

The Christian According to Paul

JOHN T. FARIS



BS
2651
.F3
1916

BS 2651 .F3 1916
Faris, John Thomson, 1871-
The Christian according to
Paul



THE CHRISTIAN ACCORDING TO PAUL

EVERYDAY LIFE SERIES

- John T. Faris:* THE CHRISTIAN ACCORDING TO PAUL
- Cleland B. McAfee:* PSALMS OF THE SOCIAL LIFE
(In preparation)
- Philip E. Howard:* THE MANY-SIDED DAVID (In preparation)
- Other volumes to be announced later

✓
EVERYDAY LIFE SERIES

The Christian According to Paul

✓
JOHN T. FARIS

*Author of "The Book of Faith in God," "The Book of God's
Providence," etc.*

Association Press

NEW YORK: 124 EAST 28TH STREET

LONDON: 47 PATERNOSTER ROW, E. C.

1916

COPYRIGHT, 1916, BY
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

The Bible Text used in this volume is taken from the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons, and is used by permission.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. IN THE DARK.....	I
II. INTO THE LIGHT	12
III. BUILDING ON SOLID FOUNDATION.....	22
IV. ARMED FOR CONQUEST.....	32
V. THE WORTHY WALK.....	43
VI. LIVING BY FAITH.....	54
VII. THE CHRISTIAN GOAL.....	63
VIII. ONE WITH CHRIST	73
IX. THE LAW OF LOVE.....	83
X. THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS	93
XI. THINGS TO PRAY FOR	103
XII. REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING	112
XIII. LIFE THAT LASTS FOREVER.....	121

CHAPTER I

In the Dark

DAILY READINGS

First Week, First Day

Ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.—Eph. 2:12.

Times have changed, but have the hearts of men changed? How truly do the outstanding words and phrases of this verse, in which Paul vividly described to the Ephesians their state before they accepted Christ, picture the condition of those today who do not know Christ? What does it mean that they are apart from the company of those who live in Christ's light? What is the result of the fact that their manner of life has set them in opposition to the friends of Christ? Is it a loss that they are strangers to his ways, his thoughts, his promises? Have they hope of any real good? What is the effect of being without God? How much real satisfaction can there be in the life that does not know him?

What book in the Bible has most to say about hope? Who inspires hope? How important a place does Paul give to hope? (Consult a concordance.)

First Week, Second Day

For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing them-

selves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves.—Rom. 1:20-24.

There are those who say they cannot know God. But has anyone a valid excuse for remaining in ignorance of him? Why do some profess to think it an evidence of superior wisdom to deny the existence of God? Why is the denial in reality the final folly? The people of whom Paul spoke revealed their folly by the substitution of man-made idols for the only true God. Read in Isa. 44: 14-17 a vivid picture of such childish substitution. How is like folly shown today? What are some of the things people worship instead of God? What will be the result of worshiping fame, money, position, ease, society? There is good in all of these things. But when do they cease to be good? What is the one way of making the most of them?

Is there anything in my life to which I am giving the allegiance that belongs to God?

First Week, Third Day

And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them.—Rom. 1: 28-32.

There is such a thing as dwelling on the thought of past sin in an unwholesome manner. When we confess our sins to God he puts them behind his back. Then why should we call them up? Why not, rather, spend our strength in facing up continually to our lives, like men? Shall we, like the

man who weakly stays away from the dentist because he fears to face the fact that his teeth need instant attention, blind ourselves to the havoc that sin is working today in our lives? Is anyone free from the necessity of facing the facts of sin? Are not many of the sins in that overwhelming list Paul gave in the verses quoted above continually present, even in the lives of many Christians? How do Matt. 5: 28 and 1 John 3: 15 help us to answer this question? Until we understand our own weakness and our unused opportunities, there will be no impulse to seek the Power who can bring us to mean something to the world.

First Week, Fourth Day

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.—Gal. 5: 19-21.

Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye.—1 Cor. 3: 16, 17.

"My body is my own!" the objection is sometimes heard from one who has been urged to give up a bad habit that threatens the well-being of the body. How true is the statement? If we are not our own, whose are we? What right did creation give to God, the Creator? In whose image are we created? If God's Spirit dwells in us, how should we keep God's temple, the body? What did Jesus do when he saw the temple at Jerusalem defiled by unworthy deeds? What does cleansing the temple of the body involve? What would be your reply to an acquaintance who says he will commit some sin "just this once," or who offers the specious argument, "I have given up so many bad habits, surely God will not be hard on me if I cling to this one a little longer"? Can you point to a passage in the Bible that justifies such playing with sin?

How does the last chapter in the Bible describe those who shall be shut out of the City of God?

First Week, Fifth Day

For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.—
Rom. 3: 23.

As it is written,

There is none righteous, no, not one;
There is none that understandeth,
There is none that seeketh after God;
They have all turned aside, they are together
become unprofitable;
There is none that doeth good, no, not so much
as one:
Their throat is an open sepulchre;
With their tongues they have used deceit:
The poison of asps is under their lips:
Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:
Their feet are swift to shed blood;
Destruction and misery are in their ways;
And the way of peace have they not known:
There is no fear of God before their eyes.

—Rom. 3: 10-18.

“You forgot one thing, didn’t you?” a father asked his little daughter as she was making her evening prayer. He referred to the omitted petition, “Make me a good girl.” “I didn’t need to pray that tonight father,” she said; “I have been such a good girl today.” We smile at the child; but do we take ourselves to task when we are as childish? Are we ever tempted to think that we are not such miserable sinners, after all? If we are downright honest with ourselves, how easy will it be to sum up the sins of which we are guilty in the course of a single month? A single week? *A single day?* Then what becomes of the complacent thought that we really deserve some consideration at God’s hands? What does God say about it? Then can we afford to trifle with sin? We must confess not only some sins, but all sins. “Lift them away!” the Psalmist cried when he thought of his sins, using the picturesque phrase that reminds us of Bunyan’s portrayal of the Christian pilgrim struggling to the foot of the cross with his burden of sins. “Lift them away!” will be our cry if we feel the burden of sin as God wants us to feel it.

What reply does Matthew say Jesus made to the man who called him Good Master?

First Week, Sixth Day

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.—Rom. 7: 14-20.

A boy of seven stood before a grocery store, attracted by a barrel of luscious apples. He looked longingly on the fruit. Twice his hand was reached out as if to take an apple, but twice it was withdrawn. Then, slowly, jerkily, the hand was stretched toward the barrel once more. Finally the fingers clutched the fruit and the apple was lifted in air. Then, for a long moment, the hand remained suspended. How he did want that apple! Yet he knew he ought not to take it. At length the hand moved toward the barrel—the feeling of “ought not” was getting the upper hand. Then the downward progress was arrested, and slowly, so slowly, the apple approached the boy’s pocket. It was almost there when the observer breathed a sigh of relief, for, with a decided movement, the young hero thrust the temptation from him, dropped the apple in the barrel, then took to his heels and ran from the spot as one might run from the plague.

A hunter has told of finding a moose weakened by hunger, fastened by his horns to the dead body of another moose, which evidently had been killed as the two fought. The live moose could not release himself from the dead body; always it held him down and forced him slowly but surely to his doom. “Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” Is there any answer?

First Week, Seventh Day

For the wages of sin is death.—Rom. 6: 23.

“Old man, will you let me tell you something?” a college Junior said to a friend, as he put his arm over the man’s shoulder. “I know you have been wondering why you are being gradually shelved by the fellows. The fact is, you have been so wrapped up in yourself that you seem to think of no one else. As one of the men said yesterday, you give the impression that you are always thinking how you can turn the misfortunes of others to your own advantage, instead of hunting for ways to lighten the burden of the other fellow.” At first the man who listened was tempted to resent the plain speaking, but thought convinced him that the words were true. Warned in time, he called himself to account and changed his manner of life. Once more he won his old place among his fellows. How far is the experience of this student a picture of the sure result of sin? How does self-indulgence separate a man from God, who gives life? Does that separation come all at once, or is it the result of a process? What is the inevitable result of the separation?

What vivid picture is given in Luke, Chapter 16, of the reward of the man who persists in living in sin?

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

Did Paul exaggerate? Was there ever a time when the heart of man was as black as it is painted in the passage studied this week? Those who are familiar with conditions on the foreign mission field can testify that Paul did not exaggerate, while the best men and women who live in lands where Christian influences are pervasive realize that it is impossible to measure the capacity for evil of their own hearts, which without the restraint of Jesus Christ might have plunged them into the state so pitilessly described by the apostle.

Jacob Chamberlain, long a missionary in India, tells in *The Kingdom in India*, of a visit to a city in the land where the name of Jesus had never been heard. “As an introduction,” he says, “when we had assembled an audience in the street, I asked my native assistant to read the first chapter of Romans, that chapter which those who call themselves liberal-minded tell us is too black to be true; that chapter that describes the heart of man wandering away from God,

and then wandering away further, until at last, 'though they know the judgments of God that they which do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them'; the depth of which many tell us is a libel on human nature. That chapter was read. The most intelligent man in the audience, a Brahmin, stepped forward and said to me, '*Sir, that chapter must have been written for us Hindus. It describes us exactly.*' The photograph was recognized. It had been taken centuries before and among a Jewish people; but the artist was divine, and the heart that was photographed was not that of a Jew, but of a man."

A second experience was equally startling. "I was reading from the seventh chapter of Romans that declaration of Paul of the power of sin over us, which says, 'When I would do good, evil is present with me, and the good which I would I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do.' As I read it, the most intelligent man in the audience spoke up, saying, 'That is it! That is exactly what is the matter with us Hindus.'"

Like testimony to the universality of the feeling came from a girl in America, who had been trained in a Christian home. She had brought her Bible to her father for the usual Sunday morning chapter. "Let us read the verses I have just been studying," he said. So together they read Rom. 7: 14-20. As she finished the last verse the little girl's voice broke, and she ran away. The father sought her. "What is it, my little girl?" he asked, anxiously. "Oh, father!" came the answer, "I know I'm bad, but when you want to scold me won't you please come right out and say so?" Explaining that he had not thought of scolding her, he told her how he had come to choose the chapter. "I was thinking how it expressed my feelings," he said, "and now you think it expresses your feelings."

All can sympathize with the child, for all know the racking torment of the never-ending contest between what one ought to do and what one wants to do, regardless of the rights of others, the best interests of self, or the things one knows God wants. And to most people one of the maddening features of this contest of *ought* and *ought not* is that the things they are tempted to do are not what are generally looked on as the great sins that make one lift up the

hands in horror, but so-called little sins, which so often are dismissed with a contemptuous shrug and a light "Everybody does them!" Thus the student may struggle between conscientious work and superficial preparation; the business man may hesitate between a fair and an underhand method in competing with a rival; the professional man may long to use for his own advantage confidential information that has come to him from a trusting client.

But is there such a thing as a trifling sin? Is the contest between right and wrong ever without supreme importance? Each time *ought* beats *ought not*, the fighter is stronger for the next conflict. But what is the inevitable result of defeat? What will happen to the temple of God, "which temple ye are," if defeat is repeated until it becomes utter rout!

Is it worth while to fight temptation? Shall we join the ranks of those jelly-fish folks who say they wish God had made them in such a way that they would always do the right thing, no matter what happens?

When God made man he planned that the heart of man should be a temple for him. When it left his hands that temple was clean and pure, a fit habitation for God.

Fit and good at the beginning, the temple might have remained so, if God had retained the keys to the edifice, giving man no voice in the direction of his life. But it was God's plan that man should be in his likeness in everything, and without the power to choose and act for himself an essential part of God's likeness would be entirely lacking.

So he gave to man the direction of his own life, handed over to him the keys of the temple, pleading with him to keep himself pure and undefiled. Man thus became a moral creature.

But man opened the doors of the temple entrusted to his keeping and permitted the entrance of defiling, degrading influences. The hosts of sin were welcomed. The corridors of the temple became stained with dirt. The beautiful columns were scratched and broken. The carved cornices and stately pediments, robbed of their supports, fell a mass of ruins. Rubbish accumulated among the heaps of broken stones. Ivy fastened in the crevices made by decay. And at last the stately temple erected by God himself for his dwelling place afforded no shelter for him. The work which God had pronounced very good had been made insupportably

bad by man's own acts, through the abuse of God's confidence in him. Man had proven himself unworthy of God's presence within him, and yet God did not leave him to himself. Somehow he had always kept a place, though man had done all he could to crowd him out. But the Master Builder had remained. Surely he would have been justified in saying, "I entrusted to you the care of my temple. You have let it go to wreck and ruin, until now it is unfit for me to enter. I will therefore leave you to the dirt and filth and pollution which you have chosen instead of me."

Yet God is not like man, to turn away from the wrongdoer because of one or two or even a thousand failures. He does not take from us the keys of the temple we have made unholy. He desires to see the pollution removed.

It is as though a cyclone had passed over a beautiful city, and laid it waste. The citizens stand appalled as they realize the greatness of this calamity, and the first feeling is one of hopelessness. How can they restore their homes? It is as though war had ravaged a prosperous land, destroying factories and railroads, making of gardens a wilderness and of fertile farms a desert. What can be done when destruction is so complete? Our hearts, the temples of God, are defiled and ruined by our sin, as cyclone never destroyed a city, as the most disastrous war never laid waste a country.

There are not lacking those who say there is no need to bother. "Human nature is always the same!" they say. Or, "That fine scheme is all right in theory; but you can't change human beings, they always act that way."

Yet God tells us the defilement must be cleansed, the ruins must be restored. "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well" (Isa. 1: 16, 17). How shall the work be done? Too often we try to do it ourselves, because of the pride that leads a man to say, "I have brought this difficulty on myself, and I must get myself out of it as best I can without asking help from anybody." As a result of our attempts at restoration, the ruins of God's temple are surrounded by unlovely constructions of man's devising. The work is a stupendous failure, a failure that makes the temple cry aloud for the Builder.

What supreme folly to attempt to purify one's own heart and build up in magnificence that temple from which God

has been driven. That is what the man does who says he will not accept Jesus Christ until he is fit to come to Christ; who will not join the Church until he is able to live worthily of the gospel of Christ; who will build the temple, and then God may have his dwelling place for himself.

Better might one go out in the forest and the fields in the dead of winter, when frost has bound the earth in an iron clasp, when trees are leafless and fields are bare, when all looks lifeless and snow like a pall covers everything, and take upon himself the task of driving the frost from its hold on the soil, of clothing the trees with leaves and the fields with verdure, than to stand in the presence of God and promise him to present to him a heart made fit by man for his dwelling place.

It is man's duty to see that this work of renovation is done, but he cannot do it himself. Sven Hedin, on returning from an expedition to the heart of Asia, told of finding a sacred mountain about which pilgrims were walking many times in a vain attempt to get rid of their sins. "If I wash myself with snow water," said Job, "and make my hands never so clean; yet wilt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (Job 9: 30, 31). "For though thou wash thee with lye, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord Jehovah" (Jer. 2: 22).

Death is the portion of everyone who is separated from God's light, alienated from his love, a stranger to his promises. For sin is separation from God, and the wages of sin is death; and persistent sin steadily widens the chasm between man and God. Man by his own acts drives himself away from God, but he discovers to his sorrow that he cannot simply by his own act return. The drunkard who has sunk into the depths of evil as well as the ordinary man who by long neglect has lost his sense of spiritual realities cries despairingly, "I wish I were back where I was!"

O God, may we hate sin wherever we see it, whether in ourselves or in other people, but may we be charitable in judging the sins of others and hard as adamant in judging our own. We thank thee that we can take our sins to the cross and not only lose them there but gain strength so that we may not commit the same sins again. Make us like

thee in our readiness to forgive completely those who wrong us. Let there be no treasured grudge in the secret place of our hearts, but may love conquer enmities and unite us all to him who loved us and gave himself for us. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Study these passages which show how God feels about sin:

Gen. 6: 3-7; 18: 20; Ex. 34: 7; Lev. 26: 14-21; Deut. 25: 16; II Sam. 11: 27; Psalms 5: 4; Prov. 15: 8, 9; Hab. 1: 13; Luke 16: 15.

Study these passages which tell of the consequences of sin:

Gen. 4: 13; Deut. 28; 65-67; Psalms 31: 10; Psalm 38; Isaiah 6: 5. Find other similar passages.

Find in Acts, chapters 9 and 16, the stories of two men who confessed their sin. How earnest were they? What other Biblical instances do you recall?

Trace the steps in the downward path taken by Saul, the first king of Israel.

CHAPTER II

Into the Light

DAILY READINGS

Second Week, First Day

For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Rom. 5: 6-8.

Why was Paul lost in wonder as he thought of the death of Christ? Why does it seem unbelievable that Christ should die for men? For whom did Christ die? Did he die under protest, making an unwilling gift of himself? *Christ gladly gave his life, not for the lovable man, but for him who is unlovely; not for the just man, but for the unjust; not for those who are on good terms with God, but for those who have turned their back on God.* Why? Why have Christians sung during nineteen hundred years of the "love beyond degree" that gave Jesus to die?

Find in John, chapter 10, Jesus' own statement of his reason for his death.

Second Week, Second Day

But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition.—Eph. 2: 13, 14.

And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouable before him.—Col. 1: 21, 22.

In the Jewish temple the Gentiles were allowed to go only to an outer court called the Court of the Gentiles. A low wall separated this court from the other parts of the temple; on the pillars of this wall was a warning which told that death would be the lot of any Gentile passing beyond the wall. Excavations at Jerusalem have disclosed one of the pillars with this inscription of warning. How is this Gentile wall a parable of the barriers we have built between ourselves and God? What was Paul's meaning when he wrote to the Ephesians that Christ has broken down for all men this middle wall of partition? What part has the set will of a stubborn man in keeping this wall intact? What may be the result for us of the breaking down of the wall? To what privileges are we entitled who cross the broken wall to the presence of Christ? How many privileges can we have if we do not let Christ lead us across the wall? What would you reply to the man who says it is too hard to understand how to cross the barrier? Read Christ's answer to such a questioner (John 3: 5-13).

Find in John, chapters 3 and 4, Jesus' own statement as to what is required of those who would come to him.

Second Week, Third Day

Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.—Rom. 10: 9, 10.

Why does Paul insist that confession of Christ is as essential as belief in Christ? The temptation comes to all at some time to conceal their allegiance, to Christ, as it came to a Chinese convert in Boxer days who had been instrumental in saving many of his comrades before he was apprehended by his enemies. They inquired if he were a Christian. He asked himself if it would not be as well to deny the charge; but his hesitation was only momentary. "I am a Christian!" he declared, firmly, and immediately he began to talk for Jesus. They cut out his tongue, but he still mumbled of Jesus and prayed for his murderers. Perhaps no such test as that will come to us. But what is the best way to be ready for

the test? How many of us live like the clerk of whom a co-worker said, "I have been by his side for a year, and I never knew till now that he was a Christian"? Are we ashamed of the gospel? Why? Is it because we are giving to the world such a poor exhibition of the gospel? Read Paul's triumphant declaration (Rom. 1: 16).

Second Week, Fourth Day

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.—Rom. 8: 1-4.

What are we to think of one who says, "I couldn't help doing it, though I knew it was wrong"? Who was master, and who was slave? But does God intend that we shall be slaves? Do we want to get the upper hand of our habits? How are we to go about it? Why can Jesus help a fellow to do the right thing? A lad whose mother asked him what Jesus would think of a bit of bad conduct of which he had been guilty, said to her, with yearning earnestness, "Does Jesus know how hard it is for boys?" Read the answer in Hebrews 2: 18. What would be the sensible thing to do next time you feel you simply must do something you know you have no business to do? Then why ask Jesus for help only once in a while? Why not have him for a permanent Helper? That is what it means to be "in Christ Jesus." When a man is in Christ Jesus, he is free. He is free from the throttling grip of sin. Does that mean there will be no more sin in his life? Just what does it mean? And what will be the result as to his past sins? What does it mean to be free from condemnation? Answer the question asked in Romans 8: 34.

Second Week, Fifth Day

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage

again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.—Rom. 8: 14-17.

It is said that in Japan an ambitious young man, if he desires, can adopt some great man as his father, and that it is the custom for the person thus chosen to care for the young man, at least till he comes to the age of self-support. In 1896 a student in Japan, hearing of a celebrated American, decided on a daring action. "I have chosen you to be my father," he wrote, in effect, "and will sail at once for the United States." Not many weeks later the American was surprised by a call from the foreigner, who announced simply, "I have come." He was made welcome, and for five years he was one of the family. He was given the same education as his chosen father's own son. What likenesses and contrasts do you discover in this incident to our adoption as God's sons?

Which of the parables in Luke, chapter 15, is the best commentary on the day's reading?

Second Week, Sixth Day

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.—Rom. 6: 12-14.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other.—Gal. 5: 17.

F. B. Meyer writes: "When I was a boy my favorite diversion was a diving-bell, which had seats around the rim, and which at a given time was filled with people and lowered into a tank. We used to go down deeper, deeper, into the water, but not a drop came into the diving-bell, though it had no bottom and the water was quite within reach, because the bell was so full of air that, though the

water lusted against the air, the air lusted against the water, because the air was being pumped in all the time and the water could not do what otherwise it would do."

Second Week, Seventh Day

"But thanks be to God, that though you were once in thralldom to Sin, you have now yielded a hearty obedience to that system of truth in which you have been instructed. You were set free from the tyranny of Sin, and became the bond servants of Righteousness—your human infirmity leads me to employ these familiar figures—and just as you once surrendered your faculties into bondage to Impurity and ever-increasing disregard of Law, so you must now surrender them unto bondage to Righteousness ever advancing towards perfect holiness. For when you were the bond-servants of Sin, you were under no sort of subjection to Righteousness. At that time, then, what benefit did you get from conduct which you now regard with shame? Why, such things finally result in death. But now that you have been set free from the tyranny of Sin, and have become the bondservants of God, you have your reward in being made holy and you have the Life of the ages as the final result. For the wages paid by Sin are death; but God's free gift is the Life of the Ages bestowed upon us in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 6: 17-23 (Weymouth).

What is your opinion of the man who is content to think of a salvation that involves nothing more than forgiveness of sins and freedom from the fear of punishment? What more should he want? Which shall we prefer, to be free from sin, or to be free from righteousness? Is there any middle ground? Was the man who became a slave in the West Indies in order that he might preach the gospel to other slaves really a free man? Why?

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

"The wages of sin is death." This is only half of the picture God presents to us—the darker half. "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is the other half—the brighter half.

In the year 1854, Murata, a noble of Japan, stationed in the harbor of Nagasaki, found a book, printed in an unknown tongue, floating on the water. He learned that it was an English Bible. Quietly but persistently he began to learn the contents. In 1866 he sought Guido Verbeck, the missionary, and asked for baptism. In the course of conversation with the missionary, he said: "Sir, I cannot tell you my feelings when for the first time I read the account of the character and work of Jesus Christ. I had never seen or heard or imagined such a person. I was filled with admiration, overwhelmed with emotion, and taken captive by the record of his nature and life."

But wonderful as was the life of Jesus on earth, that life could not save men from sin. We are saved by his death.

The words are few and the sentences are brief that tell the story of the cross. Yet every word has a volume behind it; each sentence compels the attention. Artists have painted pictures, inspired by these words. Authors have written whole libraries dwelling upon them. Christians have thought upon them and have fallen on their knees, crying out, "My Lord and my God!" And the end is not yet. For still authors write, artists paint, Christians worship as they read. Is it any wonder? They are reading and thinking of the central event of history.

They led Jesus to Golgotha. And he went, though he knew it was to his death; he went because he knew it was to his death—for this he had come into the world. He submitted to gibes and taunts and sneers, he bore buffetings and scourgings, and in all he manifested the same quiet dignity that had astonished those who looked on as he was on trial for his life. "He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

What if the multitude could have read what was passing in the heart and brain of him who was led at their will? Thoughts, not of hate but of love; not of vengeance but of forgiveness; thoughts called forth by the knowledge that this was the hour for which he had planned, for which he had received strength in the Garden, in which he was to win salvation for men.

Thus, bearing his cross, stumbling, falling, cursed, and

beaten, he was led to Calvary. On that hill he was indeed numbered with the transgressors, for he was crucified between two thieves, "on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." There the writing was placed above him, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." There the soldiers parted his garments among them, and gave him vinegar to drink; there the spear was thrust in his side. There Christ died, and man was redeemed.

But Jesus did not die until he had uttered the words of pardon to the repentant thief, who thus became the first fruits of Calvary; and not until he had foreshadowed his occupation for all the subsequent ages of the world's history by crying out in the face of his tormentors, in the midst of the agony they had inflicted, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." So he died, and so we were redeemed; so the cross, the symbol of shame, became the most precious symbol in the world, the symbol of God's forgiving love.

And this is the measure of Christ's love. Think that he might have ended his life on earth with the acclaim of angels, under the light of a blazing sky, while men, hearing the voice of the Father saying, "This is my beloved Son," fell on their faces for fear. Then think how he did go—no glory light, but darkness; no welcoming chorus of angels, but pain and wounds and a broken heart; no sudden conquest of his enemies, but taunts and mockery from those who opposed him. For, as it was expedient for us that he go away, it was expedient that he go as he did: a thorn crown on his brow, a spear thrust in his side, his hands fast to the cross—those hands on which were written in the blood of Calvary the names of those for whom he died.

He died for us. For us he was silent before Pilate. For us he permitted himself to be delivered to the mob. Thoughts of us sustained him in those hours of anguish on the cross, and thoughts of us and longings for us fill his heart today while he pleads with every one. "My son, give me thy heart." And those who refused to heed his request are joining the ranks of his enemies.

In 1891 the editor of a Bohemian freethinkers' journal sat down to write the leader for the Christmas issue. Very naturally he began to speak of the approaching holiday. But he could not write the blasphemous words to which he had

been accustomed. "I wrote of his birth in poverty, and of his life of suffering," he said afterward. "I spoke of his terrible death. But the central point of the article was the argument that those who are blaspheming Christ now are of the same character as those who crucified him—the most miserable creatures of earth." Then, turning to a copy of the paper in which the article was published, he translated these sentences: "I am a freethinker, man of no dogma, relying upon reason and heart only. But from the depth of this heart I bow before the Saviour of men and with all the power of my reason I tremble in wonder, and am amazed before the life of Christ. The mob which crucified Christ is, to an extent, excusable; they did not know what they were doing; they were in the hands of their deceivers. But whose instruments are our freethinkers, who despise the memory of the Saviour, and curse him? . . . Hundreds of our countrymen are infidels. I cannot characterize their infidelity, except as I say it is a base insult toward everything that is sacred to other people. Such insult is blasphemy." The publication of the article caused a storm among the Bohemians; it led to the suspension of the paper; it was ultimately responsible for the editor's expulsion from the National Sokol, the Bohemian Freethinkers' society; it alienated his wife and family. But it was the first step in the new life of the writer.

And every man who will may have, through Christ, life that lasts, life that is free.

Some years ago a railway company announced as a Thanksgiving gift to its employes, a clean record for all; every demerit mark was to be removed from the books and all would be permitted to start afresh. Now if, coupled with the announcement of the proposed gift, the statement had been made that every man who made personal application at the office should receive a clean record, this would have been much like God's arrangement for us: personal application is necessary before God can accomplish his purpose of forgiving our sins. We have nothing to do but to look to Christ and tell him that we desire his life, and it will be given to us. There is no deception, no delusion; there can be none. Every word of Christ's promises will be fulfilled to the letter. Would he have died, only to deceive us? Would he have lived those years on earth, borne up by the

thought of the loving gift he was securing for us, and then refuse to give it to us? Life for us was his reward; and he will see that the life becomes ours. God has promised it. His word is passed. And God has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Is there any way to obtain eternal life but by accepting the gift? Will right living do it? Can we live right without Christ's help? Will almsgiving do it? Will self-sacrifice do it?

Every one of the many schemes for restoring men is doomed to failure but the scheme that Paul made known to the jailor at Philippi: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

The imagination of Hawthorne conceived an immense bonfire, built somewhere far out on the broad plains of the West. To this fire flocked men from all over the globe, bringing all the sin and error they could find, until everything evil seemed to be burned out of the world. And as the last bit of the load of sin vanished in smoke, a demon in human form turned to his companion and said, "This is no world for us any longer. We must hang ourselves." "Pooh!" was the answer, "there is one thing that these wiseacres have forgotten to throw into the fire, and without that all the rest of the conflagration is just nothing at all! Yes, though they had burned the earth to a cinder. They have forgotten the human heart, and unless they hit upon some method of purifying that foul cavern, forth from it will reissue all the shapes of wrong and misery, the same old shapes and worse ones, which they have taken such a vast deal of trouble to consume to ashes. I have stood by the livelong night and laughed in my sleeve at the whole business."

Yes, the demons laugh at man's own attempts to turn from sin. But when man asks God to purify his foul heart in the blood which Christ shed on Calvary, they no longer laugh. For the transformation is sure, and death will give place to life, life that begins below and increases with the years, mellowing, maturing, deepening until time stretches into eternity, till earth fades into heaven, and we go to live with God forever.

Master, we are ashamed as we think how slow we have been to appreciate all that thou hast done for us, how care-

less we have been of gifts that cost thee so much of self-denial and suffering, how empty our lives have been of deeds of loving service. Give us thy Spirit that we may resolve to make tomorrow a better day than this has been, and then to make each day still better than its predecessor. Make our hearts thine, entirely thine, and give us thy peace that we may pass it on to others in thy Name. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

What does the Cross mean to you?

How is your interpretation of the Cross affecting your daily life?

We sing, "In the Cross of Christ I glory!" Why?

If the story of the Cross is good news, why are people so reluctant to tell it?

Turn to the account of one of Christ's miracles which shows the emphasis he put on the confession of belief in him. Why was he so emphatic on this point?

To how many people have you told the story this week?

What is the most effective way of telling it?

CHAPTER III

Building on Solid Foundation

DAILY READINGS

Third Week, First Day

For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—I Cor. 3: 11

What does it mean to build the life on Jesus Christ as foundation? Is it enough to think of Jesus as a good man, and then to try to do as he did? Why is it more satisfying to believe that he is the Son of God, and to make this belief the starting point of the life? Nations have tried to get along without him; individuals without number have attempted to find a substitute for him. What has been the result? Consider the message of the French man of letters, M. Lavredan: "How fearful, how burning are the wounds of a people in whose veins flows not a drop of the blood of that Wonderful One as a healing balsam! . . . What would become of France if her children did not believe, if her women did not pray? The past of France was great. It was a believing France. France's present is tribulation. . . . How hard it is to be an atheist in this natural graveyard! I can't! I can't! I have deceived myself and you who have read my books and sing my songs." How far is the poet's statement a true representation of the experience of others?

Third Week, Second Day

So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief

corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.—Eph. 2: 19-22.

The pride of Ephesus, where the people lived to whom Paul wrote this letter, was the great temple of Diana, whose foundation was deep and strong, the stone for whose walls had been carefully selected and fitted together, that the worshipers of the heathen goddess might present it as a fit habitation. This temple was in Paul's mind as he told the Ephesian Christians that God wishes a temple in which he may dwell. Christians are to be the stones in that temple, cunningly fitted together on a prescribed foundation, for which there is but one possible corner stone. How are we to learn what is the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and how to make Jesus the corner stone? Theodore Storrs Lee, when a student at Andover, learned what the foundation was for him by spending, every morning before he left his room, a half hour in Bible study. Next, through his morning prayer, he learned how to understand and apply what he had learned, through Jesus Christ, who was the corner stone of his life. Then he went out among the fellows and lived so well what he had learned that they were glad to be in his company. Why is it people are always glad when one is near whose life shows that he is getting the best out of the Christian life?

Third Week, Third Day

As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.—Col. 2: 6, 7.

Eugene Thwing, in his story, "The Man from Red-Keg," says: "Go out into your own forest and notice how straight and tall some of those great pines grew in among others of their kind, sheltered and supported and encouraged to lift their own heads high toward the heavens by the fact that all around them tall pine trees were doing the same thing. But just see what happened when the fire came and licked up the carpet of needles over their roots and denuded the

branches, and then the tornado struck the flame stripped trees. Down they went, thousands of them, prone to the ground. They could not withstand the first good hard blow of an adverse wind. Their roots had been spread out in the shallow soil close to the surface; they had not struck into and taken a hard grip upon the hard-pan deeper down. It was too easy for them to grow into nice, handsome trees. . . . Their hold on their foundation was shallow and superficial."

Why is the man who is rooted in Christ and established in the faith able to meet the shocks of everyday life?

Third Week, Fourth Day

Being rooted and grounded in love.—Eph. 3: 17.

Think of some of the really great men you have known. In what did they excel? What was the secret of their greatness? What is the secret of true greatness in anyone? What do you think of the reply made by Dr. MacGregor to the King of Siam when he visited Scotland in 1891? At a dinner the king sought to know the secret of England's greatness. Pointing to the guests at the table, the Scotchman replied: "You see here twenty of Scotland's most distinguished men. If you could look deep into the heart of each one you would find there a great love for Jesus Christ. You can keep all the good you can get from Buddha; but when you get the heart of Jesus Christ to put on top of it you will have found the secret of England's greatness." Is the answer any less true for America and Americans than it was for England and Englishmen?

Third Week, Fifth Day

Continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister.—Col. 1: 23.

Are we ever tempted to give up the Christian life? Why? Because the job is a little bigger than we thought it would be? Because we go so far without seeing clear results? Because people are always misrepresenting us? These are

not reasons for giving up a good fight; they are reasons for holding on with the bulldog grip of faith. This is what James Stewart did in the midst of the perplexities of his missionary work in Africa. "We have nailed the flag of Africa to the mast, and there it must remain till God himself takes it down," he said. This is what Jesus did all through his life; and when the end was near he "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." And yet we talk of giving up because of our trifling difficulties. Let us rather make the language of Isaiah our own, "For the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore have I not been confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame."

What words in the latter part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) enforce the lesson of the day's reading?

Third Week, Sixth Day

I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.—Phil. 4: 13.

And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness.—II Cor. 12: 9.

A teacher was telling a company of business men of the many boys who, having left his school morally earnest, came back after a few years with a sadly different tone, because of what they felt was the necessity of keeping step with the organization in which they found themselves. "The strain upon men who are at the points where temptation chiefly falls is very great," the teacher said. Then he asked one of his hearers, a railway president noted for his integrity, "Could you tell a body of students who are going into large corporate business, that success may be won with no loss of ethical ideals?" After some hesitation the reply was given, "I think that possible, *if the man is very strong.*" How can we be strong?

Third Week, Seventh Day

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.—Phil. 2: 12, 13.

A village storekeeper, a slave of strong drink, made many vain efforts to reform. His townsmen thought his case was hopeless. Then, all at once, he began to straighten up, to look his fellows in the eye, to pay his bills, to be a man. Some one called attention to the fact that the strange change in him was coincident with the appearance of a new sign over his store, "John Jones and Partner." Curious questions were asked about the partner; and the storekeeper had no answer but a smile. Yet, one day the man who had been a hard drinker said to an intimate friend, "My Partner keeps me straight." There were many shrewd guesses as to the identity of the man whom no one ever saw. Finally the storekeeper died. Then the identity of the Partner was disclosed. Who was he? Who is the Partner who can and will enable a man to keep straight? What has been your experience when you have tried to get along without him?

This day's text tells of our partnership with God. What further partnership is outlined in the first verse of John 15?

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

"What have the builders of the new skyscraper been doing all these weeks?" asked a man who had returned to the city after an absence of three months. "When I last passed this lot the ground had been cleared of rubbish and everything was ready for the building. On my return I expected to see the steel structure completed to the very top. And they are just laying the first beams!"

"They have been working hard all the time," was the reply. "You cannot see the results of their work, for what they have done is out of sight. The great concrete pillars on which the structure is to rest have been built up from the solid rock. These pillars have been made in the most substantial manner. Now that they have been completed, the superstructure will be added rapidly, in full assurance that it will stand for centuries, if necessary."

Paul followed the example of Christ in employing this figure of a foundation when he urged his friends to establish their character firmly. He taught them that in character building the foundation comes first, and that, even if the foundation is down out of sight, it is all important and must be of the most solid material; that there is but one solid

foundation, and that attempts to build on any other foundation must fail.

The experience of those who try to build their lives on any but this one foundation will be a disappointing one, as was the experience of Chundra Lela. She was deeply troubled because of the sense of wrong in her life. Longing to be rid of the burden, she resolved to go beyond any of her countrymen in India in her attempts to propitiate the gods. So, for three years, she spent the days of the hot season seated with little protection in the direct rays of the sun, and with fires burning close to her on every side. During the cooler weather she spent her days in the water of a pond up to her neck, telling over her beads with hands that grew numb from the cold. At night she would stand on one foot before the image of the god she desired to propitiate. But at the end of the three years she was not a bit nearer peace than at the beginning. She wondered what the difficulty was, until she was told of Jesus Christ. Then she realized that she had started wrong. At once she began life over again, building everything on Jesus as her foundation.

Only those who build the life on Christ have power to do what makes living worth while. On the occasion of the dedication of a Chinese church in San Francisco, a local Chinese paper said: "The teachings of Jesus Christ are shown to be right by his commandments, a perfect law for all nations. These commandments are as solid as gold and as sound as jade—whether you are a disciple of Jesus, of Confucius, of Buddha, or of Mohammed, whether Greek or Jew; you cannot live at peace without these commandments, *but the disciple of Jesus alone keeps them.*"

A few years ago when a company of commercial agents from Japan visited New York City, the Christian business men of the city gave a dinner for them. One who wrote of the event has told that the principal response on behalf of the guests was made by the chairman of the party, Baron Shibusawa, who spoke no English and therefore required the services of an interpreter. Whether by intent or misunderstanding, the interpreter quite failed to transfer to the Americans present the sense of what was probably the baron's most significant and emphatic utterance. But a missionary at the table caught the sentence, took it down, translated it and verified his translation by submitting it to a

member of the Japanese party who was familiar with English. The baron's declaration, as thus rendered and verified, was as follows: "Japan in the future must base her morality on religion. It must be a religion that does not rest on an empty or superstitious faith like that of some of the Buddhist sects in our land, but must be like the one that prevails in your own country, which manifests its power over men by filling them with good works."

The man whose life is built on Christ knows that right living is not an accident, but that it is the result of definite determination to belong to Christ and constant struggle to live according to that determination. He will find that "none of us can live well by an occasional good resolution," as Professor William James says. He will realize that "everything depends on stirring up in ourselves, by a habit of well doing, a great and ever increasing fund of moral power that shall be available to brace us against sudden temptation, to help us to carry out better purposes and hold us steady and true to the ideal." Thus we will come ever nearer to realizing what has been called the ideal of human life, "in which all that is good has become sheer habit and all that is bad is so contrary to nature that it gives us even a physically perceptible and painful shock."

A young Scotch immigrant, who landed in New York with three cents in his pocket, had laid the foundation that helped him to do the right thing as a matter of habit. In his Highland home he had been taught to love the Bible, to honor God, and to keep the Sabbath. He landed on Monday, and went to work the next day. When he had learned to walk about the city he located the Scotch Church. On Sunday morning several young men, who had been fellow passengers, called on him and asked him where he was going. When he told them of his plans to attend church, they made sport of him and proposed a trip to Long Island on the plea that health required the jaunt after the long confinement on shipboard. The Scotchman's reply was to the point: "You may go where you please, but I go to church. The last words my father spoke to me as we parted on the shores of Scotland were, 'Remember the Sabbath day.' I have not so soon forgotten." Throughout his long life he never forgot his allegiance to God. Day by day he tried to do the things that pleased God. He formed habits of industry, frugality, gen-

erosity, and earnestness that made him a marked man in the section of the city where he lived, while his companions who made fun of his religion were ruined by the habits of evil into which they drifted.

Only those who live on familiar terms with Jesus Christ, the one sure Foundation for the life, can have the nature that will be shocked by the mere suggestion of evil; and the sure result of slipping from him is the fading away of the sensitiveness to evil that safeguards the life from disaster.

In 1910 a Philadelphia house wrecking company wished to demolish a great factory chimney more than two hundred feet high. The workmen were appalled at the task before them; for a time they thought it would be necessary to take down the stack brick by brick. They were relieved when the engineers told them how the work was to be done. First a corner stone was taken from the chimney, a few feet from the ground. In its place was put a large timber. Then, stone by stone, two-thirds of several courses of the foundation were replaced by wood. Still the structure stood, apparently as solid as it had been for fifty years. But it was not to stand long. A laborer poured oil over the timber which had taken the place of the stones. A lighted match was held to the oil. Soon the flames were devouring the wood. Twenty minutes longer the chimney stood, then, without warning, the pile crumbled and fell.

The fall of the chimney is a picture of the fall of some who have been looked upon by their acquaintances as models of integrity. "Who would have thought that such an upright man could be wrecked!"—the remark is heard after the revelation of a fresh downfall. How did it happen? The careless man replaces gradually the things of Christ by other things which cannot sustain the load upon them. The result of repeated yielding to secret sin is sure: some day, when a time of testing comes suddenly, the life will fall in ruins.

The world is always ready to sneer at the man who has been destroyed as a result of a bad foundation, but it respects the man whose life is built surely and unmistakably on the life of Jesus Christ. Many people told a young lawyer that he was ruining his brilliant prospects when he became an earnest Christian. Some of his clients deserted him for a time. One of these was a saloon keeper who said he did not want his business done by a canting Christian. But not many

months passed before he was once more in the office of the lawyer. "Some of these other fellows will do when I have my ordinary work on hand," he said, in explaining his presence, "but it is different today. Now I want my will drawn up, and I come to you for this; you are a Christian man on whom I can depend."

One who had sat through many trying conferences of an important committee asked a friend, "Other things being equal, why is a Christian the best committeeman?" "Let me answer by asking another question," came the response: "Why does the man who is not a Christian lack an essential equipment for all the duties of life?"

The Christian has in his heart the grace of God, brought to him in the person and example of Jesus, that enables him to overcome opposition and destroys prejudice, but the man who is not a Christian is ignorant of the principles of unselfish love that are the very foundation of profitable and acceptable intercourse.

In other words, the man whose life is built on Christ as foundation will be rooted and grounded in love. That is a bold figure, but it is the figure we are authorized to use. As there is a soil adapted to the growth of wheat, as there is a soil fitted for cotton, so there is a soil which favors the Christian's growth, the only soil, in fact, in which he can grow. That soil is love, rich, deep, boundless love, the love of God. We must be grounded in his love until our roots cannot be torn up by the mightiest tempests of evil, until they are thrust so deep into the love of God that his measureless, endless life courses through our veins, making every nerve to tingle and the face to glow with a beauty which is not of the earth.

We thank thee, our Father, that we have a work to do for thee, and that we are to do it in partnership with thee. Give us thy Holy Spirit that we may have power in the world. Keep us from complaint because of the feeling that thou hast shut us up to service in some obscure corner, but show us how to do our best for thee where thou hast put us. We gladly leave our lives in thy hands, for with thee we are safe, and we know that by thy grace we shall be of use in hastening the day of the coming of thy kingdom. Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

How did Paul's own experience fit him to talk of the necessity of a proper foundation for the Christian life? What was his experience at the beginning of his Christian career? (Acts, chapters 9, 22, and 26).

By whom were the foundations laid in Timothy's life? (II Timothy, chapters 1 and 3). How fully are parents responsible for teaching their children of God, and how are they to fulfil this responsibility?

What would you say to one who insists that he can build his life without Christ? What argument could you give him from your own experience?

What verb of four letters repeated a number of times in I John, chapter 3, tells of the solid foundation of the author's Christian life?

Find in II Timothy, chapter 1, a famous saying of Paul in which the same verb occurs. Why are people so ready to say, "I hope I am a Christian," instead of coming out with a strong message of certainty?

A young man was asked by a skeptical friend if he were certain that Christ was with him. "I am as certain as I am that I see the tree yonder," was the reply. What does certainty like that do for us? How may it be attained?

CHAPTER IV

Armed for Conquest

DAILY READINGS

Fourth Week, First Day

But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.—Eph. 4: 20-24.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.—Rom. 13: 14.

Is it enough to admit that Christ is the Son of God? Real belief in Christ leads to the formation of new habits. Why is Paul's demand reasonable that one who has learned of Christ must change his way of living, putting a full stop to many of the ways that were a part of him and forming new ways in accordance with the lesson he has learned from Christ?

A missionary has told of a young farmer of whom he asked, "Have you heard of the Jesus religion?" "Oh, yes!" was the reply, "I have heard much of it. Many people do that doctrine; it is very good." "Do you believe also?" "No, I cannot be a believer. Those Christians spend their time and money doing good to others. I must do for myself. I cannot afford to practice their doctrine." The missionary met a woman. He asked her if she knew the Jesus doctrine. "Oh, yes; it is very good." "Then why do you not believe?" "Oh, I sell liquor. I cannot do that and be a Christian." Have you ever heard anything like that in Christian America? If everyone who is intellectually convinced that the teachings of Jesus are right should act on his belief, how much of

a change would there be in the world? What does it mean to put on the Lord Jesus Christ?

Fourth Week, Second Day

Ye were running well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?—Gal. 5: 7.

Lay hold on the life eternal.—I Tim. 6: 12.

Stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage.—Gal. 5: 1.

Be alert! Centuries ago it was a common method of defense in time of war to dig ditches before an advancing army, and to mask these cleverly. When the army reached these, the horses and chariots and engines of war would plunge in and the entire army would be put to confusion. Evidently Paul had some such picture in mind, for when he wrote the question which has been translated, "Who did hinder you," he used words whose literal meaning was, "Who dug ditches for you?" "You were getting on so well," he said to the people. "I was proud of your progress. And suddenly you fell headlong! How did it happen?" How does it happen today that the Christian gets into the ditch? Or is "happen" a good word to use? What are some of the ditches into which a Christian is apt to fall? How can one get out of the ditch? Romans 14: 21 and Matthew 18: 6 indicate that there is something more to be on guard against than falling into a ditch oneself. Is there anything in our lives that is proving a temptation, a pitfall, to others? For the sake of others as well as for our own sake, we need to lay hold on Christ, and never to let go. Those who have tight hold of Christ will keep out of the ditch themselves and will help others to get out and keep out.

Into what ditch did Abraham fall twice?

What was Jacob's ditch?

Into what ditch did Achan fall? Saul, King of Israel? Elijah? Peter? Ananias? James and John?

Who of these got out and kept out? How did they do it?

Fourth Week, Third Day

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such

as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.—I Cor. 10: 12, 13.

It doesn't do to be *too sure of oneself*. A man who had succeeded for months in keeping his resolution to avoid a bad habit that had all but wrecked his life, one day said to a friend, "There is no longer fear of a fall." How was his state of mind dangerous? Why is a man more likely to yield to a temptation to which he thinks he is not liable than to a temptation concerning which he is always on guard? Paul puts Christians on their guard not simply about the danger of overconfidence, but also about the folly of despondency concerning temptation. To a friend who had expressed sympathy for him and who urged the need of greater confidence in God, a discouraged man said: "It is all very well for you to speak; your life has been a bed of roses. Just wait till you have had trials and burdens like mine!" What would have been Paul's reply? When temptations came to him thick and fast, he could say, with a confident smile, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Christ could help Paul, and he can help us, no matter what our temptations may be—he was "in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb. 4: 15). Then let no one say, "My temptations are peculiar; there is no escape from them." Can you think of a temptation too peculiar for Christ's effective help?

What do you think of Peter's attitude as indicated in Mark 14: 29, Luke 22: 33, and John 13: 37?

What happened to the man who made the indignant statement given in II Kings 8: 13?

What was the secret of the wonderful change in Peter that enabled him to take the stand described in Acts 4: 13-21?

Fourth Week, Fourth Day

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier.—II Tim. 2: 3, 4.

Paul urges most reasonably that we *train for the fight*. Two difficulties are raised by many who read this verse. For

one thing, they resent what they interpret as a demand that those who become Christians shall cut themselves off from ordinary pleasures and occupations. But does Paul ask this? There are some things that interfere with service as a soldier of Jesus Christ, and we must get rid of them. A young Scotchman who took great delight in studying birds and beasts and insects, enlisted in the army. One day, while the soldiers were marching on the moor, a butterfly fluttered on the face of the nature lover. Recognizing a rare specimen, the man broke from the ranks and was after the butterfly. Naturally his commander demanded that thereafter his love of butterflies should not interfere with his services as a soldier.

Many people persist in quoting Paul's words, "Suffer hardship with me," as a proof that the Christian is expected to have a hard time. There are those who even say that the Christian must expect nothing but a hard time, and they therefore go out of their way to find difficulties and hardships that they may face these. But what is to be thought of the man who hunts for hardships? The boy who, when asked to define the word "difficulty," said, "something to be overcome," was not altogether right. A difficulty is also something to be avoided, whenever this may be done with propriety. No one is properly equipped for fighting life's battles if he is unskilled in avoiding difficulties when these may be avoided without loss, or timid in facing difficulties when they demand attention.

What are two or three things which, while entirely proper in themselves, might become a hindrance to the Christian?

Fourth Week, Fifth Day

Do all things without murmurings and questionings; that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world.—Phil. 2: 14, 15.

The worth-while Christian is *all wool and a yard wide*. An unknown first century author gave this testimony to the earnestness of the early Christians: "They live in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. They are in the flesh,

but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the prescribed laws by their lives." An accepted doctrine of the heathen world was briefly expressed, "Man is a wolf to a man whom he does not know"; but the surprised comment of some of the heathen who looked on the early Christians was, "Behold how they love one another; they love each other without knowing each other." They believed that God reveals himself to his people for two reasons: that they may know him, and that they may reveal him to others. And they acted as if they really believed that people would form their ideas of God from what they, God's followers, did. Do you see in this fact any explanation of the rapid growth of the Church in early days? How does the inconsistent life of Christians affect the world today?

Fourth Week, Sixth Day

So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.—I Thess. 5: 6-9.

Paul knew the Christian's need of a *high standard*. An apprentice in a printing office worked listlessly. In vain the foreman tried to rouse him by warning him of the consequences of failure. But, later on, the foreman realized that it was no longer necessary to drive the boy. He was driving himself. The editor had given him a watch. The first day he owned it he timed his work. Finding that he could set a stickful in twelve minutes, he made this a standard. Every twelve minutes the stick must be filled, or he would have to account to himself. It was not long before the boy became the speediest compositor in the office. How does the experience of the apprentice illustrate God's method of dealing with the Christian? The wrath of the foreman was powerless to waken him up. What was responsible for his progress? What spur to action does a loving God provide for us?

How do faith and hope protect the Christian and make him ready for the hard fight with the things he has no business to like?

Fourth Week, Seventh Day

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.—Eph. 6: 10-20.

In Paul's plea for Christian preparedness four things are vividly presented. There is the appeal to be strong; there is repeated urging to stand against evil; there is the assurance that all-sufficient armor for every possible contingency is provided; and there is the clarion call to appreciate the fact that the impending struggle is fraught with momentous consequences, for "our foe strives to take heaven from us," to use the words of an early Christian leader.

Why is strength demanded? Why is so great emphasis laid on the necessity of standing one's ground? Note other parts of the defensive armor: a man needs to know for certain that he belongs to Christ, and he must believe in Christ with all his might. Then nothing more is needed but weapons of offense; and two are provided—the Bible and prayer.

Why is the Bible called the sword of the Spirit? (See Heb. 4: 12). How does Bible study help the Christian for offense as well as for defense? What is the offensive value of prayer? How could a man who for years was unable to stir hand or foot, become his pastor's right hand man simply by praying?

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

No bigger mistake was ever made than is made by those who declare that the earnest Christian must give up everything that makes life worth while. The Master asks his people to give up only those things that interfere with their service of him; that is, the things that interfere with having the best time a man can possibly have. The thing that interferes may be money, or love of pleasure, or desire for applause. Whatever it is it must be offered to Christ. Instead of taking it away, he may choose to permit its retention, that it may be used then for him.

It is so easy to hold on to things one does not want to give up; it is always possible to find a good excuse for holding on. The business man is tempted to adopt questionable methods in trade because he fears that otherwise he will be unable to hold his own with unscrupulous competitors. The official, having his eyes on reelection, is tempted to determine each act, not according to what is right but according to what he thinks will be the effect on the future he wants for himself.

Unless Christ is given complete control of the life, no one can be sure of being big enough to withstand the temptation to use power for selfish ends. A man thinks he will be, perhaps, in the days of looking forward to the power; but he puts off getting in training for the day of responsibility, permitting shady transactions in the day of small things. "Time enough to pull up when pulling up is worth while," he thinks. But he finds at length that pulling up is not so easy. It is much easier to drift, and he keeps on drifting. The thing that seemed so safe becomes his undoing. He is like the New Bedford ship captains who had been lured by whales into dangerous quarters in the Arctic ice pack. The Eskimos flocked to the ships and told the captains they had a last chance to escape. The captains laughed, and continued to catch whales. But in four days the ice closed in, and it was

necessary to abandon the ships and make a perilous journey over the ice before a point of safety could be reached.

A young Christian was so eager to have a little more money than he could get by ordinary methods, that he used his Sundays to oversee the building of cottages on two lots he had bought in an addition to the town. Because he was out of town during the entire week, he felt he should be excused for absence from church, just for a little while; when he had the fifteen per cent. on his investment which the cottages would bring to him, he thought it would be easy to settle down to active, earnest Christian service. But he did not settle down. The worship of the dollar made him forget the worship of God.

That man was right who said: "All the good things that you can put a man into won't make any better man of him, if, when he didn't have 'em, he wasn't trying to make a better man of himself."

The first thing for a Christian to do when he realizes that he is permitting something to drag him away from God is to ask God's forgiveness and his help to enable him to stand firm. Do we hesitate to make this prayer? Do we feel that we have made the prayer so often that God may grow weary of hearing it? Then we need to take to heart the assurance that "we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith" in Christ (Eph. 3: 12).

God will stand by those who show a desire to stand with him, who are willing to let him decide what they are to have and how they are to use it.

But the Christian must not lose sight of the fact that, while he is to be on guard lest he slip away from God, he is to stand fast not only for his own sake but for the sake of others. Why has God revealed himself to us, giving us his light, enabling us to understand his truth? Is it simply that we may be well content with ourselves, gloating over the light as a miser gloats over his gold?

When a famous Scotchman was a boy he originated the game of lantern bearers. Every September the boys who knew the secret would sally forth at night, each with a lighted lantern fastened under his coat. No ray of light was allowed to escape. "To be a boy with a bull's eye under his coat was enough for us," the one who devised the game explained. When one lantern bearer met another greetings were ex-

changed: "Have you got your lantern?" was asked. If the answer was "Yes," well and good. The boys would strut about in darkness, conscious of the hidden light.

What a difference it would make in the world if only every under-the-bushel Christian were a real, downright, outright, upright Christian! And what a difference it would make to the Christian himself! For if the Christian does not give light to the world, the world will give darkness to him.

Christ does not ask the Christian to take himself out of touch with the world, but he does ask that his touch with the world shall always be a hearty, helpful, loving touch. There is good reason to doubt the sincerity of one who, professing to be a Christian, is not eager to share his religion with others. "The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion," a friend said to John Wesley. "You cannot serve God alone; you must, therefore, find companions or make them."

The opportunities to make companions continually present themselves, if we would only keep looking for them. But we don't. An earnest Christian once told how he lost a chance to reach a man who was hungering for the word he might have spoken. A woman came to his office and told him that her husband had gone to him that morning hoping he would talk about religion. "Did he come?" she asked. "Yes," was the reply. "Well, what did he say?" "Why, he just talked about the price of brass." "But that was just an excuse for coming," the visitor explained. "What did you say to him?" "I am sorry to say that all I talked about was just brass, too," was the reply.

The world suffers so much from those who are lukewarm, half hearted, or even indifferent, that there is always a welcome for the worker who is "all there," to use a phrase that is expressive even if it has not yet become good English. It was said of a young railroad man who reached a high place in his chosen work that one reason for his progress was this: "Whatever has B at all, has the whole of him." Thus he put himself in line with the teaching, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." The only kind of Christian he would have approved is the Christian who shows his appreciation of and consent to the precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Whole hearted service wins, everywhere and always, but those who

are in the habit of making venture with the feeling, "I don't need to put too much energy into this," deserve to fail.

God asks Christians to put all their energy into his service, and he provides a way for them to do this. He arms them completely, so that they can be "all there" when they do their daily tasks, when they take their recreation, when they try to win others to him.

Every part of the armor he has provided is important, but there is one portion that is especially important—"the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Those who know how to use this weapon have all the rest of the armor, for defense as well as offense.

Yet so often the Christian is tempted to lay aside the Bible and to substitute some book of devotion based on the Bible. Then it is but a step to reading moral essays written from the point of view of men of the world, and then it is but one more step to purely secular reading.

A thoughtful author has written of a man who enjoyed long walks. At first he was accustomed to take his lunch with him, but he felt that to carry lunch was a useless burden. So he substituted for the wholesome food a little Indian pellet which made him feel strong and vigorous, lifted him into a seventh heaven of delight and gave him visions which ordinary men could not see. After the effects of the drug had worn off, the reaction came, and he felt the lack of true food. At length he died miserably. He had been seeking relief and pleasure, but he had not sought them in the right way.

The Christian who neglects Bible reading, substituting for it some other food, starves his soul and endangers his usefulness.

Learn a lesson from a convert from heathenism, a patient in a hospital in China. A missionary, seeing her well worn Bible, asked, "Do you read your Bible much?" "I read it constantly," she said. "I never wish for 'the last dish' when I am reading it." The missionary, in telling the incident, explained that "the last dish" announces the close of a Chinese feast.

Those who study the Bible with eagerness and constancy will not come away disappointed. They will know what it is to lift the hanging hands, clasp the nerveless fingers, and grip eternal life with the purpose of holding it fast. For

them the search for eternal life will become the chief business of life. The things that interfere, whether in business, in home life, or in social life, will be brought under Christ's control, so that it will seem natural to look not only upon church attendance and church work as service of Christ, but upon all the actions of life as sacred through his blessing and guidance.

The line that has been drawn between things secular and things sacred must be erased. God must be carried into business and travel and social pleasure. Thus every action of life will take on new meaning, and joy will be at the full, for the way to victory will be plain.

Teach us, O God, the joy of turning from sin unto thee, and of presenting the Christian life in such an attractive light that others will desire to yield themselves to thee. Teach us that the blessings thou dost give us are not for ourselves only, but for others as well; and not only for those with whom we are in heartiest sympathy but for those with whom we have felt we have little in common. By the coming of the Spirit into the hearts of all of us, may we become one great brotherhood, forgetting enmities and differences and jealousies, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

What are some common ways of hiding one's light?

What did Jesus mean when he said, "Ye are the salt of the earth?" How is the faithful Christian like salt?

What effect does it have on a Christian to point another to Christ? What is the effect on the character of the Christian who never thinks of anybody's salvation but his own?

What promises has God made to those who study his Word? How were men of whom the Bible tells helped by reading the Bible which they had? (Use your Concordance). How have people you know been helped by the Bible? What help has it given you?

CHAPTER V

The Worthy Walk

DAILY READINGS

Fifth Week, First Day

To walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing.—Col. 1: 10.

What would an employer say to a workman whose heart is no more than half in his work? What is your honest opinion of a Christian who is not willing to give whole-hearted service to God? Paul had no sympathy for such a Christian. He taught the necessity of absolute surrender in order that God's best gifts may be received. Note his use of the word "all" in the passage from which today's reading is taken: he prayed that the Colossians might have *all* spiritual wisdom (v. 9); that they might walk worthily of the Lord unto *all* pleasing, (v. 10); that they might be strengthened with *all* power, (v. 11); that they might attain to *all* patience (v. 11). God's glory is revealed to those who are dissatisfied with anything short of such complete surrender to him.

Fifth Week, Second Day

For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them; for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of. But all things when they are reproved are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.—Eph. 5: 8-17.

A missionary in Japan has told of a young man who presented himself for church membership, to the surprise of all who knew him. The most surprised of all was the missionary to whom he applied for baptism. He was asked how he had been led to become a Christian. He replied that the reading of the life of Chinese Gordon had impressed him deeply. He wondered if the gospel could really transform a man, as the biography said the Christian soldier was transformed. Some time later he met a Christian family during their vacation stay at the seashore. "He coupled what he had read of Christ's life, reproduced in the life of General Gordon, with what he saw of Christ's influence in the life of the missionary and his family, and he concluded that Jesus, to have exerted such a power, must have been more than a man, and that the Gospels were at least worthy of imitation."

What impression do we make on strangers when we are away from home?

Does the feeling that we are not on dress parade ever get possession of us and make us careless?

Fifth Week, Third Day

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.—Gal. 5: 22-26.

A young man was accused of questionable conduct. Those who knew him well, said, "The charge is absolutely without foundation. His name and the action spoken of cannot be connected." Events proved that they were right. Similarly the story is told in the biography of Dr. Alexander Maclaren that one who had met him only once mistook for him a

stranger who bore a marked resemblance to him. For some reason the stranger accepted the identification, and walked down the street with the man who had accosted him. They passed a saloon. The stranger said, "Let's go in and have a drink." Then the error was evident. When one hears of incidents like these, the questions come unbidden: Would a mistake have been revealed as conclusively if the stranger had been impersonating one of us? What would be the judgment of our acquaintances if evil should be spoken of us? What is our safeguard?

Fifth Week, Fourth Day

Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore

Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,

And touch no unclean thing;

And I will receive you,

And will be to you a Father,

And ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.—II Cor. 6: 14-18.

Translate into everyday language the questions asked by Paul. Does he mean that a man is to hold himself aloof from other people with an "I am holier than thou!" expression on his face? Read in Luke 18: 9-14 Jesus' opinion of a man who takes that attitude to others. Then how are we to solve the problem of mingling with those who are just a little careless about trying to do what is right? Is it enough that we shall be unharmed by coming in touch with what is evil? How about our responsibility to help those we touch? A hard drinker confessed that he had led twenty of his boyhood companions into the saloon, and that eleven of the twenty became criminals or suicides. Put that record by the side of the words written of George Williams, the founder of the Young Men's Christian Association, who, at nineteen

years of age, entered a city store as a clerk: "When he went there it was almost impossible for a young man in the house to be a Christian; three years afterwards it was almost impossible to be anything else."

Fifth Week, Fifth Day

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that . . . I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel.—Phil. 1: 27.

A student in college was not doing well. He made a rather poor showing in an examination. A few days later a professor called him aside and said: "What did you mean by putting in such a paper? It was passably good, of course, but it was not what it should have been. It was not worthy of you." What did the professor mean? What should a student do to walk worthily? A business man? A professional man? What, then, is meant by the appeal to the Christian to walk worthily? Of whom is the Christian to walk worthily? What has our walking worthily to do with the gospel of Christ? A missionary has told of a Chinese official who felt obliged to make request through the foreign consul for the recall of a certain missionary, because he did not know how to control his temper. Was this missionary responsible for his failure to commend the gospel to the official? Once in a Boston morning paper this editorial note was printed: "The day was dark and gloomy, but Phillips Brooks walked down through Newspaper Row and all was bright." One good look at a man like that is enough to make one think twice before declaring that Christianity is a failure.

Fifth Week, Sixth Day

But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.—Acts 20: 24.

What is the best thing in life? What are men most eager for? Is it power? money? fame? happiness? What was Paul's ambition? What do you think of his method of finding satisfaction in life? Scores of busy men in New York,

deciding that they might as well give up trying to be happy while looking out for themselves only, began to look out also for poor boys who needed friends to help them to keep out of mischief. Each one of these men has agreed to look out for one boy who needs a friend, to be his chum and his helper, his Big Brother. Every one of them who has kept this agreement faithfully says there is nothing like the new plan to make life seem worth while. And the greatest joy has come to those who, by their word and by their life, have been able to persuade their Little Brothers to keep step with them as they try to walk in the way that pleases Christ.

Why is a man who is unselfish attractive to others?

Why does he get more out of life than his fellow who is always keeping his eyes open for "the main chance"?

Fifth Week, Seventh Day

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.—I Cor. 10: 31.

It is important that a man shall make a living. But what is more important? Do you agree with one who said that a young man, in choosing his vocation, should plan to make the world better by the efforts that provide his living? It was a turning point in the career of Matthias W. Baldwin, a Philadelphia manufacturer of the last century, when he realized that, while he had been making a living, he had not been making the most of life. "One night I sat down to think my life over, and what account I should give in the judgment for all my labors," he wrote in his reminiscences. "I made up my mind I could not bear to say I had spent my time in making gewgaws!" Then he turned from his work as a manufacturing jeweler, and set his feet in the path that led him to become in a few years the great locomotive builder. The conscientious asking and answering of that young man's question would prove a turning point in the lives of thousands in this twentieth century.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

There is no more characteristic phrase in the writings of Paul than that of Colossians 1: 10: "To walk worthily of

the Lord unto all pleasing." The earnestness of his own soul and his conception of the seriousness of the Christian life are revealed by the words.

That word *walk* is picturesque. The Christian is to be active. He is to keep moving. He is not to walk as does the baby, who takes one, two, three steps—and then falls into his mother's arms. We are not to be content with a step or two in the Christian life, after which we say we are so tired that we must rest awhile. We are not to be satisfied with a little following of the Master, and afterward, perhaps for days and weeks together, to live our own lives just as we choose, till another spasm of activity takes possession of us. From the Greek verb here used by Paul for walk the name of the Peripatetic school of philosophers was derived. Aristotle, the founder of this school, was accustomed to teach his students while he walked about in his garden; his successors also were peripatetics, philosophers who walked about. To us a peripatetic means a traveler. *We are to be peripatetics in the Christian life. We are to walk. We are to keep on walking. We are to be active always.*

And our walk, our activity, is to be worthy of Christ, not only in some things, but in all things. There is no room for a weak determination to be worthy of Christ in a few things, but not in others; no justification for the plea sometimes heard, "God does not expect me to pattern my life according to his standards in everything; I can take up the Christian life by degrees, and in time I will come to all these things." There are Christians who make scarcely any effective, aggressive impact on the lives of others because they are not trying to please Christ in all things. Perhaps they have had a season of fruitfulness, but for some reason they have gradually ceased to bear fruit. As, frequently, a fruit tree has nothing on it but leaves, so some Christians have nothing but words by which to manifest to the world their claim to be called God's sons. Their words are as plentiful as the leaves on the fruitless tree, but somehow the world refuses to accept words unless they are backed up by actions. No more can God accept protestations of affection to him, unless these are proved by an effort to overcome sin and live a fruitful life.

The necessity of living carefully cannot be overemphasized. If the words we speak are to be effective, they must be backed

by a life that inspires confidence. The message given to Christian workers by Doctor Maclaren should never be forgotten: "Be, and then do, and then speak." Because he lived in accordance with this precept, his life was effective and his speech was powerful. The world has no use for a man's words unless his acts and his speech correspond.

Other people may make great pretensions and fail to carry them out, if they will, but the Christian must make every effort to live in accordance with his professions. A missionary has told of the chief of a tribe in South Africa who, while he himself was still a heathen, proved to be a good friend of Christianity. He used to say to those of the tribe who professed to be converted to the new faith: "If you become better men and women by being Christians, you may remain so; but if not, I won't let you be Christians at all." Could the requirements have been stated more clearly?

A sure test of the reality of a convert's Christianity is the manner of his life after conversion. Is he still content to do the things that stained his life before? Or is he constantly making such efforts to conquer sin that those who know him will realize the change and ask what has come over him? The fruits of earnest Christian living are so well known in this country that few are at a loss to answer such a question. Even in heathen lands the change that Christ brings into the life is becoming known by its results. An unconverted Chinese merchant asked a traveler from Manchuria if the Christians in that land were like the Christians in China, adding that, if so, they were good men. Then he gave his reason: "A man owed us an account of twenty dollars five years ago. He refused to acknowledge more than ten dollars; and we had no redress. A few months ago he became a Christian, and came and asked us to look up that old account. Then he insisted on paying the full amount, with interest for all these years." The testimony of a life like that goes far toward undoing the harm worked by an inconsistent Christian; but think what the effect on the world would be if every Christian should be content with nothing short of consistent living. The true Christian proves his Christianity by his desire to permit not even the smallest sin in his life.

It is impossible to walk worthily of the Lord without walking worthily also of the truest manhood and womanhood.

For the truest men and women are those whose daily lives are shaped in accordance with what the Master likes—the things that are eternally and invariably right and proper. A college professor knew what would reach the careless student when he said to him, "Your conduct is not worthy of your father, and it is not worthy of your grandfather." He felt that the young man needed to compare himself, soberly and honestly, with men who had been remarkable for sterling integrity and irreproachable character. The result, he believed, would be an earnest purpose to follow in the footsteps of men who had tried to walk worthily of the Lord Jesus Christ. Frequently an appeal like that will effectually open the eyes to the fact that the truest manhood is Christian manhood.

The Christian who would walk worthily of the Lord must be really humble, that is, he should be manly enough to realize that he himself is of but small importance as compared with the cause he serves.

Paul spoke of meekness as a mark which distinguishes the Christian from men of the world. Perhaps this was never better illustrated than during General Sherman's last campaign in the South, when certain changes in commanders were made. General Howard was placed at the head of a special division. Soon after this the war closed and there was to be a grand review of the army at Washington. The night before the review Sherman sent for Howard, and said: "The political friends of the officer you succeeded are determined that he shall ride at the head of the corps, and I want you to help me out." "It is my command," said Howard, "and I am entitled to ride at its head." "Of course you are," replied Sherman, "you led the men through Georgia and the Carolinas; but, Howard, you are a Christian." "If you put it on that ground," said Howard, "there is but one answer. Let him ride at the head of the corps." "Yes, let him have the honor," said Sherman, "but you will report to me at nine o'clock, and will ride by my side at the head of the army." Howard protested, but his commander's orders were positive.

The Christian who would walk worthily of the Lord will by his life discourage evil.

Of Theodore Storrs Lee this was said by his biographer: "His influence for good on his associates was marvelous, simply because he proved by his life the reality of his Chris-

tian profession. It was said of him by a friend that 'no deadlier enemy of vice ever entered Amherst College,' while another friend wrote, 'When his tall, rigid form moved through a company, whether in the fraternity house or on the campus, we all felt instinctively that here was one who could be relied upon for truest, staunchest friendship and unbending integrity. He unconsciously purified the atmosphere wherever he went.'"

The Christian who would walk worthily of the Lord will be as earnest in his Christianity at home as he is among those outside the home.

When Gypsy Smith became a Christian there were those in the gypsy encampment who doubted the worth of his new profession. But when they observed his changed conduct to those about him, especially his relatives, there was an end of doubt; they knew that the boy's religion was worth something and they wanted to know more of Christ who helped him to help them.

A famous Scotch preacher of the nineteenth century frequently made the remark, "I have no use for a man's religion if even his cat is not better because of it." Is there not a serious truth behind his words? If our religion does not improve our relations to those with whom we are most closely associated, something is wrong somewhere.

The Christian who would walk worthily of the Lord must be ready always to serve his fellows in the name of Christ.

The day has passed when a Christian man can say without shame that he is so busy with his own affairs that he must leave definite service for others to "ministers and those who are paid to do it." Years ago such a letter as the following might have caused surprised comment: "I have just succeeded in persuading a citizen of 'X' to give me a building which has, hitherto, been rather a disreputable dance hall, along with the piano, furniture, and considerable land. I am going to establish a rural Young Men's Christian Association, and the land will be used for terraced courts and children's gardens. We are aiming to have a Community Welfare Building. The dance hall will be turned into a gymnasium." That such a letter does not attract widespread attention today is an indication that the layman is coming into his own.

The biographer of William Henry Baldwin, once President

of the Long Island Railroad, tells an illuminating incident of his life of service. "On a European trip he had noticed on board ship—I think in the second cabin—a distressed woman with a sick child. He found that she was not only alone, but had a poor and inconvenient stateroom. His own spacious apartment became at once uncomfortable to him, and was turned over during the remaining days to mother and child." Mr. Baldwin's friends said that this act was typical. Business perplexities never blinded him to the troubles of those about him—even those who would have been thought outside the range of his vision. One day, from the window of an elevated train, he saw in the street below the face of a child that sent to his heart a message of suffering. At the first opportunity he descended to the street. When he found the child he saw that he was ill. Business was forgotten until the sufferer was in the hospital.

Unless it is an essential part of one's daily life to do such things, and to do them quietly and unostentatiously, there is something radically wrong. Thousands of years ago, by the mouth of his prophet, God reminded his people that he had no pleasure in those who professed to serve him while they gave no heed to the cries of the needy, and that he rejoiced in the service of those who found pleasure in giving their bread to the hungry and in bringing the poor that are cast out to their houses. This was the Old Testament form of the assurance given in the New Testament that "Pure religion and undefiled . . . is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (James 1: 27).

God wants us to remember this half of the sentence, but he does not want us to forget the other half: "and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

There is but one way to keep unspotted from the world. We must live on intimate terms with the spotless Lamb of God, who found comfort in comforting others, who gave his life that sorrow and sighing might flee away, and that all might have abundant life. Those who do this will "walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing."

We glorify thy name, O God, as we sing of thy goodness to us. Teach us to glorify thee also by living in such intimate fellowship with thee that those who know us shall desire to serve him who fills our lives with joy and gives us strength

for the conquest of evil. Enable us to give a true idea of what it is to be a Christian, not merely once in a while, but always. Be with us when the temptation comes suddenly to speak or act hastily and thoughtlessly, and save us and those who know us from the sad consequences of our unfaithfulness. Let it be evident to all who know us that there has been a change in our thinking and in our life, because of our trust in thee. Thus may our witness for thee be such that thou canst use it for thy glory. For thy name's sake. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

Why was it a mistake for Lot to pitch his tent toward Sodom? (Genesis 13: 12, 13).

How literally should we interpret Paul's appeal to do everything to God's glory?

Do those who try to live to God's glory abridge their liberty of action?

What do you think of the statement that the greatest proof of the reality of a man's liberty is his readiness to do only the things he is sure will please God?

CHAPTER VI

Living by Faith

DAILY READINGS

Sixth Week, First Day

For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.—Eph. 2: 8.

What is your idea of grace? What was the meaning of the father's reply to his son who did not see why he should be helpful to a stranger: "No, you do not have to help him, but to do so would be a gracious act"? Then, what did Peter mean when he said that the Lord is gracious? (I Peter 2: 3). What clause in Ephesians 2: 8 defines grace? How would you define faith? Does Hebrews 1: 1 help you to frame a definition? What is meant by the man who says of an acquaintance, "I have faith in him"? What is meant by one who says, "I have faith in Christ"? Should he mean any less than this: that he takes Christ for his friend, that he depends on Christ for salvation, on the basis of what he has learned of Christ and of Christ's readiness to supply his need?

Turn to the definitions of grace and faith in the unabridged dictionary. Study these. Then make your own definition if these do not seem to you to cover the ground.

Sixth Week, Second Day

Not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.—Eph. 2: 9, 10.

We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.—Rom. 3: 28.

What have good works to do with a man's salvation? Is there any contradiction between the passage in Romans and the passage in Ephesians? Is there any conflict between Paul's teaching in the passage in Romans and the teaching of James 2: 14-20? Paul was talking of the works of the law; James was talking of the works of love. Love cannot be satisfied unless it is proving itself by action. Then what does faith amount to unless it shows itself by works? A freshman in college who had been rather careless in his life told his fellows of his purpose to become a Christian. He was surprised that his announcement made little impression. One of the students gave the explanation: "We'll see if he means what he says." Was the demand unreasonable? God asks of us faith that shows itself by doing things.

Read Matthew 19: 16-22. How did the young man's conception of works differ from Christ's conception?

Sixth Week, Third Day

O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified? This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—Gal. 3: 1, 2.

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh? Did ye suffer so many things in vain? if it be indeed in vain. He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham.—Gal. 3: 3-9.

What is to be thought of one who, having known the joy of belief in Christ, forgets the cross and once more depends on his own unaided efforts to keep the law of God? Was Paul justified in saying to a company of such people, "O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you?" Through faith God's blessing is offered to all the world. Why, then, turn

to some other way of seeking salvation? If Christ is necessary at the beginning, why is he not necessary throughout life? What, then, shall be thought of those who say, "Oh, this was all very well for us when we were young, but now that we have learned more of the world we see that we do not need to depend on these childish, impractical teachings." What shall we substitute for faith in Christ?

Sixth Week, Fourth Day

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.—Rom. 1: 16, 17.

In "The Kingdom in India," Dr. Chamberlain tells of seeing a venerable Brahmin engaged in his devotions on a stone platform around the central trunk of a banyan tree. "Slowly, with beads in hand, he performed his circumambulations, keeping his face toward the shrine, reciting his prayers." Asked what he sought, he said, "I am seeking to get rid of the burden of sin. Each effort that I make is as unsuccessful as the one before. My pilgrimages and penances and prayers for sixty years have all been in vain." He had spent two years in bathing in the Ganges, "but," he said, "the Ganges water washed the foulness from my skin, not the foulness from my soul." Then he asked, "Does your Veda tell how I can get rid of the burden of sin and be at peace?" Gladly the missionary told him that freedom from the burden of sin would come if he was ready to accept Christ and show his faith in him by his life. Eagerly the Brahmin listened and anxiously he read the gospels given him. When he went away, there was such a look on his face that the missionary was convinced he had learned the meaning of faith in Christ.

Sixth Week, Fifth Day

Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein

we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.—Rom. 5: 1, 2.

Thus Paul tells us of two consequences of faith. First, there is peace. When a man believes in the Master there is no longer any excuse for turmoil or confusion in his life, and he does not need to be bothered about his relation to God; he knows that he and God are friends. More than this, the man who believes in Christ is able to take his stand on the grace of God. "What is grace?" a Christian was asked. "Grace is everything for nothing," was the reply. It is the undeserved favor of God, given to us because he loves us, and for the sake of Christ. It gives a sense of security, a knowledge of companionship, an assurance of strength for the struggle with the things that threaten to make life sordid and unpleasant. And the best of it is that when a man stands on the grace of God that grace gets into his heart and proves a foundation on which he is able to build a life of the graces that make him a favorite with his fellows.

How does faith give access to God's grace? Is Christian life possible without faith? See Hebrews 11: 6; Acts 16: 31.

Sixth Week, Sixth Day

And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.—Phil. 4: 19.

Note carefully every word of the text. See how definite is the promise. God will supply every need, and in fullest measure, for his supply is according to his riches in glory, not according to human measurement. How can we expect to measure the gift of Christ? Is it possible to determine the limits of eternity? Can we tell how far the East is from the West? God ministers to us at all times and satisfies us abundantly. Then what excuse can there be for continuing to live an incomplete life?

Find, in the first part of Matthew, chapter 7, the warrant for Paul's assurance that God supplies the needs of those who have faith in him.

Sixth Week, Seventh Day

For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered

unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.—I Cor. 11: 23-26.

A thoughtful man overtook two plumbers. As he passed them, he heard these words: "I have a bit of iron tubing at home that I wouldn't part with. It was picked up down in Panama. I keep it for a momentum." The man who overheard the words smiled at the odd blunder. But later he wondered if the workman's use of *momentum* instead of *memento* was, after all, such a blunder. A real memento should be a spur to action, an impulse to better living. When Jesus presided as host at the first Lord's Supper he said: "This do in remembrance of me." *Memento* is the imperative form of the Latin verb *to remember*. Then may we not think of the Lord's Supper as a memento? More, does it not give momentum to him who eats the bread and drinks the wine because he has faith in Christ as his Saviour? How does it help a harassed and troubled assistant to feel the encouraging touch of his chief on his shoulder? How is a Christian helped by feeling the touch of Christ in the communion service, looking by faith into the face of the Conqueror of sin and death, and receiving Christ's very life in his appointed way?

Read the account of the first Lord's Supper, in Luke 22: 14-20.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

A Swiss paper tells of a young student on an express train between Frankfort and Basel who sneered when he saw a church in course of construction in a village. "It's only imbeciles who attend church," he insisted. "Then I'm an imbecile," quietly answered one of the men in the same coach. "I, too," broke in a third traveler. "I go every Sunday to church, and although an imbecile, am nevertheless professor in the University of Leipsig." Another traveler added, "I am chief councilor in the city government of

Strassburg, and a churchgoer." And still another chimed in, "I'm head of the Berne gymnasium, and a convinced Christian."

These imbeciles were in good company. They knew that Paul had been willing to be called a fool for Christ's sake. They knew that their Master had been accused of being beside himself. Why, then, should they refuse to let the student know that they were of the "imbecile" party? And why should not we be as ready to stand by our colors when we find ourselves in the presence of those who sneer at others who are foolish enough to own that they believe in Christ?

Paul stood by his colors. To those who wished to put faith in Christ in the background of their lives, who thought it a sign of manliness to belittle the cross of Christ, he wrote, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There can be no life worth while without Christ. Note well what the Bible says on this point. "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him" (Heb. 11: 6). Christ rebuked Peter when his faith was small. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt. 14: 31). To the disciples he said, "O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves?" (Matt. 16: 8). And again, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?" (Mark 9: 19). The emphasis placed on faith by Christ is indicated also by his careful efforts to develop the faith of the Syro-phenecian woman (Mark 7: 26).

In "Instans Tyrannus" Browning tells us of a man whose faith was so stedfast that his godless king tried in vain to break his spirit. The king exhausted his ingenuity in planning punishment. At last he thought of one supreme torture. He tells thus of the result:

"So, I soberly laid my last plan,
To extinguish the man.
Round his creep-hole, with never a break,
Ran my fires for his sake;
Over-head, did my thunder combine
With my under-ground mine:
Till I looked from my labor content
To enjoy the event.
When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?
Did I say 'without friend'?"

Say rather, from marge to blue marge
 The whole sky grew his targe
 With the sun's self for visible boss,
 While an Arm ran across
 Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
 Where the wretch was safe prest!
 Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
 The man sprang to his feet,
 Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
 —So, I was afraid!"

But, while works must not take the place of faith, it must be remembered that faith cannot be divorced from the works that prove it real, vital.

Paul agreed with James that a living faith proves itself by works. Faith is important; so are works. Our faith is judged by our works. Christ indicated this when he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father" (Matt. 7: 21). To the churches he said, "I know thy works" (Rev. 3: 1, 8). And this knowledge was the warrant for what he said to them of their life. Thus faith and works go hand in hand.

That faith and works must go together was taught by a Highland boatman of whom Dr. Guthrie once told. A passenger crossing a lake in a rowboat was caught in a storm. Terrified, he called on the boatman to join him in prayer for deliverance. But the boatman said, "You pray, and I'll row." Prayer and rowing might have been combined, but at any rate the boatman knew that it was no time to let go of the oars. Jesus teaches us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," but he is just as insistent in teaching, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Faith and works have been united by God, and, "what . . . God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

A blind man on a city street gave an object lesson of faith proved by works. He was feeling his way with his stick. A friend met him and said he would walk a few squares with him. Instantly the blind man took the arm of his friend. This movement would not have been the expression of real faith if he had then shown himself unwilling to go where his friend led him. But that the blind man's faith was real was proved as he instantly moved ahead, dragging

his stick behind him and following unquestioningly his companion's slightest movement.

We can well afford to put ourselves in God's hands, asking him to supply our needs, trusting in him for the things that will make life gloriously rich. God is all powerful, and when we trust him there is nothing he will not do for us.

God's problem with his children is not the problem of what he shall give to them; it is rather the problem of getting them into the right attitude for receiving what he is so able and willing to give them. He has rich gifts awaiting the true prayers of his children, gifts that are to be had for the asking and not to be had unless they are asked for. He can be depended upon to keep his promises to his children, but he can keep them only when his children comply with the conditions necessary for the answer.

Here, too, it must be remembered that faith and works go together. God gives to those who come to him believing in him, but he gives his best to those who are ready to follow his plan to receive the best.

The addresses of a mission worker who has wonderful power to win men to Christ, are packed full of Scripture. "I wish I had his gift of using the Bible!" has been the remark of more than one hearer. The worker has told how the gift came to him. When he was converted it was, of course, necessary to quit the use of profane language. To his surprise he found that half of his vocabulary was gone. For two years the Bible formed practically his only reading, until he became saturated with Bible words and phrases. Now he thinks Bible, talks Bible, lives the Bible. He has a gift—God's gift to a man who toiled.

Jesus wanted to make it the simplest possible matter for people to cooperate with him, so he planned the feast of faith that would be at once a reminder of man's need of Christ and a help in reaching out and taking hold of him, and, with him, of all things that are necessary.

Those who accept Christ's invitation to the feast he has appointed, feed upon him by faith, eating the body broken for them, drinking the blood shed for them. This is a mystery. But Jesus said it would be so, and countless millions have proved and are daily proving the truth of his words.

Sometimes Christians feel that they have no right to go to

the Lord's Supper because they have sinned. If they come at all, they rob themselves of comfort by saying to themselves, "I ought not to be here; I am not fit." Of course they are not fit—until the Lord gets hold of them. Confession of sin and earnest desire to get a new grip on Jesus Christ gives to anybody a right to return to the table of Christ, and so to get in position to receive his best.

For "the righteous shall live"—not by church attendance, not by mingling with God's people, not by good deeds, but "the righteous shall live by faith."

Master, teach us how to abide in thee, to feed upon thee, to receive thy life, to go in thy strength day by day. We thank thee that, knowing our need of thee, thou hast shown us how we may come to thee. We thank thee that thou hast spread the table for us, and that we may feast upon thee. Let the Lord's Supper mean more to us each time we eat the bread and drink the wine. And give us the joy of bringing with us to thy table others who have not yet given their hearts to thee. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

What is the meaning of the words, "the righteous," as applied to those who are saved by their faith in Christ? Read Romans 3: 24, 25.

How would you reply to one who says that faith is unreasonable; that he cannot believe in what he does not see or feel?

Why is the Lord's Supper helpful to the one who would act on Jesus' words in John 15: 4?

Paul said (Phil. 4: 13), "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." What is the significance of the phrase, "in him?"

What does the Lord's Supper mean to me?

CHAPTER VII

The Christian Goal

DAILY READINGS

Seventh Week, First Day

Be perfected.—II Cor. 13: 11.

Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Phil. 3: 12-14.

In the Authorized Version, Paul's message is translated "Be perfect," but the Revised Version gives it "Be perfected." What is the difference? Which form do you prefer? There are those who criticize the assumption that a Christian can be perfect. But who can object to the urgent entreaty "be perfected"? that is, "be completed"? An employer, speaking of a young man who had recently taken a desk in his office, said, "He is wonderfully good in so many ways, but he lacks initiative." What should that young man do when he discovers his failing? Would it be enough to sigh over it? How long would his employer be apt to retain him after being forced to the conclusion that he was doing nothing to complete himself? How would you go about the task of completing yourself if you were in his place? How is the Christian to begin to be completed, to be perfected?

Seventh Week, Second Day

Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain.

And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.—I Cor. 9: 24-27.

An ancient writer says: "Wouldst thou conquer in the games? Thou must be orderly, spare in food, must abstain from confections, exercise at a fixed hour whether in heat or cold, drink no cold water nor wine." Today similar training is required of those who are preparing for athletic contests. What is the incentive that makes a man ready to undertake the training? If it is worth while to deny oneself hurtful things that he may be able to wear the college initial on his jersey, is it worth while for us to put out of the life things that interfere with the purpose to be a real man? How is a careless Christian like an uncertain runner or a wrestler who spends his strength on the air instead of on his opponent? Under what sort of discipline should a Christian put himself if he is to live at his best?

Seventh Week, Third Day

Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ.—Eph. 4: 13-15.

What is conveyed by the expressive phrase sometimes used of a man, "He has arrived"? Substitute *arrive* for *attain* in the first clause of the day's passage. Is the meaning clearer? It cannot be said of the Christian that he has arrived until he has become a man through his knowledge of the only full-grown Man who ever lived. What indication is there in the first clause that a Christian cannot arrive alone? How many should we take along with us in our struggle to reach the goal? But it is not a simple matter

either to advance to the goal ourselves or to take others with us. It is so much simpler to be like children, to listen to every hare-brained teacher who has some new hobby to exploit, or to follow those who play with religion even when their play proves dangerous to those whom they should help. How shall we arm ourselves against these dangers?

Seventh Week, Fourth Day

And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you; to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.—I Thess. 3: 12, 13.

The author of "Pastor Hsi" has told of a man of some position and property in China who became a Christian. His income was derived largely from the cultivation of opium and tobacco. At first he did not see the harm in continuing to grow these crops. But after a time he came to see that such action was inconsistent with his profession. He hesitated to turn his land to less profitable uses, but he realized that there was only one course open to him. "He unhesitatingly made a clean sweep of the whole business, though it involved the sacrifice of a considerable portion of his income. Not content with banishing opium from his estate, he also abandoned the growth of tobacco. Nor would he continue to keep pigs on his farm. 'No,' he insisted, 'they are filthy'; which is certainly true in China. 'We must have nothing to do with that which is impure.'"

How much do we think of soul health in comparison with bodily health? How does the prayer of III John 2 appeal to us?

Seventh Week, Fifth Day

Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.—Phil. 1: 6.

A runner who is doubtful of his ability to distance his competitors, who dwells on the thought of failure, has not

much chance of winning. The professional man who thinks oftener, "What if I should fail," than "I intend to succeed," is not likely to get very far. What chance of growth has the Christian who feels that it should not be expected of him that he will progress very far on the way to manhood in Christ Jesus? There is a vast difference between proper confidence and foolish conceit. Why is it reasonable to think that when the Lord Jesus Christ begins to do something in us he knows what his plan is, and will not give up until his plan is perfected? But lack of confidence hinders his work. You have your opinion of a passenger in an automobile who grabs the hand at the steering wheel in a moment when danger seems to threaten. Have you put your life's steering wheel into the hands of the one safe Pilot? Then show your confidence in him!

Seventh Week, Sixth Day

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.—II Cor. 3: 18.

A writer in "Daily Bible" told this incident: "A few minutes before noon daily, by the eastern standard time, every Western Union Telegraph Company's instrument cuts its connection, and is put in communication with the instrument in the Naval Observatory in Washington. At five seconds before twelve a warning tick sounds over the wires. When the skilled operator in the observatory sees . . . that the sun is directly over the imaginary line of longitude passing through the city, that moment the fact is flashed over miles of wire, and every one of the company's clocks made true. Then business is resumed. The work of the day is planned with reference to this appointment. The company's rule is to be absolutely accurate; . . . to test this accuracy every day, and to test it by the standard set in the heavens, and all this purely for commercial purposes. Shall not we, whose lives are so utterly dependent on the Master, cut clean our connections with every outside thing at least once in every twenty-four hours, and put our hearts beating in time and tune with his heart, that he may have a chance

to set and keep us true, and that we may not be misrepresenting him?"

What will be the effect of indulgence in things that are evil on the vision of one who looks at Christ?

Seventh Week, Seventh Day

Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.—II Cor. 7: 1.

The meaning of the day's text can be expressed by the use of three of its words, *promises . . . therefore . . . holiness*. The previous sentence recorded God's promise to receive his people, to dwell with them, and to be a father to them. But how can one expect to be on familiar terms with God if there is permitted in the life what defiles or soils—for this is the literal meaning of the word? Now note that little word *all*. What would Paul have said to one who declared his purpose to follow Christ *in the main*? How successful can one be in growing like Christ if he attempts any such partial process? Why didn't Paul stop after speaking of the necessity of thoroughgoing cleansing? What is likely to happen to one who is freed from bad habits, unless there is something added to his life to take their place? See what Matthew 12: 43-45 says about this. For this reason Paul told what more is necessary. Let holiness in! There are those who sneer at the idea of holiness. But why? Holiness is a manly quality. Jesus was holy, and he was the most glorious man who ever walked the earth.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

Paul did not raise the question, "Can a man be perfect in this life?" But he did say that it is our duty to try to be perfect—to be unsatisfied with anything short of perfection in holiness.

It is the Christian's business to strive toward perfect manhood in Christ. Day by day he is to see to it that his life is nearer to the ideal set by God himself—his own holiness. This is the goal set before him. It makes no difference

that this goal seems a long, long way off. Common-sense, matter-of-fact Paul says that it is a Christian's duty and privilege to reach out continually after the ideal in the assurance that some day, when God takes him from earth, it will be an actual possession.

Here, as always, Paul's impatience with half measures shows itself. His prayer was that God's people might be sanctified *wholly*, that, *spirit and soul and body*, they might be *preserved entire and without blame*. To his way of thinking, Christians are never good enough; nothing is good enough but perfection. Since perfection cannot be attained here, the Christian must never be satisfied with his progress in life.

In calling attention to the necessity and the possibility of advancing toward the ideal, Paul used his favorite figure of a foot race. The successful runner must have his goal in mind, and he must determine that nothing is to be allowed to stand in the way of his reaching his goal. The Christian has a race to run. Shall he be less careful? He needs to fix his eyes on Jesus, and then lay aside every weight that he may not be hindered in his progress in Christian living.

Let no one think the task will be easy. Many times will come the temptation to turn aside from a course of action that is plainly demanded by faithfulness to Christ. "I would do this, but"—the excuse will be on the lips of the Christian, introducing the statement of the reason why it seems inconvenient or impossible to take the particular step in question. There is no room for a *but* if one would follow Christ. He calls for unquestioning, unqualified obedience. Nothing must stand in the way of following him. The instant something seems to hinder a Christian's obedience, that moment he is in frightful peril. The something—whatever it is—must be sacrificed.

It is a proverb in the printing office that the typesetter must follow copy, that is, he is expected to set all matter exactly as it is given to him by the foreman. "Follow copy, even if it goes out of the window," is a time-honored joke repeated to the boy when he begins to learn the printer's trade. His instructor wishes him to understand that obedience is not a matter for discussion or quibbling; obedience is simply obedience, nothing more and nothing less. So many who learned to give such obedience in the home, hesitate

to give it to him whom they call Father! God's blessing waits for those who are ready to obey him under all circumstances, that they may be perfected.

In urging the Christian to be perfected, Paul's desire was that he *be completed*. As he became acquainted with Christ, he was filled with admiration of his well-rounded, symmetrical character and he longed to have each of his friends grow into the symmetry and beauty of Christ. So he said to them, "Be completed"; that is, "Do not be content with a one-sided life. Be many-sided, ready for every duty, earnest in every act, able for every emergency."

What did he mean? A careful look at Paul himself will show. He was an illustration of a many-sided man. He hated sin, but he sympathized with the sinner and longed to help him. He loved life, but he was ready to yield his life in God's service. He loved men, and he could accommodate himself to the rich as well as to the poor. He was all things to all men. There was no situation to which he was not equal. He had learned in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content. Everywhere and in all things he knew how both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

Paul was too humble to dream of putting himself forward as an example of what he meant by becoming complete. He pointed to Christ as the sole example of completeness. But he had been so long looking at Christ as his example that he was becoming conformed to him; he was himself becoming complete, perfected.

Paul made such great progress in his aim to become complete in Christ because he would not allow anything in his life that interfered with his great purpose. The supreme object of his life was service of God in God's way. This way he took. "This one thing I do," he said; and by doing one thing, and that the thing God wanted him to do, he was a successful man, in the highest, richest sense of the word.

The matter of greatest importance for every Christian is to find the way in which God wants him to travel, and to keep to this no matter what may be the temptations to leave it. If he does this he will reach the Christian's goal. One who served God for more than half a century on the mission field was, on the occasion of his first furlough in America, invited to become pastor of a rich city church. He

declined the attractive call, because he felt that God wanted him to go back to the foreign field. Later he was urged to become head of his denomination's foreign mission board, but his insistent "this one thing I do" led him to decline. Even when President Arthur named him United States Minister to Persia, he would not swerve from the path of duty. Specious arguments in favor of accepting each of these appointments could have been found very easily, but he had the sound Christian sense not to look for them.

Christians who would learn Paul's secret need to take to heart the message given in an advertising journal: "Permanent success is oftener won by holding on than by a sudden dash, however brilliant. The easily discouraged, who are pushed back by a straw, are all the time dropping to the rear to perish or to be carried along on the stretcher of charity. They who understand and practice Abraham Lincoln's homely maxim of 'pegging away' have achieved solid success."

The Christian who is really successful must become a well-rounded man himself, and he must help others in their efforts to become complete or lead them to desire completeness. But it is impossible for one to become well rounded himself without influencing others in the same direction. A woman who was compelled to live in intimate touch with a number of people whose habits were not agreeable to her, wrote, as a result of years of experience: "I know of nothing that meets the case so well as to set about the earnest cultivation of those graces in ourselves which we would like to see in the troublesome sister or brother, the love, joy, peace, long-suffering goodness, gentleness, faith, meekness, and temperance, which alone can make them or us beloved or useful. It is a good thing to call a halt at regular intervals and ask ourselves: 'Have I little ways that are likely to be a trial to my fellow workers? Am I given to bursts of temper or other forms of impatience? Am I cold or unaccommodating? Am I selfish, or given to underhanded ways of accomplishing my purposes, ways not very wrong, perhaps, but not exactly straight? Am I overbearing or inclined to hold grudges? Am I always willing to give place to others, or do I claim and take the foremost place for myself, and sulk if I do not get it?'" These, and other forms of self-interrogation which our own consciences can suggest, to-

gether with the maintenance of a constant state of watchfulness and prayer, will help us in our effort to become perfect as Christ is perfect, and to take others with us on the same road.

Be perfected! Be completed! This is God's appeal to the Christian. He makes it because he wants us to be on intimate terms with him. He grieves when anything separates us from him or dims our vision of him, and he longs to have the separation removed. When the mists of summer or the frost of winter or the accumulated dust of weeks and months cloud the window glass, it is impossible to see the outer world with any satisfaction. When the glass is cleansed everything may be distinguished clearly. Why do we not learn a similar lesson when we complain that we have not as much comfort as usual in prayer; that it is difficult to feel God's nearness? When the mists and frosts of selfishness and the grime of impure and unholy thoughts cloud the heart's vision, it is impossible to see God's glory. And if, while one is on earth, he is content to have his vision clouded thus, how can he expect to see God throughout eternity? The promise is plain, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Then why be content with anything short of absolute purity?

Of course there are difficulties in the way of those whom God calls to be completed. But for those who speak the word of readiness to follow where God shows the way, God will sweep aside all hindrances, helping them onward and upward, till they all "attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Our heavenly Father, there is so much that is unlovely in our lives that we would be afraid to come to thee if we were not sure of thy welcome. Search our hearts and reveal every wicked way in us. Then show us what we may be if we permit thy Spirit to transform us. Take away the mists that hide thee from us. Satisfy us every day with the knowledge that thou art dwelling within us. By our faithfulness, and courtesy, and gentleness, and love for those who are about us, may we prove that we are dwelling with thee. Thus wilt thou use us in revealing thee to those to whom thou art as yet unknown. For the sake of thy Son. Amen.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT
AND STUDY**

What would you say is the secret of Christian progress?
How much is it worth while to sacrifice in the effort to
achieve a well-rounded character?

What is your conception of a full-grown man?

God's promises have been called an incitement to holiness.
Are they? Why?

CHAPTER VIII

One With Christ

DAILY READINGS

Eighth Week, First Day

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.—Gal. 2: 20.

The little girl was just alive, and that was all. The physician said that unless new blood could be infused into her veins she must die. The mother bared her arm that the physician might open the artery and cause the rich blood to flow from her body into that of the child. And the child lived. When she grew strong once more she was told of the operation. From that day she felt that her mother's life had become hers; that she belonged to her mother in a new, real sense.

How far is this an illustration of Christ's method of giving new life to his people?

Eighth Week, Second Day

If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.—Col. 3: 1-3.

Forty years ago a young man in England thought of nothing but going into his father's brewery business. There came a day when a friend asked him to read the third chapter

of John. Carelessly he made the promise and carelessly he began to read. But carelessness was suddenly ended as he saw his need of Christ. Then he resigned his inheritance, and, penniless, he went out into the world to fight evil in his Master's name.

A young man thought he was thoroughly enjoying life. His daily program was like that of many of his fellows—he was occupied from morning until night with work that appealed to him and pleasures with which no one could find fault. But he did not realize that he was always thinking of himself. Then came a change. "God spoke to me," he said, in telling of his change. "He told me he wanted me to give him my time. Then that seemed to me the only thing worth while in life. Though years have passed, I have never changed my mind."

What would men think of one who hopes some day to be President of the United States, yet today is content to keep a saloon? What shall be said of one who looks forward to immortality, yet who today wherever he goes makes no effort to be like Christ?

Eighth Week, Third Day

Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus.—Gal. 6: 17.

Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body.—II Cor. 4: 10.

In Paul's day slavery was universal, and slaves often secured their freedom by gift or purchase. But since a man who was known to have been a slave was never safe from imprisonment as a runaway unless there was some mark to indicate freedom, it became a custom in some places to take a freed slave to the temple that he might be branded with the seal of one of the heathen gods. Thenceforth the slave was the property of that god, and no one could sell him again into slavery. So Paul said, "Let no man trouble me, for I bear branded in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

What did Paul mean by the marks branded on his body? Does a reading of II Cor. 11: 23-27 help you to answer?

Have we a right to claim that marks received in the service of Jesus are marks of the Lord Jesus?

*Why was Paul justified in being proud of his marks?
What is your opinion of a Christian who is ashamed of
such marks?*

Eighth Week, Fourth Day

As therefore you have received the Christ, even Jesus our Lord, live and act in vital union with Him.—Col. 2: 6 (Weymouth).

Much has been said of the Christian's privilege to imitate Christ, but it has been pointed out that what is needed is not so much imitation as appropriation. What is the distinction? Do you agree? Try appropriation, and see. The next time you are in trouble, and you feel that you must give up the battle you have been fighting, suppose you remember Christ's bearing when he was surrounded by foes; then breathe a prayer, "Thy courage, Lord." Do not ask for courage like his, but the courage which helped him. See if the realization of a power such as you have never known doesn't come to you. When you are tempted to sin; when impure desires seek an entrance to your heart and unholy ambitions fight for the possession of your soul, look up, and pray, "Thy purity, Lord," and the temptation will be conquered for that time.

Can we hope to appropriate Christ in this way without shaping our daily lives according to his standards? What these standards are we know, not merely from his words but from his acts. Then sometimes let us think of his life on earth, asking ourselves such questions as these: How did he treat his parents? How did he act toward his teachers? What was his habit about attending religious service? What was his conduct in the house of God? What were his habits of prayer? What a revelation would be worked in our lives if we should reverently make these inquiries and obediently ask him to guide our feet, our hands, our voices in his way.

Eighth Week, Fifth Day

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.—Eph. 3: 17.

What did Christ mean when he said to his disciples, "Abide

in me"? (John 15: 4). How fully do Christians do as he asks? Find a clause in Mark 10: 1 which indicates how we are likely to come to him. Then note the clause which tells how Christ treats those who come to him off and on. A student who attends one lecture in five given in a course gains some benefit, but the real reward is likely to go to a student who never wishes to miss a lecture. If it is worth while to go to Christ at all, why is it not far better to be with him all the time? The opportunity for such constant intercourse is given to us. What is Christ's promise to those who abide in him? Read John 15: 1-4 once more. In the light of that promise Paul was justified in making the petition in Ephesians which is this day's Bible reading. Why was he not content to make the petition that Christ may at times be a visitor in the heart? What is attractive in the idea that he will *make his home* in the heart? What should we do to make him feel at home in our hearts? What is the implication of the fact that the same Greek word is translated *dwell* in Ephesians 3: 17 and Colossians 2: 9? What should it mean that Christ is to dwell in us in the same sense that God dwells in Christ? Now read John 14: 23.

Eighth Week, Sixth Day

For to me to live is Christ.—Phil. 1: 21.

Do you sympathize with the man who said, "If I could be such a Christian as Paul was, it would be worth while to put aside the things that keep me from being a Christian"? Why cannot anybody be as earnest as Paul was? Paul tells the secret of his progress: "To me to live is Christ." But did he learn this secret all at once? Recall passages which tell of Paul's struggles with temptation. How would it help him in his struggle with temptation to remind himself that Christ was to be his life—that he and Christ were to be always together? *Together with him* (Col. 2: 13) was his cry. What does it mean to you that you are invited to the same intimacy with the Lord?

Eighth Week, Seventh Day

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being

on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Phil. 2: 5-11.

Some years ago residents of Philadelphia expressed surprise when workmen began to resurface every square inch of stone in the walls of a large office building. "Why do they go to all that expense?" the question was asked. "Surely the building is much less grimy than others near by." But when the work was completed it was agreed that, after all, the expense was justified; the appearance of the building was wonderfully improved. Then it was learned that the owners had thought, with others, that the building was well enough as it was till a change in tenants made necessary the cutting of a new name in the stone above the main door. The dazzling brightness of the new surface exposed made the rest of the building look so dingy that it was at once decided to freshen the entire structure. Is it not likely to be just so when we compare our lives with those of other men and women about us? "I am as good as the rest of them," we are tempted to say. But when we compare ourselves with the perfect Man, Christ Jesus, what disgust and loathing for ourselves is the result! Then, if we are honest, we can be satisfied only with daily, hourly struggle to make our lives like his, to have his mind, to be like him.

How would the first three words of Hebrews 12: 2 do for the watchword of the Christian who wants to have in him the mind of Christ?

Philippians 2: 5-11 is one of the most tremendous passages in the Bible. Learn it, then repeat it frequently. Think the words over when temptation comes or when discouragement darkens the day. Think of them when you are joyful. Repeat them aloud as you walk in the fields or in the woods. Say them over when you lie awake at night. Your life

will be enriched, for they will bring you into new touch with Christ.

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

Christ is born in the hearts of all who believe in him and yield themselves to him, at the very moment they ask him to become their Lord. And he promises to dwell in their hearts forever.

There is a vast difference in the life of everyone who asks Christ to be born in his heart. No longer need the days be dreary rounds of uncongenial employment; everything may be transformed because Christ's presence gives a new ideal of life.

Every man has some ideal. There are some who feel that they are to secure as much from the world as possible, at all cost to others; if they should state their ideal, they could honestly do no more than say, "For to me to live is self." But the ideal of those who are a real power in the world is altogether different. Resolutely trampling upon self, they are continually thinking of the needs and desires of other people, seeking to be true neighbors to them in the name of Christ.

When Christ is born in us all partial or unworthy ideals are forgotten. At first Paul had no higher ideal than to keep the letter of the Jewish law, and to protect the law by uprooting the heresy of Christ. Only when Christ appeared to him and proved to him that the whole course of his life was wrong did he see the necessity of changing his ideals. Christ showed him that he is the Son of God; that his teaching is not designed to overthrow the law, but to fulfill it, and that to attempt to keep the law is only to die. Knowing these things, there was just one thing for Paul to do: make Christ the Lord of his life.

When Christ is born in us we learn that we are asked to give up no worthy ideals. Paul found that he could still revere the law of Israel as he followed the Fulfiller of the law. He could still be zealous for the protection of that law from the assaults of all its enemies. But there was one great difference as he retained these ideals: Christ became the chief figure in everything. Before, Paul himself had been the central figure in his acts and purposes. At last he

understood the glad fact that his life had been surely changed, and he said, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me."

Would you live so near to Christ that you, too, can say, "For to me to live is Christ"? God is no respecter of persons. The gifts and graces he gives to one Christian he will give to another; and there is no limit to his giving. "The same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. 10: 12). This is not the mere advertising phrase of an unscrupulous merchant; it is the gracious promise of the unchanging God, who says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24: 35).

Now if Christ is to live in us as he did in Paul, there must be room for him. Two presidents cannot be at the head of the government at the same time. Two families whose tastes and interests are conflicting cannot live peaceably in the same house. No more can Christ find room in the heart defiled by sin; Christ and sin cannot dwell together. We cannot make a compromise, reserving part of the heart for sin and asking Christ to take the rest. He asks for permission to enter the heart, to take complete possession of it, and when this permission is given he will teach us of himself so that we, too, can say with truth, "To me to live is Christ."

There is a story told of a somewhat eccentric preacher who was driving along a country road, when he was attracted by the appearance of a farmhouse. Leaving his carriage he went to the door. A middle aged woman answered the summons, and he asked without hesitation, "Madam, does Jesus Christ live here?" The woman stared, but though he repeated his inquiry he received no answer; and when he had gone she ran out to where her husband was chopping wood, and told him of her caller. "Didn't you tell him we belonged to the Church?" demanded the old man. The wife shook her head. "Didn't you tell him we give money every Sunday?" Again she shook her head. "'Twasn't anything like that he wanted to know, John. He wanted to know if Jesus Christ lives here—that's different."

This is what God tells us is the ideal. He wants us so completely to identify ourselves, our thoughts, our interests, with Christ and his thoughts and ideals and interests, that each of us may say with Paul, "To me to live is Christ."

Though this ideal is possible for every Christian, it does not become actual for many Christians. We do not permit Christ to live in us. We want to mix our life and his, our ways and his, our plans and his; we want to take his views of life when these are pleasing to us, and to adopt our own views when these please us better.

The man who is clinging to definite wrong in his life cannot say, "To me to live is Christ." If we desire Christ in us so completely that we can truly use Paul's words as our own, we must tell him of our desire and declare our purpose to strive to keep down all that offends him.

Those whose lives are hid with Christ, who can say with Paul, "For to me to live is Christ," know the secret of happiness. Misfortunes and disappointments will continue to come to us, but they no longer will have their old power to distract and annoy us. Paul found it so. Year after year he became, in the eyes of the world, poorer and more wretched, but in his own eyes he was ever happier because he endured as seeing Christ who was invisible to his tormentors.

The man who understands what Paul meant has a wonderful power to help others. An American editor, traveling in France, spoke one Sunday in the pulpit of Charles Wagner. After the service a man said to him, "I came to hear Mr. Wagner, and I was disappointed when you got up to speak. But I shall always be glad I heard you. I remember only one thing you said, but this I shall never forget. I refer to your definition of religion; you said, 'To me religion means just one thing: Jesus and I are friends.'"

If Christ is to be our friend, if he is to live in us, we must become acquainted with him. One visited a house where two old people had lived for years. They were sisters, but their interests were not the same. Gradually they came to live apart, though in the same house. From day to day they met without a greeting. At night they separated without a word. They did not know one another's thoughts or plans; they were as strangers. Jesus can never live with us on any such terms as these. We must grow to know him, for he is to be our life. And how can he be our life unless we know how he thinks and acts, and what he wants us to do for him? We must learn of him, study his life, talk to him, take him as our intimate friend.

A traveler tells of his ride through a lonely wood in a Southern State, in the course of which he came to the cabin of a negro woman. He talked with her a few moments. As he was about to go, he said, "Are you living here all alone?" With a bright smile came the answer, "Just me and Jesus!" The silent forest was to her a paradise, for she had wonderful company. She would have been able to appreciate the answer made by a busy woman to one who asked her if she knew the Lord Jesus. "Oh, yes! I walk with Jesus, I eat with Jesus, I drink with Jesus." That was her simple way of saying that Jesus was her companion, her intimate friend.

There is a temptation that is likely to come to those who are living thus close to Christ. When the day is to be more than usually full of service for other people, when the home cares are weighty, and the business perplexities are severe, it is easy to feel that there is no time for the morning season of Bible reading and prayer, and that we can safely let this go.

Yet is it not true that the days when we have had most satisfying fellowship with Christ have been those days when we have had a little time apart with him, reading his word, speaking to him, and hearing him speak to us? And what of the days when the morning reading and prayer have been omitted?

We thank thee, Lord Jesus, for the blessings that come to us through thy word. May the remembrance of Paul's readiness to serve strengthen us so that, as we hear thy call, "Follow me," we may not in self confidence say, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," only to fall by the wayside, but, relying on thee, may be obedient to the vision of duty as thou dost reveal it to us. Show us how to grow in grace—by resisting sin, by abiding in thee, and by pointing others to thee. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

How can Christ make his home in the heart of his follower?

What will be the effect of Christ's dwelling in a man's heart: on the man himself; on those who associate with him?

How does Christ make hard things easier?

What is the real test of the genuineness of the Christian's profession?

Think of the friends and acquaintances who attract you most. What is it in them that attracts you? Do you know the secret of this attraction?

CHAPTER IX

The Law of Love

DAILY READINGS

Ninth Week, First Day

Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying.—Rom. 15: 1, 2.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.—Gal. 6: 2.

Who are the strong? Has anyone a right to excuse himself from the operation of this law of love because he thinks he is so weak? Who wants to own himself a weakling? Yet, might not one who is always leaning on others just as well make such a confession? If there is love in the heart the way will be found by everyone, anyone, no matter what his circumstances, to pass on to others God's good gifts. One would have thought a little crippled girl, who lived in a poor tenement room, could do nothing. But one day a visitor came to her bedside. "Would you like to hear me sing?" "Oh yes!" the cripple said, "but, first, won't you open the door a crack? There's lots of folks in the house who'd like to hear the singing. I'd feel selfish if I kept it all to myself."

What is the world's opinion of the one who is always taking in and never giving out? What is the sneering but expressive name given to such an individual?

Who do most for the world's happiness—the few who give millions to endow hospitals and colleges, or the millions in humble life who perform little deeds of helpfulness?

Ninth Week, Second Day

Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for

he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.—Rom. 13: 8-10.

“I have no debts. I pay my bills as I go along. No one has any claim on me.” It is a common thing to hear such a statement. But can anyone say this with truth? Of course there are those who have no financial obligations. But how about the debt to God? How about the obligation of love and service to family and friends? How about “Love one another as I have loved you”? Not only are we told that we owe to those about us a debt of love, but the measure of that debt is revealed to us: “Love thy neighbor as thyself” is the definite injunction. What does regard for our own welfare make us desire for ourselves? Very well, let us do that for our neighbor. Who is our neighbor? Can we ask that question in the light of Luke 10: 25-37?

Ninth Week, Third Day

Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded? Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.—I Cor. 6: 7, 8.

When one is unjustly attacked, why is it a temptation to give the attacking party “a taste of his own medicine?” But note the way taken by a pastor who lived in a town where, unfortunately, the churches were not always on the best of terms. As the culmination of a long series of petty slights and insinuations, the pastor of one church preached a bitter sermon denouncing various doctrines and customs of the church of which the man in question was pastor. At first the latter was incensed. He spent much time in the effort to devise a cutting rejoinder. But, fortunately, he prayed for guidance. Then he preached a sermon devoted to setting forth the good points of the church to which the attacking minister belonged. Lessons were drawn from the lives of

men of might who had been prominent in the councils of the denomination. Not one reference was made to the sermon of detraction and criticism. What do you think would be the effect of such a course? Why is not a method like this used oftener? Why is the kind course the wiser course? Have you an opportunity to test the matter with one who is at swords' points with you just now?

Ninth Week, Fourth Day

Doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.—Phil. 2: 3, 4.

A minister in a small town has told how, when the fire bell rang, he saw a man running frantically up the hill toward the fire. Soon the man turned and walked leisurely back. "Where is the fire?" the minister asked. "I really don't know," was the reply. "I got near enough to see that it was not our house, and I stopped and turned back." But in a European paper appeared a note about a man in a Danish village who went with others to the help of a family whose house was burning. While he was at work the message was brought that his own house was in flames. "Let it burn," he said; "there is a sick man in this house and I am not going to leave him to die while I save my furniture." It is easy to decide which of these incidents is more pleasing. But which is more natural? Why? Why is it so much easier to heed the advice of the world, "Look out for yourself," than to listen to the appeal of Christ, "Look out for the other fellow"?

Ninth Week, Fifth Day

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling.—Rom. 14: 13.

After the death of a man in an Illinois town there were many eulogies of his life, but perhaps the most effective word was that of an observer who said, "For years it was his habit, as he walked the streets, to take every banana peel

or stone or fallen branch from the sidewalk, and to make the path of others as safe as possible in every way he could." In the same town lived a man who said once, "I guess I can safely leave this little patch of ice on my walk; everybody will pick his steps carefully on a day like this."

It is easy to see the need of taking physical difficulties out of the way of others. If we were as careful to remove difficulties from the way of their progress toward God, what change would we have to make in our lives?

Ninth Week, Sixth Day

Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful.—Col. 3: 12-15.

What is meant by the statement that the Christian is to be "in the world, but not of it"? Paul speaks of the Christian's attitude to the world as the putting off of old garments for new apparel. These garments he names: *compassion*—the Christian is to be sympathetic with others; *kindness*—he needs to have that feeling toward another that is fitting in those who are kin; *humility*—it is necessary not only that we keep free from thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but also that we appreciate the good qualities of others; *forbearance* and *forgiveness*—the habit of mind that will enable one to say, as did Edward Everett Hale on his eightieth birthday, "I never had but one enemy, and last week, when I was trying to think of his name, I found I had forgotten who he was."

Are these qualities named by Paul manly qualities? Why? Why is the Christian urged to forgive others as the Lord forgives him? How completely does God forgive? See Psalm 103.

Ninth Week, Seventh Day

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but

have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.—I Cor. ch. 13.

Is it a true statement that the love that is kind, envies not, and is humble, will win its way through doors that are closed to those who are self-assertive and overbearing? Do you know one who is perfectly described by these words, "thinketh no evil"? Do you know another who habitually puts the worst construction on the actions of all his acquaintances? No need to ask which of the two wins friends and holds them with a grip of steel. Then why are we so slow to choose the way that wins friends? Why are people more fond of quoting these words to others than of applying them to themselves? Is it because we are not fond of vigorous heart searching? They cut like a surgeon's knife. How do we bear the test? Are we guilty of self seeking? Do we envy or grieve at the good of others? Do we rejoice as we see the good things that come into the lives of our acquaintances? The mirror is held up to us not that we may be discouraged as we see how far short we come, but that, seeing our lack, we may come in humility to Him who will teach us how to love truly.

How fully did Paul show the characteristics of the love of which he wrote? Think of some of the trying circumstances in which he was placed. How did he act? How would you be tempted to act under similar conditions?

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

One who has described the conditions of life in Germany and France during the Middle Ages says that men had no sense of obligation to right living; they lived by preying on one another. The universal rule seemed to be, "Might makes right." The upper classes oppressed the lower, while the lower classes in turn oppressed those lower still. Every man was apparently living for himself, with no thought of his neighbor, no care for his interests. The situation was thus summed up: "Men apparently had lost the sympathetic imagination by which the pain and grief of the unfortunate are transferred from the hearts of others."

The root of the difficulty then—as it is the root of social difficulty today—was that men persisted in thinking that the way to happiness is through self-seeking. The world is being transformed, and this transformation is due to the fact that from year to year the conviction is gaining ground that the way to happiness is not found in self-seeking, but in service; not in looking out for one's self, but in planning for the well-being of others. The transformation is slow because so many scorn the teaching; but the faithfulness of those who have made it a part of their lives is constantly bearing fruit in the transformation of self-seekers into servants of their fellows.

Life is not worth while unless it is full of deeds of thoughtfulness like those told of a community of Jewish immigrant farmers in New England. One farmer in the community lost his barn by fire. All the contents were destroyed. His capital had been exhausted in the purchase of the farm, and he and his family were destitute at the beginning of winter. "As soon as his plight became known a group of his neighbors assembled. 'What can we do to put this man on his feet?' was the question that occupied them. In less than one hour the victim of the fire had two hundred and fifty dollars to his credit, and was able to start all over again." Another farmer was busy plowing when his best horse died. "Once

more the neighbors got together, raised a fund and bought him a horse, the cost of which he paid back in instalments."

There is in the world far more of such unselfishness than the pessimist is willing to own. An ambitious young man employed in a bank knew of a chance to prepare himself by extra effort for a longed-for promotion. He was eager, till he learned that another clerk, who was supporting an invalid mother, was working for the same position. Without saying a word, the young man resolved to make no effort to secure the new position; there would be time enough for him when the needy man was taken care of.

Some years ago, when a bill was pending in Congress prohibiting the use of disease-breeding phosphorus in the manufacture of matches, it was realized that the greatest danger to the bill lay in the fact that the Diamond Match Company owned the patent to the only safe process of manufacturing phosphorous matches. President Taft appealed to the company to surrender its patent that the law might not fail of passage, or, if passed, that other manufacturers might not be thrown out of business. The patent rights were surrendered at once.

A man past middle age, the father of a family, who had found difficulty in securing work because of his years, became engineer in a city factory. On his very first day in his new position he noticed a number of unsafe contrivances as well as the omission of certain precautions for the safety of employes which in most establishments were deemed absolutely essential. When he called the attention of his superior to these irregularities, he was advised to forget about them, and a hint was given that protest would cost him his job. The engineer's next hope was in the city's inspector of steam boilers, but a perfunctory visit from this official was followed by approval of the plant. Then the engineer saw that the only hope of securing the correction of abuses lay in calling them to the attention of the inspector, who could not be silent about them under such circumstances. An unfavorable report from the inspector would compel the company to protect their men. Yet—and here was the problem—the engineer could thus protect his fellow workmen only by endangering his own position and so the welfare of his family. What was he to do? What would you have done?

And what would you have been tempted to do if you had been in the place of Alice Freeman Palmer, to whom a friend protested because she was devoting time to doing little things for needy people when she might have written books that would have brought her fame? "When you are gone people will ask who you were, and nobody will be able to say," the friend urged. "Well, why should they say?" was her reply. "It is people that count. You want to put yourself into people; they touch other people; these, others still, and so you go on working forever." Not "How much fame may I win?" but "How much help may I give?" is the question to be answered by every earnest individual.

There are those who are perfectly willing to serve when the service does not require too much effort or when it does not involve danger to self. But Paul sets before us the privilege of serving others in entire forgetfulness of self. The Christian who has a passion for service will not worry about himself.

A Christian business man once gave a reporter an interview in which he spoke freely of abuses connected with the business in which he earned his living. The reporter congratulated himself on the good story he was able to write, until he realized that the printing of it, unchanged, might have a serious effect on the future of the business man. So he wrote to him and asked him if it would not be wise to leave out many things in the story which, from the reporter's point of view, made it really worth printing. Reasons were stated; the danger to the man of publishing the story unchanged was explained carefully. A few days later came the business man's response. He said he had carefully read the story to his wife, in view of the reporter's suggestions, and that both of them agreed it ought to be printed exactly as it stood. "We feel that God will use that article to waken some director's conscience or startle to action some conscientious official," he wrote. Then he went on: "In any event, worse than the risk I am running is the fearful condition of the one thousand employes of the company who are suffering from such unprincipled management."

There are those who do not find it difficult to forget self in the service of others, who fail utterly when the call comes to show the love that forgives injuries. Yet no one can claim to be a true follower of Christ who cannot forgive an

injury as completely as a minister to whom an editor wrote for the verification of an incident he had heard, which he wished to use in his paper. The incident told how the minister had been led into the greatest work of his life after he had been forced out of his own church by the opposition of one of his leading members. This was the reply to the letter of inquiry: "The incident referred to in your letter is a garbled statement of something which happened in 1874. The good man spoken of has been in heaven for a long time; and there may have been undue heat on each side. I should be glad if the matter could be relegated to oblivion." Love like that is the unfailing mark of the true Christian.

An African missionary has told of an old woman whose face was much scarred by tribal tattoo marks. When the missionary asked her why the women so disfigured their faces, she replied that the tattoos were marks of beauty. "But," said the missionary's wife, "European women do not have any such marks." "No," replied the African, "you have face marks of love, for you feed the hungry and clothe the naked without asking any return; you are patient and uncomplaining when our people abuse you. You have the face marks of love."

Love is the solution for all of life's difficulties. Does the young man wonder how to be on good terms with his friend? Love him! Does the teacher long for a better understanding with the boys of his Sunday school class? Love them! Does the man of business ponder the problem of saving one of his clerks from a reckless life? Love him! Does the mother yearn after her neighbor who is bringing gloom to her home by an unhappy disposition? Love her! Is it your desire to win your friend to Christ? Love him! "He loved me out of the pit!" was the true description given by one who had been reclaimed from sin, in speaking of the method employed by the friend who reached him.

"Love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." I John 4: 7. Love lifts us above the earth and puts us in touch with heaven. It closes our eyes to the unworthy and the mean and opens them to the splendid and the beautiful. It empties our hearts of everything that is base and fills them with highest aspirations and noblest impulses. It makes us companions and friends of Jesus and equips us to do his work in the world.

O thou who hast loved us from the beginning of the world, who didst die for us that we might know the meaning of thy love, who dost not turn away from us even when we spurn thy love, teach us what love is. Show us thy heart. May the vision humble us to confession of our failures, to appreciation of our own littleness, to longing for a purer, truer life. Dwell in us that our lives may be beautiful and winning. Give us thy Spirit that we may know we are the children of eternal love, and that all fear may be cast out forever. And to thee shall be the glory. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

How would you answer the man who says it is impossible to live in the spirit of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and get along in the world?

Who gets closer to his fellows—the successful pusher who disregards the interests of others, or the one who is always planning to see that others have a good time?

What do you think of the inventor of the milk-test machine, who refused to patent it because he wanted to help other people?

Is it possible to live the life of love without learning from the love of the Son of God?

CHAPTER X

The Secret of Happiness

DAILY READINGS

Tenth Week, First Day

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy.—Gal. 5: 22.
Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.—Phil. 3: 1.

Why is the long faced Christian a disgrace to his profession? Where in the Bible will he find his authority for gloom? What was the message of the angels on the first Christmas day? What did Jesus say about joy in John, chapters 16 and 17? Turn to your concordance and note how many times occur the words joy, joyous, joyful, rejoice, and the like. How do you think Jesus looked? Would the children have crowded about him if he had been sad and gloomy? Would people have been attracted by his message if he had been mournful? What are the elements in the Christian's joy? What does the orchardist do with the tree that bears no fruit, or only perverted fruit? What would Christ be justified in doing with the Christian who does not show the fruit he has a right to expect? If ever you are at a loss for reasons for gladness, read Zeph. 3: 14-17, and see what a good partner the prophet would have been for Paul.

Tenth Week, Second Day

Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses,

in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.—II Cor. 12: 8-10.

A young Italian who had been unjustly committed to prison chafed under the ordeal, but long after he came from the prison he realized that blessings he enjoyed later could never have been his but for the trials that preceded. He passed the lesson on in the form of a parable, the text being the suit of frustagno (Italian homespun) which took the place of his convict garb. He said: "Frustagno is made of hemp and cotton, two weak materials, but when combined they become a cloth of the strongest and most durable quality. The hemp and cotton are woven closely together, and thoroughly soaked in water. Then the cloth is laid upon a smooth, square stone and beaten with stout sticks until it is perfectly dry. There is no wearing out of a suit of frustagno. That which gives the cloth such strength and durability is the thrashing it receives; and is this not true of human life? Man is made strong and self-dependent by having passed under the hard knocks of experience. It sometimes takes almost as severe treatment as the cloth receives to knock out self conceit and make one useful to society. The knocks and grindings I have received were indeed severe, but they were all for my good, to prepare me for life's battle." How may a privation become a source of happiness?

Tenth Week, Third Day

Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—II Cor. 4: 16-18.

Have you looked with wonder at a Christian who suffers constant pain, yet is a messenger of cheer to all who come into the home? How have you explained the fact? What do you think of Paul's explanation? Do you think that

Paul's assurance, "to them that love God all things work together for good," is literally true, or do you sometimes feel like taking it at a discount? Those who take literally this assurance, as well as the statement made in this day's reading, cannot afford to forget two things. First, they must be patient. It may seem sometimes that the coming of the promised blessing is long delayed. Why not? God has a lifetime—our lifetime—to fit us for eternity. Years may pass before we see the place of a particular trial in his plan for our happiness. It will not always be so. But let us comfort ourselves with the thought that it is an eternal weight of glory God is working out for us. The second thing to remember is that, while physical blessings do come to Christians which are distinctly the result of suffering and trial, often the only result of trial and disappointment is the increase of the spiritual life, the added beauty of the inner life. Shall we say that suffering is not worth while if this is all it brings to us? If we say this, how does our attitude differ from that taken by those who sneer at religious blessings as imaginary?

Tenth Week, Fourth Day

But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.—II Cor. 9: 6, 7.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts 20: 35.

An American resident in India, accustomed to all sorts of accommodations when traveling in the interior, once came to a village where the head man had a *hujra*, or guest house. The host, a Mohammedan, had already retired, but he rose from his bed to receive the traveler who asked if the *hujra* belonged to him. "No, it is God's, but I am in charge of it," was the answer, which was not mere form, as was proved by the welcome freely accorded the visitor.

What difference would it make in our gifts, and in our pleasure in making gifts, if we should take a like attitude to what God has intrusted to us?

How much of what God has given to us is to be administered for him?

Dare we make the prayer that God will use for his glory every dollar we spend, whether or not it is given directly for the support of his work?

Tenth Week, Fifth Day

But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.—Acts 20: 24.

Why should a man be glad to be the bearer of the invitation, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest"? George Sherwood Eddy says that the gospel is still good news in Korea, and that the native Christians are glad because they can ask others to give their hearts to Christ. "If a man spends all night at an inn without telling the message to all the inmates he feels that he has missed a great opportunity," Mr. Eddy says. "We saw a young student whose diary shows thirty-four hundred interviews during the year. One day he confessed with shame that he had spoken to only four persons about Christ that day." What if every Christian felt a like responsibility and privilege? How much joy do you take in speaking of your Master to your associates?

Tenth Week, Sixth Day

For now life is for us life indeed since you are standing fast in the Lord.—I Thess. 3: 8 (Weymouth).

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy.—I Thess. 2: 19, 20.

How does the average Christian look upon the call to do Christian work? Why do so many act as if taking part in service for Christ were a disagreeable incident in life? What is the true attitude? One who had spent years as a missionary, said, "I have dwelt for years by myself in Africa, have been thirty times stricken with fever, have been ambushed

by natives, have eaten everything from ants to rhinoceroses, but I would gladly go through the same experiences again for the joy of teaching those people to know the Saviour." Why did he feel so? Why is it such pleasure to lead a friend or an acquaintance to Jesus Christ? Why should it be a keen pleasure to watch the progress in Christian living of those whom one has been instrumental in leading to Christ?

Tenth Week, Seventh Day

Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.—Eph. 5: 19.

Rejoice always.—I Thess. 5: 16.

Christianity has been called "the religion that sings." What is there in heathen religions to prompt one to sing? Why is it that the attempt has been made to adapt Christian hymns to the uses of Buddhism? Can you picture an atheist singing because he does not believe in God? How would a church service with all singing eliminated appeal to you? What does it mean to sing with the heart? How can one sing in the heart? Is it possible for the heart to be singing all the time? How close must one keep to Christ if this is to be the condition in his heart? How close to Christ did Paul keep? Is there any reason why we cannot keep as close as he did? Does Christ show any favoritism?

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

Why are so many Christians content to be gloomy, or sullen, or unpleasant, or dictatorial, or unsympathetic? They may be true servants of God, and exhibit these traits; but how much happier they would be, and how much more useful, without them!

Dr. Hastings tells of a friend who spoke of a neighbor, saying, "I am sure he is a Christian, but he is a rather disagreeable one." Is it not a certainty "that part of a Christian's duty to his Lord is to learn at his feet the kindness, the gentleness, the sympathy, the considerateness, which win and are attractive for him"? By what right are any of us content with less than that? The Psalmist's prayer was, "Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us."

How can the Christian who offers that prayer be disagreeable? And why should not every Christian try to live that prayer every day of his life?

There is no excuse for an existence that is cheerless, empty, unsatisfied, no matter how much privation there may be in the life. Those who make God their constant companion, their unfailing Friend, say that burdens are lightened and that life is transformed because of his presence.

The Master tells the secret of being glad. When life is hard we must look, not at men about us, but at the Father above us. When we are discouraged, perplexed, dismayed, we have only to lift our thoughts to God, to tell him about the hard things, to ask him to show us how to understand them. "If we "look up and not down," there will be a song of thanksgiving in the heart.

Paul and Silas, in the prison, after a form of punishment so severe that death was frequently caused by it, did not stop to rub their sorely wounded backs and groan in their misery; they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for Christ. That is the spirit that will yet conquer the world. There is abundant reason for such rejoicing. Paul rejoiced in spite of troubles many times greater than any that can come to us.

One of Paul's greatest trials was his thorn in the flesh, the physical ailment which he does not describe for us. Three times he earnestly asked to be freed from this burden, but Christ chose to answer his prayer, not by taking away the ailment but by giving him strength to bear it. It is to be everlasting honor that he no longer urged his prayer; he knew he had received his answer. Thereafter he took pleasure even in his ailment, for it was helping him to live as God's companion.

God's method of dealing with his children is far wiser than that taken by many earthly parents whose love for their children frequently finds expression in the effort to remove all difficulties from their path. But their activity is not always the blessing it is intended to be. A traveler has told of meeting in Europe a mother who said to her daughter, "If I had had your opportunities when I was young, I should have been a very happy girl." But the daughter was not happy; she felt that she had too many advantages and not enough difficulties. "You do not know what life is when all

the difficulties are removed," she said. "I am simply smothered and sickened with advantages. It is like eating a sweet dessert the first thing in the morning." God in his wisdom sometimes allows difficulties to remain in our way. He knows that without the discipline of overcoming difficulties our lives would be one-sided, our development would be hindered and our capacity for real joy would be limited.

It is a mistake to think that all the hard things must be hindrances to happiness and achievement. "Wouldn't this world be a great place to live in if there were no weeds in it!" a traveler who had been looking out on a beautiful landscape remarked to his companion. "But isn't it a good thing to have to fight the weeds?" was the unexpected reply. "Life would lose its zest if everything could be had without a struggle." He was right. Happiness comes not so much through freedom from trials and troubles and hardships, as through God-given ability to rise above such things.

An English book tells the story of a London police court missionary who found satisfying life work as a result of an accident that seemed to sound the death knell of all his hopes. He was playing with his little son in the fields, when the boy said, "Father, roll!" The boy rolled gleefully along the ground. Then the father rolled. The next thing he knew the boy was asking, "Are you awake, father?" He had rolled into a ditch, where painful injuries had made him unconscious. A blood vessel had been broken, and he was never strong thereafter. Several years of hardship followed. Then the way was opened to undertake the London employment, which would not have been offered to him if he had not had his accident. He was successful from the first, because his own suffering fitted him to sympathize with other sufferers.

Faith in God should be so strong that there will never be a doubt in our minds that "to them that love God all things work together for good." All things that come to an earnest servant of God are God's gifts. They are sent in love, and they are to be received with joy.

But are we to permit the giving to be all on one side? How about our gifts to God? We start by giving ourselves to him. But is there not something lacking in the promise that dedicates the life to God and holds back the possessions? All that we have is the Lord's; it all came from him. God

asks us to give only a portion of this for his work; it must be remembered, however, that all is to be used for his glory. The question to be answered, whenever the pocket book is opened, should be, "Will this use to which I propose to put this money be for God's glory?" Those who spend on themselves and give to others in that spirit, are on the right track; they will become cheerful givers.

Do we ever feel like patting ourselves on the back because we are so generous in our gifts? When we have such a feeling it would do us good to think of some people who have learned the real joy of giving. When Matthias W. Baldwin, the builder of the first American locomotive, was a young man struggling for a foothold, he attended a meeting called to raise money. After an hour of despondent debate, he rose and said, "Brethren, we have talked long enough. It is time something was done. We need not expect others to give until we set them the example. I have laid aside twenty-five dollars for a new suit of clothes; but I can wear my old ones one winter longer. Put my name down for twenty-five." This example of self-denial changed the spirit of the meeting in an instant.

One of the richest women in a western city was a cook. She gave the savings of a lifetime to buy a manse for the church of which she was a member. Thus she gave up everything; but she had riches that no man could take from her. The sage of old who wrote, "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more," knew what he was talking about.

In Korea a little band of Christians were building a church, but they lacked fifteen dollars. For a long time the building stood half finished, when an earnest young man became burdened about it. His possessions were only a small piece of ground, a bullock, and a little mud hut. One morning after prayer he led away the bullock to the house of a friend, who gave him in exchange fifteen dollars. The little church was finished. Springtime came and the farmers began to plow their fields. But what of Pai Ni Il, who was without his bullock? He and his brother got into the traces and drew the plow, while his old father held the handles.

But no Christian has really learned the joy of giving until he has begun to throw his life into the service of his fellows, ministering to them, helping them, encouraging them, pointing them to Christ. There is no pleasure like that which

comes to the winner of souls. There is no higher privilege than that giving to the man who can say to his fellows, "O taste and see that the Lord is good."

Because he realizes this, a talented Christian in China is glad to serve in obscurity, that he may find the way to the hearts of his countrymen. "He might have been a professor in his college. He might have had one of a hundred positions of influence at a princely salary, as salaries go in China; he might have been secretary to the viceroy if he had chosen. He might have been the leading Christian layman in any one of a thousand cities. Where is he now? Pastor of a church in the Yangtze valley at fifteen dollars a month, in a city where not one in ten thousand people can talk with him in English or appreciate him." Some of that man's friends make fun of him. But what of that?

There were those in a western town who laughed at the men of a Bible class who longed to know the joy of the soul-winner. They studied prospects with care, and they decided that the men most worth while winning were four of the worst drinkers in the town, as well as two men who had served time in the county jail. The six men consented to come to the class. They were made welcome, though some declared that their presence would lower the tone of the class. The reward came when two of the men united with the church. "And we have reason to think the other four will come soon," the soul-winner said, happily.

Christians like these Bible class men would have delighted the heart of Maltbie D. Babcock, who appealed to Christians:

"Be strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift.

We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.

Shun not the struggle—face it, 'tis God's gift."

We thank thee, our Father, for the place prepared for us, for the joy we are to have in thy presence, for the knowledge that we are to serve thee forever. May we not be alone as we enter thy presence and stand before thy throne, but may we take with us many of those with whom we have lived, for whom we have prayed, to whom we have given the invitation to seek the Lord with us. Make us faithful servants every moment, that our associates out in the world or

in the home may be won by little acts of love to desire to know the Lord who is directing our ways. In the name of him who died that we might live. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

How has the promise, "To them that love God all things work together for good," been fulfilled in your life?

What is your conviction as to the best way to give to God's work? How does your plan succeed? What gift has brought you most joy? Why do you give?

What do you think of the Christian who is content to sing, "Where is the blessedness I knew, when first I knew the Lord"? Why should the Christian's joy increase as the years pass?

CHAPTER XI

Things to Pray For

DAILY READINGS

Eleventh Week, First Day

Pray without ceasing.—I Thess. 5: 17.

Continue stedfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving.—Col. 4: 2.

What is to be thought of the Christian who is content to plan for stated seasons of prayer, while between times he never thinks of prayer? Yet we may speak to God at any time. Is it hard to realize this? Why not try speaking to him at any moment through the day? Earnest Christians testify that there is nothing like this method of realizing the constant presence of God. The prayers made during the hours of business may be mere ejaculations—a plea for help in temptation, or for guidance at a time of special difficulty, a request that God will be with a sick friend of whom word has just been received, a heart uplifted in passing a house, it may be of a stranger, on the door of which there has been placed the sign that God has taken to himself one of the family within. Everywhere, on the car, on the street, in the office, in the lecture room, we are in God's presence and we may speak to him.

Weymouth translates Colossians 4: 2, "Be earnest and unwearied in prayer, being on the alert in it." How does this help in the understanding of Paul's message?

Eleventh Week, Second Day

I exhort . . . that supplications, prayers . . . be made for all men.—I Tim. 2: 1.

How often do we pray for other people? Why is it far easier to devote most petitions to ourselves and our fancied needs, while we speak of the needs of others in a few words or sentences at the end of the rather formal morning or evening prayer? How far was the cynic justified who said that the prayer of many Christians was something like this: "Lord, bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more"? Note how Paul used his privilege of praying for others (Eph. 1: 16-19).

What proportion of Christ's prayers were for himself?

Eleventh Week, Third Day

Epaphras . . . sends greeting to you, always wrestling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand firm—Christians of ripe character and of clear conviction as to everything which is God's will.—Col. 4: 12 (Weymouth).

What would it mean to you in an hour of severe temptation to know that some friend was asking God to help you? What do you think it meant to Peter to have the assurance that Christ was praying for him? Luke 22: 31, 32. What do you think of a man who wants a friend to do for him what he is unwilling to do for his friend? What idea do you get from Paul's use of the word wrestling? Read the account of Jacob's intense experience in prayer (Genesis 32: 24-31). How accurately would the word wrestling describe the average prayer? How completely did Epaphras' prayer cover the deepest needs of his friends? Can you suggest anything he might have added to his prayer?

Eleventh Week, Fourth Day

To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfil every desire of goodness and every work of faith, with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.—II Thess. 1: 11, 12.

What do you do when a friend asks you to pray for him? You promise, but how long do you remember the promise? Probably the request is soon crowded from the mind. Many

men keep a prayer list, on which they enter the names of those who ask for their prayers, as well as the names of those for whom they wish to pray even if they have not been asked to do so. Such a list as this would be a help in making definite the prayers that sometimes seem so labored. Friends of Ding Li Mei, the Chinese evangelist who has been so wonderfully successful, say that he carries the names of several thousand people on his prayer list. What do you think would be likely to be the effect on the personal life of a man who prays earnestly for a friend that he may be a worthy Christian, and that his life may glorify God? Can one pray for such things for another and not strive for them himself? What would be your reply to the man who scoffs at prayer? What argument from experience can you make?

Eleventh Week, Fifth Day

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.—Eph. 1: 17-21.

Note the three things which Paul prays that the Christian may understand. *The first is hope.* What do we hope for in the Christian life? We ought to have a definite idea. Is it only that we may win heaven at last? What else? *The second is the riches of God's inheritance in his people.* Does that seem like turning things wrong end to? We speak of the riches of our inheritance in God; but—wonder of wonders—we have a right to speak of God's riches in us. Does that thought bring a new sense of responsibility to us? *The third thing we need to understand is the wonderful power of God* which will enable us to realize our hope in life

and to become what he wants us to be that he may rejoice in us.

Eleventh Week, Sixth Day

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.—Eph. 3: 14-19.

A timber explorer in Louisiana was engaged to estimate the amount of growing cypress in a section of land. So sure was he of the speedy completion of his task that he took no lunch with him, leaving word at the hotel that he would return for an early dinner. At first his progress through the forest was rapid, and his confidence increased. Suddenly, however, he was confronted by a dense thicket of briars. Without hesitation he pushed into them, thinking to pass through in a moment. But the thorns were long and sharp, and the branches were so closely interlaced that he found it out of the question to advance more than ten feet in five minutes. Hour after hour the contest was continued. Still he persevered, resolved to win his way through that section of forest. But his strength was finally exhausted, and he had to give up until he could return with reinforcements.

In what respects is the experience of the lumberman like the experience of the Christian who fights the temptation to do what he knows is not right?

How can the knowledge of the love of Christ make us strong?

Eleventh Week, Seventh Day

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may

be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. —Phil. 1: 9-11.

Judging from his prayers, what was Paul's idea of the comparative importance of physical blessings and spiritual blessings? How does his idea correspond to the teaching of Jesus as indicated by the petitions in the Lord's prayer? Why is it necessary that the Christian have as complete a knowledge of Christ as possible? How will an abounding love to Christ and knowledge of him help us to choose the best things in life, and to live in such a way that others will be glad that they know us? Why should we desire the love, knowledge, judgment, sincerity, perseverance, and fruitfulness for which Paul teaches us to pray?

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

Always there are those who point to Paul's injunction to "Pray without ceasing" as an evidence of the impracticability of so many Christian teachings. But is it impracticable?

Paul was writing to his friends at Thessalonica—the modern city of Salonika. At the close of the letter he told them certain things they must do if they would be earnest disciples of the Lord. "Do not be content with spasmodic efforts at Christian living," he said; "follow good, make the pursuit of good your one controlling purpose in life." Again he said, "Pray without ceasing; let your life be a life of prayer."

A passenger who asked a London cab driver if he loved God was told he had no time for such things. Then the passenger asked him if he had a wife. When an affirmative answer was given, he said, "I am sorry for her." "Why are you sorry?" the astonished cabby asked. "Because you have no time to love her," was the reply. "No time to love her! Why, I loves her every yard I drives!" the man said. If we love God every step of the way, we will be, in spirit at least, in communion with him at all times, living so close to him that it will seem the most natural thing in the world to speak to him at any moment or under all circumstances.

We must have an appointed time for prayer when we can have a little talk with God. The prayer then will be as definite as that offered daily by a group of earnest young people: "Take me, Lord, and use me today as thou wilt. Whatever work thou hast for me to do, give it into my hands. If there are those thou wouldst have me to help in any way, send them to me. Take my time and use it as thou wilt. Let me live close to thy hand and be fit for thy service, to be employed only for thee and for ministry to others, in his name."

Then there will be special times when it will seem necessary to go apart for prayer. Do we know how to retire to a mountain top for prayer when we are perplexed and need strength and guidance for the duties before us? Jesus did; and here is the secret of his wonderful achievements. He was at home with God, as he asks us to be. We can find our mountain top in an instant's time, if we will only pour out our hearts to God with earnest desire for his blessing. And what blessed days those prove when the mountain top blessing comes! And what dreary days those are when we grope along the ground in the valleys and have no mountain-top experiences with God! A son has told of the difference the mountain-top experiences made in the life of his mother. "I came soon to know that there was a little, sacred interval in each busy day, not always won, but always sought and planned for, when no ordinary knocking would gain an entrance to her closed door or bring her to my side. She and her Bible were alone with God. And I knew without her telling that I and my concerns were a part of her concerns in that time of prayer. Once or twice I had even been called in, when sin or sorrow was to be spoken of between us. And life had a different look when I came out through her door after that speaking. In ordinary hours my mother was not only one of the dearest, but one of the gayest companions; but when she came down from that mount of silence, it seemed to my childish eyes that her face shone."

The Christian is to be constantly in the presence of God, consciously keeping in touch with him. Sometimes, for hours, not a word of prayer may be spoken or thought. But as one may walk with his friend, enjoying every instant of fellowship with him, unconscious, it may be, that no words are uttered, so the Christian may hold true communion with

God while engaged in the business of the day, or as he talks to others. "How do you manage to get time alone with God?" a busy man was asked. "He is my companion on street car rides, or when I walk from my office or my home," he answered.

Did you ever, consciously, take a walk in God's company? Try it. You will be surprised to find how short the way seems. Next time you take a long walk repeat the Psalms you know, and any other chapters you have learned. And after you have repeated a few Psalms, pray for a while as you walk. Perhaps the idea will seem strange just at first—but why should it? God is the best companion in the world. Try him, and see!

Frequently surprise is expressed that some man or some woman, who seems to have less thorough equipment for life than many others, is able to accomplish so much more than any of those others. In many cases the secret of the achievements that cause surprise would be disclosed if we could have a glimpse into the prayer life of the workers. Such a glimpse is given us in the journal of a missionary whose biographer lifted the veil of privacy long enough to disclose this prayer, made at a time of great trial and uncertainty: "Make me patient under calumny, whether it be at home or abroad. Give me patience to labor at details as much as if they were the highest work. Let me not get disappointed with the opposition that may be thrown in the way. If it shall prove not to be thy call to labor here, help me to take the lesson thou givest for my good. Help me to be content with thy work in me if not by me, and out of all vexation and trial it has brought, only let my heart be brought nearer thee." There need be no surprise that the Christian who is in the habit of making a prayer like that, and is daily trying to live in accordance with the prayer, is used by God for the glory of his kingdom.

God has rich gifts awaiting the true prayers of his children; gifts that are to be had for the asking and not to be had unless they are asked for. Of course, in all our asking, it is understood that we seek to ask in accordance with his will. "This is the boldness," says John, "which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we

have asked of him" (I John 5: 14, 15). God can be depended upon to keep his promises to his children. Can we be depended on to ask him, and to fulfil the conditions necessary for the answer?

A Christian business man was fulfilling the conditions God has made known to those who would expect an answer to their prayers, at a time when he was about to receive a promotion. He asked himself these questions: "What is my aim? Is it money, honor, dignity, ease, luxury? What is there in money that will satisfy thee, O my soul?" Then he made this prayer concerning the possible promotion: "If it is thy will, wilt thou cause Mr. H—— so to appoint, but if otherwise, may his mind be set against it. Enable me to feel that I am in the path where thou wouldst have me go." Life would be simplified for all of us if we were always ready to pray in that spirit, and God would just as surely use us and bless us in his service as he did this young man.

Unless when we offer prayer we are ready to do God's will, whatever this may be, the prayer is of little value. Do we ask for a greater knowledge of God? Then are we ready to spend the hours necessary in earnest Bible study? We plead for the conversion of a friend. Are we ready to go to that friend and invite him to become a Christian? We pray, "Thy kingdom come." Do we realize what is involved in this prayer? The Christian who makes this prayer in the spirit desired by Him who taught it is thereby consecrating to God's service his whole life, to be used as God sees fit in the spread of that kingdom; and the follower of Jesus who from the heart asks that laborers be sent forth to gather the harvest of souls must be willing to be himself thrust out, if God wants him.

All real prayer costs. The Master's prayers cost him strong crying and tears and great drops of blood. They led him to Calvary and the tomb. Where do our prayers lead us?

O, God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father, teach us to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. As our knowledge of his love grows, may our dissatisfaction with ourselves and our own unloveliness grow also. Adorn us with his beauty. Keep us close to him that we, looking ever at our Pattern, may be transformed into

his likeness, and may be able to look upon him who suffered for us all. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

What were some of the things which were prayed for by David? What did Abraham's servant Eleazar pray for? What did Moses pray for? Solomon? Elijah? Daniel? What prayers by Paul are recorded in The Acts? How is a man's character revealed by his prayers? What is the cost of true prayer?

CHAPTER XII

Reasons for Thanksgiving

DAILY READINGS

Twelfth Week, First Day

Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.—Eph. 5: 20.

What will become of worry and anxiety for those who live in accordance with this message? What room is there for discontent? Is it possible to be thankful for everything that comes to us when we are trying to do what God wants us to do? Why, then, should the reader feel that Paul's urgent plea to give thanks always for everything is not to be interpreted literally? Do we interpret literally the promise of Christ, "I will never leave you nor forsake you"? Then why is not literal interpretation of Paul's message possible and action in accordance with it desirable?

*How does Paul's statement in regard to himself in Philip-
pians 4: 11, point the way to the thanksgiving that lasts?*

Twelfth Week, Second Day

Giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.—Col. 1: 12.

There are in these phrases almost as many specific reasons for thanksgiving as there are words. First, there is the word *Father*. How does the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ become our Father? By what act is an outsider taken into one of our families and given the right to call *father* one who is no blood relation to him? What reason for thanksgiving is wrapped up in the word *us*? What pleasure

is there in sharing experiences with friends? What is involved in the fact that Christians can be associated as they receive God's blessings? How has God made us fit to receive his blessings? It is a mistake to think that Christ's followers may at some future time have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God; they have that right now, for they *have been* made fit. What does it mean to be a *partaker in the inheritance*? Ask one who has been named with others in the will of a rich man. There is one fundamental difference, however; the heirs of the rich man must divide the inheritance, whereas each one of God's heirs has a right to the entire inheritance. Do not turn away from the phrase, *of the saints*. In the Bible the saints are not impossible, unreal, soft-minded folks; the saints are the redeemed—all of God's people are included, no matter how feeble their efforts to follow him.

Twelfth Week, Third Day

We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure.—II. Thess. 1: 3, 4.

Note that the word *we* is editorial merely; Paul is speaking of himself. Paul gave—without knowing it—an indication of at least four of the qualities for which his own life was remarkable. In the first eleven words three of these qualities are recorded. First, there was the fact that duty always appealed to him; second, he was humble; third, he was unselfish. Why are these qualities attractive? How often is the object of thanksgiving some one else than the one who gives the thanks? And how many men who had done as much work for other people as Paul had done would give all the credit to some one else, leaving themselves entirely out of account? Now read a few words more in the sentence and find the hint that to Paul duty was pleasure. Another word, in the final clause, helps the impression; what is it? What, in Paul's opinion, were the things most worth while in life?

Twelfth Week, Fourth Day

I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.—I Cor. 1: 4-7, 9.

Ask a group of a dozen Christians to tell their chief reason for thanksgiving. What would they be likely to say? What are the first things that come to your mind as you think of reasons for thanksgiving? Now note what came first into Paul's thoughts. He had neither time nor temptation to speak of things that so many people think are absolutely necessary to a pleasurable existence: These were good, but there were so many other better things that he turned his attention at once to these things. There was the knowledge of the truth. Why is this a good thing? Then there was the desire and the ability to pass on to others this knowledge. How many Christians think of this as a privilege? There was the assurance that Christ would help them in their efforts to please him. Finally, there was the knowledge that God, who cannot lie, would fulfill his promise to his people, the promise that they should share the good things that Christ gives to his own.

What do you think of Paul's way of estimating values?

Twelfth Week, Fifth Day

Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.—I Cor. 9: 16.

I thank my God, I say, for your cooperation in spreading the Good News.—Phil. 1: 4, 5 (Weymouth).

Why should a Christian be thankful that he can tell the Good News to others? How universal is this feeling of thanksgiving among Christians? Why is there so little personal, man to man, testimony for Christ? What would be the result if, in any community, one Christian in every ten should make it a habit to tell to one person each day what Christ means to him?

Twelfth Week, Sixth Day

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.—II Cor. 1: 3, 4.

It was Paul's custom in his letters to give, immediately following the words of address, a message of thanksgiving. Usually his thanksgiving was for others; here he spoke first of himself. But was this an indication of selfishness? He was thankful because God had comforted him in his affliction. Why? *That he might comfort others!* Is it worth while to experience privation and suffering in order that we may sympathize with others? If we can have God's comfort in our trouble, as Paul had it, we can be of real use to others in their time of need. People everywhere are hungry for comfort; eagerly they turn to one who can comfort them. A stranger who visited a city church which was crowded to the doors wondered why the people came, because half of those present could not hear the speaker's feebly uttered words. He was more surprised when he learned that the house was always full. "Why do they come?" he asked. "If you were in trouble, and our pastor called on you, or wrote to you, you would not ask that question again," was the reply.

Which would you prefer, the power to move thousands for the moment by your eloquence, or the ability to comfort those that mourn?

Twelfth Week, Seventh Day

Thanks be to God for his unspeakably precious gift.—II Cor. 9: 15 (Weymouth).

Ordinarily Paul did not lack words to express his thoughts. But there were occasions when even he was dumb. Once he started to describe the love of God, but he gave up the attempt; "it passeth knowledge," was all that he could say. Again, when he was speaking of God's gift in Christ, words failed him. He could only call the Gift unspeakable. Then

he paused in eloquent silence. Everything can be described but that which is boundless. There is but one way to know God's unspeakably precious Gift: those who give Christ the chance he wants to make over their lives will begin to understand him. To others who ask for a definition of Christ the only possible answer is, "Come and see!"

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

Always Paul was thankful for the privilege of telling to others the good news of Christ's life and death and resurrection. We say that his was a peculiar privilege. Do we really think so? Then why do we not take advantage of our opportunities to tell the same story? Are we to rest content with congratulating others on their rare opportunity to tell their friends of him who will fill their lives with the best things? We are so slow to tell the story, although right at our elbow are those who have never heard it. A city girl, visiting in the mountains of Georgia, found one of these hungry hearts when she mentioned the Saviour to a young girl. "He ain't never been roun' these here parts," was her wondering answer. "I ain't never hearn about him. You tell me!" And when the story was simply told, the mountain girl cried, "Oh, I wish my Saviour would come to me!"

Unless we are thankful for the privilege of passing on the good news to those who have never heard it, or to those who have never heeded what they have heard, there is something radically wrong with us.

It is related of a man who lived centuries ago that whenever he received a gift for the charitable institution with which he was connected, he exclaimed, "*Deo Gratia*"—Thanks to God. His name was Felix, but in the course of years even the children came to know him as Brother Deo Gratia—Brother Thankful.

In like manner Paul might have been called Brother Thankful by the early Christians. He was continually breaking out in words of thanksgiving and praise to God for some blessing received and appreciated. Twenty-eight times in his epistles he used the words, "I thank." More than twenty times in his messages to the churches he called on the Christians to join him in thanksgiving.

It is not difficult to picture Paul. He had a strong face, even if his bodily presence was weak. And surely it was a kindly, smiling, beaming face to which anyone, child or man, would be attracted instantly.

Paul would have enjoyed going with a modern Christian worker who went one Sunday afternoon to a home for invalids, to hold a brief service. An eager congregation awaited him; there were perhaps sixty men and women in wheeled chairs. "What a gloomy atmosphere for a service," some one said when he was told of the gathering. But he was wrong. There was no gloom; there was brightness. The faces of the blind were alight, the hands of the cripples were trembling with anticipation, the attitude of nearly all indicated expectation of something good to come to them from God's Book which would stay with them through the week.

It was a glorious half hour for the leader, but it was made still more glorious by the words of the people as they gave personal greetings before being wheeled by their attendants to their own rooms. "How thankful I am for the Bible!" one helpless woman said. "I like to think of God with me!" said a blind man. There were many similar messages. God had been good to them, and they were thankful.

Did you ever hear someone speak of the impossibility, for him, of entering with heartiness into a service of praise and rejoicing because the year has brought to him so many perplexities, sorrows, losses? Tell him to stop thinking about these, and to rejoice because of the things that have not been taken from him and the things he has not suffered. Remind him of the words spoken by Charles Dickens when he learned of the sad plight of Laura Bridgman, the child who was blind and deaf and dumb: "Ye who have eyes and see not, and have ears and hear not; ye who are as the hypocrites of sad countenances, and disfigure your faces that you may seem unto men to fast; learn healthy cheerfulness, and mild contentment, from the deaf and dumb and blind. Self-deluded saints with gloomy brows, this sightless, earless, voiceless child may teach you lessons you would do well to follow." Let the thankless man dwell a little while on such thoughts, and see how he will begin to remember blessings he has forgotten, until he is readier to give thanksgiving to God than he has ever been before.

There is need of great care, however, when we think of those who are unfortunate as an incitement to our thanksgiving. There is danger lest we become Pharisees in our thanksgiving, emphasizing our own good fortune until we feel like thanking God that we are not as other men are. Do we see a blind man? The natural thought is, "How glad I am that I have eyes." We see one who is in the depths of poverty, and we feel grateful that we can live in comfort. Such thoughts are good in themselves, but there is need to guard them lest nominal thanksgiving degenerate into selfish carelessness of the wants and needs of others. There are people who sympathized at one time with the poor and unfortunate, but who have been led by increasing prosperity to think so much of the many ways in which their lot is superior to that of others that in time their neighbors became mere object lessons by which to impress upon themselves and others their own good fortune.

Paul was saved from any such error. He was thankful for the good things he had, but he was even more thankful for the good things others had. By practicing in his own thanksgiving his own teaching, "Look not every man on his own things but every man on the things of others," he added to his own happiness so that he bubbled over with thanksgiving.

It is noteworthy also that Paul's thanksgiving did not easily expend itself. He was not one of those who feel that when they have expressed their gratitude once, there is no necessity to bring the matter up a second time. Paul taught by his own words and by his deeds that real gratitude lasts.

The biographer of Clara Barton tells how this devoted woman, on the battlefield, in the absence of a surgeon, saved the life of a soldier who was bleeding to death from a wound inflicted by a bursting shell. An hour after dressing his injuries, when she had forgotten the occurrence, she was stopped near his cot by a feeble pull at her dress. Stooping over the cot she was passing, she saw the man whom she had saved. The tears were sliding quietly down his brown, dust-covered cheeks as he whispered, "You saved my life." Nothing more was said; he assured her he wanted nothing but to thank her. Again, after an hour, the same thing occurred. "And so, day after day, until he was removed," Miss Barton wrote, "whenever I came within reach of him I could feel my dress slipping gently through his fingers,

and, as often as he dared, he arrested me with the same four little words, "You saved my life!" He never said anything but this. Weeks after his departure for the hospital, Miss Barton heard a rap at her door. On opening it she saw the same man, this time on crutches. As before he spoke but four words, "You saved my life!" and limped away.

An attractive story of feudal times tells of a knight who felt that it was his duty to deliver his people from a cruel duke, a usurper. At first the knight had no followers, and the statement of his purpose to displace the duke seemed absurd. But, one after another, men were won to his banner until he had sturdy, dependable leaders for the forces he needed. Once he came to the rescue of a man who was in the hands of robbers; delivered, the man dedicated his life to the knight. Later the knight found one who was fleeing from the duke, and cared for him and assured him of safety; this man, also, in thankfulness, made known his purpose to attach himself to the knight. A third man, saved from dire disaster, became his follower. And through all the strenuous times that followed these men had but one idea, to show by deeds of daring, by sacrifice of self, by regard for the wishes of their chosen commander, their gratitude to him for his gift of life to them. They did not say to their preserver, "You saved my life," but their actions spoke for them.

Like Miss Barton's soldier and the knight's companions, Paul did not believe in stopping with one expression of thanks. He assured the Thessalonians, "We give thanks to God always for you all." To the Corinthians he wrote, "I cease not to give thanks for you." Then what are we to conclude as to the number of times he thanked God for the gift of life in Christ Jesus? He wrote, simply, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakably precious gift"—but the utterance of his thanks must have been repeated times without number.

For Paul had "the habit of thankfulness"—the cultivation of a disposition of fundamental, intelligent, trusting optimism based on faith in God. Everything strengthened the habit, even the trying experiences of which he told so vividly: "In journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers . . . in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in

perils in the sea . . . in labor and travail." . . . In everything he gave thanks.

What is our thanksgiving to Christ like? Is it a mere form, easily satisfied by the utterance of a few words, or is it a vital matter that controls all our speech and all our actions? Christ saved our life, he is our life; so we are not our own. Both words and deeds belong to him. "Giving thanks always for all things" is Paul's inclusive way of expressing the Christian's duty and privilege.

We thank thee, O God, that thou thinkest of us in our needs and art able to supply our wants. We thank thee that we can ask thee even for daily bread and know that we shall have it. We thank thee for the health and strength thou givest so that we are able to work for our daily bread. While we seek for the supply of our bodily wants, may we also seek for supplies for our spiritual needs. And when we have received rich gifts from thee, may we be glad to share them with others, who need thee. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

If you had nothing to depend on but the extracts from the epistles which form the subjects of this week's readings, how complete a picture of Paul would it be possible to construct?

How many of Paul's characteristics are revealed in the verses of this week's readings?

Why is thanksgiving an essential element in the life of the Christian?

CHAPTER XIII

Life That Lasts Forever

DAILY READINGS

Thirteenth Week, First Day

All things are yours; whether . . . life, or death, . . . or things to come.—I Cor. 3: 21, 22.

Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.—I Thess. 5: 10.

Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him.—II Tim. 2: 11.

What is your frank opinion about the catalogue Paul makes of the Christian's possessions? How far are you ready to agree with him? What makes this life and the things we enjoy here worth while? Why does life pall on so many people? One who was speaking of the suicide of a man who had the world at his feet, said that he had never learned how essential Christ's friendship is to one who would enjoy life. What do you think of his explanation? How can death as well as life be reckoned a cherished possession? Christ teaches us that the life after death will be wonderfully worth while. If we believe him, why should we not feel that the means of transition from the life here to the life over yonder is a boon to be welcomed when the time comes to make the journey? Here is a man who has long dreamed of making his first trip to Europe. What shall be thought of him if he looks on the vessel that would carry him over as an enemy to be dreaded? And why should not every Christian feel as did one who was about to die, "Why, death is no more than going into the next room!" Death is only the passage to the room which Christ has made ready for those who love him, because he wants them to live with him forever.

What is the significance of the present tense used in Christ's promise in John 5: 24?

What is meant by the words, "hath passed out of death into life"?

Thirteenth Week, Second Day

But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. —I Cor. 15: 54-57.

When John Quincy Adams was eighty years old he met on a Boston street an old friend who shook his trembling hand and said: "Good morning! and how is John Quincy Adams today?" "Thank you!" was the reply, "John Quincy Adams himself is well, sir, quite well, I thank you. But the house in which he lives at present is becoming dilapidated. It is tottering upon its foundation. Time and the seasons have nearly destroyed it. Its roof is pretty well worn out. Its walls are much shattered, and it trembles with every wind. The old tenement is becoming almost uninhabitable, and I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon; but he himself is quite well, sir, quite well." Not long afterward he had his second and fatal stroke of paralysis. "This is the last of earth," he said; "I am content."

Thirteenth Week, Third Day

If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.

But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign,

till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him.—I Cor. 15: 19-27.

What would life mean to you if you thought that death would be the end instead of the passage to a larger, richer, more glorious existence? What inspiration would there be for the daily struggle with evil and the effort to make the most of oneself if it were impossible to feel that every conquest of evil makes one better fitted to enjoy the blessings Christ has promised to his people? What is the meaning of Paul's decisive, triumphant assurance that this life is not the end?

Read John, chapter 14, in the light of today's Scripture passage. What did Jesus mean when he said he is the way to God?

Thirteenth Week, Fourth Day

But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.—Eph. 2: 4-7.

Analyze this wonderful passage, which tells the whole story of salvation. Note the reference to the time when we lived in the dark. Why did God pay any attention to us when we had chosen to go so far from him? What did he do for us? How was our conversion a more wonderful resurrection than the resurrection of Lazarus? How have we been made to sit with Christ in heavenly places? It would be natural to interpret this part of the passage as something to be fulfilled in the future. Why did Paul use the past tense? What new content does Christ give to life that makes it seem like heaven? How do the words of Browning become true to the one who lives with Christ?

“I find earth not gray, but rosy;
 Heaven not grim, but fair of hue.
 Do I stoop? I pluck a posy.
 Do I stand and stare? All's blue.”

And how does the last clause of the Scripture passage emphasize this message of the poet?

“Do your joys with age diminish?
 When mine fail me, I'll complain.
 Must in death your daylight finish?
 My sun sets to rise again.”

Thirteenth Week, Fifth Day

But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.—I Thess. 4: 13-17.

In some cemeteries it is customary to inscribe “Our home” on the stones erected over the graves. Why should the Christian feel otherwise about the tomb? Where is our home? All who believe in Christ shall be called to live with him. First those who have died before his coming shall rise, then those who are still alive at his coming shall be summoned to meet him. No man can know to which class he will belong. But for all alike there is the absolute certainty of enjoying the companionship of the Lord forever.

Read in Revelation 7: 14-17 the description of the joys of eternal life with Christ.

Thirteenth Week, Sixth Day

For I am already being offered, and the time of my

departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.—II Tim. 4: 6-8.

Paul likened himself to a drink offering which was being poured out. He knew that the close of his earthly life could not be far away. How did he feel as he looked back on his years of service of Christ? Was he justified in feeling that he had tried to do his best? What do the three figures which are employed—the fight, the course, the crown—mean? What right had he to feel that a crown of victory awaited him? How can we be sure of receiving a like crown for ourselves? How should this assurance make us feel in the face of death? Is the love of Christ's appearing of which Paul spoke consistent with the fear of death?

Thirteenth Week, Seventh Day

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom. 8: 35, 37-39.

Can life bring to the Christian any experience that will be too severe, too trying for Christ's help to avail? Paul insisted that this was impossible. Had he the right to speak so positively? Think what he had gone through. Then let him who says that his difficulties are peculiar, that Christ cannot help him to overcome, hide his head for shame. Is anything too hard for the Son of God? And he is on the side of those who will be on his side. His love fills the heart with gladness and makes the life one round of satisfaction. Those who keep company with the Master are lifted above the disappointments of life, into the supreme satisfaction of those who say in confident trust, "Whom have I in heaven but thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!"

Paul's language was the language of certainty. He knew. He was persuaded. Christ was his and he was Christ's; and he was conqueror through Christ of all the things in life or in death that might have had power to disturb him. What more could he ask? What more can any Christian ask? No condemnation! No separation! For it is given to us to lean on the love of him who was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty, who says, "And they shall be mine . . . and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK

Norman Duncan has told of the death of a rough teamster in the Minnesota woods, whose work it had been to haul logs from the woods to the landing at the lake. Frank Higgins, the "lumber jack's sky pilot," sat by his side.

"I've a heavy load, pilot—a heavy load," the dying man said. "Do you think I can make the grade?"

"With help, Alex," was the reply.

"You mean that I need another team of leaders?" he asked.

"The Great Leader, Alex."

"Oh, I know what you mean," said the teamster. "You mean that I need the help of your Christ."

And then Frank Higgins told the story of Him who was waiting to help the dying man, told it simply and effectively.

The man said little at the moment, but later in the night, just before he drew his last breath, he whispered in the pilot's ear:

"Tell the boys I made the grade."

Thus he entered into eternal life.

How do we know he did?

Christ is a perfect workman. He came to earth to accomplish certain definite things. Shall we say that he did accomplish some of them, but that other things were left undone—that he conquered temptation, and disease, and suffering, but did not conquer death? "The last enemy that shall be abolished is death"; and he overcame it. It was our enemy, he made it his enemy. In his triumph we triumph, because he is ours and we are his, and we now can cry in exultation, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

When Paul said, "If we have only hoped in Christ in this

life, we are of all men most pitiable," he must have thought of his own experience since his conversion. There was joy in following Christ, but there was hardship, and suffering, and tribulation. He thought nothing of these things, because of the hope of dwelling with Christ, and of winning others from death to life. But what if there were no resurrection? And, if there is no resurrection, what of the disappointments, the vexations, the difficulties that come to us day by day? Could we bear them? But, courage! There is a resurrection.

When Paul learned that there were some in the Church who denied the resurrection of the body, he declared that they were cutting the foundation from under their religion. If we cannot look forward to resurrection, then Christ is not risen but is still in the grave. Faith crumbles at once, and preaching is vain. Moreover, those whom death has taken from us have perished. Against this hopeless view of life Paul earnestly set himself: the Christian must not deprive himself of all the joys of life. Christ is risen, the dead shall rise, our faith is not vain.

Then why should death be such a distasteful idea to us? Christ died that he "might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage," (Hebrews 2: 15). Fear of death is doubt of Christ.

There is no way to escape death. But why should we wish to escape it, when it is but the passage from this world to the presence of God? No death, no glory. Then death is our friend! If we remind ourselves continually that what we call death is only the gateway to life, our thought will more and more be given with joy to the anticipations of the glorious future. Dwight L. Moody learned this lesson. He said:

"I like to think of the time when the dead shall rise from their graves. We read of this in what we call the 'burial service.' It is an unfortunate expression. Paul never talked of 'burial.' He said the body was 'sown'—'sown in corruption,' 'sown in weakness,' 'sown in dishonor,' 'sown a natural body.' If I bury a bushel of wheat, I never expect to see it again, but if I sow it, I expect results. Thank God, our friends are not buried; they are only sown!"

So, when the blinds are drawn and the bell is muffled and all the house is still because one who has been sick has closed his eyes for the last time on earth; when eyes are burning

with tears and hearts are heavy because of fearful anticipation of years spent without the presence of one dear to us, let the words of Christ sink into our hearts, "He is not dead, but sleepeth." The life of those who love Jesus does not end when their eyes close in death; the eyes will open again to see the glory of the King. Some day our eyes, too, will close in sleep, and we shall awaken where he is and where are our loved ones who have gone before us.

From China comes the story of Li, a native Christian, who had faith like this in the hour of death. The Boxers were about to kill him, with his family. The father knelt with both hands outstretched to heaven. "Father, if you want us to go"—he began. But his sentence was never finished. His spirit went to God while he was yet speaking. In like manner Chao Hsi Mao and his family were bound and placed in a cart by order of a Boxer chief, who directed that they be taken away to death. As the cart took them to the place of execution, they sang:

"He leadeth me; O blessed thought!

O words with heavenly comfort fraught!"

and again:

"E'en death's cold wave I will not flee,

Since God through Jordan leadeth me."

It does not seem a far cry from this modern Christian's experience to the experience of Stephen, the witness for Christ in whose martyrdom Paul had a part. What a peaceful conclusion to the story of bloodshed is given in the words, "He fell asleep!" There was no uncertainty in Stephen's heart as to the future; he was merely answering the call to leave the earth with its service for heaven and its larger service. Having begun here the life that was to be continued "over yonder," he gladly welcomed the sleep from which he was to awake in the presence of his Lord.

It is a mistake to think that the risen life becomes ours only after the death of the body. It is ours now—the life of Christ, given to us as we confess sin and as we struggle against sin. Then let us not delay to enter on our inheritance as sons of God, turning our backs on the sin that must not be given even the smallest corner of our hearts and revelling in the faith and hope and love that belong to those who have eternal life.

Faith and hope and love! All that is worth while in life comes from these, even though in incompleteness. So, all the joy of heaven will be in these; but it will be complete. The doubts that darken faith and the clouds that obscure hope and the sin that opposes love, while we live here, will then all be swept aside, and faith and hope and love will possess our souls unhampered and unhindered. The joy they bring to earthly life may be only like the streamlet which threads its way under the burning sun, but the joy they bring in heaven will be like the ocean, and more; it will be unlimited as eternity, wide as infinity, and deep as the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Lord, as we gaze into thy vacant tomb our hearts are filled with joy. We hear thee speaking to us. "Because I live, ye shall live also." We think of those we "have loved long since, and lost awhile," and our tears become smiles as we remind ourselves that those who love thee are called to be with thee. Make the resurrection truth a real power in our lives. Let the prospect before us of a life that never ends lead to the silencing of complaints, patience in trial, joy in service for thee, and the revelation of our risen Lord in every word and action. In his name. Amen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND STUDY

What does the resurrection of Christ mean to you?

What may the resurrection of Christ mean to you?

Why did the early Church grow so rapidly? Do you think the vividness of the belief in the resurrection and the thought that Christ would come soon, had anything to do with it?

Why are Christians today so lukewarm in their efforts for Christ? What would be the effect if we really believed that "the Lord is at hand"?

It was once said of a Christian: "He has been so busy living for other people, in the name of God, that he has had no time to think of death." What do you think of the life of which such a thing could be said?

How shall a man make the most out of both worlds?



Project on Theological Studies, Springfield, Mass.



1 1012 01005 3389