who honestly know themselves have a humility that does not delight in the praises of men. Even if I knew everything but had not charity, what good would it do me? Those who know much will be judged much. Knowledge does not satisfy the soul, but a pure conscience giveth confidence before God. It is great wisdom to think nothing of ourselves but to think highly of others. All are frail, but esteem none more frail than thyself.

Chapter 3 The Doctrine of Truth

O God, thou art the Truth, make me one with thee in continual charity. I am weary of reading and hearing too many things; in Thee is all I desire and long for. Let our labour be to conquer ourselves rather than to gain knowledge that profits us not. Knowledge may be good, but a clear conscience is a surer way to God. Many desire to know rather than to live well and so reap scanty fruit. When the day of judgement comes we will be examined, not on what we have read, but on what we have done. All earthly things are as dung to gain Christ.

Chapter 4 Forethought in our Actions

We ought not to believe everything we hear, but ponder it with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and the help of wise counsellors. It is a great wisdom not to be rash or jump to conclusions or pass on what thou hast heard. The more humble a man is, the more prudent he will be and the more at peace.

Chapter 5 The Reading of Holy Scriptures.

Seek for the truth in the Holy Scriptures, rather than a desire for a reputation of learning. Pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writers of the Word. Do not judge by the author, but by what has been written, for the Lord speaks to us in sundry ways, even by the lips of children.

Chapter 6 Inordinate Affections

When a man desires something inordinately, he loses his peace. The proud and covetous are never at rest. It is the poor and humble who have peace, because wealth has not opened the door to covetousness. The carnal man cannot withdraw from earthly desires which in the end disappoint him. Peace of heart comes from resisting our passions, not by obeying them.

Chapter 7 Depart from vain hope and Pride

Be not ashamed to serve others, nor to be esteemed poor in this world. Trust not in thine own knowledge and ability, but in the grace God gives to the humble. Glory not in wealth nor powerful friends nor in thy appearance nor in thy abilities, but in God who giveth all things, especially Himself. It is good for us to set ourselves lower than all men so as to walk in humility and peace.

Chapter 8 Too much familiarity is to be shunned

Lay not your heart open to every man; rather reveal your affairs to the wise and him that feareth God. Flatter not the rich, but keep company with the wise and humble. Be not familiar with any woman. Desire to be entirely familiar with God alone. We must have charity to all, but familiarity with all is not expedient. Neither the good report of a stranger, nor our own self-opinion, is reliable. We are all imperfect!

Chapter 9 Obedience and subjection

It is a good thing to be under a Superior rather than having independence. If we obey our Superior unwillingly and without charity, we will be discontented and easily complain. It is much safer to be under subjection than in authority. It is easy to do what we agree to, but we will only find peace once we have submitted to God against our own inclinations. Let us not be over-confident in our own opinion; it is better to take counsel than to give it.

Chapter 10. Avoiding Superfluity of Words

Avoid the tumult of men discussing worldly affairs, as too easily vanity about our opinion will grasp us. Seek not comfort from men, but go to God for His peace. Watch and pray lest our time is spent on idle things. If we have to speak, let us speak what will edify. It is an evil thing to set no watch over our mouth. Yet devout discourse of spiritual things greatly helps our growth.

Chapter 11 Desiring Peace and Progress in Grace

Growth in perfection comes when we mortify ourselves to all earthly desires so that our hearts are turned to God. Otherwise we will not be on fire to grow better every day, and will remain lukewarm. So when any adversity confronts us we are too easily cast down and turn to human comforts.

If we desire to have the victory, surely we should look to God. He is ready to help those who put their trust in Him. Progress in the spiritual life is not in keeping outward observances, but in putting the axe to the root of our earthly passions. Then we will possess our soul in peace.

It is hard to depart from habits to which we are accustomed, but harder still to go against our own will. But if overcoming small things is difficult, how will we overcome harder things? We receive such peace for ourselves, and give such joy to others, once we are determined to pursue spiritual progress.

Chapter 12 The Profit of Adversity

It is good to endure an adversity as it helps us to, *'search our hearts, to see if there be any wicked way in them.'* When men wrongly think ill of us, it encourages humility and defends from vain glory.

Affliction also reminds us of our need for a deepening relationship with God, without whom we can do nothing that is *good*. When distress leads us to be weary of life and longing to be with Christ, we realise that perfect security and peace cannot exist in this world.

Chapter 13 Resisting Temptations

No man is so holy that he can avoid temptations, for the devil, *'goeth about seeking whom he may devour.'* **1 Peter 5:8**. All the saints have had to bear temptations; these can be profitable, as by them a man is humbled. If we succumb, sadly we may become reprobate and fall away.

But by patience with long suffering, with God's help, we will be overcomers. Take counsel when in temptation, and comfort thy brother who is suffering as thou would wish to be comforted thyself.

Temptation show us what we are made of. Be careful to resist temptation as soon as it knocks on the door, as it is then more easily vanquished. Otherwise, when it has entered and got a grip on you, it is harder to destroy.

'If you think you are standing, watch out lest you fall. God is faithful and will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but will also provide a way out that you may be able to endure it.' **1 Corinthians 10: 12-13**.

Chapter 14 Avoiding Rash Judgement

It is fruitful to judge oneself; but to judge others we are often biased, mistaken and led into sin. If you rely more on your own reason than upon the revelation of the Holy Spirit, you risk being led astray. So be perfectly subject to God, whose inspiration overcomes all human reason.

Chapter 15 Works done for Charity

God value the love that leads us to do charitable works, rather than the works themselves. Often charity is inspired by a desire to boast of our generosity. True charity earns nothing for the giver, but is done only for the glory of God. Let charity be done if possible in secret, for all earthly things are vanity.

Chapter 16 Bearing with the Defects of Others

Be patient with the faults of others, remembering that you have many that must be borne by others. We expect others to be perfect while we are content with our own failings. Weigh ourselves rather than our neighbour. So, bear with one another; comfort, help and admonish one another.

Chapter 17 The Monastic Life

If you would grow in grace, you must be, '*made a fool for Christ's sake*'. The wearing of a religious habit profits little, but the mortification of passions makes a true religious man. He that seeks only his own welfare will suffer tribulation. Labour rather to be subject to all; know that you were called to suffer, and to labour, not to be idle. No man can be turned to gold in the furnace unless he is willing to humble himself for the love of God.

Chapter 18 Examples of the Holy Fathers

Follow the example of the Holy Fathers. They were called to serve the Lord in hunger and thirst, cold and naked, labour and weariness, in prayers and fastings, in beatings and in prison, in many persecutions. How fierce a war they waged for the taming of their faults. How much they gave up to be separated from the world. Outwardly they were destitute, but inwardly they were refreshed with grace and divine consolation. Beware lest your fervour at the beginning turn too easily to luke - warmness. May the desire to grow in virtue not sleep in thee, but be inspired to follow the examples of the devout!

Chapter 19 Exercises of a Religious Person

Be honest with yourself. We ought to daily stir up our first love, so that we do not gradually fall away. Let us not neglect our daily discipline of prayer and feeding upon the Word of God. Though we may fail, let us persevere to grow daily in Christ. At eventide examine thy ways. How hast thou behaved in thought, word and deed that has offended God and thy neighbour. Prepare thyself as if thou were about to enter heaven and receive the reward of thy labours. '*Blessed is that servant whom the Lord will find watching. He shall make him ruler over all His goods*'. **Luke 12:43-4.**

Chapter 20 The Love of Solitude and Silence

Follow Jesus, who left the multitude to pray. It is better to withdraw from the busy-ness of life, and to meditate upon God's loving kindness. It is better to avoid the society of men than to speak more words than we ought.

The security of the Saints has always been the fear of God. The security of bad men arises from pride and leads to their downfall. No man can safely speak until he has learned to hold his tongue; no man can safely command until he has learnt to obey; no man can safely rejoice unless he has a clear conscience. Often men highly esteemed have fallen into peril by self-confidence. So some temptations are helpful to keep us humble.

It is better for a man to lie hidden than to do signs and wonders while he neglects himself. Our sensual desires lead us to rove abroad, but only to return with heaviness of conscience. It is better to shut thy door and to call unto Jesus, thy beloved, and enjoy His peace.

Chapter 21 Contrition of Heart

If you desire progress, stay in the fear of God and restrain your senses. One cannot perfectly rejoice while aware of the many perils of one's soul. Happy is the man whose daily contrition defends him from a bad conscience. Contrition attracts the consolations of God, and subdues the attraction of the world.

If we thought more often of our death, we would be more zealous to repent, and to suffer austerity and hardship. Pray, therefore, for a spirit of contrition that will enable one to pray with the Prophet, *'Feed me, O Lord, with the bread of tears and give me tears to drink in full measure.'* **Psalm 80:5.**

Chapter 22 Consideration of Human Misery

Misery will come unless we turn to God. All things come from God. All men have tribulations. It is best to suffer them for God than to complain. Man's happiness consists not in an abundance of goods, but in having his needs met with peace. The spiritual man sees more clearly the defects of human corruption. How miserable are men who are so sunk in worldly pleasure that they reap, in the end, the destruction that follows.

The Saints, however, set their minds on things eternal, which draws them up to things invisible, to avoid the temptations below. So, my brother, make progress towards the things of the Spirit. Still you have time, the hour is not yet past. When you are most troubled is the time to win most blessing!

How great is our frailty. Today we confess our sins, tomorrow we do them again. Good cause to humble ourselves, and never to have a great conceit of ourselves. What will become of us in the end if we become lukewarm? Let us remember our first love and never cease to strive for holiness.

Chapter 23 Meditation on Death

Should not thou order thyself in every act and thought as if today was your last? If you have a clear conscience you will not fear death. If we do not daily amend our ways, living longer may be more perilous. *'At an hour we think not, the Son of Man will come'*. **Matthew 24:44**. If we have a perfect contempt for the world, a fervent desire to be holy, the toil of penance and bearing any adversity for Christ, we will have confidence to die happily.

Time is very precious; *'now are the days of salvation: now is the acceptable time'*. **2 Corinthians 6:2**. The time may come when one will desire even one hour for repentance and not receive it. So chastise your body with penance that you may approach Christ with confidence.

Why believe you will live long when not one day is safe? How many have been deceived and suddenly snatched from the body? So, beloved, seek ye earnestly treasure in heaven that is eternal. Remain a pilgrim on earth, because here thou hast no continuing city.

Chapter 24 Judgement and the Punishment of Sinners

Always look to the end. How will you stand before the Judge from whom nothing is hid? He will not accept excuses, but will judge justly.

Happy is the man who prays for his adversaries, and from his heart forgives offences; who is not slack to ask forgiveness from others; who is sooner moved to compassion than to anger; who labours to bring the flesh in subjection to the Spirit.

The more thou sparest thyself now, so much the more will be thy punishment. There is no sin that shall not have its proper torment. Be content to suffer a little in this world to be delivered and to stand with the blessed at the Day of Judgement. If thou can bear so little in this world, how will you survive the torments of Hell?

All is vanity, except to love God and to serve Him only. For he that loves God is not afraid of death nor judgement, for perfect love gives access to God. If our love be not perfect, then let the fear of Hell restrain thee.

Chapter 25 Zealous Amendment of our Whole Life

Be diligent to grow in your spiritual life that you may receive your reward. Discover what is the, '*acceptable and perfect will of God*' for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work. **Romans 12:2.** Do not fear the battle to overcome oneself, especially those things that displease you in others. Imitate the good examples in others; be careful not to be guilty yourself of the faults you see in others.

Be mindful of the purpose you have embraced to be conformed unto Christ. O, if Jesus crucified would come into our hearts, how quickly and fully should we be taught. **Galatians 2:20. & 6:14.** A fervent spiritual man submits to all that is commanded of him. Those who neglect this discipline open themselves to continuing difficulties.

Consider the discipline of those in the Cloister. They rarely go abroad; they have the poorest fare and coarse clothing; they speak little and rise betimes to sing Psalms, they are given to prayer and study of the Word.

The Second Book

Admonitions for Inner Things

Chapter 1 The Inner Life

'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you'. Luke 17:21 So seek the Lord within, where you will find solace and peace. *'For the Kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17.* Prepare your heart as a Bride to receive her Bridegroom, who says, *'If anyone love me, he will keep my words, and We will come unto him, and will make our abode with him.'* **John 14:25.** For friends and circumstances may change, but Christ abides for ever.

Put all your trust in God, let Him be your fear and your love, for He will always do what is best for you. Consider the suffering of the Lord Jesus and you will be strengthened through tribulation. Christ was despised of men, beset with slanders, agreed to suffer even death for your sake, so how can you complain? How can you reign with Christ if no adversity befalls you? So fight the good fight so that you will attain the Crown of Life.

Chapter 2 Humble Submission

Keep a good conscience and be sure that God is with you in all you do. If you know how to suffer in silence, trusting in the Lord, He will deliver you. It is good to be humbled, because the Lord loves and comforts the humble man. He that rests in God will be kept in perfect peace. Do not think you have made any progress until you judge yourself as inferior to all.

Chapter 3 The Peaceable Man

A peaceful man can accomplish more than one who is well learned. He that is troubled and discontented cannot control his tongue. He accuses others but excuses himself. How far off is he from true charity and humility if he is unable to live peaceably with perverse and undisciplined people. Keep yourself in peace and you will not be troublesome to others. Whoever knows how to suffer will keep the greatest peace. He is the conqueror of himself, he has defeated the world, he is the friend of Christ and the heir of heaven.

Chapter 4 A Pure Mind and Simple Intention

If you seek only God and the good of your neighbour, you will enjoy inward liberty. You would see that every creature, however small, sets forth the goodness of God. Whoever turns fully to God puts off all slothfulness and is changed into another man. Then he will be set free from things that used to trouble him, for he will be able to rise above them.

Chapter 5 Consideration of Oneself

He that is aware of his own failings will be slow to judge others. It is better to be concerned with the purity of our own inner man before attending to others. Let nothing please you, nothing be great or acceptable, unless it comes from God. A soul that loves God despises all else.

Chapter 6 The Joy of a Good Conscience

The glory of a man is when he can testify to a good conscience. This will bring you joy even in adversities. An evil conscience is always fearful and unsettled. Sinners never have real peace, because, *'there is no peace in the wicked, sayeth the Lord'*. **Isaiah 48:22**. Those who are in Christ can glory in tribulation, because they glory in the Cross. There is great tranquillity to ignore the praises and the criticisms of men. What you are, you are. Man considers the deeds, while God weighs the intentions. To think little of yourself is the sign of a humble soul. To seek comfort only from God is a sign of inward purity.

Chapter 7 The Love of Jesus Above All Things

Those that love created things, which are deceitful, will fall; but those who embrace Jesus will be made stronger than ever. When all else fails, His faithfulness alone can help thee. Be rid of all other affections, so that Jesus can reign supreme in your heart. Seeking help elsewhere will disappoint.

Chapter 8 Converse with Jesus

When Jesus is present the path is smooth; but when He is absent all is hard. If Jesus is with thee, no enemy can hurt you. It is poverty to live without Him, and real wealth, not as the world gives, to live with Him.

Be thou humble and at peace and Jesus will stay with you, but you will lose Him if you turn to outward things. Who else is there to turn to? It is better to have the world against us than to have Jesus offended with us.

Love Jesus for Himself, and love all, friends and enemies, for Jesus sake, that they might come to know Him. Never desire to be commended, for that should come from God. Empty yourself of everything to become one with Christ alone. Endure whatever comes upon thee for the glory of Jesus Christ, for everything has its season; after winter comes the summer, after night comes the day.

Chapter 9 The Want of All Comfort

It is possible to despise human comfort when we have divine comfort; not to seek one's own interests, nor to value one's own merits. A man must long strive to master self and to give all his attention to God.

When you have spiritual comfort from the Lord, be not puffed up, for that hour will pass and trials will follow. So the Psalmist cries out, *'In my prosperity I shall not be moved'*, but then came the test when he cries, *'Thou didst turn Thy face from me and I was troubled.'* But he did not despair; he cried unto the Lord, and eventually he was restored so that he was, *'compassed around with gladness.'* **Psalm 30:6-11.**

The devil sleeps not, neither is the flesh dead, so prepare for battle. You are in a war zone. *'But to him who overcomes, I will give to eat of the Tree of Life.'* **Revelation 2:7.**

Chapter 10 Gratitude for the Grace of God

Remember we are slaves of Christ born to labour in His vineyard. So dispose thyself to patience and the bearing of the Cross. Worldly delights are vain, but spiritual comfort, coming from God, cleanses the mind. Confidence in ourselves quenches the Spirit, but inasmuch as we are grateful for heavenly comforts, so they will continue to flow. Be careful not to be so strengthened by grace that thou neglect repentance, nor become proud. Rather pray that the outcome of grace will be more humility and the fear of God.

Those taught by the gift of grace and the rod of its withdrawing will not attribute any good to themselves. Seek always the lowest place, and the highest shall be given thee. No one settled in God can be puffed up; they recognise that all their accomplishments come from God for His glory.

Chapter 11 How few are the lovers of the Cross

Jesus has many followers who love His kingdom, but few who will bear His Cross; He has many who desire His blessings, but few who will welcome tribulation; many who will share His table, but few His fasting; many who rejoice in His miracles, but few who will suffer His shame. How powerful is the pure love of Jesus in whatever condition He places us, unspoilt by self-interest. Then, *'when you shall have done all things that are commanded of you, say, we are unprofitable servants.'* **Luke 17:10.**

Chapter 12 The King's Highway of the Holy Cross

It is a hard saying, *'Deny thyself, take up thy Cross, and follow Jesus.'*

Matthew 16 :24. But much harder to hear the words, *'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'* **Matthew 25:41.** Only those who follow the way of the Cross fear not everlasting damnation. In the Cross is salvation, is life, is joy, is peace, is holiness. If you are dead with Him, you will also live with Him!

If you bear the Cross cheerfully, it will bear you; if you are unwilling, you give yourself an added burden. If you cast away a Cross, perhaps a heavier will follow. No Saint has been without tribulation. The life of Christ was a Cross. The higher one advances in the Spirit, so much the more tribulations can come.

The more the flesh is wasted by affliction, the more the spirit is made strong by inward grace. No one desires to chastise the body, to flee honours, to suffer reproaches, to be despised and desire no prosperity. But if you trust in the Lord, He will give you fortitude. Armed with faith, you will not fear the devil. Set thyself to suffer manfully the Cross, *'for the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the future glory to be won'*. **Romans 8:18.**

The more one dies to self, the more one lives unto God. For, *'through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God'*. **Acts 14:22.**

The Third Book

Eternal Consolation

Chapter 1 The Inward Voice of Christ

'Let me hear what God the Lord will speak... to those who turn to Him in their hearts'. Psalm 85: 8. Blessed are the ears that take time to hear the whisper of God; to ignore the noise of the world to hear the Truth within. Has not the Lord said, *'I am your salvation'. Psalm 35:3.* I am your Peace and your Life; keep yourself with me and you will find peace. How can the seductions of the world help you if you are forsaken by your Creator'?

Chapter 2 The Truth Speaks Inwardly

'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' **1 Samuel 3:9.** Let us not hear from men, but from Thee, O Lord, the Inspirer and Enlightener of all the prophets. Beautiful their speech, but if You are silent, they do not make our hearts burn within us. They bring forth knowledge, but You unlock the meaning of things sealed. Speak, Lord, unto me for the comfort of my soul, the amendment of my life, for thy praise and glory. Amen.

Chapter 3 The Word of God is to be Heard with Humility

'Blessed is the man whom You shall instruct, O Lord. and teach out of Your law that You may give him rest from evil days.' **John 6:63.** My prophets have become deaf; men prefer to listen to the world more than to God. Men toil night and day for the desires of the flesh, but for the highest honour and eternal reward they begrudge the least fatigue! He that despiseth My words, *'hath One that shall judge him on the last day.'* **John 12:48.** O Lord my God, You are all my good things, only the sinner You leave empty. Turn not Your face from me, and teach me to do Your will.

Chapter 4 Live in Truth and Humility before God

'If the Truth has made you free, you shall be free indeed.' **John 8 :36.** Yes, Lord, let Your Truth teach me and guard me and deliver me from temptations.

My son, reflect on your sins with grief, and never value your good works. Beware your sinful nature, you have nothing in which you can glory. Some wish to know the things of God, but neglect their own salvation. It is those who are filled with My Spirit, and purged of their worldly affections, that seek heaven.

Chapter 5 The Wonderful Effect of Divine Love

'O Father of mercies and God of all comfort'. 2 Corinthians 1:3. You are my Glory and the lifter of my head; You are my Hope and *Refuge in the day of trouble.* **Psalm 32:7.** Set me free from evil passions, that being thoroughly cleansed, I may be equipped to love, strong to suffer, steady to persevere. Love lightens all that is heavy, and drives a man to do great things for God. Nothing is sweeter or stronger than love, because love is born of God. Love believes that all things are possible and makes them happen; though wearied, it is not tired; though alarmed it fears not; though pressed, it is not overcome.

Love is kind and brave, love is patient and faithful, love is wise and long suffering, never seeking itself; love is humble, sober and chaste. Love is obedient to superiors, hoping always in God whatever the circumstances.

Chapter 6 Proving of a True Lover

The true lover regards not the gift of Him who loves, but the love of Him who gives. He stands firm under temptations, and is constant through blessing and adversity. He knows our adversary is constantly at work to hinder from prayer, from reading the Word, from Confession and from Holy Communion. Fight like a good soldier, rebuking tempting spirits and commanding them to depart in the power of the name of Jesus. Take great care to avoid pride and be humble.

Chapter 7 Let Humility Conceal thy Spiritual Progress

Do not boast of your spiritual blessings, for progress is also in your patient endurance. Take counsel from those mature in faith, and don't attempt more than you can handle. It is better to have a little than too much. A man is to be judged, not by visions, nor by his Scriptural knowledge, nor by the position he holds, but by whether he is grounded in true humility, full of divine charity, thinking nothing of himself, and happier to be abased than to be honoured.

Chapter 8 A Low Opinion of Ourselves in the Sight of God

'Let me speak unto my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes.'

Genesis 18:27. If I esteem myself, my iniquities bear witness against me. But if I abase myself, thy grace will be with me. By myself I am nothing, but if Thou look upon me, I am strong and joyful. Blessed be God who, although I am unworthy, never ceases to pour out His benefits upon me. O Lord, let us turn to Thee, that we may be humble, thankful and devout, for Thou art our salvation, our courage and our strength.

Chapter 9 All Things are to be Referred to God

My son, make Me your ultimate end if you wish to be blessed. For as often as your thoughts are concerned with self, you quench my presence. All men receive from me the water of life, and those who willingly serve me shall receive my grace. But any glory you seek outside of Me will deprive you of my joy and wisdom. With great strictness I require thanks for My many mercies, so that vain-glory is vanquished. Rejoice in Me alone, and in Me alone place your hope, *'for none is good save God alone'*. **Matthew 19:17.**

Chapter 10 It is Sweet to Despise the World and to Serve God

'O how abundant is your goodness that You have laid up for those who fear You.' **Psalms 31:19.** How wonderful that when I was lost you found me, undeserving as I am, and when I strayed You brought me back. What return can a man make for this grace but to serve Thee? Yet it is You rather who has served man and given Your life for him! So it is a great honour to despise all things for You, for they shall have great grace who give themselves to Your service. How blessed it is to serve God; this grants equality with the Angels, it is terrible to devils, to be commended to the faithful and pleasing to God.

Chapter 11 The Longings of Our Hearts to be examined and ruled

My son, set your desires entirely according to My will, and be not a lover of thyself. So resist the desires of the flesh and bring them under the Spirit. Be pleased with simple things, seeking my honour and not your advantage!

Chapter 12 The Growth of Patience, Resisting the Desires of the Flesh

My son, attract My peace by enduring tribulations patiently for My sake. Be not envious of those in the world who seem to have what they will. Is it not written about them, *'even as the smoke they shall vanish that prosper in the world.'* **Psalm 68:2**. How brief and false are their delights that end in the death of the soul. *'Delight thyself in the Lord and He will give thee the desires of thy heart.'* **Psalm 37:4**. The flesh will be upset at first, but with fervency it will be overcome and the old serpent put to flight.

Chapter 13 Let Thy Obedience follow the Example of Jesus Christ

My son, if you fall away from obedience, you fall away from my grace. There is no greater enemy to the soul than self-will. Overcome this and your adversary will be overcome. Consider how I, the Almighty, subjected Myself to man for your sake, that you might overcome your pride, inspired by My humility. How can you complain against those who are against you, when so often you have offended God, deserving hell?

Chapter 14 Consider the Judgements of God and be not Lifted Up

If you did not spare wicked angels, what shall become of me? Left to ourselves, we sink and perish; but when You come to us, we are raised up and live. How humbly ought I to think of myself. What a great discovery it is to find that I am nothing! Shall the clay glory against its Creator? How can the applause of men lift up one whose whole hope is firmly settled in God? For men and their words will pass away, but *'the Truth of the Lord abides for ever'*! **Psalm 117:2**.

Chapter 15 How We Should Consider All that We Desire

My son, always say, *'If it pleases Thee, Lord, let it be done. But if it will be hurtful to my soul, take away such desire from me'*. Therefore pray constantly, *'O most merciful Jesus, grant me Thy Grace always to desire what is acceptable to You. Let Thy Will be mine. Grant that I might die to all things in the world, be happy to be unknown, but have my heart find its peace only in Thee.'*

Chapter 16 True Comfort is in God Alone

If you desire too much the comforts of the world, you will lose the comforts of heaven. Let temporal things be used, but heavenly things desired. You cannot be satisfied with any temporal good, because you were not created to enjoy temporal things.

Do we not carry everywhere the comfort of God? Can we not pray, “Be present with me, Lord Jesus, everywhere, that I might be without human comfort. But if this be withdrawn, let this trial be a greater comfort, *‘for He will not always accuse, nor will He keep His anger forever’*”. **Psalm 103:9.**

Chapter 17 Place All Our Anxieties on God

My son, let Me do with you what I please, for I know what is expedient for you. *‘Cast all your anxieties upon Him, for He cares about you’*. **1 Peter 5:7.** O Lord, do with me whatsoever You please, for it can only be good for me. Let me be as ready to suffer as to rejoice, and to give Thee thanks for all that happens to me. Keep me safe from sin, and I shall fear neither death nor hell.

Chapter 18 Miseries Must be Borne Patiently following Christ

My son, from my birth until my death on the Cross I suffered abuse, rejection, ingratitude. Surely you can also bear the miseries of this life with patience, complaining not. *‘For we are heirs of the Father and co-heirs with the Son, provided we share His suffering, that we might share His glory’*. **Romans 8:17.**

O Lord, it is good that I should follow Your example and bear the burden of this corruptible life as long as You decide. It is easier because the gate of heaven, closed under the Law until Your passion, is now open.

Chapter 19 Patient Endurance of Injuries

Cease to complain, My son, *‘you have not yet resisted unto bloodshed’*. **Hebrews 12:4.** Remember the great suffering of others to more easily bear your own small troubles. The better you suffer, the better will be your reward. If you desire to be crowned, endure all things patiently for God, whose grace will help you to be victorious.

Chapter 20 The Recognition of Our Weakness

O Lord, I confess my weakness. It is often a small matter that floors me. Have mercy on me and deliver me. Strengthen me lest the old man, not yet fully subject to the Spirit, gets the upper hand. You promised a hard way, but my miseries seem to be unending. The world is not easily abandoned because of, *'The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life,'* **1 John 2:16**, all attract us to it. But those who live under God know the blessings promised to those who renounce the world. These make all God-given trials worthwhile.

Chapter 21 We are to Rest in God Before Anything Else

Grant me, dear Lord, to rest in You before health and honour, before fame and riches, before all things visible and invisible. You alone are most powerful and most loving, O Jesus Christ, beloved Bridegroom of my soul. When shall I gather myself into You? I will not cease to pray until Your grace returns again. For You did first stir me to seek You, according to Your great mercy. Therefore with all created things I will praise You and bless You, my Lord and my God.

Chapter 22 Remembrance of God's Manifold Benefits

Grant me to understand Your will, O Lord, and to walk in Your commandments. All we have comes from You, so let us not boast. He who values himself the least receives the greater blessings. You know which gifts are best for each man to have; it is not for us to judge. If God gives poverty, let that person rejoice, for you have chosen the poor for Yourself. Therefore let everyone be contented with what God has given, and not be envious of others.

Chapter 23 Four Things that bring Inward Peace

My son, now I will teach you the way of peace and true liberty. Prefer the will of others to your own; choose always to have less than more; seek always the lower place; pray always that the will of God be done in thee.

'O Lord, be not far from me; O my God, make haste to help me'. **Psalm 71:12.**

O Lord, let it be so; drive all evil thoughts from me as I wait for Thy comfort.

Chapter 24 Be not Inquisitive about Others

Do not concern yourself with the busy-ness of what people say or think or do, but follow Me! You will not have to answer for others, but will give an account of yourself. Whatsoever your neighbour has said or done will come upon him, but keep thou yourself in perfect peace. If, instead, you would open your heart to Me, I would reveal to you My hidden things.

Chapter 25 The Source of Peace and Spiritual Progress

'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you'. **John 14:27**. Peace is what all desire, but many reject the way to it. My peace is with the humble who hear and obey my voice. Do not entangle yourself with things not committed to you. Peace is not when you are spared adversity, or when you feel great devotion, but when you give yourself entirely to do My Will. Keep a low opinion of yourself, do not justify yourself, suffer all things for my sake and you will walk in peace.

Chapter 26 A Free Mind comes by Humble Prayer, not by Learning

O Lord, let me not be bothered with the cares of this life, but keep my mind on heavenly things. Give me strength to resist, patience to endure, constancy to persevere. Let me desire fellowship with You and not with the world. Help me not to be seduced by the pleasures of food and drink and possessions, but to keep my eyes on Thee.

Chapter 27 It is Love of Self that Hinders Our Love of God

My son, the love of yourself does you more harm than anything in the world. Do not entangle yourself with the world. Man's welfare is not in possessions or seeking men's praise, but in rooting out the desire for them. *'Grant me to be strengthened with might in the inner man'.* **Ephesians 3:16**. So grant me, Lord, the wisdom to seek You above all things, since all else is passing away.

Chapter 28 Resist the Tongues of Slanderers

My son, don't worry what men say of you, but be silent and turn to me. Try not to please men, and fear not to displease them. Then you will have peace.

Chapter 29 Call Upon God in Tribulation

I thank You, Lord, that You have sent tribulation that I might fly to You for help and see it turn out for my good. O Lord, be glorified once I have been truly humbled and delivered by You. I have deserved to be afflicted, and can only pray, *'Thy will be done.'* Nevertheless, as You have delivered me in the past, please have mercy upon me again, for Jesus sake. Amen.

Chapter 30 Seeking Divine Aid and Grace

My son, I am the Lord who giveth strength in tribulation. Apart from Me there is neither help nor wisdom nor remedy. I am at hand to repair all and with increase! Is there anything too hard for me? Having said it, will I not do it? Where is your faith? Stand firm in your faith, persevere, be long suffering and courageous. Comfort will come to you in due time. Wait for me – wait! I will come and heal thee.

Have no thought for tomorrow, it is Satan's playground. *'Let not thy heart be troubled or afraid'*. **John 14:27**. When all seems lost, as with Mordecai before his rescue by Queen Esther, the greatest gain is at hand. I will never leave you nor desert you. It is good for you to face adversities, so welcome them and give thanks. I sent my beloved disciples to great conflicts, to suffering, to bring forth much fruit with patience. Remember this, My son!

Chapter 31 Disregard Creation, that the Creator may be Found

O Lord, the greatest freedom comes to those who desire nothing upon earth but to know You and to follow Your ways? *'Who shall give me wings like a dove, and I will fly away and be at rest'*. **Psalms 55:6**. Seek the wisdom that comes from above rather than the knowledge acquired by a scholar.

All have gone astray, hence the great flood. Be concerned more with the mortification of the flesh than with the things of this world. They are all vanity and pass away. Consider not whether a man has been courageous, good at his job, or rich but rather whether he has been poor in spirit, patient and devout. God looks at the inward man. He who waits on Him will not be disappointed.

Chapter 32 The Need to deny the Appetites of the Flesh

My son, you cannot attain perfect liberty until you have renounced self. Do not be cast down by hearing the way of the perfect man, but make this your desire. Be at my call, and of the Father I have placed over you. You still have many things to part with.

'I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may become rich'.

Revelation 3:18. That is the heavenly wisdom that comes from above and treads upon all that is mean and low. Many praise heavenly wisdom when their hearts are far from her, yet she is the hidden *'pearl of great price'*.

Matthew 13:46.

Chapter 33 Consider God rather than the Uncertainties of Life

My son, trust not in your feelings that change often. He that is wise will stand above the winds of uncertainty, and direct his attention only on Me. The more your eye is upon me, the better you will weather the storms that will come.

Chapter 34 God is Sweet in all Things to Those Who Love Him

My God, what can I desire more than Thee? Those that hold worldly things in contempt, and mortify the flesh, are truly wise, for they have moved from vanity to truth, from the flesh to the Spirit. But alas, the old man still lives in me, he is not wholly crucified. Help me, O Lord, to overcome the lusts of the flesh, for there is no other hope or refuge but in Thee, O Lord my God.

Chapter 35 There is no Security from Temptation

My son, you are never safe in this life, but need spiritual armour. You dwell amongst enemies and need to resist them with patience and the authority of My Name. I have called you to be an overcomer cheerfully against anxieties, infirmities, and slanders. These tests, when overcome, will lead to a heavenly crown. My Saints have all passed this way because, *'the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with winning the future glory'*. **Romans 8:18.**

So wait for the Lord, be of good courage, for I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. I will be with you in every tribulation and will reward you plenteously.

Chapter 36 Against the Vain Judgements of Men

My son, fear not the judgements of men when your conscience declares you innocent. Paul thought it nothing to be judged by men, but made a humble defence. *'Who are you that you should fear a mortal man'*? **Isaiah 51:12**. He is here today and gone tomorrow. Even if at first you suffer undeserved shame, lift up your eyes to Me. Am I not able to deliver you and to judge those who have come against you?

Chapter 37 Resignation of Ourselves will win Freedom of Heart

My son, forsake yourself and you will find Me! O Lord, how can I do this? Always and in everything, small & great, be naked of self-will. Some resign themselves, but hold something back. They have not put their full trust in God. Others will make a full surrender, but fall back when tempted back into their own ways. Unless people make a full resignation to My will, with a daily sacrifice of themselves, no lasting fruit can come.

Chapter 38 Recourse to God in Dangers

My son, strive to be a free man, master of yourself in thought, word and deed. Enter the Tabernacle with Moses to seek the counsel of God for the solution of doubts and questions. Turn to God in prayer for victory over dangers, as Moses did against Amalek at Rephidim. **Exodus 17:8-13**. Be careful not to follow Joshua who, *'asked not beforehand at the mouth of the Lord'*, **Joshua 9:14**, and was deceived by the Gibeonites.

Chapter 39 Be not Fretful in Business

My son, commit all your problems to me and in due time they will turn out well. O Lord, most cheerfully I commit all unto Thee, for my own thinking will get me nowhere. My son, the old enemy is always plotting to cast the unwary into a trap. Watch and pray, therefore, sayeth the Lord, that you enter not into temptation. **Matthew 26:41**.

Chapter 40 Man Can Find no Good nor Glory in Himself

'Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him? Psalm 8:4. O Lord, what has man done to deserve Your favour? How can I complain if You forsake me, or if I do not get what I want? I am nothing and I fall away unless You help me. But You, Lord, are always the same, doing all things well and enduring for ever. Let me not seek the praises of men. Thou art my glory and the lifter of my head. *'As for myself, I will glory in nothing except my infirmities'. 2 Corinthians 12:5.*

Chapter 41 Contempt of all Temporal Honour

My son, be not concerned when others are exalted and you are belittled, but be satisfied with My opinion alone. O Lord, we are blind and quickly misled by vanity. But because I have often sinned, I reap what I have sown. So unto me shame is justly due, but unto Thee praise, honour and glory.

Chapter 42 Our Peace does not come from Friendship with Men

Keep your friendship with Me alone. Then if your friend desert you or die, you will not be at a loss. Let your love for your friend be grounded in Me; then it will be ordered by Me. The less you rely on earthly friendships, the nearer you will draw to God. Look not to the world for anything; if you rely too much on anything, by this measure it separates you from God's grace.

Chapter 43 Against the Vanity of Worldly Knowledge

My son, be not deceived by the wisdom of men, *'for the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power'. 1 Corinthians 4:20.* Listen to My words that enlighten the heart and bring repentance with consolation. When you have learnt much, remember that I teach little children with a greater understanding than can be obtained from men.

Woe to those who learn much but take little care to seek how to follow Me. I am the One who teaches the humble mind eternal truth way beyond the learning of scholars. I am He who instructs men to despise earthly things, to seek eternity, to flee honours, to endure offences, to place all hope in Me. I am the teacher of truth, the searcher of the heart, the discerner of thoughts, the promoter of actions, distributing to every man as I think fit.

Chapter 44 **Avoid Trouble from the World**

My son, in many things it is best to be ignorant, to see yourself as one dead to the world. To many things it is best to turn a deaf ear, being mindful rather of those things that give thee peace; to leave people with their own opinion than to enter into argument. O Lord, how far we are from this discipline! We spend our time seeking worldly profit, but neglect causes of spiritual harm, and easily get sunk into outward things. Lord, have mercy upon us and help us!

Chapter 45 **Man is Prone to Offend in Words**

'Grant me help, O Lord, out of tribulation, for vain is the salvation of man.'

Psalm 9:11. Rare is a faithful friend who stays with us in all our distresses. But You, O Lord, are most faithful. How wise was the soul who said, *'My mind is firmly settled and grounded in Christ.'* **Saint Agatha.**

Who can foresee and guard against future evils? Whom shall I trust, O Lord, when *'all men are liars'* **Romans 3:4**, so that we cannot trust even what seems to be good, and *'a man's foes are those of his own household'*. **Micah 7:6.** From such perils, Lord, deliver me and let me not sin myself with a deceptive tongue.

How good it is to be silent about other men, not to believe all that is said, and not to pass on gossip. How good to confide in only a few trustworthy friends, and to be seeking after Thee, as the searcher of my heart. How safe it is not to seek the admiration of men, but to seek those things that lead to amendment of life in this frail time of temptation and warfare.

Chapter 46 **Put Our Trust in God When Arrows Assail Us**

My son, be strong and put your trust in Me. Words are just words. If you are guilty, amend yourself; if innocent endure it for God's sake who was also falsely accused. If you are concerned about the opinion of others you are not yet humble and dead to the world. I am the Judge and discerner of all secrets. I have allowed all this has to happen, *'that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'* **Luke 2:35.** Even if an unjust charge is brought against you, why should you care when My judgement is all you care about? O Lord, I cannot justify myself, *'for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified'*. **Psalm 143:2.**

Chapter 47 Grievous Things to be Endured for Eternal Life

‘O, if you had seen the everlasting crowns of the Saints in Heaven, and with what great glory they now rejoice, who once were esteemed by this world as contemptible, and in a manner unworthy of life itself; truly you would forthwith humble thyself, even to the earth, and would rather seek to be under all, than to have command as much as over one!

Neither would you long for this life’s pleasant days, but rather would rejoice to suffer affliction for God, and esteem it thy greatest gain to be reputed as nothing amongst men. O, if these things had a sweet savour unto you, and pierced to the bottom of your heart, how could you dare so much as once to complain!

Chapter 48 The longing to enjoy the blessing of the Heavenly City

O Lord, the days of this life are so few and evil, I long for the Heavenly City where I shall be delivered from the bondage of my sins, have true peace and stand before You to behold the glory of Thy Kingdom. *‘O my God, be not far from me, nor turn away in wrath from Thy servant’.* **Psalm 71:12.**

O Lord, please deal gently with me and pardon me, for often in prayer my thoughts are distracted. Where my thoughts are, there I am, as You have truly said, *‘For where thy treasure is, there thy heart will be also’.* **Matthew 6:21.** How blessed is the man who crucifies the flesh so that with a clear conscience he can offer a pure prayer to You, with all earthly distractions excluded.

Chapter 49 The Great Rewards of Eternal Life

My son, you do not receive the desire for eternal bliss by your own efforts, but by divine grace, that you may progress in virtue and humility. Often men desire *‘the glorious liberty of the sons of God’*, **Romans 8:21**, but imperfectly, being still spoilt by their carnal desires. You have still to be tested by many things, so *‘take courage, therefore, and be strong’.* **Joshua 1:7.** Long to be, *‘changed into another man’.* **1 Samuel 10:6.** So do what you don’t wish, and don’t do what you do wish. *‘Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me’!* **Mat. 16:24.** In this way you will receive, *‘the garment of praise for heaviness’.* **Isaiah 63:3.**

Chapter 50 Offer Oneself into the Hands of God

O Lord, when I know your peace I can be devout, but when You withdraw Yourself, I fall away. In this life You will instruct me as I suffer many things for Your sake, bending humbly to the opinion of all. It is good that, *'shame has covered my face'* **Psalm 69:7**, so that I seek comfort from You and not from men.

Beloved Father, I am under Your rod of correction. Nothing is hidden from You. It is better to be corrected here than found wanting at Your Judgement Seat. The minds of men are often deceived in their judgements; please grant me to discern between things visible and spiritual, and always seeking Thy will. *'For what every man is in Thy sight, so much is he, and no more'*. **St Francis**.

Chapter 51 Seek Humility, Especially when You Fall Away

My son, because of your mortal body, you cannot always be on a spiritual high. But when you return to please Me in spiritual obedience, have confidence in My coming to set you free from anxieties. For I will feed you with the nourishment of the Scriptures, and enable you to follow My commandments. Then you will say, *'The sufferings of this present time are nothing compared with the future glory that shall be revealed in us'*. **Romans 8:18**.

Chapter 52 We are not Worthy of Comfort, but Deserve Stripes

O Lord, so often have I offended Thee that I am not worthy of your comfort. All I can utter is, *'O Lord I have sinned: have mercy on me and pardon me.'* Be patient with me. What do You require of a sinner but repentance, wherein is hope of forgiveness. Only then is a troubled conscience at peace, and grace restored to protect from the wrath to come, for, *'a humble and contrite heart Thou will not despise.'* **Psalm 51:17**.

Chapter 53 Grace is withheld from Carnal Men

My son, grace does not abide with earthly things, so cast away every hindrance. Prefer waiting on God to outward things, and keep yourself, *'as strangers and pilgrims'* in the world. **1 Peter 2:11**.

It is a great confidence at the hour of death to have no remaining affection for the world. The perfect victory is to triumph over ourselves. This means laying the axe to all earthly affections, so that you can walk at liberty.

Chapter 54 The Difference Between Nature and Grace

My son, look carefully at the way that Nature and Grace work. Nature is crafty and can lure you away to be enslaved by self, while Grace is transparent, abstaining from all evil. Nature does not like to be in submission, while Grace desires to be under authority. Nature works for her own gain, Grace considers what may be best for many. Nature is irritated by harsh words, while Grace is not disturbed because she has placed her eternal treasure in heaven. Grace is a mark of the Elect, and evidence of salvation. The more nature is subdued, the more the inward man is reformed according to the Image of God.

Chapter 55 The Corruption of Nature and the Necessity for Grace

O Lord, you have created me in your divine image, and granted me Grace to be saved from perdition by overcoming my evil nature. *'For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.'* **Romans 7:23.** My conscience is a divine spark hidden in the ashes of corruption, so that, *'I can will what is right, but I cannot do it'.* **Romans 7:18.**

O most blessed grace, that makes the poor in spirit rich and the rich in goods humble in heart, come unto me each morning. Grace alone is my strength. Though I am vexed with many tribulations, yet by Thy grace I will fear no evil. Without grace I am an unprofitable branch fit to be cast away. O Lord, may Thy grace keep me in good works through Jesus Christ Thy Son. Amen!

Chapter 56 The Need to Deny Ourselves and Take up Our Cross

My son, the more you forsake yourself, the more you will enter Me. I want perfect renunciation of yourself to do My will, without argument or complaint, for, *'I am the Way, the Truth and Life'.* **John 14:6.** Without the Way, there is no going; without the Truth, there is no knowing; without the Life, there is no living. *'If you would enter life, keep the Commandments'.* **Matthew 19:17.**

O Lord Jesus, grant me grace to imitate Thee, despite the world's contempt. I know You love those who keep your commandments, and that, *'I will love him and manifest Myself to him'*. **John 14:21**. Let us bear the cross we have received from You for, *'He will fight for us.'* **Revelation 3:21**.

Chapter 57 Be not Dejected When You Fall

My son, patience and humility in adversities are more pleasing to Me than devotion when things go well. You do well when things go well, but when adversity from Me comes, you discover your weakness. Be patient, with no ill word from your lips. Call unto Me, for the storm will pass. All is not lost. Gird yourself to endure, for you are a man and not an Angel. O Lord, what does it matter if I suffer, as long as it is the way to eternal life?

Chapter 58 Enquire not into the Secret Judgements of God

My son, enquire not into the mystery of why one man is so eminently exalted, and another so grievously afflicted. My judgements are to be feared, not to be discussed; for they cannot be understood by man. Dispute not the merits of the Saints, for this is unprofitable. Rather be concerned with greatness of your own sins, and the poverty of your virtues, than to dispute about the Saints.

Many enquire who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God? To this the Lord replied, *'Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven; whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven'*. **Matthew 18:3**.

For the poor and humble in their own eyes will inherit the Kingdom, while the rich will be sent empty away.

Chapter 59 All Our Hope and Trust is in God Alone

O Lord, you are my hope and comfort in this life. You will never leave me nor forsake me, and your mercies endure for ever. You are ever there to help, instruct, comfort and guard us. In Your mercy, hear the prayer of your servant in exile in the land of the shadow of death. Please lead me into the peace and glory of the Kingdom of Heaven, for Jesus' sake. AMEN!

The Fourth Book

By Charles Whitehead KSG

Past President of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Council

An Encouragement to Receive Holy Communion

Chapter 1 This is My Body

You promise that when we receive Your Body and Your Blood we will have new life within us. We know we are sinners, but we must never allow our conscience to hold us back because it is Your command to come.

How earnestly Noah, Moses, Solomon and King David sought to please You, and yet I spend so little time preparing to receive You and am seldom free from distractions. You are fully present in the Sacrament of the Altar, sweetly and graciously welcoming those to whom You have chosen to give Yourself.

O how wonderfully You deal with us as You give Yourself to us in the hidden grace of this Sacrament, recognised by Your faithful people but hidden from unbelievers, as You renew our minds and even our bodies. For in You lies all our virtue and hope of salvation, our holiness and liberation. How sad it is that we do not fully appreciate Your gift of this most Holy Sacrament which is offered to us throughout the whole world. Thank You, Jesus, that You refresh us with Your life-changing Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

Chapter 2 The Revelation of Your Great Love

Lord, I come hungry, thirsty and needy to You my Saviour, the King of heaven. Yet who am I that You should give Yourself to me, a sinner? O most sweet and loving Jesus, what should my thoughts be as I approach You in Communion? I desire to receive You devoutly, what better desire can I have than to humble myself totally before You and to praise Your infinite goodness to me? I will glorify You for ever and humble (subordinate) myself in Your presence.

For our salvation You instituted this Sacrament and gave Yourself to be our food! How wonderful are Your ways, how mighty Your power, O Lord! You commanded and it was done.

You are completely present under the simple forms of bread and wine, and by means of this Sacrament You are pleased to live in us. Be glad, my soul, and thank God for the noblest of all His gifts.

Chapter Three Frequent Communion

My Lord, to You I lift up my soul, I desire to receive You, to invite You into my house so that, like Zacchaeus, I may gain Your blessing and be counted among Your chosen. I cannot exist without You, I cannot live unless You come to me. I must receive You for my salvation. O merciful Jesus. It was You who, after healing the crowds said, "I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way". So treat me in the same way, Lord, it was for the comfort of the faithful that You remained in this Sacrament.

Holy Communion keeps us from evil and builds up goodness in us – what would happen to me if I fail to seek this most powerful assistance? I will try at proper times to receive Your Holy Mysteries and this great gift.

O Lord God, Your guidance and mercy to us is wonderful. Let heaven and earth in all their beauty keep silence before You. Whatever praise and beauty they possess comes from Your generous goodness – Your wisdom is infinite.

Chapter Four The Many Blessings Given

My Lord God, may I approach Your glorious Sacrament devoutly and worthily. May my spirit taste Your sweetness, concealed within this Sacrament like a fountain. How can I, an unworthy sinner, receive and understand so deep and sacred a mystery?

Lord, I firmly believe that You, both God and Man, are truly present in this Sacrament, and that it is Your desire that I should receive and be united to You in Your love. For through this Sacrament our vices are cured, our passions restrained, our temptations reduced, grace is given more totally and virtue, once established, is encouraged, faith is strengthened, hope is reinforced and love is inflamed and enlarged.

O most holy Saviour, Jesus, I ask You in Your mercy and grace to give me what I am lacking. For You graciously call us to Yourself saying, *'Come to Me, all you that are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'*. **Matthew 11:28.**

Lord, accept me for the praise and glory of Your name, for You have given Your Body and Blood to be my food and drink. Through the reception of these Mysteries, grant me an increase in committed devotion to You, O Lord!

Chapter Five The Priestly Office

The office of a priest is high and of great dignity, for only an ordained priest of the Church has the power to celebrate and consecrate the Body of Christ, but God Himself is the chief agent whose commands all creatures to obey.

A priest, in the place of Christ, intercedes for all people, wearing the sign of the Cross to be reminded of our Lord's passion and to follow in His footsteps. He carries every personal injury done to others, expressing penitence for sins with compassion. The priest is a mediator between God and the sinner, never ceasing from prayer and the holy sacrifice, asking for grace and mercy.

In celebrating this Sacrament, the priest honours God, gives joy to the Angels, builds up the Church, helps the living and gains rest for the departed.

Chapter Six Preparing for Communion

When I consider my own wretchedness, I am full of fear and confusion. For if I do not accept You, I refuse life; and if I participate unworthily I will incur Your displeasure. Show me the right way, O Lord, and provide me with a short devotion suitable for Holy Communion. I need to prepare my heart for You, both for the receiving of Your Sacrament and for the proper offering of such a great and holy sacrifice.

Chapter Seven Self-examination

A priest must be humble and deeply reverent when receiving the Sacrament with the real intention of giving glory to God. Examine your conscience, and with true contrition and humble confession cleanse and purify it. Do not hold back anything that may prevent you from approaching the Sacrament.

When you have confessed all your faults with deep sorrow and penitence, make a strong resolution to amend your life and go forward into holiness. In faith commit yourself, body and soul, to Me, so that you may worthily offer the sacrifice and receive the Sacrament of My Body for the health of your soul.

There is no better offering or greater satisfaction for the washing away of sins than to offer ourselves to God, together with the offering of the Body of Christ at the Mass and in Communion. When you come to Me for pardon and grace, I will forgive all your sins for I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. My pleasure is that you turn from your wicked ways and live.

Chapter Eight Christ's Offering

As Christ freely offered Himself on the Cross for our sins, we must offer ourselves to Him daily in the Eucharist as a pure and holy offering. Christ does not seek a token gift, but myself surrendered totally to Him. He gave His Body and Blood to be my food, so nothing I can give is acceptable apart from myself.

Christ's words are eternal: *'If you are not prepared to leave all your possessions behind, you cannot be my disciples.'* **Luke 14:33.**

Chapter Nine Offered to God in Prayer

Lord, accept Your servant today as a free and holy offering, together with Your precious Body, for my salvation and that of all Your people. Burn and consume all my sins and offences, give me a clear conscience, restore the grace lost by my sin, and receive me with a kiss of peace.

I bring to You, Lord, my family, friends and all who are close to me, and the needs of all those who have asked me to pray and offer Mass for them. May they, both living and departed, enjoy Your grace and deliverance from the suffering to come, so that they may give great praise and thanks to You.

I pray too for all who have in any way hurt me, reviled me, or caused me harm, just as I pray for any whom I have hurt, injured or offended. Have mercy, Lord, on all who ask for Your forgiveness, and help us all to enjoy Your love and come to everlasting life.

Chapter Ten Be Committed to Holy Communion

Christ invites us to come frequently to Holy Communion, that we may be healed and strengthened to resist the lies of the Devil, who makes every effort to prevent us receiving it.

We must put aside all misgivings, doubts or anxieties, which cause us to delay in receiving Communion, and go at once to Confession, willingly forgiving those who have offended us and asking pardon for those we have offended. God will readily forgive us.

It is no advantage to be in distress, nor to stay away from the Sacred Mysteries as this leads to spiritual dryness. Some half-hearted people put off Holy

Communion because they are unwilling to be committed, but in truth they are lacking in love and weak in devotion. We must resist this, and God will strengthen our desire. When we are unavoidably absent but full of desire, we can make an act of spiritual Communion with Christ. There is no loss of the fruits of the Sacrament, and we are stirred to a fresh love for Christ.

Chapter Eleven The Body of Christ and the Holy Scriptures are our Food

In Your Holy Sacrament, Lord, You are actually present with me, concealed under a different form, hidden in this Sacrament. I must be content with this until the day of endless glory comes and the use of Sacraments will come to an end. Then I will rejoice in Your presence for ever and view Your unveiled glory.

Meanwhile I will work by faith, encouraged by the example of the Saints. The Holy Scriptures will be my comfort and my stimulation, and above all else, Your Sacred Body will be my special remedy and refuge. You have provided Your Sacred Body to refresh my soul and body, and put Your Word as a lamp to my feet. Without these blessings, I cannot live a holy life.

How great is the office of a priest, who consecrates, receives and ministers You to others! For the words of the law – *'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy,'* **Leviticus 19:2**, are addressed especially to priests. They are called to repent of their sins and to serve You with deeper devotion in the spirit of humility and determined goodwill.

Chapter Twelve Receiving Christ in Communion

Every loving person reveals their affection by preparing the best and finest room for a close friend, but even our best preparations cannot be worthy of the Lord. We must do whatever we can as we prepare to receive the Body of our Lord, knowing that He will supply whatever is lacking in us.

We come to be blessed and united to Him so that we may receive new grace and be inspired afresh to amend our lives. So we must always prepare ourselves with great care and invite the Beloved into our hearts.

We must prepare devoutly before Communion, but also continue in prayer after receiving the Sacrament, as much care is needed after Communion as the devout preparation before it. We need to stay in a quiet place, enjoying the presence of God, offering Him our whole being so that we may live in Him.

Chapter Thirteen Union with Christ

It is my prayer and desire to seek only the Lord, to be totally united to Him and to increasingly delight in heavenly and eternal things through Holy Communion and frequent celebration of the Mass. My soul rejoices to dwell in the Lord all the days of my life, the one true and hidden God.

Your Spirit reveals Your graciousness to Your children, refreshing us with the bread from heaven. You comfort the faithful daily and raise our hearts to heaven by giving Yourself to be our food and delight. What shall I return to the Lord for all His grace and love given to me? Nothing will be more acceptable to Him than my whole heart inwardly united to Him in total surrender. Then He will say to me 'If you abide in Me, I will abide in you', and I will answer, 'Lord, live with me, I pray, for I will gladly stay with You. My only desire is that my heart be united to You'.

Chapter Fourteen Desire for the Body of Christ

Lord, I am aware of the devout Christians who come to Your Sacrament with the deepest devotion and love, and I am ashamed that I am so lacking in love that my heart does not burn within me in Your presence. They really know You in the breaking of bread, but I rarely feel such devout affection and unconditional love.

Have mercy on me, Jesus, and grant that I may feel that deepest desire for Your love in Holy Communion, so that my faith may be strengthened, my hope encouraged, and that having tasted the bread of heaven, my love may never die. For though I do not burn with such zealous desire as others, I pray that through Your grace I may be numbered in their holy company.

Chapter Fifteen Gaining True Devotion

I must seek the grace of holiness with a real desire, but leave to God the time of His heavenly gift, which He will grant at the right moment.

When it is not granted or is withdrawn, I know that it is due to my sinfulness, and when I have overcome this obstacle I will have my desire. When I surrender myself totally to God, I will find myself united to Him and at peace. For our Lord gives His blessings when He finds empty vessels ready to receive them.

A person who seeks God wholeheartedly will be blessed, and when they receive the Holy Eucharist they earn that grace which is union with God, for they do not think about themselves but seek the honour and glory of God.

Chapter Sixteen Seeking God's Grace

The Lord knows all things, even my deepest thoughts, and He alone can help me because He knows the good things I need above all else.

So I beg for His grace and mercy, asking that from now on, my only joy may be to be with Him, my love, my delight and my total good.

Lord, may Your presence set me totally on fire, so that I might be made one with You in spirit. For You, Lord, are the everlasting fire, the love which purifies the heart and illuminates the mind.

Chapter Seventeen The Burning Love for Christ

I long to receive the Lord in Communion with all the zeal of my heart, just as the many Saints and holy people have done.

I offer you, Lord, with all reverence and love whatever a devout heart can desire, holding back no part of myself, but accepting You with all the humility, love and faith, shown by Your Holy Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, when she answered the Angel *'Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word'*. **Luke 1:38.**

This was just like Saint John the Baptist, who leapt for joy by the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb. Later, when he saw Jesus, he lovingly humbled himself, saying: *'The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice'*. John 3:29. In like manner I wish to surrender myself to You with all my heart. I plead for all who have been commended to my prayers, that You may be worthily praised and magnified for ever. I surrender all to You, O Lord, and I pray and plead with the entire heavenly host to join with all the faithful in giving You praise and thanksgiving.

May all who reverently and devoutly celebrate Your wonderful Sacrament, humbly intercede for me, a sinner, that You may in generosity remember me and my poverty.

Chapter Eighteen Humbly Imitate Christ

The Lord tells us to beware of vain attempts to analyse the Sacrament, for the actions of God are greater than we can understand. Those who do not question God are happy, because many lose their sense of devotion by trying to understand the mysteries of God which are beyond them.

Many people are tempted about the faith and the Sacrament by the Devil, but we must trust in God's Word, believe in His Saints and Prophets, and the evil one will run away from us.

We must go forward with simple, undoubting faith, and come to the Sacrament with humble reverence, confidently committing to Almighty God whatever we are not able to understand. God never deceives us, but we are deceived when we put too much trust in ourselves.

In this sublime Holy Sacrament, faith and love take priority over everything else. It works in ways we do not understand. For if the works of God could be easily understood, they would be neither inscrutable nor unutterable.

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‘This is typical John Wright. He talks about what most of us are frightened of doing with humour and a fund of stories. These show how God can open up opportunities to speak for him in all sorts of situations. John has his own way of doing this, but there are simple principles here that all of us need to heed.’

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A Way beyond Death by Jemimah Wright. Brazilian missionary up the Amazon.

YOUR JOURNEY INTO LIFE

If this booklet has given you a desire to be found by God, to be given a purpose in life and peace of mind about the future, you may wish to say this prayer, preferably on your knees.

“Heavenly Father, you know I have sinned and am not worthy to be called your child. But I believe you are a God of mercy and that you sent your Son Jesus to die on the Cross for my sins.

So I turn to you, Lord Jesus, with great thankfulness. I surrender my life to you. Please forgive me for the past, please cleanse me from all my sins, and give me the Holy Spirit to live within me as my Teacher and my Friend.

I reject Satan and every evil Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ and declare the Word of God, ‘If the Son has set you free you are free indeed.’ I declare that Jesus has set me free today from all my sins, from every bondage of Satan. I have been born from on high, I am a child of God, I am a new creation, I have eternal life, in Jesus mighty name. Amen. Hallelujah!”

If you have prayed this prayer sincerely from your heart, it will become real when you tell someone you have become a real, born again, Christian. Please don't delay. Then the joy will come!

It is also vital to go on an Alpha Course by calling:

0207 052 0200 alpha@slkt.org.uk

This will help you grow up as a Christian and you will meet nice people.

There are also one hundred one minute miracle stories filmed on Instagram at: [Walking_as_Jesus_walked](#)

God bless you!

John Wright

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Project Director, Celebrate Norwich and Norfolk.

'The Imitation calls us to prioritise our inner life as we experience the trials and temptations of life. John has done a great service by giving us a summary of each chapter. He shows the value of simplicity, humility and intimacy in communion with Christ and one another.'

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Formerly Senior Leader, Fountain of Life church, Norfolk.

'John has done a great service to the Church. This is a helpful distillation of what can seem a heavy tome. It will be a blessing for all those seeking a deeper dependence on the Lord.'

Rev. Simon Taylor
Past President of the Christian Police Association (England & Wales).
Former Deputy Chief Constable.