

Grace
FOR
EVERYDAY
LIVING

A DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Grace for Everyday Living

Grace for Everyday Living

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Grace & Christian Unity





Grace—is there a more encouraging word?

Grace is undeserved blessing and unmerited favor. It means someone is inclined to do us good no matter who we are or what we do. Grace gives gifts we don't have to earn and can never lose. By definition grace can't have conditions, or it wouldn't be grace.

Our God is a gracious God. The Father is gracious, Jesus is full of grace, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace. The gospel is the good news of God's grace. The entire Bible ends with a word of grace: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

Because God is gracious, He is inclined to do us good no matter who we are or what we do. He blesses us with undeserved gifts that we don't earn and can't forfeit. He looks on us with favor. How encouraging!

And yet we're often discouraged. The daily grind saps our strength and joy. Stress and strain, sickness and pain, loneliness and conflicts, betrayals and failures, unjust demands and unmet desires—these suck the life out of us and leave us depleted and depressed.



To make matters worse, we often feel helpless to change things and hopeless that things will ever change. The problem is not just that other people are flawed and sinful but that we are too. We let ourselves down more often than anyone else does. Life is harder than we think, people are more selfish than we hope, and we are weaker than we imagine. How discouraging!

What's the solution? Grace. God's grace. God's grace relied upon for everyday living. It is our only hope in this otherwise graceless, hopeless world. That's why this devotional was written. Here are 365 reflections on God's grace to remind you that His grace is sufficient every day.

Each day begins with Scripture because it teaches us about God's grace. The Bible is God's inspired truth written to His blood-bought children. Reading it regularly prepares us to face each day as we believe what God says, obey what He commands, and trust what He promises.



Then we reflect on the Scripture to help us understand and apply God's Word to our lives. These are words of hope and encouragement and words of instruction and challenge. God's grace edifies and transforms, comforts and consoles. The goal is to increase in knowledge, faith, and hope so that we might love, trust, and obey God.

Each day closes in prayer, because after we hear from God, we should respond to Him. These brief expressions of praise, thanksgiving, affirmation, or request should convey our heartfelt response to God's grace. Reading, reflection, application, prayer—this daily discipline will transform our lives.

The themes of the entries vary like our days. Some are suited for sunny days when we simply enjoy the sweet fragrance of God's grace. Others arm us for coming battles. Some offer havens and harbors of shelter from life's storms. All of them remind us of God's beautiful character, His unconditional love, and the endless supply of His soul-saving, heart-filling, and peace-giving grace.



You'll find this book most useful if you simply read one entry per day. The prayers at the bottom of each entry serve as a starting point for your own prayer. Combine this book with meeting God in His Word and prayer each day. You'll find that your heart draws nearer to Him as you appreciate and understand His grace more and more.

The riches of God's grace described in these devotions only apply to God's children. They are true for Christians but not for non-Christians. Ask yourself, "Am I a child of God or not?" Here are some truths you need to know in order to answer this question Biblically.

No one is born a child of God. Jesus said, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). No one gets to Heaven simply by being born; we must be born again. And we do so by repenting of our sins and embracing Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.



Anyone can become a child of God. The apostle John revealed, “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12). No matter who you are or what you’ve done, if you repent of your sins and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, He will receive you and God will adopt you into His family as His child.

You can become a child of God today. Jesus taught, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God loves you so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and rescue you from an eternal judgment in Hell.

If you confess that you are a guilty, helpless sinner and give yourself to Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, you can become a child of God and all these promises become yours. Receive God’s grace today and enjoy it all your days.



Whether you are newborn in the Lord or have known God for a lifetime, we pray that these devotions will draw you closer to Him daily. Your God is a gracious God, and His grace is sufficient for all your needs. May this year of devotions encourage a lifetime of joyful reliance on God's grace for everyday living.

A few notes about this book:

Why a devotional focused on grace from a ministry whose mission is to teach and promote Christian unity? Simply, God's grace is the only sure footing for true, visible Christian unity. Unity built on anything else is sure to fail. But, if your life is filled with a genuine dependence on God's grace, you cannot help but be transformed, becoming increasingly united with your brothers and sisters in God's adopted family.

In our years studying what the Bible really says about Christian unity, we've read far and wide from some of Christianity's greatest voices, trying to understand how the church has understood God's will for His



people. Some entries are written entirely by various members of our team. Some entries contain a quote and some explanation. Others contain nothing but a quote that ends with the name of the original author. We've uncovered great works from Martin Luther to Charles Spurgeon for this devotional and have updated these quotes to modern language. We've included brief biographies of the authors at the end of this book. We believe you'll be encouraged by the details of their lives and ministries.

We hope this devotional helps you to grow in your love for your Savior and your brothers and sisters in Christ.



January





January 1

*I also count all things loss for the excellence
of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

~ Philippians 3:8

Each new year should be a step up the mountain, lifting our feet a little higher into clearer air and a more heavenly atmosphere. Whatever our attainments or achievements may have been yesterday, they should be nobler and better today.

Everyone's past is full of mistakes. The whitest pages are flecked with many stains. We are ashamed of certain things in our memory. There are failures, neglects, and sins in the best of us. We should leave these all behind us. We should count them as rubbish that has no place in our new life for Christ and must be given up.

~ J. R. Miller

Lord, I leave the past behind to live for You this year.



January 2

*The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and His ears are open to their cry.*

~ Psalm 34:15

From the beginning of the year to its end, God's eyes are on you. You may feel alone and forgotten at times, but you're not. You are never hidden from God's loving gaze.

Live this year knowing that your heavenly Father knows where you are, what you are going through, and what you need. Even when you feel lonely and invisible, the Lord's gracious eyes are on you, and He hears your every cry.

Lord, keep me mindful of Your attentive love.





January 3

The LORD is my shepherd.

~ Psalm 23:1

Sheep depend on shepherds. They can't outrun, hide from, or fight off predators. They panic and get lost easily. They need help finding safe places to graze and rest. Sheep don't thrive without a shepherd.

Praise God, the Lord is our Shepherd! He guards us from enemies and guides us in righteous paths. He stays with us through dark valleys. He makes us lie down in green pastures and leads us beside still waters. He restores our souls. Follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd, that all may be well with you.

Lord, help me to follow You closely.

January 4

*By the grace of God I am what I am,
and His grace toward me was not in vain ...
yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.
~ 1 Corinthians 15:10*

It is by God's grace that you are what you are, and His grace toward you is never in vain. God gives you the grace to fulfill His will. In other words, God has a purpose for you, and He will grant you the grace to fulfill it.

Ask God what He wants you to do, and then ask Him for the grace to do it. His grace will always be sufficient for you.

God, grant me grace to do Your will today.



January 5

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit.

~ John 15:5

It's hard to change. Old habits are hard to break, and new habits are hard to form. Thankfully, God transforms us as we live in close fellowship with Christ. Focus on your relationship with Christ, and He will produce His fruit in you and through you.

“The branch of the vine does not worry, toil, and rush to seek for sunshine. No, it rests in unity and communion with the vine. And at the right time, and in the right way, the right fruit is found on it. Let us therefore abide in the Lord Jesus” (Hudson Taylor).

Lord, help me to abide while You produce.

January 6

*Do not fear therefore; you are of
more value than many sparrows.*

~ Matthew 10:31

Don't be afraid of what other people think about you. God values you enough that He sent His Son to die on the cross for you. See yourself as valuable and precious—as God does. Stop worrying about your self-esteem, and let the cross remind you that you have Christ's esteem.

“God had such an esteem for souls that Jesus Christ was made a man, even a curse for them, so that they might not perish. Therefore learn to value your own souls rightly. Do not sell cheaply that which God has paid for so dearly” (John Flavel).

Father, I'm valuable because You value me.



January 7

*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus
for good works, which God prepared beforehand
that we should walk in them.*

~ Ephesians 2:10

Many people don't know who they are or where they're going. But Christians know their identity: they are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. And they know their purpose: to walk in the good works God has prepared for them beforehand.

As long as we believe what God says about us and obey what God tells us to do, our lives will have meaning and purpose. So let's obey God daily. If we do, we'll lead the fulfilling lives that God intends for us.

God, I want to fulfill Your purpose for me.



January 8

*On account of him many of the Jews
went away and believed in Jesus.*

~ John 12:11

Many who saw Jesus raise Lazarus believed in Him. Who wouldn't place their faith in the Savior who gives life to the dead?

Jesus still gives life to the dead. He causes spiritually dead souls to be born again and makes them new creations. He calls people out of darkness into light, a rebirth more miraculous than calling Lazarus from the tomb. Our new, transformed lives in Christ should make others believe in Him. How we live our lives is the best argument for—or against—the gospel.

God, may people see my life and believe in Jesus.





January 9

Go and sit down in the lowest place.

~ Luke 14:10

Do you want to pursue peace with others? Then put them first. Let them have the place of honor. Make them important in your life. Humility produces harmony.

“Do not seek the highest place. If you do, you will have a contested election, for many want that position. But if you choose the lowest place, you will have it, and nobody will try to run in opposition to you. There is always plenty of room in the lowly places, and there is peace there” (C. H. Spurgeon).

Lord, help me to humbly seek the lower places.



January 10

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.


~ Philippians 2:3

When we live for ourselves, our lives become very small and confined. To be free, we must be freed from self. There is something wonderfully liberating in living one's life to make others great rather than spending so much effort trying to be great in others' eyes.

When you prioritize others, you will find joy in the things that really matter. If you want to experience real freedom, focus on others instead of being self-centered.

Lord, make it my goal to focus on others.



 Note: some pages are omitted from this book preview.

February





February 1

Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

~ James 2:17

We never get to understand the Bible merely by studying it. It will not reveal itself to us until we begin to do what it teaches. The person who seeks to obey it will know it.

Many Christians will readily recall how dim and obscure faith in Jesus Christ seemed to them before they believed, when they were trying to find the way, and then how simple and clear it appeared after they had begun to follow the Savior.

~ J. R. Miller

Lord, help me obey and do what Your Word teaches.



February 2

I am the good shepherd.

~ John 10:11

Jesus is the good shepherd who seeks after His lost sheep, gives His life for them, and then guides them safely home. Though our Savior is not now physically present with us, there will be a day when we will be with Him at last.

“The Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be in the midst of Heaven. His people will at last see Him face-to-face and go out from His presence no more. He will gather His lambs into His bosom and wipe away all tears from their eyes. Where He is will be fullness of joy, and at His right hand will be pleasures forever” (J. C. Ryle).

Lord, thank You for being my shepherd.





February 3


*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and he who wins souls is wise.*

~ Proverbs 11:30

What would you do if you saw flames rising from your neighbor's roof? Their house is on fire, but those inside don't know it. You would rush to the door and shout for them to get out. How unloving it would be not to alert the family to their danger!

As Christians, we know the world is threatened with God's judgment, but most people don't know it. Wise Christians view life in light of eternity. Don't be afraid; share the gospel. Those who faithfully preach the good news offer hope to those destined for Hell.

God, give me boldness to share my faith.

 Note: some pages are omitted from this book preview.

March





March 1

We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

~ 2 Corinthians 3:18

Before the days of digital photography images were captured on light-sensitive plates that were exposed to a subject for some time. In the same way, when we expose our souls to Christ over time, His image will be captured on our souls, and our lives will present His beautiful picture to the world.

Begin by asking God to make your heart sensitive. Then expose your heart to Christ; linger long in His wonderful presence. Read and reflect on His Word. Talk to Him throughout your day. As you do, you will notice His image forming on your soul—and so will others.

Lord, I will expose my heart to Your Word.



March 2

*It is good for me that I have been afflicted,
that I may learn Your statutes.*

~ Psalm 119:71

Good to be afflicted? Yes, if from it we learn obedience. Parents sometimes let children suffer the results of their bad choices so that they will learn to act differently in the future.

Are you afflicted because of disobedience? Your Father is teaching you to obey His commandments. He allows us to experience the consequences of our poor decisions so that we will learn the blessings of obedience.

Father, teach me to obey.





March 3

*God resists the proud,
but gives grace to the humble.*


~ 1 Peter 5:5

Humble hearts seek grace, and therefore they get it. They yield to the sweet influences of grace, and so it is granted to them more and more. Humble hearts lie in the valleys where streams of grace are flowing, and thus they drink from them.

Humble hearts are grateful for grace and give the Lord the glory for it, and therefore it is consistent with His honor to give it to them.

~ C. H. Spurgeon

God, keep me humble by giving me Your grace.

 Note: some pages are omitted from this book preview.

July





July 1

*In Your presence is fullness of joy.
~ Psalm 16:11*

Lasting joy is only found in a loving God. When we're in His presence, we're surrounded by His unconditional love, warmed by His compassionate gaze, and lifted by His tender voice. God's presence fills our hearts to overflowing so that we have no need to seek happiness anywhere else.

So how do we enter into the presence of God? Prayer. Prayer is more than asking. It is also basking in the joy-giving, heart-filling, soul-satisfying reality of our Creator and Lord. Are you lacking joy? Then go to your God in prayer—in His presence is fullness of joy.

Lord, let me find my joy in You.



July 2

Abide in Me, and I in you.

~ John 15:4

Are you weary of trying to live the Christian life? If so, you're probably trying to live it in your own power. Instead, focus on your relationship with Jesus Christ, and He will nourish your spirit and produce His fruit in you.

Andrew Murray reminds us, "If Christ the heavenly Vine has taken the believer as a branch, then He has pledged Himself in the very nature of things to supply the sap and spirit and nourishment to make it bring forth fruit."

Lord, keep me in constant communion with You.






July 3

*There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.
~ Hebrews 4:9*

As sailors long for a harbor and travelers long for home, so Christians long for Heaven. Heaven is our harbor and home after life's hard journey.

“What a refuge of rest to enter after having passed through the storms and tempests of this world in which pride, selfishness, envy, malice, contempt, and strife are like waves of a restless ocean, always rolling and often dashed about violently. What a restful promised land to come to after going through this wasteland and this howling wilderness full of snares, pitfalls, and poisonous serpents where no rest could be found!” (Jonathan Edwards).

God, I'm eager to be home in Heaven.

 Note: some pages are omitted from this book preview.

October





October 1

*Jonah arose to flee ... from the
presence of the LORD.
~ Jonah 1:3*

God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, but instead of obeying he fled. Jonah's disobedience landed him at the bottom of the ocean. But when he obeyed, God used him to save many souls.

Are you trying to run from something the Lord has told you to do? Well, you can't flee from God, and your futile flight will land you in deep water. So stop running and obey God. You'll be glad you did, and you never know what amazing things He plans to accomplish through your obedience.

Lord, I choose to obey You.

October 2

*These things we write to you
that your joy may be full.*

~ 1 John 1:4

Everyone has down days, but sadness shouldn't be the normal mood of the Christian life. God wants us to be joyful. And why wouldn't we be? We are loved by God, saved by His Son, and filled by His Spirit.

"Man is more himself, man is more manlike, when joy is the fundamental thing in him and grief the superficial. Melancholy should be an innocent interlude, a tender and fleeting frame of mind. Praise should be the permanent pulsation of the soul. Pessimism is at best an emotional interruption; joy is the uproarious labor by which all things live" (G. K. Chesterton).

Lord, make me joyful.



October 3


See who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name.

~ Isaiah 40:26

The stars appear because God summons them. The sun rises because the Lord tells it to. Flowers bloom at their Lord's command. Our Lord did not simply set the universe in motion. He composes Heaven's music and designs nature's dance.

“It is possible that God says to the sun every morning, ‘Do it again’ and to the moon every evening, ‘Do it again.’ It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately but has never gotten tired of making them. The repetition in nature may not be a mere recurrence; it may be a theatrical encore” (G. K. Chesterton).

God, You are wondrously active in Your creation.

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Biographies





Horatius Bonar (1808–1889) was a Scottish minister and writer. Little is known of his life because he requested that no biography be written so that Christ would remain the focus. He is best remembered for his hymns based on Scripture's foundational doctrines. He began writing these to help the children in his congregation understand the Bible, but his songs and other writings soon gained a wide influence and are still encouraging believers today.

John Calvin (1509–1564) is best known for his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which has had a broad and enduring influence on the Protestant movement. Despite persecution he spent his life preaching and writing as well as establishing the University of Geneva. Though most of his ministry took place in Switzerland, he played a major role in the French Reformation as well as heavily influencing England and Scotland.

G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936) was an English writer, authoring approximately 80 books as well as articles, poems, and short stories. His beliefs can be seen in



both his fiction and nonfiction. Though best known for his novels and newspaper articles, he also wrote *Orthodoxy* and other Christian works.

Blind from infancy, **Fanny Crosby** (1820–1915) lived an active life, serving as an inner city missions worker. She is best known for writing over 8,000 hymns as well as numerous patriotic and political songs. Despite the hardships of blindness, an unhappy marriage, and losing her only child, Crosby's writing is filled with joy and hope. She would remark that she had a rare privilege, because her first sight would be Christ.

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) was a key figure in the Great Awakening, a series of revivals that spread through colonial America in the 1730s and '40s. He pastored for nearly 30 years before being installed as president of what is now Princeton University. His careful study and teaching of Scripture have given him the reputation of being America's greatest theologian. He continues to have a lasting influence through his preaching and his extensive writing.



John Flavel (c. 1627–1691) was an English pastor who began to preach at age 20. His disagreement with the Act of Uniformity, which prescribed a specific form of worship for all churches to follow, led to his dismissal from the pulpit, but he continued to preach secretly until the law changed just a few years before his death. Additionally, during his years away from his church he wrote a number of influential books to continue his ministry.

Madame Guyon (1648–1717) had a wide influence in France through her teaching and writing. She maintained the view, unpopular with the established church, that salvation was through grace rather than works. This view led to her imprisonment for many years. She also encouraged Christians to continually live in the presence of God through prayer.

Born to devout parents in London, **Joseph Hart** (1712–1768) rejected their faith for much of his life since he could not live a sinless life. Under the ministry of George Whitefield he came to believe in Christ, accepting that His sacrifice was sufficient



without works. For the last decade of his life he focused on preaching and writing hymns. Though his ministry was short it had a widespread effect that lasted through his writings.

The Heidelberg Catechism was written in 1563 to teach Reformed doctrine. It consists of 129 questions and answers that cover the basic points of Christian belief, particularly dwelling on the nature of God and man. It was divided into 52 sections so that pastors could teach on one section per week for a year. Over 450 years later, this catechism is still taught and used as a reference for doctrinal questions.

Matthew Henry (1662–1714) was an English pastor whose *Commentary on the Whole Bible* is still in use. Before his death he had completed the commentary on Genesis through Acts, and the remainder of the New Testament was finished by a group of other ministers based on Henry's notes. He also wrote a number of other books, and his writings influenced spiritual leaders of later generations such as Charles Spurgeon and George Whitefield.



Oliver Heywood (1630–1702) was a minister during a time of great turmoil in England. Because he did not comply with the Act of Uniformity, which gave a required form of worship, he was excommunicated and became a traveling evangelist. He suffered continual persecution, even spending a year in prison, but persisted in his preaching and in efforts toward church unity, resulting in the London agreement of two denominations known as the “happy union.”

Though little is known of the life of **Julian of Norwich** (1342–c. 1416), her writings have endured through the centuries. Her *Revelations of Divine Love* was the first book to be written by a woman in the English language. She was frequently sought out for advice and was known for her counsel.

While the authorship of the hymn “How Firm a Foundation” is uncertain, it is often attributed to **George Keith** (d. 1782). Little is known about him except that he was a bookseller and the son-in-law of the well-known English pastor John Gill.



William Law (1686–1761) was a priest in the Church of England, teaching at Cambridge until he refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new king, George I, and was dismissed. He spent the rest of his life tutoring students and teaching the Scriptures to men such as John Wesley. He also wrote several books on Christian living that deeply impacted future spiritual leaders such as Wesley and George Whitefield.

Born into poverty, **Brother Lawrence** (1614–1691) joined the army as a young man but due to an injury left and entered a Carmelite monastery in Paris. Here he spent the remainder of his life seeking to love God and commune with Him through the simple tasks of daily life. He is best remembered for his insights in *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

Martin Luther (1483–1546) is known as the Father of the Reformation. He began as a monk in Germany, diligently living the prescribed lifestyle in an effort to please God until he understood that salvation is by faith alone, not works. This revelation eventually led to the famous 95 *Theses*. His legacy and writings still deeply impact believers today.



George MacDonald (1824–1905) was a Scottish pastor and writer best known for his fantasy books, which he used to convey truths about the nature of God and man. His great emphasis was on the redeeming love of God and the numerous ways God drew people to Himself. MacDonald's writings had a great influence on several other authors, such as C. S. Lewis and G. K. Chesterton.

Though **Robert Murray M'Cheyne** (1813–1843) only lived to be 29, his emphasis on godly living and evangelism impacted Scotland. He left only a few written works, as most of his time was devoted to studying God's Word and other spiritual works as well as ministering to his community. He lived with a constant awareness of his own mortality, and this led him to preach earnestly on salvation, praying for his congregation on his deathbed.

F. B. Meyer (1847–1929) was an English pastor and evangelist who spent most of his ministry at Christ Church in London as well as being actively involved in social work. He wrote over 40 books including



Bible commentaries, biographies, and devotional works. His ministry and works greatly influenced C. H. Spurgeon.

Andrew Murray (1828–1917) was born in South Africa to missionary parents. After completing his schooling in Europe he returned home to minister, pastoring churches and opening several seminaries and mission training institutes. But he is best known for his books that teach prayer and close, continual fellowship with God.

J. R. Miller (1840–1912) began his ministry by serving on the Christian Commission to provide supplies for chaplains and social workers during the Civil War. He then pastored churches in Pennsylvania and Illinois and wrote over 60 books, as well as several devotionals and numerous articles. His writing centers around ministry, marriage, and family life, urging readers to seek unity starting at home.



The New England Primer was the most widely used textbook in early colonial America, designed to teach reading and writing through Bible-based lessons. Most children in the colonies began their education with the *Primer*, learning the tenets of faith as well as laying their educational foundation.

John Newton (1725–1807) is best known for his hymn “Amazing Grace.” He went to sea as a young man, working up to a position as captain of slave ships. He was gradually convicted of his sinful life and finally turned to God, though it was many years before he joined with William Wilberforce to oppose the slave trade. Newton wrote multiple hymns as well as political literature urging abolition of slavery.

J. C. Ryle (1816–1900) was a regular church attendee while schooling at Oxford, but not until he heard Ephesians 2:8–9 did he understand the concept of grace and salvation by faith. He expected to join the family business, but when it failed he entered ministry instead. He spent the rest of his life teaching but also found time to write a number of books, such as *Holiness* and *Practical Religion*.



From childhood, **Richard Sibbes** (1577–1635) loved books, and, though he was expected to be a tradesman, he enrolled in St. John's College and then became a minister. He wrote extensively, from Bible commentaries to devotional works, and his writings continue to impact readers centuries later. But in his time he was best known as the “heavenly Doctor” for his gentleness, godliness, and devout preaching.

C. H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) came to Christ as a teen and dedicated the rest of his life to spreading the gospel. The “Prince of Preachers” taught for 40 years, multiple times a week, and his sermons were transcribed and distributed not only in London but also in America. Despite his busy preaching schedule, he also wrote prolifically. There are more of Spurgeon's books in print today than any other author's in the English language.

Louisa M. R. Stead's life (c. 1850–1917) was marked with ill health and sorrow, but these only seemed to solidify her faith. Her well-known hymn, “'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus,” was written after the tragic death of her husband. Soon after, she moved



to South Africa as a missionary, where she stayed until her health failed. Though only known for one short poem, her words have had a lasting impact.

Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) spent over 50 years as a missionary in China and founded the China Inland Mission. Unlike most European missionaries, he immersed himself in the Chinese culture of dress and lifestyle so that nothing would distract from the gospel. Despite political unrest and illness that took the lives of fellow missionaries, his wife, and several of his children, Taylor maintained that no sacrifice was too great for the cause of Christ.

Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) was a Spanish nun. Finding her convent too worldly, she founded a new one, where she devoted herself to writing. Her writings focus on prayer and communion of the soul with God. Her greatest desire in life was to follow Christ's example of service and suffering.



Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471) entered a monastery in the Netherlands at age 19, spending his life in prayer, teaching, and writing (in addition to his own work, he copied the Bible four times). He and his monastic brothers focused on teaching the common people, helping to lay a foundation for the Reformation. He is best known for his insights in *The Imitation of Christ*, which is the most translated Christian work after the Bible.


John Trapp (1601–1669) was an English pastor. During the English Civil War, he served as a chaplain to the parliamentary soldiers. He is known for his careful, detailed study of Scripture, as he wrote extensive Bible commentaries that are still studied today.

Lilias Trotter (1853–1928) was a promising artist who left her career to work in ministry. She began by ministering to prostitutes and later spent over 30 years as a missionary to Muslim women in Algiers. During this time she wrote many devotional writings and poetry centered on the Christlike life.



Thomas Watson (1620–1686) was a pastor in London until the Act of Uniformity was passed in 1662. Because he did not comply with the required Church of England rites, he was ejected. Yet he continued to preach unofficially for 10 years until he was able to return to public ministry. Along with preaching, he wrote a number of books that have endured through the years due to their depth, clarity, and faithful exposition of Scripture.

Octavius Winslow (1808–1878) was born into a large, poor family in England but moved to America as a young child. He was schooled and then ordained in New York but after a few years returned to England, where he spent the remainder of his life preaching and writing. He wrote over 100 books and pamphlets, many of which are still published and read today.

 Note: some pages are omitted from this book preview.