

GROWING TOWARD GOD

G. B. F. HALLOCK

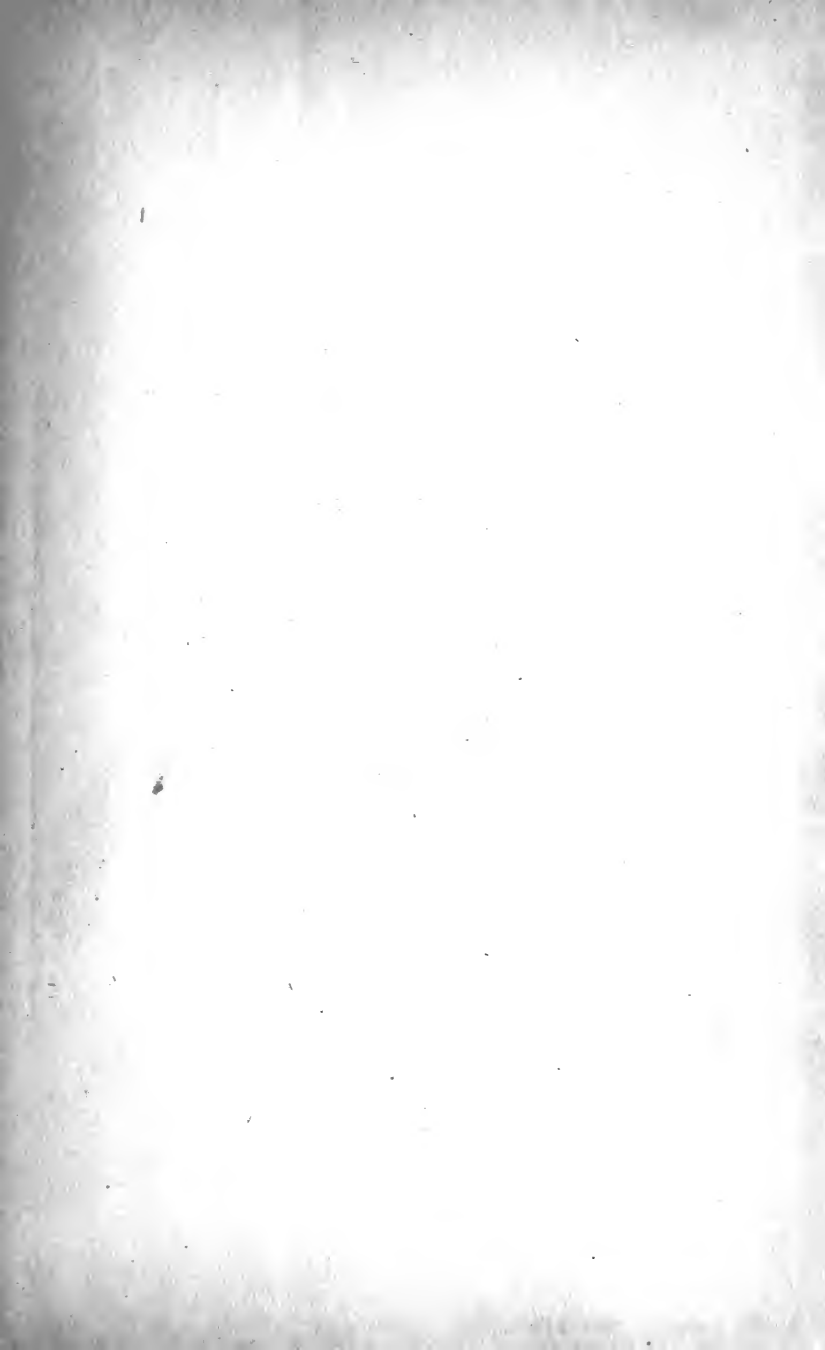


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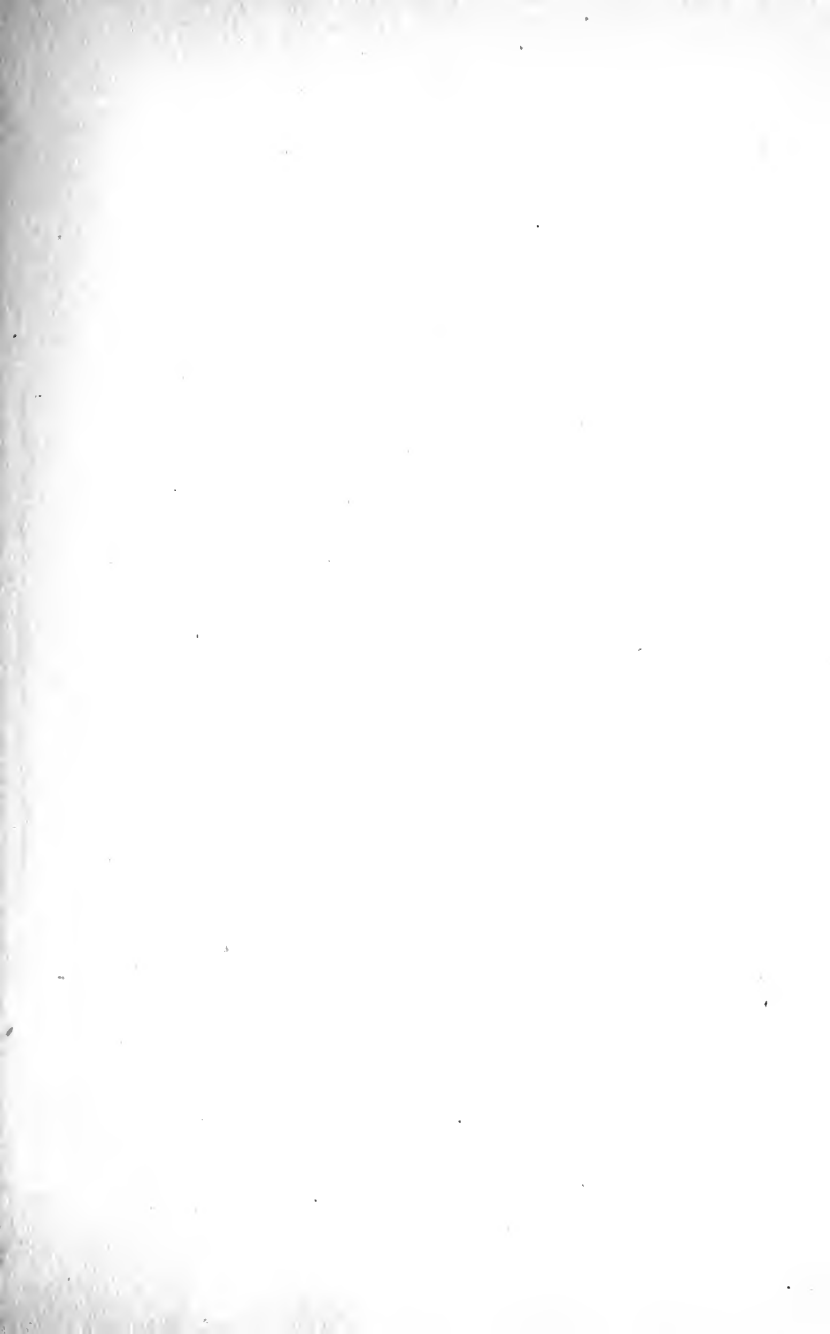
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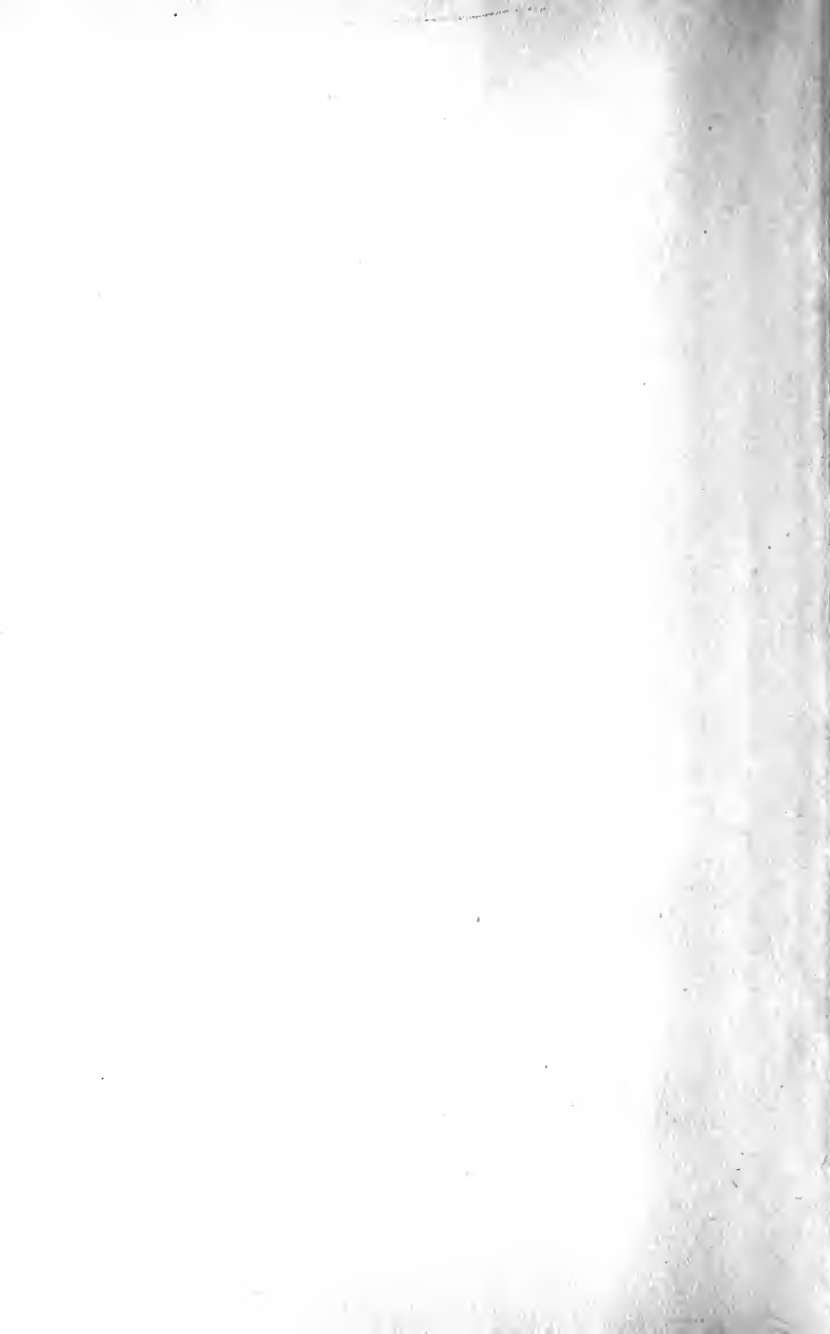
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G R O W I N G T O W A R D G O D

By GERARD B. F. HALLOCK, D.D.

Author of "Journeying in the Land Where Jesus Lived," "God's Whispered Secrets," "Upward Steps," "Beauty in God's Word," etc.

Then bless thy secret growth, nor catch
At noise, but thrive unseen and dumb;
Keep clean, bear fruit, earn life, and watch
Till the white-winged reaper come.

—Henry Vaughan

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PREFACE.

God is the Sun of our souls. As vegetable growth is toward the sun so true Christian growth is toward God. Bring that sickly plant from the cellar up into the light and how soon it begins to freshen up and grow and take on rich colors. The reason there are puny Christians is because they live too much away from God. "The Lord God is a sun." "God is light." Light vivifies. Light purifies. Light gives power. All sources of power are directly from the sun, coming in rays of light. Light is comforting. A dark day is a gloomy day, but a burst of sunshine gives cheer. Light is beautifying. A garden or a bird of glorious plumage is not beautiful in the dark; but in the light of the sun how exquisite they are!

No wonder Christians are exhorted to "walk in the light." We should all get as much as we may out under the clear shining of the glorious "Sun of Righteousness." Spiritual health

and beauty and happiness and serviceableness are the sure results.

This little book has but one aim. It has been written with the hope and prayer that it may be providentially used as a beckoning hand to call its readers to a life lived more largely out in the sunshine of God's love.

G. B. F. H.

Dear Brother Hallock

It is a great joy to me that I advised & exhorted two of my younger brethren to write for the religious press. One of them is the Rev Dr J. R. Miller of Philadelphia - & the other is the author of this volume on "Growing towards God". The writings of both these beloved brethren have had the precious seal of the Master's approval.

May the same Divine Blessing attend this volume - and may it help many a soul upward and God-ward is the sincere prayer of

Your Brother in Christ Jesus,

Theodore T. Temple

Brooklyn
August 1, 1904



GROWING TOWARD GOD

I.

GROWING TOWARD GOD.

“ Grow tall—tall enough to look over Mount Difficulty into Hope City.

Grow broad—broad enough to bear with people whom God has made different from you.

Grow deep, sending your roots down into perpetual springs. Come to know God.

Grow straight, measuring right up to the line of duty.

Grow stout—ready for burdens, and ready for fruit.”

Plants and vegetation and trees grow toward the sun. Even the heart of a tree trunk is not at the centre, as many suppose, but the main body of every tree has an elliptical bulge toward the sun-prevailing side. In garden or grove or thicket, if any plants or trees or shrubs are in the shade, they struggle toward the sun, the source of their light and life and

well being. It is in the same way that Christians ought to grow,— toward God, the source of their life and light and blessedness. “ The Lord God is a sun.” It is our privilege and should be our delight to grow toward him.

Not a few Christians are dissatisfied with themselves and their attainments. They feel that they are living on the surface of the Christian life and that there are depths of riches belonging to it into which they have not come, because they do not know the way. They want to grow toward God, and in likeness to God, but they say they know not how to make such attainment.

The fact is that the whole matter has been treated too much as a mystery. The darkness and uncertainty which trouble Christians would disappear, if the plain teachings and counsels of the Bible were carefully regarded. The directions for living the spiritual life are all given so definitely and plainly in God’s Word that no one need make a mistake.

One essential qualification for the deepening and enriching of the spiritual life is knowledge. It is important, if we would grow toward God,

that we should have a clear and definite understanding of spiritual things. There can be almost no growth in grace without growth in knowledge first. But there is nothing in the least difficult or mysterious about the way to get this knowledge. It is simply by a constant and faithful study of the Bible. Bible-fed Christians are strong Christians, vigorous, active, growing. Those who neglect the Bible are weak and sickly, discontented and inefficient. We are simply to "desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby." There is no mystery about that, nor anything out of the reach of any of us.

Not less important and necessary is prayer. Prayer is indeed a method of knowledge. It brings acquaintance with God, knowledge of God and growth toward God. The absence of prayer is the sure sign of retrogression and indifference. Prayerfulness is an essential characteristic of any deep or successful Christian living. There is no mystery about prayer. It is a very simple thing, but a very essential thing, if we would grow as Christians.

Near akin to this is meditation. To meditate

is to dwell upon anything in thought, to study upon it deliberately and continuously, to muse, to reflect, to think. It really means to get into the middle of a thing. It means to study deeply. The great men of science have been men of meditation. The greatest philosophers arrived at their deep thoughts by reflection. The great men of God, too, have been men of meditation. Robert Hall and Richard Baxter and John Bunyan and others, who have had a deep understanding of or rich experiences in the Christian life, were all men of much spiritual meditation. Too many of us fail to make the truth we hear our own. We fail to make it undergo the mental process of digestion, by which alone it can become our own — a part of us. Would you grow toward God, then follow Paul's advice to Timothy: "Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them."

One other essential is obedience. So far as we know we are to do. As some one has said: "There are attainments in the spiritual life which can be reached in no other way, save through a faithful and loving doing of the will of Christ. The exercises of faith and prayer

will not bring them. It is through service that life grows stronger, healthier and more vigorous. To do each day the ordinary duties of life as unto Christ, and with a desire to please him, will as truly bring us into larger and happier spiritual life as the exercises of the closet, of devotion, or waiting upon God in the ordinances of public worship. Prompt, loving and faithful obedience to known duty not only yields peace and joy, but it also opens the way to higher service. The failure to recognize this truth will account for the unrest and dissatisfaction and dwarfed lives of many professed Christians. Neither emotion, nor prayer, nor meditation on the Scriptures, can be substituted for holy obedience.”

You wish to grow toward God. Then put away all thought that it is to be attained in some strange, mysterious way. Fall in with the oldest, simplest, best possible methods of knowledge, prayer, meditation and obedience. Verily, you shall have your reward.

“How does the soul grow? Not all in a minute.
Now it may lose ground, and now it may win it;

Now it resolves, and again the will faileth;
Now it rejoiceth, and now it bewaileth;
Now hopes fructify, then they are blighted;
Now it walks sunnily, now gropes benighted.
Fed by discouragements, taught by disaster,
So it goes forward, now slower, now faster,
Till, all the pain past, and failure made whole,
It is full-grown, and the Lord rules the soul.”

II.

TURNING ASIDE TO SEE.

That in these busy, hurrying times we need to be stirred afresh to the blessed exercise of fellowship with God, few Christians will deny. That fellowship with God is a blessed exercise all who know anything at all about Christian experience will agree. "It is good for me to draw near to God," is a common sentiment of Christians; but the drawing near and the living near are not nearly so common as an attainment. The fact that we can draw near to God implies the fact also that it is possible to live at a distance from God, which too many among even professed Christians do.

Moses at the "mountain of God" was an instance of a man within reach of a great spiritual opportunity. What he saw was a bush burning, but unconsumed. Moved by a spirit of reasonable inquisitiveness, he said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight; why

the bush is not burnt." When he paused in his going, and bent his steps in the direction of the wonder, there came to him the blessing of a rich revelation. Indeed, he met Jehovah, who spoke to him, face to face.

It was almost a similar experience the Apostle John had on Patmos. Being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," he heard a voice behind him. It was a trumpet-like voice, proclaiming: "I am Alpha and Omega." John "turned to see" the voice that spake with him, and at once there followed a still ampler message and a richer blessing.

What was true of Moses and what was true of John is true of men always,— they get visions of God and the richest spiritual blessings only as they give themselves pause in the hurry of life, and "turn aside to see." God intimates in some way that he would speak with us, and when he does, that moment is our moment of spiritual opportunity. It is our duty to turn aside to see. It is our duty to place ourselves in the full attitude of attention. Like Samuel upon hearing the voice, we should say at once, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Turn aside to attend upon a spiritual mood or impulse. Moses did not thoughtlessly or indifferently hasten on, satisfied with the mere glimpse he got of the burning bush. Many get a glimpse of spiritual possibilities, fall into the mood of spiritual thoughtfulness; but they deliberately shake it off, and say to the wooing Spirit of God, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." That is doing despite unto the Spirit of grace. That is hurrying by the burning bush. That is failing to heed God's beckoning call. That tells the secret, too, why many brought up in our Christian homes and churches and communities are not Christians. This same lack of spiritual attentiveness is the reason also why many Christians are weak in faith, lukewarm in love, and powerless for service. God has many things to say to those who will come near enough to him to hear his voice or who will be still long enough to listen. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." The term here rendered "secret" is in the Hebrew tongue "a whisper." When a humble and teachable soul is near to God he

often tells it a secret. He whispers in the attentive Christian's ear some sweet word of promise or of love which no one else can hear, perhaps which no one else could understand. Turn aside to see. Pause long enough to find out the meaning of the intimation God has given.

Turn aside to attend upon what God says to you in his Word. This is an age of secularity. The push of life leads along the well-beaten track of worldliness. It takes some grit for a busily engaged man to say to himself: "I will now turn aside from the paths of greed and money-getting and secularity, and see some great thing in the spiritual realm." The Bible is a letter sent to him, but he does not open it, — or thus far has neglected it. He has been rushing along practically heedless of what God says. But this is a very narrow-minded and foolish way in which to live. It is a happy day for any man when he comes to a distinct decision to deflect from his accustomed way of worldliness and listen to the voice of God. It is important, too, for all Christians to remember that time taken for the study of God's mes-

sages is not time lost. No one is a loser by the time he spends with the Bible. In the largest sense "Godliness is profitable unto all things." It pays to turn aside and see God, and to hear what he has to say to us in his blessed Book. Turn aside to hear and to meditate.

Turn aside to see and learn the meaning of God's providential acts. At first the burning bush seemed only a mysterious but meaningless happening; but it was far from that. Moses turned aside to see and at once found that there was transcendent meaning in it, and a most important message for him. It was when God saw that he turned aside to see and hear, his attention arrested, that he spoke to him. "Be still, and know that I am God." Do you get still enough before God to permit him to tell you the meaning of his providential dealings with you? There is much you might know which you do not, many mysteries that would be explained to you if only you would be still before God, would turn aside to see and to hear what he has to say to you through his providential dealings.

God speaks to us when we are still. In the

busy part of the day in London, so great is the rush along the Strand that the tolling of the great clock in St. Paul's Cathedral, as it strikes the hours, is not heard. People could hear it if they would stop and listen. Many of us live in such a rush and hurry that we do not hear God speak. Yet he would speak to us messages of the sweetest and most meaningful import if we would permit ourselves to pause in life and be in an attitude to heed what he says.

Being with God shows. Men could tell that Moses had held fellowship with him. Being with God gives power. Moses went from the presence of God to work wonders in his name. Quiet listening to God is no hindrance to making active accomplishment in life. Being with God gives a sense of zest and security. To go conscious that God is with us gives mighty inspiration to life. Moses had God consciously with him. No wonder he went so well on God's errands.

III.

THE COMFORT OF PRAYER.

“ Prayer is the rope up in the belfry : we pull it, and it rings the bell up in heaven,” so said Christmas Evans, the great Welsh preacher. To know that the bell rings, and to have its music flood our lives, this is indeed a great comfort to Christians.

What a never-failing source of comfort prayer is! The history of each individual Christian and of the amount of comfort and blessedness he has received could be almost accurately recorded by a statement of his habits of prayer. Children in their disappointments and youths in making their choices, mothers in their careworn lives and fathers in their toil, statesmen in their heavy tasks and pastors with their perplexities, Christians of all ages and all classes and in every variety of circumstances have tested and attested to the wonderful comforting power there is in prayer.

“ Since I began,” said Dr. Payson when a student, “ to beg God’s blessing on my studies, I have done more in one week than in the whole year before.” Luther, when most pressed with his gigantic toils, said: “ I have so much to do that I cannot get along without three hours a day of praying.” General Havelock rose at four, if the hour of marching was six, rather than miss the precious privilege of communion with God before setting out. Sir Matthew Hale said: “ If I omit praying and reading God’s Word in the morning nothing goes well all day.” These men, as have all faithful Christians, found the comfort there is in prayer.

What prayer has been to the individual it has been to the race. Think what volumes of prayer have gone up to God. Its comforting power to the race cannot be overestimated. It has been the source of untold blessedness and cheer to the people of earth. Could it all be put together, what a bundle of comfort it would make! It is well for us to widen out our conception and think what a total of comfort prayer has given to God’s people.

Are you getting comfort out of prayer? It is your privilege as a Christian to find in it every day a mighty source of help and of blessedness to your life. If you are not finding in it such a blessing you should look well to know the reasons for this lack.

One may be that you are not keeping tryst with Christ. You fail to meet him at the appointed place. If you regularly go to the trysting place, he will be found of you there. Irregularity in your habits of prayer may be the reason you no longer get comfort out of prayer.

Another possible reason is that you are overstrained with the labors of life. You have taken too much upon you. You are too hurried to think. If you pray, it is with divided or hurried mind. The things you have in hand seem so important that you must give them attention, and so you give your prayers little time, thought or attention. No wonder you fail in getting the comfort of prayer. The only remedy is for you to drop some of your responsibilities until you come into possession of yourself. You cannot give yourself to God until you possess yourself.

The other possible reason for lack of comfort in prayer is indulged sin. There is no use in looking for comfort in prayer while cherished sin is in your life. We do not say sin, for we all sin and come short of the glory of God, but we cannot have comfort in prayer while sin unwatched-against, sin unfought-against, is there. The presence of permitted sin, cherished sin, is the most common cause of our lack of enjoying the comfort of prayer.

Let us learn to value prayer more. We have read a description of a picture. There is represented a steeple of an old church. In the steeple is a bell and a rope hanging down toward the earth. Beside the bell calmly sits an owl, suggestive of the fact that the bell has not been used for a long time. Through a casement of the steeple one can see down below a little corner of a grave-yard, and running by it the street full of hurrying people. As a motto under the picture are the words, "Why don't they ring?" Why don't we ring? Why do we permit the bell-cord of prayer to hang all unused in the steeple, when if we would only ring we might have our lives all flooded

with the harmonies of heaven? Let us pull the rope! Let us value prayer more! Let us use it more as a means. We can have the music of heaven falling down and filling our lives with the sweetest melodies of comfort and peace and joy, if we will. Why don't you ring?

IV.

THE COMFORT OF THE CHURCH.

During Absalom's rebellion David was at one time forced to remain an exile from Jerusalem. In a fit of homesickness of the soul he sat down and penned the Eighty-fourth Psalm. It would seem that he lamented his absence from Jerusalem not so much because it was the royal city, as because it was the holy city, the place of God's temple and worship. Restrained thus by force of circumstances from waiting upon God in his sanctuary, it seems that the want of the privilege made him all the more sensible of its worth. We see him with yearning desire facing Jerusalemward, exclaiming: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." How beautiful in his exile God's house and service seemed! And how intense was his longing desire to enjoy them! "My heart and my flesh crieth out—";

he longed, he fainted, he cried out in his desire to be restored to the enjoyment of God in his sanctuary. But he wanted also God himself, the sense of his presence, of his love, of his communion: "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." You have had that feeling — that you wanted God, wanted his presence, wanted him in your life, in your heart, your soul — your heart and your flesh crying out for the living God. There are multitudes of people everywhere who are well acquainted with this lonesomeness of heart, this homesickness of the soul, and especially in the way of a desire for a name and place in the sanctuary of God's Church. David in his banishment even begrudged the happiness of the little birds that made their nests about the temple structure. Not those that flew over the temple on hasty wings; not those that made their nests in the trees of the wood; but those he knew were about the temple, and made nests for themselves, and in which to lay their young in the buildings around the courts of God's house. He could wish himself with them; for we hear him crying out in his spiritual homesickness: "Yea, the

sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house."

The Church is the spiritual home of God's people to-day as truly as was ever the Jerusalem temple to David. And every soul needs just such a home. Every true Christian should have a church home. God intended it to be so. It is one of the very best signs that we are Christians if, like David, we love God's house and worship and people. Christ knew his followers would need the home associations of the Church, so he called them together as a family and prayed that they might be one. The figures under which his people are represented by Christ and his apostles tell of the same need. They are sheep, not scattered sheep, except when lost, but gathered into a flock. They are stones, not boulders here and there, but built together into a temple. They are not simply flourishing plants, but parts of one vine. They are not separate individuals, but members of the body of Christ, with one common life, and with rela-

tions to each other as well as to their Head. The Church is a divine institution, provided to meet a felt need — a need inherent in our natures. See how men are ever inclined to association. We know how it is and why it is that people read in circles, study in classes, play in companies, travel in parties, carry on business in firms, fight in regiments, associate in unions, ever thus voluntarily binding themselves together. God knew that in religion his people would need such associations. He met that need by founding the Church, the perfection of human society, where human society suns itself in the full radiance of his fatherly love.

What are some of the sources of comfort brought to us by God's Church. One, as we have said, is the comfort of having a spiritual home. What a sad, uneasy thing life must be without a home! There is no sickness more bitter than homesickness. It is said that many a Swiss has sunk a martyr to his longing for home. The malady is commonly brought on by hearing their celebrated national air at some unexpected moment when under the influence of dejected feelings. Overcome by the emotions

awakened, he sheds tears, and can only be consoled by the prospect of immediately returning to his home. If unable to accomplish this wish of his heart, he sinks into a profound melancholy, which not unfrequently terminates in disease and death.

We believe there is just such a restlessness, an uneasiness, a homesickness of the soul, which every Christian must feel who lives without a church home. We believe that there is a deep longing for the soul's home in the sanctuary which will not cease until that God-given desire is satisfied. And, oh, how much of church homelessness there is in the world!

The need, too, is of one home. That is the natural way. You know that you can not have a dozen homes a week. That means you have no home. The man who, like a tortoise, carries his home around on his back, who tells you it is home wherever he hangs his hat, simply means that he has no home. God speaks of our being "planted in the house of the Lord." Well, you never expect fruit from a tree that is being continually plucked up and transplanted from one place to another. Indeed the chances are not

only of no fruit, but that the tree itself will die. It is an old saying, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." And you may apply that to all church tramps. You never expect to get any real good work out of a tramp, do you? Just so true is it that you may expect very little from any wandering Christian who gives his soul no permanent resting place. We all need a church home, a place where our interests centre, where our hearts are fixed, where our souls are helped — one regularly attended, constantly served, and devotedly loved church home.

We find comfort in the Church also as a feeding place for the soul. We need God's truth to nourish and strengthen us. Without it our faith becomes weak, our souls become sickly and ready to die. Our souls do really hunger, and we must have the "bread of life" to satisfy them. Our souls are ever thirsty, and we need the "water of life" to slake our burning desire. We are commanded to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby." Our souls need the Church and its ordinances as our bodies need bread; and the Christian who neglects the spiritual nourish-

ment thus to be obtained must inevitably become weak in faith, cold in love, and sickly in soul. We need the church home as a place in which to grow spiritually strong.

We find comfort in the Church as a source of sympathy and fraternal help. God calls his Church a family. He intends that each individual church shall be a family where are found love and sympathy and mutual helpfulness. It is one of the tests of discipleship, that if we love God we will love our brethren also. And let us not forget that, notwithstanding all that is said to the contrary by the enemies of Christ, there is a sympathy and a love, there is a spirit of encouragement and of helpfulness, found among the members of Christ's Church that is not found in the outside world. The Church has faults enough, and does not profess to be perfect; but one of the first commendations of her early days was the remark of her enemies: "See how these Christians love one another." And, despite all the flings to the contrary, the time has never come yet when her members cannot truly sing:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love."

Among the mountains of Switzerland, where the difficulties and dangers of travellers are great, they have a way of binding a group of adventurers together. Before they commence the slippery and perilous ascent a strong cord is bound around the waist of each, and all are then tied together; so that every one helps the other, and if a brother slips the others pull him up again. Just so helpful have the ties of Christian Church relationship been found to multitudes of members as they have felt the uplift of the mutual sympathy, the on-push of united effort, and the inspiration of a common purpose and love. And there are so many difficulties in the Christian life that we really need all the help we can get. The Church may have some faults, but we venture the opinion that seldom will you find a professing Christian who will not say that he was strengthened and helped by uniting himself with God's people. Blessed, very blessed, are all they who find a home in God's house!

V.

TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY.

Some one has said that spiritual meditation is a lost art. There was undoubtedly more of it in past generations. The lack of it is indeed one of the religious lacks of our times. The main reason for the lack is apparent to all who give any thought to the subject. It is because of the tremendous rush and hurry of our modern life. We are "jostled out of our spirituality." There is a beautiful hymn we sometimes sing,

"Take time to be holy,
Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His Word;
Make friends of God's children,
Help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing
His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy,
The world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret,

With Jesus alone;
By looking to Jesus,
Like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct
His likeness shall see."

It does take time to be holy. We need to take time for meditation and prayer and fellowship with God if we would make any attainment in grace or growth is spiritual insight and character.

Few of us realize how great is the importance assigned to meditation in the Scriptures. It is distinctly commanded of God. Joshua was exhorted to meditate on the book of the law day and night. Timothy was counselled: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them." The Philippians were told "to think on these things." In the description of the good man, in the first Psalm, it is said that he meditates on the law of the Lord. We may also notice the resolutions of good men recorded in the Psalms: "I will meditate on thee in the night watches," 63:6; "I will meditate of all thy precepts," 119:15; "My meditation of him shall be sweet," 104:34. God

criticised his people when they failed in this moral thoughtfulness, saying, "My people do not consider."

Spiritual meditation is a most proper occupation of the human mind. The power of thinking distinguishes us from the whole material universe, and spiritual things are certainly of such transcendent importance as to be worthy of our closest attention. Besides, our character in the sight of God depends on the character of our thoughts. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he," Prov. 23:7. Men are good according to their thoughts. They are also bad according to their thoughts. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders," etc.

Meditation is also essential to the success of God's Word in our souls. Christ tells us in the parable of the sower that it is only those "who having heard the word, keep it," that bring forth good fruit. By meditation the seed of truth sinks into deep earth and is "kept" and becomes fruit-bearing. It was when the prodigal "came to himself," when he began really to think, that he resolved to return to his father. It was when Peter "thought thereon"

that he "wept." Truth can affect us only as we think thereon.

What are some good subjects for meditation? One is God's existence and attributes. It is one of the Bible designations of sinners that "none saith, Where is thy God, thy Maker." It is the mark of the believer that he thinks about God and dwells in fervent and loving meditation upon his attributes of being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Another is God's works. "I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings," said the Psalmist. No one can "consider the heavens," the "moon and the stars which he has ordained," "remember the works of his hands," "consider the lilies, how they grow," or study God's greatest work in the redemption of man and not be immensely benefited and blessed by such meditation.

Still another is God's words. If anything would seem to be worthy our special attention and thoughtful consideration it is God's direct utterances by his words. His revelations, his exhortations, his commands, his promises, how infinitely important they are, and how worthy

of our closest thought, our most profound attention! Such meditation would be sure to lead us also to think about God's claims. These are worthy our special consideration on account of their comprehensiveness, their spirituality, their perpetual obligation, and our guilt if we neglect them.

One other theme — our future. That we are to have an unending future is a great reality. It would be well for us all if we lost sight of it less and meditated more frankly and more frequently upon it. God makes this duty plain when he says: "Oh! that they would consider their latter end!"

There are some aids to meditation. The lost art can be regained. This power of getting into the middle of things, for that is what the word meditation means, of taking spiritual truth and musing upon it, thinking upon it, studying it deeply, this is an art which can be cultivated, a religious attainment possible to us all.

A first aid toward spiritual meditation is to become deeply impressed with its value. Meditation leads to conversation. It would be easier

for us to "talk of his doings" if we thought more about them. It leads to knowledge. Thinking always does. It leads to happiness. We would all be happier if we thought more about God, what he is, what he does, what he says, and thus come to know him better.

Another aid is for us to bear in mind the influence of habit and act accordingly. We shall not get time for meditation and shall be sure to neglect it unless we make set times for it and let it become a habit of our daily living. We must provide for a "quiet hour" each morning or evening, a "still hour" with God each day, just as we do for a morning and evening prayer; then, by and by, it will become a fixed habit, and both the art and the time for practicing it will be gained.

"Take time to think:

Thought oft will save thee from the snare,
Bring thee to cooling streams and bowers,
Spare thee from nursing needless care,
Surround thee with defensive towers;
Yield thee the harvest of content,
Lift thee from dust to starry ways,
Discover comfort heaven-sent
In thy most dark and cheerless days;
Therefore, take time to think.

Take time to pray:

For when thou pray'st the vision 's cleared,
The voice is toned, the will 's subdued,
The dear are to thee more endeared,
And the soul's failing strength 's renewed.
In prayer the purest words are spoken,
The mind receives heaven's holy light,
The heart is given the Spirit's token,
The hands are charged with wisdom's might;
Therefore, take time to pray.

Take time to praise:

Praise is the witness that you see,
Or hear, or feel, or understand,
Or trust where there is mystery
About the workings of His hand.
It is thy child-attempt to prove
Thy kinship with the hosts above,
Who, as they in God's presence move,
Praise Him for His exhaustless love;
Therefore, take time to praise.

Take time to work:

Know what a privilege it is
To work with God, to have thy hand
Engaged for Him, thy energies
Developing 'neath His command.
To share the stores of grace and truth
Which to His faithful ones are given;
In service to maintain thy youth,
And hear the Lord's 'Well done!' in heaven;
Therefore, take time to work.'

VI.

FAITH AND JOY.

So universally do men seek after happiness and so widely does society in its organized forms seek it that many philosophers have declared happiness to be the final motive of all conduct, that all other motives are but shapes of this one all-prevailing motive. But alas! toward what different points of the moral compass do men look for happiness. Some look for it above and some below, some in the grandeur of the soul and some in the grossness of the senses, some in the heaven of purity and some in the hell of licentiousness. Multitudes of those who seek happiness fail to attain the object of their search, and usually from one of two simple reasons, either that they seek amiss, or else fail of recognizing in what direction real happiness is found. It would sound very strange to some devotee of pleasure, who thinks of the followers of Christ as a people of sad-

ness, gloom and melancholy, to have it announced to him that religion is the real source of happiness. And yet this is true. It is not religion but the lack of it that makes people unhappy. Christianity is not only not opposed to pleasure, but it is the mightiest source of pleasure. "Gladness is sown for the upright in heart." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." "Believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

What then, is the relation between faith and joy? The relation seems to be implied in the very order of words, "Believing ye rejoice." It is the relation of inseparability, the relation of cause and effect. The believing is the cause of the rejoicing. The faith brings the gladness. The trusting is the source of the happiness.

There is another step in the production of joy out of faith that must not be overlooked. Faith is the cause of love and love is the cause of joy. In a verse in the First Epistle of Peter we are told who it is the Christian loves. It is the unseen Saviour: "Whom having not seen, ye love." Faith is to the soul what the eye is

to the body. It is the power of seeing. It is a cognition, or spiritual apprehension. It is not merely light, but discernment. It sees not the object merely, but its excellence also. It produces congeniality, or sympathy, a feeling of actual interest and delight. It also appropriates, gives us the consciousness that in some sense the object is ours. This is the way in which faith in Christ produces love to Christ. It is the faculty by which we apprehend, approve and appropriate him. Having come thus to love him, joy is the fruit of love. Love is in itself a joyous affection. It is in its nature happy. God is love; all the blessed love and are blest by the fact that they love. Confidence is joy. "Believing, we rejoice."

Let us not fail to notice also the nature of the joy faith produces. It is "unspeakable." "With joy unspeakable and full of glory," continues the apostle. That is, it is unspeakably great; it is also in its nature not a noisy, but a deep and silent thing. In this sense, too, it is "unspeakable." And that is the reason we doubt not, why it is so often mistaken for the opposite. Because it is calm and sometimes

grave the world thinks it severe. But, as has been said, "the gods approve the depth and not the tumult of the soul." We spoke of happiness at the beginning, but happiness is a somewhat shallow, superficial word. It signifies what happens, what comes to us by hap or chance, having reference largely to our circumstances or our material welfare. But "joy" is a nobler word, signifying a more deep, sincere and quiet thing, a "calm rapture," as Jonathan Edwards called it. There is nothing boisterous, tumultuous, hilarious about it. It doesn't express itself in laughter, nor sing comic songs. It is "joy unspeakable"; not a thing to be talked about, but to be felt.

It is also joy "glorified." True Christian joy is glorified joy, says the apostle. That is, it has the glory of heaven shining upon it, filling, suffusing, transfiguring, intensifying it. In other words, there is no other joy anything like so rich, so deep, so full, so blessed as this joy which comes with religion, which springs out of faith. "Believing, we rejoice."

It is a joy, too, that rises above all sorrow and trouble. Suffering saints often have been

the most joyful. "We rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, we are in heaviness."

"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

It is our duty to be joyful and our privilege to spread joy among others. It is also an effective means of commending the religion of Christ to others.

"Take joy home,
And make a place in thy heart for her;
And give her time to grow, and cherish her;
Then will she come and sing to thee
When thou art working in the furrow; ay,
It is a comely fashion to be glad;
Joy is the grace we say to God."

VII.

RELIGION'S PLEASANT WAYS.

It is not religion but the lack of it that makes people unhappy. Yet how strangely and how widely the opposite view prevails. There are many who think of religion not only as a galling drudgery, but as the surest source of moroseness, melancholy and unhappiness of life. Their idea is that religion is a system of suffering to which many people are willing to submit here in order that they may not suffer hereafter,—that religion's only happiness is in the future, its rewards after death. Instead, the real fact is that religion is a thing of present joy and ever continuing blessedness. It is the gladdest, happiest thing in all this world. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace." It is religion that gives us the bright things in life and sin the dark things, not vice versa. Religion goes down to the deepest springs of our mental and spiritual

well-being. It brings untold measures of peace and joy. It takes the sting out of the past. It takes the worry out of the present. It takes the fear out of the future.

Religion's way is a safe way. Walking in religion's way we have God as our Keeper. "He that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep." God walks with us and by us and keeps us from harm. When a child is travelling with his father he is not afraid. When we enter religion's way we begin a walk with God. We are absolutely safe.

The good things we have on the way also make it pleasant. We have all the good things of earth and heaven. The whole world belongs to our Father in heaven. It is not true that the world belongs to Satan. It belongs to God, and he controls it for the good of his people. "Godliness is profitable unto all things having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

Then, too, the work we do on the way makes it pleasant. It is in accord with the profoundest philosophy, as well as with the widest experience, that there is no such happiness as

that which springs from the effort to benefit others. A young boy said to his mother: "I tried to make little sister happy while you were away. She would not be happy; but I was happy trying." Usually we can make people happy when we try; but whether we succeed or not we are sure to be happy trying. He who sees in his neighbor a brother in Christ, and who for the love he bears to Christ puts himself out in order to be helpful to that brother, always finds a spring of gladness bursting out in his heart as the waters did out of the rock which Moses smote.

As we walk in the way of religion it is pleasant, moreover, to think of what is at its end. At the end of the way we will meet the shining ones, who will take us to heaven. The fact that we have no fear for the future, the consciousness that it is well with our souls, the bright prospect of heaven at the end, these contribute mightily toward making the way of religion a pleasant way for all who walk in it.

Out of these facts grows a duty. It is the duty of joy. "Gladness is sown for the upright in heart," and we ought as Christians to

make it plain that we are reaping the harvest of such sowing. It is our duty to make religion welcome by making it winsome. Some people seem to think there is no occasion for an effort in this direction, that religion is sufficiently winsome in itself, or, if not, that there is something out of taste, if not morally culpable, in trying to make it seem so. But certainly it is our duty to do what we can to lead others to realize that the religious life is a happy life, a life of gladness and reward.

We owe this duty of joy, for one thing, for religion's sake. Christianity would get much impulse forward if it could be everywhere so commended that people would learn that it is not only not opposed to pleasure, but the very greatest source of pleasure. We owe this duty of joy also for Christ's sake. It is a way of highly honoring him, this showing forth of the delights of following such a Master. You owe this duty of joy, too, for your own sake. You owe it to yourself to be happy in your religion. You are cheating yourself out of a great privilege when you are not. You owe this duty of joy, finally, for others' sakes. You owe it in the

way both of helping other Christians to be glad, and of inclining those who are not Christians to enter upon religion's way of pleasantness. When the spies went over into Canaan, the wise ones brought back of the grapes of Eschol in order to induce their friends to go over into a land where such fruits abounded. We owe it to others to show them the good fruits of the Christian life that they, too, may be induced to enter. Make your religion attractive. Cultivate and illustrate all the sweet, gentle, uplifting, joyful qualities which Christianity suggests. Let it be seen that Christ is an attractive Master to you. Let it be seen that his service is light and love and liberty. So will you win others to join you in following him.

VIII.

CELESTIAL INVESTMENTS.

Christ tells us plainly that there are two kinds of treasures which it is possible for people to possess. One he speaks of as belonging to the earth and the other to heaven, one as exposed to danger and destruction and the other as beyond the reach of any contingency whatsoever.

And his words are so plain that there is no difficulty at all in determining the exact nature of these treasures. The one sort unquestionably includes all worldly possessions, and the other all spiritual excellences. The call Christ makes is that we shall counsel with him in the matter of our investments, saying that he is able to give us points in finance. He asks us to trust him at least as far as we would some earthly stock expert. People will listen to men as they advise the investing in this stock or that. Even a stranger can come along intro-

ducing "Bohemian Oats," and he will not fail in finding many who will listen to his scheme and invest in the fraud. Five-hundred-and-twenty-per-cent Miller of Brooklyn got hundreds of people to invest with him, though he presented them not one cent's worth of security. People fairly tumbled over one another in their rush to invest, to their utter undoing; and yet, how few there are who will listen for a moment to one who tells them of investments that pay both for this life and the life that is to come! As one who knows all about this life and that life, and who comes to us as an expert to be counselled with about investments, Christ's distinct and definite advice is this, that we all "lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven," that we make large deposits in the celestial bank, giving, as he does, the good and sufficient reason that that is the only bank where deposits are good both now and after death, both here and hereafter.

It is a fact, then, that spiritual wealth can be accumulated. The expression "lay up," or amass, makes this inference fully warranted. His command is, "Lay up for *yourselves*

treasures in heaven." The treasures, then, are yours; not put there for some one else. They are to accumulate for you there in a place the safest of the safe. It is possible, then, for us to lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven. This same is what Christ meant when he told us to "provide for ourselves bags that wax not old." It is what he meant when he told the young man of the gospel: "Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." It is what Paul meant when he told Timothy to exhort the rich "that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come." The fact is that every man is every day increasing his spiritual stock. The spiritual accumulations of our earthly life are every day passing over into the lines of the heavenly life and becoming eternal. Moral accumulation is the great law of our being. Our whole life is a treasuring up.

There is another inference from Christ's command to lay up treasures in heaven and the

way we see it obeyed,— it is that the heavenly accumulations of the saved will differ. Some begin to obey this command earlier in life than others. Some are very active in obeying it, while others are not. The Christian who has given God but little service, or the fag end of life only, will be saved; but he will have little or nothing in the way of heavenly investments. Every one who is so happy as to get to heaven will have in God's presence "fullness of joy" and at his right hand "pleasures forevermore"; but that does not say that they will have joys and pleasures alike. A pint cup and a quart cup may be full to overflowing. But the quart cup *holds more*. The Bible makes it very plain that there will be differences among the redeemed. Some will be saved "so as by fire," but the house they have built of "wood, hay and stubble," no work or poor work, "shall be burned." It speaks of "greatest" and "least" in the kingdom of heaven, of some as having an "abundant entrance," and distinctly tells us to "lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven," thereby assuring us that it is both possible and worth our while to do so.

The accumulation of spiritual wealth should become with us a dominant passion. All men are swayed by either secular or spiritual interests. It is impossible to live under the sovereign control of both. "No man can serve two masters." "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." One or the other must be the dominant power. Therefore the Christian must choose between coming under the sway of the world spirit or the other-world spirit, between making Mammon master or God master, between the making the accumulation of worldly wealth or the accumulation of spiritual wealth his dominant desire. Christ told us plainly which to choose. He thoroughly understood human nature. He said that our hearts will point to our treasure as does the needle to the pole, and therefore urges that with single-eyed concentration of energy we set ourselves to the laying up treasure in heaven, making it the master passion of our lives to secure for ourselves large celestial accumulations. This we may do by devotion to the cause of Christ, effort to promote the glory of Christ, striving to extend the kingdom of Christ, and

the helping to turn men from sin unto Christ, while all the time following after holiness in our souls, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

"We build our heaven as we go along," said an aged saint, one day. "I once had friends," said she, "who were travelling abroad for several years. They intended to build a home on their return, and the dream of the home that was to be went with them in all their journeyings. When they could secure a beautiful picture, statue, or vase, they purchased it, even at the cost of temporary inconvenience, and sent it home to await their coming. Rare and curious treasures, which would afterward be linked with happy memories, they forwarded for their future enjoyment. I love to think," she added, "that we are doing the same for our heavenly home, in these pilgrimage days on earth. The kindly deed that made a picture in somebody's life, the little sacrifice that blossomed into joy, the helpful friendship cut suddenly short maybe — all these we shall find again; and the patience we have gained, the 'song in the night' which we have learned —

whatever of beauty, tenderness, faith, or love we have put into other lives or our own — all these will be among our treasures in heaven.”

Verily it is true that we build our heaven as we go along. Every loving thought that we think, every kind word that we say, every kind deed that we do will be among the treasures that we shall find accumulated there.

Such accumulated spiritual wealth is absolutely imperishable. This is what Christ said; that secular treasures are exposed to danger; money will rust, grain become blighted, garments moth-eaten and that all alike are exposed to the thief, but that spiritual wealth is imperishable. “Therefore,” he says, “lay not up on earth, but lay up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” It is not possible for spiritual wealth to perish. It can be eaten by no moth, corrupted by no canker, stolen by no thief. The reason is that it is not something outside of a man, nor added to a man. It is the man. It is riches incorporated into his being, a part of and as imperishable as his identity, as imperishable as his very soul.

IX.

CHRIST DWELLING WITHIN.

There is in a Russian palace a famous "Saloon of Beauty," in which are hung over eight hundred and fifty portraits of young women. The pictures were all painted for Catherine the Second, the Empress. They are beautiful pictures of beautiful women, the artist having made a journey through all the fifty provinces of the Russian empire to find his models. The painter was extremely desirous of pleasing his royal patron, and, very happily for him, he struck upon the idea of making every picture convey a half concealed compliment to the Empress. In each picture may be detected by the close observer some hidden, delicate reference to the royal person for whom they were painted; in one some favorite surrounding is seen; in another some favorite adornment; in others some jewel, or fashion, or flower, or style of dress; so that in each one

something characteristic of the Empress is seen, all tributes to her beauty or compliments to her taste. The walls, therefore, really reflect the Empress herself in whatever direction you look.

The artist, Count Rotari, made his own name immortal because of his inventive ingenuity in the flattery of an earthly monarch. But may we not make a spiritual application of this fact and in doing so find pointed out to us something worthy of our utmost endeavors? Was it not something very like this artist's devotion, only in a higher, worthier sphere, that Paul was being moved by when he said: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"? The world saw Paul the Apostle, but at the same time they saw Christ in the person of his disciple. Every grace that Paul possessed was but a faint reflection of the perfect beauty of Christ. Every virtue which Paul exhibited was only a manifestation in a lesser degree of the holiness of his sinless Lord; each beauty in person or character a faint showing

forth of Him whom he imitated, "the One altogether lovely."

But the reason Paul was able in any degree to manifest Christ was far more vital and deep-seated than could be illustrated by any painter's power to put character and beauty on his canvas. The secret was that Christ dwelt within him. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Christ's indwelling in believers is a divinely stated fact. It is a great mystery, but it is a great fact. It is an unique but glorious truth that the Lord Jesus Christ actually makes his home in the hearts of his faithful people. A great mystery it is, indeed; but so are human life and the eternity of God and the incarnation of Christ profound mysteries, yet we accept them. We are plainly told in God's Word that God dwelleth in us, and that Christ is in us our hope of glory. Christ's parting promise was that if we kept his words he would come and make his abode with us. Christ "dwells in our hearts through faith." The figure of speech represents the idea of a building, a temple, with the Christ resident within as the indwelling

guest. Far more must be implied than mere divine influence over us, such as a friend exerts over a friend, a teacher over a pupil, or even a mother over a child. The fact is that to become a Christian is to have a new and spiritual life enter the soul, as when a seed with its living germ is planted in the dead soil.

Christians experience many blessed results from Christ's indwelling. One is that we are moved by a new motive. "The love of Christ constraineth us." There is all the difference in the world between trying to force ourselves under the pressure of duty and the being moved by love. It is exactly the difference between having Christ outside us and having him within. Only as we get Christ into our hearts and let him dwell with us by his Spirit, will we find the right motive moving us, or that we are really attaining to any true ideal of the Christian life.

Another result is the gradual expulsion of evil. Indeed, this expulsion may be very rapid if we will let Christ have full possession of our hearts. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

Another result is joy, — a joy that the world can neither give or take away. Christ within makes an inner joy that all earth's trials and sorrows cannot quench.

Another result is the gradual transformation of the Christian into the likeness of Christ himself.

“ Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee!
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in Heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.”

How much is there about us to remind those who see us of Christ? Every manifestation of truth and holiness in us is only a new tribute, like the painter's tribute to his Empress, but in an infinitely higher realm, to him who is the Truth, the Life, the Way, the Holy One of God. The first move toward a Christian life is the opening of our hearts to the knocking Saviour. After that the degree of our holiness will depend upon the degree to which we give him welcome house-room in our hearts.

X.

ABIDING WORK.

There is a familiar story of an old blacksmith and his chain. The blacksmith lived in the heart of a great city and all day long people could hear the clanging of his hammer upon the anvil, and they knew that he was forging a chain. Now and then idlers dropped in to watch his work, and as they saw how faithful and patient he was, and how he would never pass over a link until it was absolutely perfect, they laughed at him and told him he would get ever so much more accomplished if he did not take so much pains. But the old smith only shook his head and kept on doing his best. At last he died, and was laid away in the churchyard, and the great chain which lay in his shop was put on board a ship. It was coiled up out of the way, and for a long time no one noticed it.

But there came a fierce, wild night in the win-

ter when the wind blew a gale, the rain dashed down in torrents, and vivid flashes of lightning darted through the sky. The ship toiled through the waves, and strained and groaned as she obeyed the helm. It took three men at the wheel to guide her. They let go her anchor, and the great chain went rattling over the deck into the gloomy waves. At last the anchor touched the bottom and the chain, made by the old blacksmith, grew as taut and stiff as a bar of iron. Would it hold?

That was the question every one asked as the gale increased. If one link, just one link, was imperfect and weak, they were lost. But the faithful old smith had done his best in each link. The chain held.

Could we realize how much of our own future destiny and of the welfare of others is bound up in our present action, would we not as Christians try to do far better work than we do?

To help this thought get still stronger hold upon our minds let us drop this figure of a chain and change to the Bible illustration of the building of a house. The Bible makes a plain distinction between mere work and work that

abides. Even on as good a foundation as Jesus Christ himself one may build well or ill, may build of either "gold, silver and precious stones," or of "wood, hay and stubble." We are bidden be careful how we build because "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, . . . he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." The passage in which these words are found clearly assumes that the builder is already a Christian, one who is building upon Christ, and will, therefore, himself be saved; but the warning is specifically directed against this same Christian's making poor work. The words picture to us a man whose poorly constructed house burns over his head, though he himself escapes through the flames. The man has been spending his time and strength to little purpose. He has built, indeed, on the true foundation, but he has reared upon it so much which was unsound and even false, that he himself must be saved with difficulty, and only with the loss of much of the reward which he had expected.

The Christian with his works will be saved as different parts of a building are saved, by proving to be gold or silver under the test of fire. How careful ought we to be lest our works prove to be only wood, hay or stubble! The simple fact that we build upon Christ will not insure that our building will be good. We must be careful how and what we build, and with what materials we make the superstructure. Men who are Christians are too often found teaching false doctrines, or dogmas that lack the substantial, vital power of Christianity. How many vain substitutes and foolish conceits, how much false theology, how many mistaken views of piety, how many foolish and hurtful errors have been propagated by men who were themselves Christians! Every such work, however carefully reared, shall be tested by fire. If it shall not be found to bear the test of the investigation of the last great day, then just as a cottage of wood, hay and stubble would not bear the application of fire, so that man's work shall be found to consume away. If a man's doctrines have not been true, if he has had mistaken views of piety, if he has wrongly nour-

ished feelings which he imagined were those of religion, if he has inculcated practices which, however well meant, were not such as the gospel produces, if he has fallen into error of opinion or feeling or practice, however conscientious he may have been, yet he shall suffer loss; his works shall be destroyed. God sees and cares what kind of work we make. Certainly we should aim to do abiding work, work that will stand the strongest tests. We may be sure that our building must pass the scrutiny of God's all-seeing eye. "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

It is sad to think how unsubstantial and unenduring much of our work is. A sight familiar to summer visitors at Asbury Park will illustrate and enforce the thought. Night after night, under an electric light, at a certain spot upon the beach a sand sculptor used to come and delight the promenaders. Early in the twilight he would begin to heap the sand into mounds, and as the crowds gathered, he would begin his task. His only tool was a short, slim stick. He would kneel upon the sand, and with

skillful motions, pat and hollow and mould it into marvelous shapes of beauty. An itinerant artist he was, going from place to place, spending his time and pains upon the shifting sands. Before every day dawned the tide had leveled the mounds and obliterated every trace of his really beautiful images. Invariably the thoughtful admirer would sigh because the man was not modelling a more lasting material. But conversation with him revealed that he was satisfied. By passing his hat his daily wants were met. Some other means of livelihood he takes for the winter, but each summer he goes again to the beach, like the wrecker, for what silver he can pick up along the peopled shore.

But why be impatient with this man more than others? All around us are men working in the sand. With many it is not the story of a summer only, but of a whole lifetime written in nothing more substantial than the shifting sand. So little good remains, so unsubstantial were the materials used, so unwisely chosen was the work done that the testing tides obliterated every token of the labor. A solemn voice speaks to each one of us and says: "Ye

have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” May it be ours to do lasting work, real abiding work, work that will stand the tests of time, or tide, or fire.

XI.

CELESTIAL CITIZENSHIP.

When Christianity commands us to have our citizenship in heaven it does not require us to be bad citizens of the world where we now are. A man may make some hearty attachments where he tarries, pay tribute and live cheerfully and helpfully, and yet none the less desire a better country, a city first in his love and always in his hopes. So the Bible teaching is that we can be faithful to every present relationship, and yet never forget our celestial patriotism, that we can be in this world without "minding earthly things."

We have read that some years ago a traveler who had recently returned from Jerusalem, discovering in conversation with the great Humboldt that he was fully as familiar with the streets and houses of Jerusalem as he himself had become, suddenly asked the aged philosopher, in surprise: "How long is

it since you visited there?" Humboldt replied: "I have never been there, but I expected to go sixty years since, and I prepared myself."

Should there not be something quite corresponding with this in the way of spiritual information and heavenly-mindedness that should characterize every Christian? Should not the heavenly home be as familiar to those who expect to dwell there eternally?

But heavenly citizenship has heavenly obligations. One of these has to do with our conversation. Speech betrays nationality. Our every-day speech should be such that our citizenship will stand revealed. A man's speech likewise indicates the company he keeps. It is not a bad index to one's prevalent state of mind and traits of character.

In one of his books, Mr. Spurgeon tells of a friend of his who once came over to America. He was from Essex. He landed in Boston, where he knew no one, and became somewhat homesick. But walking along the docks he heard a gentleman, as a workman happened to let fall a cask, say: "Look out there, or else

you will make a Coggeshall job of it." Mr. Spurgeon's friend addressed the man at once, saying, "You are an Essex man, I know, for that is a proverb never used anywhere but in Essex; give me your hand." They were friends at once. So should there be a ring of true metal about our speech and conversation so that when a brother meets us he can say: "You are a Christian, I know, for only Christians speak like that, or act like that. 'Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth, for thy speech betrayeth thee.'"

An obligation closely related to this is that of heavenly conduct. As a Christian is allied to such a country, a suitable mode of living becomes him. Our acts should be all such as are consistent with our dignity as heavenly citizens. Indeed, this is one of the most noticeable ways in which celestial citizenship will betray itself.

We are told that during the war of the Scottish clans, MacGregor's son was made to exchange clothes with a peasant lad, in order that he might not be known, and thus be in less danger. Both boys were captured, however, and

the question that puzzled the captors was, "Which is MacGregor's son?" The boys were brought to the palace and watched. The peasant lad showed no familiarity with the appurtenances of the palace, but betook himself to the servants' quarters, where he felt at home. MacGregor's son, on the contrary, made use of the palace as though he belonged there; and so revealed his identity. This is the way it should be with us as Christians. Our conduct and the spirit of our life should betray us, should make manifest that we are high-born and high-bred and aim for a high destiny. People should take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of him. We should, in fact, seek while we are here to keep up the manners and customs of the good old fatherland, so that, as in China or Japan the natives say, "There goes an American," so men should be able to say here in our home land, "There goes a heavenly citizen; he is in the world, ministers to its good, but is not of it."

Let us not forget that "conversation" means "being conversant." When two people talk together, it is called "conversation." The

reason is that they are supposed to be "conversant" with the subject about which they are speaking. And being "conversant" means the "going up and down in a thing." That is the literal meaning of the word. We "go up and down," move about in, and therefore we are "conversant" with the things and the people and the city in which we live. This is why "citizenship" is in the Bible called "conversation." "Our conversation," that is our familiar habits, our daily life and routine, that with which we have to do, our "conversation," our "citizenship" should be "in heaven." Whatever incompatibility there may seem to be, therefore, between having a residence in one world and a conversation in another, Christianity boldly meets and puts it out of the way. As we have seen, in the old Anglo-Saxon, a man's "conversation" meant not the mere act of his tongue, but his whole life and conduct, and so revealed to what kingdom his heart belonged.

Our American representative, as we know, has a temporary residence in Athens. He is sent there by our government. But though liv-

ing on that foreign soil, occupied daily with its affairs, its landscape winning his admiration, and its faces and manners his good will, yet he remembers that his stay is to be short; he is expecting to be called back where his treasure is and where his heart abides. This should be the attitude of the Christian, and we should cultivate heavenly dispositions, heavenly habits, heavenly affections, and familiarity with heavenly things.

To this end we will also maintain heavenly communication. We will keep in correspondence with heaven. Just as people in a foreign land are always glad to have letters from their country, so should we gladly and continuously have communication with our fatherland, both from and to. We will send our prayers there as letters to our Father, and we will get his letters back through his Holy Spirit and in the pages of his Word. By meditation, by fellowship with his people, by encouraging the presence of his Spirit in our hearts, and in many other ways, we will seek to keep up the connection between ourselves and our fatherland above, and make ourselves more and more fit

for residence there when the time of God's call shall come.

“ For our conversation (citizenship R. V.) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.”

XII.

REVERSES AND PROSPERITY.

The question is sometimes asked, "Which is harder to bear, reverses or prosperity?" There are peculiar temptations that come with being abased. There are other, and possibly even greater temptations, that come with being exalted. Paul knew both, and he had learned how rightly to bear both. "I know," he says, "how to be abased,"—that is to have reverses and to be in circumstances of want,—“and I know how to abound,”—that is to have an abundance. He had been in circumstances where he had an ample supply for all his wants, knowing what it was to have enough. He had been in circumstances of want, knowing what it was to lack. It certainly requires as much grace, if not more, to keep the heart right in prosperity than it does in adversity; for adversity of itself does something toward keeping the mind right,

while prosperity does nothing in that direction. But Paul had learned the proper conduct and spirit with which to meet both. "I am instructed," he says, "both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." The Greek word he used meaning "instructed" is one commonly used in relation to the ancient "mysteries," or secret societies. In the case of those mysteries it was only the "initiated" who were made acquainted with the lessons that were taught there. In saying that he had learned, or been instructed in the art of knowing how to be abased and how to abound, he means that he had "gotten into the secret of it." The exact meaning is that he had been "initiated" into it, somewhat after the case of one joining a secret society; for he uses the exact Greek word denoting the celebrated sacred and secret rites of initiation into the Elusinian mysteries required of Athenian citizens. So Paul says that he had been initiated into the secrets to be taught by both trials and prosperity. He had learned to be full, how to have an ample supply for all his wants and yet observe the laws of temperance

and soberness and to cherish the spirit of humility and gratitude, and he had learned how to be hungry also, to be in circumstances of want and yet not murmur or complain.

There may be still another idea suggested by what he said. The condition of Paul was not always the same. He passed through great and sometimes rapid reverses. At one time he had abundance, but suddenly he was reduced to want. At one time he was in a state that might be regarded affluent, but only soon to be brought down to poverty. Yesterday poor and hungry, to-day all necessities supplied. He may have intended to give special emphasis to his thought by implying the fact that it is in these sudden reverses that grace is most needed,— that it is in these rapid changes of life that it becomes most difficult to learn the lessons of faith and contentment. It is true that men grow accustomed to an even tenor of life, no matter what it is, and learn to shape their temper and calculations according to it. But these lessons of faith and philosophy vanish quickly when the persons pass suddenly from one extreme to another, finding their con-

dition in life suddenly changed. Such changes are constantly occurring. God tries his people not by a steady course of prosperity or by long-continued and uniform adversity, but by quick transition from the one to the other. And it often happens that the grace which would have been quite sufficient for either continued prosperity or continued adversity fails in the sudden change from the one to the other. But whether it was to be a condition of want or a condition of affluence, or to suffer quick transition from the one to the other, still Paul had been initiated into the secret of how to bear all with Christian discreetness and grace and fortitude and to find in God's will his peace.

Taking his life as an example let us inquire a little more closely just how we ought to bear business reverses. For one thing, we should bear them improvingly. "Adversity," some one has said, "is the diamond-dust heaven polishes its jewels with." "What is defeat?" asked Wendell Phillips. "Nothing but education; nothing but the first steps to something better." "I have been beaten, but not cast down," said Thiers, after making a complete

failure of his first speech in the Chamber of Deputies. "I am making my first essay in arms. In the tribune, as under fire, a defeat is as useful as a victory." Trials are rough teachers, but rugged schoolmasters make rugged pupils. In the height of his prosperity P. T. Barnum became involved in the Jerome Clock Company, which failed and swept away every cent he had. He was not the man to be discouraged, however, for he had met and overcome too many difficulties to become disheartened. In a manly way he paid all his debts and began again, and made the experience of the past a stepping stone to much higher success. "Adversity is the prosperity of the great," and it is possible for us to make all our trials work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

If we bear our business reverses improvingly we will doubtless bear them also patiently and uncomplainingly. We can not think for a moment of Paul whining over his losses. He had too manly a sense and character for that. John Bunyan was thrown into Bedford jail; but we do not see him sitting down to bemoan his lot

and curse his persecutors. Instead, we see him determined not to lose a moment of his precious time just because he was in prison. Sitting down with two books as his library, the Bible and Fox's "Book of Martyrs," he evolved the greatest allegory the world has ever seen — a volume that has made his name and fame immortal and will enrich the ages.

Anaximander when told that the very boys laughed at his singing, manifested not the least impatience or resentment, but quietly remarked: "Then I must learn to sing better," and set about it with new determination. There is hope for all who bear their discouragements or business reverses in such a spirit of patience and good cheer. These very graces will prove of greatest value in the attainment of final success.

And all our reverses should, of course, be borne with Christian faith and fortitude. God, our heavenly Father, knows what is best for us. He is infinitely wise and loving and good. We can well afford to trust him, even in the dark. He has promised to make all things work together for our good, if we are among those who

love him. If we are to be abased let us like Paul learn the art of knowing how to suffer want, and even make ourselves and the world the richer for it.

But aside from knowing how to bear reverses it may be fully or even more important to know just how we ought to bear prosperity. Paul said that he had learned another art, the art of knowing how to abound. If there is one thing the most of us serenely take for granted it is that we know how to abound. Yet Paul speaks very earnestly of it as something he had to learn, and also in a way to signify that the lesson is by no means an easy one. The fact is that most people meet the crisis of abasement a great deal better than they do that of prosperity. If Paul with his really few possessions could speak of it as a serious question in his life how to keep himself under in the presence of prosperity, it is certainly a large part of wisdom for us who live in these times of unexampled abundance to ask ourselves whether we know how to live in them. It is not as easy a matter as some of us lightly suppose, this of knowing how to abound and not be in-

jured by having abundance. The important question for us is not what wealth and social position and success and pleasure might do for us. The question is, as things are and our dispositions are, what do they do for us? There are people to whom prosperity is a blessing. Released from hardship and toil and narrow circumstances they find their sympathies expanding and their nature flowering out into a profusion of kind thoughts and kind deeds. But this is not the usual way. The world never begrudges wealth to those who thus know how to abound. But they are few who can thus bear prosperity. Most of fortunate and favored ones are seen to become narrowed and hard, dried up in their humanity and visibly degenerated by so-called success.

How, then, shall we bear prosperity? For one thing, we should bear it very watchfully, lest it insidiously encroach upon and dry up the stream of human kindness and chill the currents of the soul. Then, too, we should bear it very humbly. The temptation to pride is so great that few people are made better by having all things and abounding. For the sake of

suitable humility we may well bear in mind, too, that abounding in material things is not necessarily a sign of personal greatness or worth, or of the highest sort of success. There are some mighty mean men who make money. There are not a few of earth's noblest who, like Agassiz, "have no time to make money." Each such an one could say, " ' I am doing a great work and cannot come down ' to the turning myself into a mere money-making machine." There is plenty of room for that honest introspection into our underlying motives in seeking wealth, our methods of getting it, the uses we are making of it, and, if all these are right, our lack of worthiness in God's sight above others who are denied it, which will lead us to bear the test of abounding with a very humble spirit.

We ought, moreover, to bear prosperity very generously. Indeed, this is an indispensable requisite to knowing how to abound. When we "freely receive," it is not alone a duty to God and to our fellows to "freely give," but it is the only safety-valve to keep us from becoming surcharged with selfishness and greed. No man has a right to get too rich. Of course, no

one has a right to set the bounds for another as to just when he is becoming too rich; but when anyone finds himself getting rich he must for himself meet the problem as to how much he can rightly keep, and how much he must give to God and his fellows in order that in God's sight and men's sight he may be able truly to say with Paul, "I know how to abound."

There are many other features in the problem of knowing how to abound. We mention but one further. We ought always to make sure that we are bearing prosperity gratefully. By this we mean, with the humble and thankful recognition of God as the Giver of every good and perfect gift. No one should say that it is by his own great might or wisdom he has obtained his possessions, but by God's blessing on his efforts,— in case those efforts have been right and honest. But if at the bar of his own conscience and God's word any man sees that his efforts are not right and honest, then let him know that by all his wealth he is only piling up a curse against himself for the day when all secrets shall be revealed, a weight of accumulation that can only sink him into perdition.

If we could only see the full measure of risk and responsibility arising therefrom, probably few of us would be willing to assume the burden of becoming rich. There is no more difficult art for any one to learn than the art of knowing how to abound. The fact is that Paul thought of himself as abounding when he really had but very little as men count possessions in these days. An inventory of his belongings reveals little besides an old cloak and some parchments. His wealth was largely a wealth of contentment. Indeed, this was one of the secrets into which he had been "initiated." He tells us so in the same connection: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." He had "learned" it. Then it was not a thing natural to a restless and ambitious nature like his, but had to be attained in some way. He had "learned" it. Then it was not necessarily something that accompanied conversion and came without effort. No, when he says that he had "learned" it he means that he had gotten into the secret of it. It was another of those secrets he had gotten into by his introduction into the "mystery of godliness." The way he

came to know how both to abound and how to be abased, how to live a life of Christian contentment in either circumstances, was that he had found out the fact and felt the experience of an indwelling Christ. He had learned how to be abased and how to abound because he had learned, as he himself says, that he "could do all things through Christ who strengthened him." He had "Christ within, the hope of glory," Christ in him, Christ for him, Christ with him, one with him forevermore. This, after all, was the apostle's real secret. It is the secret we all may learn,— that of living "in the secret of His presence," of yielding ourselves to Christ, of finding our joy from Christ, of abiding in Christ. Then we too will be able to bear both adversity and prosperity, and to say with Paul: "Not that I speak in respect to want; for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound; in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me." (R. V.)

XIII.

OUR TEMPTATIONS AND THEIR CON- QUEST.

Cæsarius of Heisterboch relates that Philip, a great necromancer, once took a company of Swabian and Bavarian youths to a lonely place and entertained them, at their request, with his incantations. He drew a circle around them with his sword, and warned them not to leave it on any account. By his first incantation he surrounded them with armed men, who dared them to conflict, but none of them were lured forth. By his second incantation he surrounded them with a company of beautiful dancing damsels, who tried every power of attraction upon them. A nymph, whose beauty exceeded all others, advanced to one of the young men and wrought with such effect upon him that he forgot the restriction and stretched forth his finger beyond the circle to receive the ring which she proffered. She at once seized

him and drew him after her. It was not till after much trouble that the necromancer was able to recover him. Some one remarks, " This circle is the rule of right and virtue. The armed men are pride, ambition, and passion. The charmers are intemperance, voluptuousness and sensuality. The only safety is within the circle. The first finger over the line and the whole body will follow to shame and ruin." Yes, if we yield to temptation even a little there is no telling where it will end. " When ruin starts it rushes "; our only safety is in keeping well within the line of right.

Temptation is such a dangerous thing that we should be very careful to avoid all presumption toward it. We know a drinking man who professed conversion. He said to some friends that he proposed to prove the genuineness of his change of heart by going to the city and walking right past the saloons where before he had fallen so many times. You are not the least surprised to be told that when he went he fell again, and as deeply into sin as ever. He needed to pray, and take means to answer his own prayer, " Lord keep back thy servant also

from presumptuous sins." He needed to learn what James meant when he said, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." But it was "fall into," he said, not "run into." The result of testings that come in the line of duty may be good for us, but we are not to seek temptations, but wisely, cautiously avoid them. If a temptation can honorably be avoided it is far better to avoid it; it is likely to save some life-time scars from the moral nature.

There are two ways the ancients kept from yielding to the music and ultimate destruction of the sirens. One was that of Ulysses, who fortified himself with bands that held him fast to the mast while his boat carried him, listening, by the tempting strains. The other was that of the Argonauts, who carried Orpheus with them in their boat, and were so engrossed in listening to his music that they never heard the sounds from the fatal shore. They bore through life no memory of the tempter's allurements, as Ulysses did. The man who has the sweeter music in his soul and who keeps his mind and body so occupied with the better things that he has no time for unnecessary

conflict with Satan, is going to be the greater power for good, and make highest development in the Christian life. So dangerous a thing is temptation that we should carefully avoid all compromises with it. Of two evils do not choose the least. Choose neither. Even very little sins may work great destruction. A pilot half a point wrong may place his ship directly on the rocks. The beginnings of sin are always small. Yet half a point from strict truthfulness may strand us upon the ledge of falsehood. Half a point from perfect honesty and we are steering for the rocks of crime.

How shall we know temptation when it comes? The answer is very plain. By companionship with Christ. A young man of intemperate habits was converted. A former associate met him and asked him into a saloon to have a drink. He said, "I cannot; I have a friend with me." "Oh, that is all right; bring your friend with you," said the man. "No," said he, "the Lord Jesus Christ is my friend, and he will not go into a saloon and does not wish me to go." This is the real test. Imagine Jesus with you, your Friend at your side, his

eyes upon you — would you do the thing? This is no imagination. It is reality. He is by our side. His eyes do see, his ears do hear, and his heart really cares. How shall we meet temptation when we know it? First, by quickly realizing our relationship with Christ, that his honor is wrapped up in us, that his confidence is fixed upon us; also by wielding strongly the weapon of “all prayer,” and drawing quickly the “sword of the Spirit,” the Word of God. Pray as if all depended upon God. Fight as if all depended upon you. Keep face front. Remember, too, that Christ was tempted and is able to succor you from the grasp of Satan. Remember also that a swift attack is the best defence. Do not wait until evil has chosen a good position and fortified himself strongly in it. We need to crush temptation as soon as we see it. Take it by surprise. Give it no quarter. Do not dally with it one instant.

XIV.

LITTLE SINS.

All God's commands are commands. All are important, and all alike should be obeyed. Christians can indulge in no so-called little sins and find favor with God, peace of conscience or safety of soul.

What are some of the special dangers and evils in little sins? For one thing, little sins have in them an element of definite affront and disobedience to God. They are a violation of his holy law, and "he that is guilty in one point is guilty of all." That is, he is a law breaker. It is also a fact that the authority of God seems to be more despised in the commission of small sins than in the yielding to great. For little sins have in them ordinarily less of temptation and therefore more of wilfulness.

Then, too, little sins greatly deface the image of God in the soul. In a costly mirror a little flaw is a serious detraction. In a rare and cu-

rious picture a little scratch is a great deformity.

Little sins also maintain the habit and course of sinning. Indulging in them sets the heart in the way of thinking less and less seriously of sin, and the tendency toward wrong doing becomes more and more fixed.

One winter's day, a gentleman standing by Niagara saw an eagle light upon a frozen lamb, encrusted in a floating cake of ice. The eagle fed upon the carcass as it was drifting toward the rapids. Every now and again the eagle would proudly lift his head into the air and look about him, as much as to say, "I am drifting toward danger, but I know what I am doing; I will fly away and make my escape before it is too late." Nearing the falls at length, he stooped and spread his powerful wings and leaped for his flight. But alas! alas! while he had been feasting on the dead carcass his feet had frozen to its fleece. He leaped and shrieked and beat upon the ice with his wings; but uselessly, for with the ice and frozen carcass the eagle went over the falls and down into the roar and darkness below.

This is a picture of every soul that is playing with and feasting upon sin. It matters not that the sins seem little sins; each indulgence or dalliance with evil helps to fix upon one the habit and course of sinning. Many, sadly many, are the men and the women who have intended after a little more indulgence to turn from their sins and be saved; but having tarried until reaching what they began to think the danger point, attempting to turn, they have found themselves so absolutely fettered by sinful habits, their affections poisoned by sinful indulgence, their wills paralyzed by sinful indecision, and their souls frozen fast upon the decaying mass of rottenness upon which they had been feasting.

It is also sadly true that what little sins lack in weight they usually make up in number. A ship may have a heavy burden of sand as well as of great building blocks of granite, and may be as soon sunk with either. Smallest grains of sand will bury travellers in the desert. Finest flakes of snow gathering over the weary wayfarer will extinguish life, and if they drift, will bury whole houses and their dwellers. So,

very little, delicate sins, as some people think them, will chill and benumb the soul and take away its life. Little sins accumulate, and may work the worst of evil by their very number.

Little sins need special emphasis placed upon them also because of the extreme difficulty there is in convincing men of the great danger and evil there is in them. Dynamite is done up in very small packages, and the material looks very innocent and harmless; but it is for these reasons the promiscuous handling of it needs to be guarded against so carefully. Some poisons look exactly like sugar, and in the fact that they do is one of their chief dangers. But both dynamite and poison have tremendous powers for evil. And so have little sins, in spite of the fact, indeed largely caused by the very fact, that by their seeming innocence it is so hard to convince people of the great danger and evil there is in them.

One of the pre-eminent evils of little sins is that they so readily make way for greater sins. The devil by his seemingly little temptations nurses up youngling sins; but they do not stay younglings. By and by they arrive at full

stature. There is an Indian story of a morsel of a dwarf who asked a king to give him all the ground he could cover with three strides. The king, seeing him so small, said, "Certainly." Whereupon the dwarf suddenly shot up into a tremendous giant, covering all the land with the first stride, all the water with the second, and with the third he knocked the king down and took his throne.

"Who is it knocks so loud?" "A little lonely sin."

"Slip through," we answer — and all hell is in!

If Satan prevails with us to go with him one step out of the way we are in danger of making no stop short of the height of wickedness. He will make us take a second step and a third and so on, all the way to destruction. Each step is but one step; the last step in sin is but one step, as well as the first; so if Satan can prevail with us to take one step, why should he not prevail with us to take the last step as well as the first step, seeing that it is but one? Your second sin no more exceeds your first than your first does your duty, and so on to the end. It is but one step at a time.

It is said that a man one day strolling along in the country happened to see a magnificent golden eagle flying slowly upward toward the sky. He watched it with delight and admiration as it so strongly mounted upward. But presently he saw that something was wrong with it. It seemed unable to go any higher. Soon it began to fall, and presently it lay at his feet a lifeless mass. What could be the matter? No human hand had harmed it. He went and examined the bird; and what did he find? It had carried up with it a little weasel in its talons, and as it had drawn its talons near to its body for flight, the little creature had wormed itself partly out of the talons and had drunk the life-blood from the eagle's breast.

How like this it is with a little sin. It may appear a very trivial thing that one is at first tempted to do, but presently it fastens itself upon the soul and works speedy death and destruction.

How must little sins be dealt with? Not tenderly; not connivingly; but they must be "taken." We must take them or they will take us. They are "the little foxes that spoil the

vines.” We must watch against and pray against even the smallest of sins, or by and by we will be overcome of sin and fall into utter spiritual ruin. Look out for the little foxes that spoil the vines. Make no place in your life for so-called minor evils. Cherish a tender conscience as the very apple of your eye. Keep alive reverent and devout thoughts of God and alert recognition of his law, and don’t forget your absolute need of Christ as your helper, guide and defence every moment of life.

XV.

SPIRITUAL LONESOMENESS.

A company in a Christian home had been spending the evening in spiritual conversation. Something was said about the "blessed reality" of God's presence with his people, of the comfort and strength that come from communion with him, and upon other themes kindred to these. It was in the country, and among the company was a minister who was on his vacation, and with him a devoted young daughter of about sixteen years. By and by most of the family and of the guests had retired, among them being this dear young girl, the daughter of the minister. But a few lingered down stairs until a late hour, talking of things concerning the kingdom and in communion about spiritual matters. The second company finally broke up and all went their ways to their bedchambers. But as he passed the door of the room in which his daughter was, as he supposed, sleeping, her

father heard some smothered sobs coming from the room. Pausing for a moment, he heard her call, "Oh, papa, please come in and see me!" Upon entering the room he was surprised to find his daughter, usually so happy, sobbing bitterly on her pillow. "Oh, papa, I am so lonesome," she exclaimed. Supposing the lonesomeness arose from the fact that they were away from home, and she separated from her usual companions, some words of comfort and cheer were spoken with that thought in view. To this misdirected ministry the girl exclaimed, "No, no, papa, that is not it; I am very happy here among our kind friends, but I am so lonesome for God. He seems so far away from me, and I can't find him anywhere, and I have tried so hard to have communion with him. It seems like I am just a formal Christian and not a real one at all, or God would not be so far away from me, and I would not be so lonesome all the time for him in my heart. It has been so long that I have waited for him to come to me since I gave myself to him, and he does not come to me. Oh, do pray for me, papa, and help me to find God!"

Thus this little Christian cried out in her bitter heart-lonesomeness for God. Yet how deeply some of us can sympathize with her, and her spiritual desolation. David was not a little child, he was a grown, strong, intellectual man, yet he exclaimed in spiritual homesickness: "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."

You have had that feeling, and so have I. Well do I remember a time, after months and months of longing, when out under the stars and the wide spreading branches of a tree, I opened my boyish heart to my own dear father, and how, putting his arms about my shoulders he told me how glad he was that I had yielded to this longing after God.

But this longing comes a great many times in life, and is not confined to any first experience as a Christian. It is not more pleasant than the pangs of hunger or the cravings of thirst; yet it is something for which we cannot be too thankful. For one reason because it is the sign of a most blessed fact, namely, of the possession of a heaven-born nature. It tells of the divinity within us. When God breathed into

man the breath of life he became a living soul — a living, longing, aspiring soul. “Our soul,” says Augustine, “was created by God, so for God, and is therefore never quiet until it rests in God.” Since the fall there have been two natures in man, each constantly striving for the mastery. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other.” We have within us the Spirit of Christ, the image of God, causing us continually to aspire; while the old Adam in us ever drags us downward. Our body looks down and searches the ground for its delights. The soul looks up among the stars and beyond. The body lives in the world, with the world and for the world. The soul, like a bird caged from its native forest, yearns for liberty and that life for which it was meant by the Creator.

Every season of soul yearning is also the sign of a blessed condition. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Their longing shall be realized. Their hunger shall be fed. Their thirst shall be satisfied. It is a condition in which a great blessing is near at hand. The

old divines used to speak of the experiences of the "fullness of God's presence." And the words referred to a reality possible to every Christian. One speaks of God's gracious in-filling "until I had to call upon God to stay the flood. I had enough; I thought I could not contain more and live."

What is the reason there is not more of such experience in these days? One is because we do not allow ourselves enough time in religion. We live in such a hurry that we are "jostled out of our spirituality." We allow ourselves almost no time for devotional study of the Bible, or for prayer, or for spiritual meditation.

Let us prize every impulse of spiritual longing, every yearning for God, for it is the sign of a blessed condition in which we may enjoy him to the full. In other words, we are in reach of a very happy experience.

Having this longing it is of the utmost importance that you shall yield to it. It is not a forcing the door of the heart, but a call to privilege. "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." At every such season God's response is: "Behold, I stand at the door and

knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." In Holman Hunt's meaningful picture illustrating this verse the door at which Christ stands and waits is made knobless. It teaches this same lesson — the importance of our yielding. Our spiritual homesickness is in fact God's knock. He is at the door of our heart. He has come to see us. Your heart and your flesh cry out for the living God! It is a sign of a blessed nature, akin to God. It is the sign of a blessed condition,— in reach of a happy experience. It is the sign of a pressing duty upon you,— of yielding to God's gentle knock at the door of your heart. Open the door, and he will come in and satisfy your longing.

XVI.

THE GRACE OF BEING TENDER-HEARTED.

We are not naturally tender-hearted. This may be due to the struggle of the race upwards from lower levels of life. In the pushing of the weak to the wall and the success of the strongest there is much that is cruel and tending to eliminate tender-heartedness from the category of human virtues. At all events it is certain that the struggle of life as we see it every day has a strong tendency to form in us and encourage traits the very opposite of tenderness. The awful competition of business life in these days is anything but encouraging to the grace of tenderness. The hot struggle that goes on in social life, though covered with the courtesies of education and refined manners, often brings about an awful refinement of cruelty in the treatment people give each other. The hurry, the pressure, the weariness of hard work, for

those who must labor with their hands, act as a foe to tenderness of heart in the lives of men and women. These reasons only press upon us all the more strongly the duty of cultivating the grace of being tender-hearted.

We ought to be moved to this, for one thing, by the great example we have of tenderness in God. Tenderness is one of the attributes of our Heavenly Father. How often occur in the Bible such expressions as, "the tender mercy of God," "the tender mercies of our God," etc. There is among men such a thing as mercy without its being tender; just as there is kindness without its being loving kindness. Some people bestow kindness so roughly that it is scarcely kindness at all. We have known a man to send help to a poor relative with great regularity, but it was always accompanied with such harsh and hurting words that his could never be called loving kindness. But God's kindness is loving kindness, and God's mercy is tender mercy. One of the features that marked the pathway of Christ when in the world was his great tenderness in his treatment of all,—the widows, the children, the suffering, the sick, the

sinning — how tender he was toward them all!

Tenderness is not weakness. Some seem to think that it is a sign that they are weak if they manifest tenderness. On the contrary it implies the possession of strength. Not necessarily physical strength, but it implies self-possession, a collected mind, self-command, moral strength. It is the stronger bending to lift the weak. For tenderness is an active, not a passive trait. It is not the indolent sentimentality that weeps over novels and sympathizes with imaginary woes. It is something that serves, that does something to relieve actual need. It is the Good Samaritan actually pouring the oil and the wine into the wounds and helping the fallen to their feet. Neither is tenderness a sort of enthusiastic folly, helping indiscriminately and falling in with unwise forms of manifesting sympathy. There is a good deal more of tenderness in giving sensible help than in the mere emotional, thoughtless, indiscriminate giving such as is done by many who think they are making themselves most commendable for their goodness of heart and charity.

It is our duty to be tender-hearted. We

should be tender-hearted toward God. Some might think of tender-heartedness as a grace to be manifested exclusively toward our fellow men. "Past feeling," is a condition the Bible tells us people get into in their treatment of God. There is no more hardened condition of heart one can get into than to become wanting in susceptibility to divine influences. How many there are who are actually heedless of and unmoved by the story of the Cross! Nothing could mark them as more lacking in the grace of tenderness of heart. No one is tender-hearted who is not tender toward God.

We ought also to be tender-hearted toward our fellowmen. Not alone to the sick, the feeble, the poor, the aged; we ought to be very tender toward all of these, but we owe more of general tenderness than we usually manifest toward those who are on equal footing with ourselves. All human souls are sensitive; all have their troubles; all are in need of human help and cheer. Let us recognize our duty to be tender toward all our brother men.

We ought to be tender, too, toward the animal creation. There is room for great improve-

ment here, even among people who will not strike a dog, beat a horse, starve a cat, or neglect a wounded bird. Do we always consider the weariness and pain of our horses when we make them hold up their heads in one constrained position by a tight check rein? Men and women who would be insulted if told they are not tender-hearted are going up and down our country roads and city streets every day practicing this form of cruelty. How many women there are who need to cultivate this grace of tenderness enough to prevent the most cruel slaughter of millions of God's creatures, the beautiful birds, and the causing of other millions of little nestlings to starve, by the killing of the parent birds, while the wearers advertise their shame by setting up the dead bodies as so-called "ornaments" on their hats. Tenderness of heart is a choice grace, one through which we commend both ourselves and the Saviour we serve by its careful cultivation. Let us be watchful against all hardness of heart. Let us cultivate the beautiful grace of tenderness of heart.

XVII.

THE MARKS OF THE LORD JESUS.

In early life we were acquainted with a man who was anything but fair to look upon. He was crippled, so that he could walk only with unsteady step. There was upon his face a look as if he were in constant pain and weakness, and his features were disfigured also with scars. But these blights and scars were for him the insignia of the noblest honor. He had been a soldier, in the Army of the Potomac. In a gallant charge he had greatly distinguished himself; but he received wounds from which he never recovered. He never knew a well day again. He must henceforth bear the marks of that heroism. He was not ashamed, but proud of them. He knew they were brands of honor. He could well have said, in the very spirit of Paul, the Apostle, "Henceforth let no man trouble me, question my loyalty to duty; for I

bear in my body the unextinguishable marks, the very brands of my fidelity.”

The Apostle Paul was a much scarred man. His body was branded with marks he must carry to his dying day. He had also other wounds, wounds of the spirit, deep and sore. He had had trouble on every side and of almost every kind, and the reference he had to these “marks” was as if he had said: “From this time on for the remainder of my life, let no man trouble me.” Look at me! Behold these brands of scars, the wrinkles of care and weariness on my face, the welts made by the Roman lictor’s rods, with which I was thrice beaten, the red lines of those nearly two hundred stripes laid upon me by the Jews, the scars left by the stones which bruised and beat me down until I was left for dead; whence did these come but from my battlings for Jesus? Call them slave-brands if you will, but I glory in being thus branded as the slave of Christ. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the brands of the Lord Jesus; I am scarred all over with the plainest evidences of my loyalty to him.

There are marks or brands of some sort which every one who is devoted to Christ must carry. Christians are not now subjected to such stripes and scourgings as Paul had to endure. At the same time, the period has not come yet when we can be "carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease." The being a Christian requires no little conflict with evil, no little self-denial, and must yield some marks of our attachment to the Lord. There must be a difference between those who are Christians and those who are not, and men ought to be able to see the difference. By a holy life; by self-denial; by subdued animal affections; by zeal in the cause of truth; by an imitation of the Lord Jesus; and by the marks of suffering in our body, if need be, we should have evidences that we are Christ's — some slave-brands or wound-scars indicating that we belong to the Son of God. As some one has said, "Nowhere is a Christian anything but a Christian." If that be true, and it is true, then there must always be some marks of differences of life and choice and affection which will make the fact of being a Christian evident.

We bear each in his body the brand of the

master we serve. The horny hand of the laborer bespeaks him the slave of unceasing toil. The dented brow of the merchant tells how his ledgers, his gain and loss, his balances — that old master, business, has him under subjection. The thoughtful features of the student reveal his servitude to a higher master, the love of knowledge and truth. Sin, too, brands itself on the body. Sottishness and sensuality, selfish indulgence of appetites and passions leave their marks in disfigurements which betoken no honorable servitude. But if the life be given to God's service, if the soul be filled with love to Christ and brought under subjection to his will, if his Spirit pervade our spirit and we be intent on the fulfillment of his gracious purposes toward ourselves and toward all mankind, then there will scarcely fail to be some outward signs of that, too, so that even the careless observer would become aware of the purity of the soul within, of the Master who rules the life, and of the peace and joy and blessedness that come in serving him. Being a Christian should show even in the face.

The marks of the Lord Jesus will be seen also

as brands of service. A slave once carried a written message in punctures on the skin of his head, which had first been shaved bare to receive the writing. When his hair had grown so as to hide the writing he went unsuspected; and the person to whom the message was sent, having shaved the letter carrier's head, read the message. So completely as this should we be at our Master's disposal and ready to accept the brands of his service. The brands Paul spoke of were slave-brands. He delighted to write himself down as the bond-servant of Christ. Now, the very essence of slavery is to have no will of our own, to be the possession, the property, of another; to enjoy nothing, to have nothing, to do nothing, to be nothing save at the beck or command or will of another. This is a dreadful state to be in if that other one be a man like myself. But suppose my master be my King, my Creator, my dear Redeemer and Lord, how exalted I am to become the servant of such an one!

The marks of the Lord Jesus Christ being scars of battle will therefore be greatly to our honor. How often has an old soldier shown his

scars with pride and exultation as a proof of his attachment to his country! As some one has said, "It is not gold, precious stones, statues, that adorn a soldier, but a torn buckler, a cracked hemlet, a blunt sword, a scarred face." "I prize this wound," said Lafayette, when struck in the foot by a musket ball at Germantown, "as among the most valuable of my honors." So Paul felt in regard to the wounds he had received in the cause of the Lord Jesus. They were his boast and his glory, the pledge that he had been engaged in the cause of the Saviour, and therefore a passport to all who acknowledge themselves as lovers of his Lord.

Let us not forget that we must expect to have scars as the result of the Christian conflict. It is not dress-parade, it is war, and we must expect to fight; and if we fight, we must expect to get wounds. He who has no "marks" must be an extremely poor, inefficient and cowardly Christian. A day is coming when all "marks" gotten in the service of Christ will be honorable and receive the rewards of our Lord's recognition.

XVIII.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP.

Peter was a born leader. He was impulsive, but strong and always influential. The days immediately following Christ's crucifixion were very disheartening. The Lord, upon whom his hopes had been fixed, was crucified, dead and buried. It was hard to keep up hope. Doubt had begun to invade the minds of all the disciples. We picture them out on the shore of the lake. One says, "Why does not our Lord come to us as he told us he would?" Another says, "How long it is since our Lord went away!" A third says, "Will he ever return again, after all?" A boat is just starting out for the night's fishing. One of the seven, of whom five had been fishermen, remarks, "How beautiful the water looks this evening!" Then it is that Simon Peter takes his, as ever, impulsive part, and says, "I go a fishing." The break has been made, and at once the others yield to the

drift, and say, "We also go with thee." We are not surprised now to read a moment later in the account, "They went forth." That is the way it always goes. When there is an "I" man there will always be a "we" man, and when there is an "I" man and a "we" man there will soon be "they" men. "They went forth." First a leader astray; then followers with him; then sure evil to result. "They went."

There is a very important lesson in this as to the "I" man's evil influence. "I go a fishing." "We also go with thee." When there is one young man or young woman or older man or older woman to say, "I go," to any wrong place, there will be others to go along. And they will encourage one another in evil until mischief is done, and you read, "They went." No one can over-emphasize this influence and responsibility of leadership. There is great social power in wrong doing. "None of us liveth to himself." We are moved and swayed irresistibly by each other. Sin loves companionship. Peter did not want to go a fishing alone. Few ever do. Half the drunkards of to-day

owe their condition to the unnecessary tipples they took when some comrade invited them. The story of a large proportion of all the downfalls we see to-day could be written in the words of this conversation we are studying: "I go — and we go with thee." Well we need the warning to follow not a multitude to do evil.

Because of this social power of wrong doing we see, moreover, the multiplied responsibility of the leader in wrong. "When ruin starts it rushes," but great is the responsibility of the one who starts it. Peter's sudden impulse was very contagious. As by one inspiration they all say, "We go along," giving a most notable instance of the power of unconscious influence to evil which a strong man exerts over those around him who may be in any degree careless or listless or inclined to self-indulgence.

It would not be proper to speak of this act of Peter's as an act of the worst sort of evil, for what he did was comparatively innocent. But it is true for us to assert that the most awful sort of condemnation is the condemnation that awaits those who having the influence and responsibility of leadership use their powers and

opportunities to lead others astray. The old mad man of Sicily threw himself headlong into the crater of *Ætna*, and men worshiped him as a god. But, think you, had he folded in his arms a little child as he took that awful plunge, would not men have execrated him as a devil? That is what men strong in wickedness are ever doing — taking others with them in their plunge! “ Oh, if my influence could only be gathered up and buried with me!” exclaimed a dying man whose life had been most poorly spent. But that could not be. His influence still lives and goes on blighting other lives. The evil men do lives after them, and this fact adds a fearful weight to their responsibility and condemnation for doing evil. This is the deep meaning of the message of our divine Redeemer when he uttered those sad but significant words: “ Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.”

But there is another and happier side to this fact of the “ I ” man’s influence: we refer to his large possible influence for good. When he

says "I go," to any place of benefit or blessing, then, too, there will be others to say, "We go with thee"; and good will result, and it can then most happily be said, "They went." We see therefore that there is this same social power in well-doing as in evil doing. No young man or young woman says, I go to church, or to Sunday School, or to prayer meeting, or upon some mission of mercy, but what there will be some one else to say, "I go with thee." And others still are likely to join them, until the result of the united good they accomplish will be written in a triumphant, "They went." Companionship in the good, its likelihood, its desirability, its large results, these are themes upon which every Christian well might meditate.

In this fact of the social power of well doing lies the multiplied opportunities of each well-doer. "When good starts it rushes." There is a contagion in well doing even stronger than there is in ill doing. We know a young man who alone took a stand for Christ by uniting with the Church. At the next communion a score of his companions took the same step.

We know a church where worldliness had gotten a strong hold, and there had been almost no conversions in years. A devoted Christian minister was called as pastor. At the first communion twelve young ladies took a stand for Christ. The ice was broken, and inside of a little less than two years upwards of two hundred persons, and in a small country district, had joined that church, more than doubling its membership. Good grows, and each well-doer has a multiplied opportunity.

Consider also the "I" man's glorious reward. It is not only that of being saved, but it is that of not being saved alone. If it is a joy for the shipwrecked mariner to escape from the waves and stand on the shore saved, how much greater, then, must be his joy when by his side he is permitted to see other men, and maybe women and children, too, who by his exertions he has been able to save. "He that winneth souls is wise." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

XIX.

SIN A SELF INJURY.

Sin has been defined as any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God. It is an evil done against God, of which we should repent and for which we need forgiveness through the atoning blood of Christ. The great evil of sin is that it transgresses God's wish and loving will toward us, promotes discord and rebellion in his universe, and puts us under liability to the punishment due for our offences. But there is another side to sin's consequences, of which we do not make so much account as we ought. It is of slight importance as compared with the fact of sin's being an offence against God; but sin is also an offence against ourselves — against our own present well-being. In sinning against God we wrong him, but we wrong also our own souls. God's law is but God's love speaking in the imperative mood. God is not to be regarded as some

mighty police justice, detecting the law breakers and with whips and fines and imprisonments punishing the guilty. Neither does he commission Satan, as some in a most mistaken way think, to be his jailor, with special appointment to torment the wicked. God does not turn over the execution of his decrees to wicked spirits, nor does the Bible anywhere countenance such an idea. At the same time we are to bear in mind that God is just, as well as loving, and will by no means clear the guilty.

Yet God's laws are beneficent in their purpose. They are intending to help and to bless. But they are not to be violated with impunity. The law of gravitation is a beneficent law in nature, but he that sinneth against it does it to his own hurt. So it is in the spiritual realm. Sin is self-hurt. "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul." Not in the spirit of haughty denunciation, but with sad and kindly warning the Bible declares that he who transgresses God's spiritual laws wrongs his own soul, is the author of his own sorrow and suffering and loss. God desires only our salvation. He says: "Turn ye, turn ye, for why

will ye die?" It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all should turn unto him and live. But God will not lower us to the level of a stone or a stick, without will or choice. He will not force us to be good by an omnipotent act; for then we could enjoy no reward for being good or doing good. He gives motives and persuasions and helps, loving wooings and equally loving warnings, but leaves us free. This is how it comes that he that sinneth against God wrongeth his own soul.

Man is therefore capable of sinning. As some one has well said: "It is our glory that we *can* sin; it is our disgrace and ruin that we *do*." The capability of sinning distinguishes us from the brute and belongs to all moral beings. The highest angel in heaven has it, or there would be no virtue in his obedience. A good deal that is of highest honor to us is implied when it is said that we are capable of sinning, — three things at least; that we have knowledge of the moral law, that we have a capacity to obey that law, or at least power to get the help we need to enable us to obey it, and that we have perfect freedom of choice.

Sin is something directed against God. “ He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul.” All the laws of man’s being, physical, organic, intellectual and moral, are God’s laws, and violation of them is sin against Heaven. God has great ambitions for us. He would build within us noble character. When we sin we defeat his wish and make our characters ignoble and low. God would have us useful to others; but sin makes us hurtful to them. God would have us happy; but sin makes us wretched, utterly and forever. God would have us grow in spiritual beauty, symmetry and power; but sin deforms, enfeebles and mars our being. Sin is therefore always against God and his desires for us.

Sin against God is a wrong done to our own nature. It is self-injury. It is a sort of moral suicide. “ He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul.” He violates the law of his soul’s well being.

The law of the piano is that its strings shall be tuned in harmony and struck with light, cushioned hammers; but if you fail to tune the strings at all, and strike them with an iron sledge, you get only discord and destruction.

The reason is that you have sinned against the law of the piano.

The law of the circulation of the blood is from heart to artery, capillary, and back again by the veins; and as it goes it repairs waste, carries off useless matter, and gives health and strength. But if you open an artery and send the blood outside its course, you die. You have transgressed the law of the circulation of the blood. How sinful, how self-destructive, then, is the violation of law, and how fatally does he who thus sins wrong his own soul!

That sin injures the soul admits of no debate. It is a patent fact written on every page of history, and universally proclaimed by the deep consciousness of humanity. By deadening our moral susceptibilities, by disturbing our peace, by warping our judgment, by enfeebling our powers, by clouding our hopes, and in a great many other ways, whenever we indulge in sin we work upon ourselves a great hurt, a great self-injury.

This should lead us to notice, therefore, that sin is an unnatural thing. A state of sin is not the normal state of any being. We wrong our

souls not by keeping, but by breaking God's laws. Obedience to them is happiness. The voice of all the Divine prohibitions is, "Do thyself no harm." Sin is an unnatural self-hurt, a suicidal self-harm. In sinning,

" We rave, we wrestle with great Nature's
plan;
We thwart the Deity; and 'tis decreed,
Who thwart His will shall contradict their
own."

It is further implied that God's laws, being written on our nature, the penalties for their violation are beyond the power of man's evasion. A man may break the laws of his country and yet may be able to avoid the penalty. He may not be detected, or he may flee to foreign lands. The reason is that the law that he has violated may be arbitrary — not written in his nature. But this cannot be in the case of the violation of God's laws; for they carry with them their own penalties, right home into the constitution of the transgressor. He must flee from himself before he can flee from them.

A life of sin is therefore a life of folly, for it must ever be a life of misery. Sin is folly, and

the greatest sinner, whatever his talents or apparent gains, is the greatest fool.

All God's warnings against sin and woings from sin are love prompted. They are intended to deter us from self-injury and call us toward the highest good.

XX.

EATING HONEY BY THE WAY.

There were three kinds of honey commonly known in Palestine: that which was made by bees, that which was distilled from the trees, and that which was made from grape juice, which was largely exported. The kind that Jonathan ate when it is said of him in the first book of Samuel, "He put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb, and he put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened," was doubtless the product of the honey-bee. Palestine was known as a land "flowing with milk and honey." We have read that in one of our Eastern States there is a crag in the hills where, in a cleft in the rocks, great masses of honey hang, stored up by the labors of busy bees for years, yet absolutely inaccessible. Many attempts have been made to reach and appropriate the honey, but in vain. Just so wild bees in Pales-

tine settled in trees and in the clefts of rocks, and deposited their honey.

Saul had foolishly pronounced a curse on any who should partake of any food before evening — the evening of the day of the great battle when the Philistines were smitten from Michmash to Aijalon. Jonathan, faint with hunger, and not knowing of the curse, dipped the end of his rod in a luscious honeycomb and ate, and straightway was strengthened; that is, his bodily powers were refreshed by the food. Weary with his chase after the Philistines a little needed nourishment made a new man of him physically.

Without discussing Jonathan's act as related to his father's foolish oath, of which he knew nothing, we think this incident of the long ago may serve well to impress upon us the fact of our need, as Christians, of frequently reviving our strength and vigor and hope as we press along through life, using for this purpose such wayside blessings as God puts within our reach as we journey or as we fight. Life is a battle, and we, like Jonathan, must be actively engaged. As a result we are sure at times to faint and

grow weary; but let us not forget that God provides honey by the way for our refreshment, and that it is our privilege to eat of it.

There is, for example, the honey of God's word. The provision is abundant, as was the honey in wild profusion in the woods which Jonathan entered. The honey of which Jonathan partook had a marvellous effect upon him; "it enlightened his eyes." That is, it so strengthened his body that the faintness which produced dimness of vision disappeared. This honey of his word which God gives us, is sweet to the taste; it gives strength; and, above all, it has a blessed enlightening power. The Word of God enlightens the mind. The Bible has well been called "the common people's University." It enlightens the moral sense, the conscience, and makes it like a corrected mariner's compass, pointing always in the right direction. It enlightens the eye that has grown dim through sorrow. Best of all, it reveals the sinner's Saviour and the way to eternal life through him. Let us eat of this honey by the way. It may be impossible for all of us to learn Latin and Greek and Hebrew and become deep

students of God's Word. The battle may go too hard with us for that — we must live in such a hurry; our daily bread must be earned; our families must be cared for — but God does put much of this honey within our reach. Let us, like Jonathan, “ put our hand to our mouth,” and eat of the honey by the way.

He puts within our reach, also, the honey of prayer. And how sweet and refreshing it is, as we hurry along the dusty highway of life! We may not be able to shut ourselves up like monks in a cloister, and spend the whole of our days in prayer; it would not be a good thing for ourselves or for the Kingdom's advancement if we could. But we can eat some honey by the way. We can at least find time for a few minutes on our knees before God morning and evening, and, “ an upward glancing of the eye ” from time to time during the day. As in the case of God's Word, this, too, is sweet; it gives strength; and it has a very blessed enlightening power. Do not fail to eat of this precious honey by the way.

Then, too, there is spiritual meditation. We can always “ think on these things.” No mat-

ter how hard the battle presses or how busy we must be, there is always within our reach some of this sweet honey of spiritual meditation — of communion with our Heavenly Father and with our Elder Brother, Christ. Even while in rapid motion we can out with the end of our rod, dip it in the honeycomb and eat a little. “ My meditation of him shall be sweet.” It is not only sweet, but this too, like the study of the Bible and prayer, has both a strengthening and an enlightening power.

Yet again, there is Christian conversation. Here is honey of which Christians too seldom partake. It would please God and help us much if we partook more of it. There was a time in Old Testament history, when “ they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name.” So thoroughly did he approve of their mutual converse about himself that he says: “ And they shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels.”

There are many other ways in which we can

get tastes of God's sweet, strength-giving honey by the way; but we will mention but one further, namely: through the services of his house. The Sabbath brings a pause when we may get this refreshment and new strength. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." In the mid-week meeting for prayer and fellowship; in the services of God's house on the Sabbath, and at other times, when faithfully embraced, the Christian gets a chance, Jonathan-like, to put forth the end of his rod, dip it in the honey and the honeycomb, and eat by the way.

There is honey to be had in Christian service, too. Happy indeed is the Christian who, while pressing on his way through the tangled wild-wood and stone-strewn ways of the wood of Ephraim, finds and eats of the sweet, strengthening, eye-enlightening honeycomb.

XXI.

SPIRITUAL FRAGRANCE.

Two intelligent Christian men were conversing recently about the religious reading that comes into our families, when one of them mentioned a certain religious weekly. The other said: "What it contains is all true, but it lacks fragrance or spiritual flavor." The first added that when he took up an article to read, he could tell whether the writer was surrendered to God or not. He added: "I have often seen sermons in print that were excellent in conception, in division, in language, in illustration, in logic, but lacking in spiritual aroma. They were cold and intellectual, not having spiritual flavor. Spiritual fragrance can only come through spiritual conditions. When I find souls surrendered to God, I feel communion with them in what they say. The fact of their abandonment to God produces spiritual feeling, and no person can counterfeit it. People

may imagine they can, but they cannot, and it cannot be hid. It is like Christ. 'He could not be hid.' Preaching without spiritual aroma is like a rose without perfume. 'Christ's name is like ointment poured forth.' We can only get the perfume by getting more of Christ."

We are not sure that our two friends were altogether generous in their criticisms; nevertheless there is a large element of truth in what they said, and spiritual fragrance is something the possession of which is very much to be desired.

Christ desired at one time to be hid. He had come to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon for concealment, for needed rest. This fact speaks to us of his true humanity. His fatigue was real. Nature did not spare him. He knew what it was to be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," to sympathize deeply with men, to have his soul go out toward the object of his solicitude until he was weary in body and mind and heart, too, and have nature exact her penalty after the time of brave bearing up under the stress. That Christ was weary and sought seclusion tells us of his humanity.

This desiring to be hid tells us also of Christ's humility. He entered into a house, and would have no man know it. We are sure this desire was not prompted by fear or shame, that it did not spring from caprice or unworthy policy. One reason will be found, as some one has expressed it, namely, "the modesty of high goodness." Christ did not clamor for recognition. He did not blow any trumpet or have one blown before his face. He did not wish his disciples to seek recognition, either.

Christ's desire to be hid tells also of his sensitiveness to sin. Wherever you find rare purity, as was in Christ, you find this shrinking from the corruptions of the times. The desire to escape from the world's wickedness Christ felt, and this feeling is shared by all his pure-hearted followers. Heart-sore, heart-sick on account of the sin he saw around him, Christ sought to be hid, at least for a little time, just as a pure-hearted man we know of, in a strange city once found himself in a street where solicitation to evil dogged his every step; suddenly he saw a church door open, and he took refuge within long enough to compose his thoughts and

get courage to beat his way out of the slums of iniquity into the midst of which he had fallen.

Christ could not be hid. Why? Because he was good, and goodness is self-revealing. A rose cannot be hid. You have it in your pocket. But people know it. It sheds fragrance. Eminent goodness will out.

Christ cannot be hid, because great need is sure to seek him. As some one has said: "Misery has a swift instinct for a helper." That mother, whose daughter was tormented with an evil spirit, had a quick sagacity to find Christ, the Healer. And the world's need to-day feels after Christ if haply it may find him.

Christ cannot be hid, because true love will surely find him; because earnest faith will ever lead to him; because his disciples will make him known.

The true disciple of Christ cannot be hid. He cannot be hid any more than his Master can. Christ's name is "like ointment poured forth." There is a spiritual fragrance about a true Christian's life that makes its presence known. Once, in crossing a meadow, we came to a place that was filled with fragrance. Yet we could

see no flowers, and we wondered whence the fragrance came. At last we found, low down, close to the ground, hidden by the tall grass, innumerable little flowers, sweet forget-me-nots. It was from these the fragrance came. They could not be hid.

“ The lives that make the world so sweet
 Are shy, and hide like the humble flowers;
 We pass them by with our careless feet,
 Nor dream 'twas their fragrance fills the
 bower
 And cheers and comforts us hour by hour.”

How are we to have spiritually fragrant lives? First, cultivate the spirit of Christ. Be like him human and humane. Be like him humble and self-sacrificing. Be like him sensitive to sin. Secondly, be much with Christ. In that way we will become like him. “ Why are you sweet?” was asked of the scented clay. “ Oh, I was so long in the sweet society of the rose that I partook of the nature of the rose.” Be much with Christ and you will partake of the nature of Christ. Prize every opportunity to be with him. Seek communion with him. Being with him, partaking of his nature, like him

you cannot be hid. Your influence will be for good. You will live a spiritually fragrant life.

XXII.

THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.

Differences of position and circumstances among men affect very much their power to sympathize with one another. It is a difficult matter, for example, for those born to wealth and affluence to enter into the difficulties and understand the hardships endured by those to whom life is a perpetual struggle for the barest necessities. It is difficult for those who are well and strong to sympathize with those with bodily infirmities and illness. It is not unnatural, then, that persons, judging by human analogies, should sometimes suppose that he who was the Son of God, the King of Glory, would be indisposed to sympathize with wretched, sin-benighted men on earth. But the Bible assures us of the exact contrary. It tells us that Christ is pre-eminently the sympathizing one. "He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities."

His preparation for exercising this sympathy toward us was in the fact that "he was in all points tempted like as we are." The similarity of his circumstances qualifies him for sympathizing with us. As some one has aid, "Just as the light becomes tinged with the hues of the glass it passes through, so the unfathomable love of the Son of God becomes sympathetic towards men as it passes to us through the human heart, steeped in sorrow, agonized with suffering, of the Son of man." Egypt has its two great water courses, its river and its sweet-water canal. The canal conveys the sweet waters of the river where the river itself cannot take them. The human heart of Jesus is the canal which conducts the sweet waters of the divine love in streams of sympathy to the parched souls of men.

The sympathy of Jesus goes out to us through knowledge. Many springs of earthly sympathy are sealed through ignorance; but the sympathy of Jesus is never lacking through want of knowledge. Christ knows our every care. The sympathy of Jesus is prompted by his nature. With him to know is to care. The sympathy of

Jesus is deepened by his own experiences. There can after all be but little true sympathy, however loving the heart, where there has been no similar experience. It is a widow who knows best how to speak words of comfort to another bereaved of husband. It is the man who has passed through the agonies of a financial difficulty himself who knows best how to cheer the one who, after every effort to retrieve his fortune, yet finds himself going, step by step, to the wall. It is in the school of experience that the language of sympathy is best taught. Christ's knowledge of our trials is not theoretical, but an experimental one. "They tell us," says Dr. Maclaren, "that in some trackless lands, when one friend passes through the pathless forests he breaks a twig ever and anon as he goes, that those who come after him may see the traces of his having been there, and may know that they are not out of the road. Oh, when we are journeying through the murky night and the dark woods of affliction and sorrow, it is something to find here and there a sprig broken or a leaf bent down with the tread of Christ's feet and the brush of his hand as he

passed, and to remember that the path he trod he has hallowed and that there are lingering fragrances and hidden strengths in the remembrance, 'in all points tempted as we are,' bearing grief for us, bearing grief with us, bearing grief like us."

Christ's own sufferings were his preparation for his mission of sympathy with men. He became a man in order that he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

The intensity of his sympathy with us is shown when it is said, "He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities." There is no more tender Bible verse than this. What touches us touches Christ. What concerns us concerns Christ. He has a wonderful keenness of sympathy. His nature is an intensely sensitive one. When in the world he always felt most keenly anything that could touch the feelings of his fellow men. He is wondrously quick to understand and wondrously ready to sympathize with the sorrows of his people. "He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities." That is something deeper than simply to know the *fact* of our infirmities. At some time you may have

been ill and called a physician. You found difficulty in making known to him the mere fact of your pain; but Christ is one who is touched with the *feeling* of our infirmities. He enters with us into our sorrows and troubles. "Touched with the feeling"—how deep that goes.

But the sympathy of Jesus is as wide as it is ready. He whose exquisitely sensitive soul was thrilled by the beauty of a lily or moved by the fall of a sparrow is keenly touched by whatever can concern a human heart, whether high or low, good or bad, a friend or an enemy. No one can be beyond the reach of his all-comprehending sympathy. The reason is because no one can be beyond the embrace of his all-comprehending love. And his sympathy is as deep and tender as it is ready and comprehensive. One reason is that he has been tempted in all points like as we are. He can sympathize with the poor because he has been poor. He can sympathize with the weary and heavy laden because he himself has been tired and worn. He can sympathize with the lonely, the misrepresented and the persecuted because he himself has been in their position.

Let us not forget, either, that his is a practical sympathy, a help-rendering sympathy. We might have earthly friends who could sympathize with us but lacking in wisdom or ability could not render us definite help; but Christ is both willing and able to help. His sympathy for the hungry multitudes led him to spread a table for them in the wilderness. His sympathy for the widow weeping beside the bier led him to restore to her arms her only son. His sympathy for Mary and Martha led him to weep at the grave and also to call the brother they mourned to come forth. It is the knowledge that now as then he is as ready and able to help us that impels us to come with all assurance to the throne of grace and confide to him our every trouble.

What are some of the directions in which his sympathy for us is called out? "In all points like as we are." We are tempted through the senses. So was he. We are tempted by opportunities for seeking honor and power. So was he. We are tempted through our human affections. So was he. We are tempted to deflection from the path of obedience by the in-

firmities of the good or the crafty questionings of the worldly wise. So was he. Every testing process to which we are subjected he went through. He is touched with our physical infirmities. How plainly this is shown by all his ministries to the sick and suffering while in the world. He is touched with the infirmities of our prayers. We know not what we should pray for as we ought but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Christ picks out the one earnest petition from the rubbish, or the one real need from the many things we ask, and answers according to his knowledge of what is best. He is touched with the infirmity of our temper. He knows our frame, he remembers that we are dust. He does not expect impossible things of us, and when we fail in what he has a right to expect, he forgives. He sympathizes with us in our poor efforts at doing good. He knows that when we would do good evil is present with us. He takes the wish for the deed, and says, “ ‘ It was good that it was in thine heart,’ that thou didst purpose it.”

We may find much comfort in this thought of

the sympathy of Christ, his tenderness towards us all. "The bruised reed will he not break, and the smoking flax will he not quench." He knows us. He loves us. He sympathizes with us. He is ever ready to help us. "We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us come therefore boldly unto the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

XXIII.

OUR RICH HELPER.

Every Christian is a bundle of needs. He has needs physical. There seems to be no creature with so many and such constantly recurring needs. He has needs social. Life can only develop itself by clinging to other forms of life. So our affections need objects about which to twine if we would develop strength and beauty. Such words as father, mother, brother, friend, represent the needs of our social nature. He has needs mental. The mind in its best state is like the garden of Eden; but uncultivated it is like a wilderness which brings forth only thorns. It needs teachers, books, culture. Man has moral and spiritual needs also. He is a sinner. These words are enough to express his utter poverty. He needs nothing less than God's great salvation. But salvation does not end his needs. Even as a redeemed soul a man's needs are many and constantly recurring.

The Christian is a sinner and needs frequent forgiveness and a constant renewal of spiritual life. The Christian is a traveller, journeying across the desert of this world, rough, arid, dry, and with enemies on every hand. He cannot perform the journey in his own strength. How great then his need! The Christian is a voyager, trying to cross the rough and boisterous ocean of life. There are waves of distress, billows of trouble, storms of adversity, shoals of danger, quicksands of error and rocks of destruction he has to encounter. What will be the fate of his poor bark if he have not the breezes of divine influence to waft him, the anchor of hope to steady him, the compass divine to direct him, the voice of the Captain to cheer him, and the hand of the Pilot to guide him safely to the haven of everlasting peace? The Christian is a racer, trying to reach the goal of glory. A thousand voices call him back. Innumerable attractions of the world allure him aside. Earthly weights and cares threaten to cast him down. How liable he is to faint and tire, and, therefore, how great is his need of the divine stimulus and strength. The Christian

is a soldier, trying to win the victor's crown. His foes are legion in number and very strong, for he wrestles not against flesh and blood merely, "but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Surely Omnipotence alone can uphold us in our battle with spiritual foes. No one can ever over-express it — our needs seem infinitely great and many, the demand to meet them almost illimitably large.

Is it not therefore a great consolation to hear an Apostle speaking of a sure and ample supply for every possible necessity? "My God shall supply all you need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The agent is God, the medium through Christ Jesus, and the measure and resource are proportionate to need and out of the inexhaustible supply of heaven. These things being so, then we know that the meeting of all our needs is certain. Paul is positive that this source will never fail. The reason was he knew it could not fail. The meeting of our needs is not only certain, but it will be abundant. It will not be

simply according to our necessities. That would require a great supply. But, better than that, it will be according to God's riches, suited to his character not ours, commensurate with his magnificence rather than with our poverty and need. God is rich, gloriously rich, and he gives not according to our measure, but according to his measure. A courtier once said to his king, who was bestowing upon him a gift: "This is too much for me to receive." Said the king: "But it is not too much for me to give." God gives like a king, with regard to his great resources, "according to his riches in glory."

The supply will be, therefore, not according to our deserving. Instead, it will be according to the glorious fullness of his grace. If the gloriously rich God gives according to his wealth, not according to our deserving, but according to his grace and loving favor in Christ, how rich, indeed, he makes us all! The supply will be adapted to our need. The need is great, diversified, constant. The supply will be seasonable, suitable, abundant. On a merchant's desk we once saw a book labeled "Want Book."

How comforting it is to know that God has a "supply book" which exactly meets our want book! His promises, providences and divine visitations combine to meet the necessities of all his people. The supply will be through the medium of Christ. Christ Jesus is the channel of communication of God's blessings by virtue of his atonement. All the riches of God's grace and the raptures and splendor of an eternal heaven are to be given through Christ.

This blessed promise is yours, yours to live upon, and is made by a very rich helper. Are you neglecting or ignoring it?

Many years ago an aged and ragged Indian wandered into one of our Western settlements, begging for food to keep him from starving. A bright colored ribbon was seen about his neck from which hung a small, dirty pouch. On being asked what it was, he said that it was a charm given him in his younger days. He opened it and took out a worn and crumpled paper. It proved on careful inspection to be a regular discharge from the Continental army entitling him to a pension for life, and signed by General Washington himself. Here was a man

with a promise duly signed, which, if presented in the right place would have secured to him ample provision for all his days, and yet he was wandering about hungry and helpless and forlorn, and begging for bread to keep him from starving! And what a picture it gives, too, of many Christians, who, with all the promises of Jehovah in their hands, the charter of an eternal inheritance in full possession, are yet gloomy and sad and starving in the wilderness!

XXIV.

THE LOVE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We often sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus," and "One there is above all others well deserves the name of friend." We easily think of Christ as our friend, and rejoice in the thought of his tender love. But do we think as easily and realize as fully what a friend we have in the Holy Spirit? Is Jesus so exclusively our friend as to warrant us in slighting our great Sanctifier, Comforter and Teacher, the Holy Spirit? We may be sure that Jesus himself does not wish us to do so. Indeed, he wishes quite the contrary. He has made it plain that he wishes us to honor and love the Spirit, even as we honor and love himself. Was not this the very burden of his message as he talked with his disciples that last night before his crucifixion? The character, the coming and the work of the Holy Spirit was his theme in his heart-to-heart talk. He especially told the dis-

ciples that the Spirit was coming to take his place, and that this would be better for them, and for the world, too, than to have his own bodily presence. We are living now in that dispensation of the Spirit.

He is a person. He is not simply an influence. Christ used the personal pronoun when referring to him. He said, "I will send him." He said, "He will testify of me." He said, "Whom the Father will send in my name." In the baptism formula he said we are to be baptized "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He warned us that it is possible to "blaspheme against the Holy Ghost." It is possible to blaspheme only against a person. In John 16:7-14, in the short space of seven verses only, Christ eleven times repeated uses the personal pronoun "He" in referring to the Holy Spirit, instead of the impersonal pronoun "it." Suppose you read the thirteenth verse, using the impersonal pronoun, as even Christians sometimes use the word without thought in referring to the Holy Spirit. "Howbeit, when it, the Spirit of truth, is come, it shall guide you into all truth, for it shall not

speak of itself, but whatsoever it shall hear that shall it speak, and it shall show you things to come. It shall glorify me, for it shall receive of mine and show it to you." You see at once that in reading the passage in this way you utterly undermine the force of the statements, destroy their dignity and mar their meaning.

The Holy Spirit is a person, and as a person he loves us, and we should love him. We should love the Spirit just as we love Christ, both because Christ asks us to do so, and because of the love of the Spirit and of his great work for us and in us. Jesus is infinite, eternal and unchangeable; so in the Holy Spirit. Jesus loves us and gave himself for us. The Holy Spirit applies Christ's work to our souls, regenerating, convicting, converting, sanctifying us. Jesus is not more constantly with us than is the Holy Spirit; indeed, he is with us most fully through the influence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, for he sent the Spirit to abide with the Church in all the varied experiences of life. Verily we have a friend in Jesus — in the great, loving, personal Christ, who walked and talked on earth, and who now intercedes for us in glory.

But because we have him for a friend let us not forget that we have also a friend in the great, living, loving, personal Spirit, who now dwells in the Church and makes a home for himself in every heart that is willing to receive him.

It is our duty to recognize the love of the Spirit. This love is directly stated in God's Word. It is this love which was appealed to by the Apostle Paul when in writing to the Romans he said: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers." Do you love the Holy Spirit? Would you be as ready with an answer as if one were to say, "Do you love Jesus?" Or, if the question were put in this way, "Does the Holy Spirit love you?" Would the answer be as prompt and certain as if the question were, "Does God love you?" There are a great many Christians who have not gotten much beyond the statement of the Apostle's Creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." We may have prayed to him as a Spirit of power; but how often do we think of him as a Spirit of love, who loves personally with divine love unspeak-

able? Probably one reason why we do not think of the Spirit more as loving and as a person is because of the fact that he ever subordinates his own glory to the glory of Christ. Christ said of him, "He shall not speak of himself." He said, "He shall glorify me." The Holy Spirit certainly manifests a divine self-forgetfulness and benevolence, and exalts Christ. But on that account we must not forget him. We must remember him, cherish his presence, and rejoice in his love.

It is the love of the Spirit that causes him to strive with us. He might justly pass us by when we resist him, as we so often do. It is because he loves us, loves us equally with the Father and the Son, that he strives with us over and over again and tries to make a holy temple of our hearts.

It is the love of the Spirit which causes him to convict us of sin. This is apart of his gracious work. When Christ was speaking of the Spirit's work as guide and comforter, he also included the equally loving office which he exercises of convicting men of sin: "And when he is come he will reprove — or convict — the

world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.” He does more than reprove. He convicts. That is generally considered a thankless office. Few, indeed, there are who have the moral courage, not to say devoted love, to tell their dearest friends their faults and point out to them faithfully, yet kindly, their sins. But the Holy Spirit loves us faithfully. He, therefore, convicts. But he does it with the deepest motive of love, and expressly to lead us to Christ who is the Saviour from sin, from its guilt, its power, its penalty.

The love of the Spirit it is that leads us to confess Christ. “He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us;” making him to be seen in his beauty and glory and love as a Saviour. He takes us to the cross. He says:

“ See from His hands, His head, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down,”

and then asks us if ever there was sorrow like that sorrow, or ever love like that love. Yes, he shows us what Christ has done for us. Then willingly, gladly, Spirit-induced, we accept Christ as our Saviour and confess him as our Lord.

A soldier at the battle of Williamsburg was shot. An artery of his leg was severed. He was fast bleeding to death. He saw a surgeon hastening to the front, and called to him for his help. His life could be saved in a moment if some one would but bind up the artery. The surgeon dismounted from his horse and gave the needed relief. But as he turned to go the man exclaimed, "Doctor, what is your name?" "Oh, no matter," replied the physician. "Yes, doctor, I want to know your name; I want to tell my wife and my children who it was that saved me."

The Holy Spirit puts an impulse like that into the heart of the saved Christian. Christ comes to us binding up our broken hearts, healing our wounded spirits, saving our dying souls, and we feel that it is as little as we can do to tell others of him. We are glad to confess him anywhere and everywhere, under the impulse of a gratitude which the Holy Spirit awakens.

A little boy was dismissed, healed, from one of our hospitals not long ago. The nurse had been kind to him. He felt that he owed to her his life. When the hour came for him to leave

he threw his arms about the nurse's neck and exclaimed, "My mother will never hear the last of you!" He was going to sing her praises to every one he met. It was gratitude, a great, warm, thankful gratitude he felt, and he was going to express it.

It is thus that the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of men, moving them to a recognition of what Christ has done for them, and then gladly, gratefully to confess Him everywhere.

It is the love of the Spirit, too, which makes him so patient with us. Do you ever think of the wonderful patience of the Holy Spirit? No mother was ever so patient with a disobedient child; no father ever grieved so over a prodigal son; no wife ever so bore with a drunken husband as the patient, loving, long-suffering Holy Spirit bears with us in our waywardness and forgetfulness and sin. Every step of the way he tries to claim our thoughts, arrest our attention and turn us to Christ and the things that are Christ-like.

It is the love of the Spirit that causes him to labor for our sanctification. We are born of the Spirit, but we are born as babes into the

kingdom. Just as little infants or young children need a mother's care, so we need the instruction and guidance and strengthening, comforting, sanctifying work of the loving Spirit. The Holy Spirit "mothers" us, broods over us, tenderly cares for us. Regeneration and justification, may be, are, immediate; but our sanctification is a slow process, often much too slow, putting a great, laborious necessity upon the Holy Spirit. And yet how patient he is, how lovingly he labors on to perfect the image of Christ in us!

It is the love of the Spirit that makes him our comforter. Christ forgot himself in comforting his disciples that night of his betrayal. Self-forgetful of the cross, he said to his mourning disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless." I will send another comforter unto you." The Holy Spirit comes to take Christ's place — as though he were still here. Yes, it is even better than if Christ were here. He himself says that it is better. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." Christ

could not be bodily present everywhere. That would be the limitation were he to stay. But the Holy Spirit can dwell within every heart in all the world and prove the very guide and comforter we need.

We need help in the Christian life. God is the source of our help; but the love of the Holy Spirit is shown again, in the fact that his love causes him to lead us and help us to pray. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." "We pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

Let us carry with us evermore a deeper consciousness of the love of the Spirit; and let us not resist him or grieve him or quench him. Let us love him and ever yield ourselves fully to Him, and to all his gracious influences.

In a sermon by Rev. Prof. Benjamin B. Warfield, recently published, upon this theme of the Love of the Holy Ghost, he says: "What immense riches of comfort and joy this great truth has in it for our souls! Were the work of the application of Christ's redemption to

us performed by some mere servant-agent, indifferent to us, and intent only on perfunctorily fulfilling the task committed to him, we might well tremble for our salvation. It is only because the Spirit which he has caused to dwell in us yearneth for us even unto jealous envy, that he is able to continue his gracious work of drawing our souls to God amid the incredible oppositions we give to his holy work.

“ It is the ‘ Spirit whom God has caused to dwell within us.’ It is he, the indwelling Spirit, who, we are told, yearns for us with envious jealousy whenever the world obtains a hold upon our hearts. And let us not fail to gather the full gracious meaning of the word ‘ dwell ’ here. It is the word to denote permanent habitation in contra-distinction from temporary sojourning. God has caused the Spirit of love not to visit our hearts merely, but to abide there; not to tarry there for a season merely, tentatively, as it were, and on trial, but to make his home there, to ‘ settle ’ there, to establish his permanent dwelling there.

“ It is in the hands of such love that we have fallen. And it is because we have fallen into

the hands of such love that we have before us a future of eternal hope.

“ Among the legends which popular fancy has woven around the memory of Francis of Assisi, we are told that he was riding along one day in the first joy of his new-found peace, his mind possessed with a desire to live over again the life of absolute love which his divine Master had lived in the earth. Suddenly ‘ at a turn in the road, he found himself face to face with a leper. The frightful malady had always inspired in him an invincible repulsion. He could not control a movement of horror, and by instinct he turned his horse in another direction.’ Then came the quick revulsion of feeling. ‘ He retraced his steps and, springing from his horse, he gave to the astounded sufferer all the money that he had; and then kissed his hand, as he would have done to a priest.’ A new era in his spiritual life had dawned. He visited the lazaretto itself and with largeness of alms and kindly words sought to bring some brightness of the outside world into the gloomy retreat. Still his love grew stronger. The day came when he made the great renuncia-

tion and stood before men endued with naught but the love of Christ. Now no temporary lazaretto contented him. He must dwell there as a permanent sunbeam to the distressed. He came now with empty hands, but with a heart full to overflowing with compassion. 'Taking up his abode in the midst of the afflicted, he lavished upon them a most touching care, washing and wiping their sores, all the more gentle and radiant as the sores were more repulsive.'

“It is not given to man, of course, even to comprehend, much less to embody in a legend like this, all the richness of God's mysterious love for sinners. But in such legends as this we may catch some faint shadow of what the Spirit's love for us means. No leprous sores can be as foul in the eyes of the daintiest bred as sin is foul in the eyes of the Holy Spirit. We cannot conceive of the energy of his shrinking from its polluting touch. Yet he comes into the foul lazaretto of our hearts and dwells there; not for himself, or any good to accrue to himself; but solely that he may cleanse us and fit us to be what he has made us, the Bride, the Lamb's wife.”

XXV.

LIVING IN RIGHT RELATIONS TOWARD THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The question of the relation toward the Holy Spirit in which we live is an all-important one. One of Frances Ridley Havergal's poems tells of an Æolian harp which a friend sent her with a letter describing the wonderful sweetness of its tones. Miss Havergal took the harp and thrummed its seven strings, but there were no thrilling strains, only common music. She then read the letter again, and found instructions which she had overlooked at first. Then she raised the window and put the harp under the sash. Now the wind swept over the strings and the room was filled with the melodious strains such as no fingers of man could have produced. Only when the breath of heaven blew upon the harp could its marvelous music be brought out. The human soul is such a harp. Human fingers call out much that is lovely and

sweet; but it is only when the chords are swept by the breath of heaven, by the Holy Spirit, that its noblest music is brought out. The music came when the harp was in right relation with the wind. How important that we shall be in right relation with the Holy Spirit; that we shall get where and stay where the breath of heaven can sweep over us.

When in the right relation the blessing comes. In speaking of a body of Christians who had earnestly been seeking in prayer for the Spirit's presence, one, in describing the experience that came to all, said, "A conscious wave of blessing was felt throughout the whole gathering." Another used these words in describing the experience of another company met in a spiritual retreat: "A warm wave of blessing passed through the whole company." We are sure that there is such a thing, both in public worship and in the privacy of life, as being in such relation to the Holy Spirit as to have felt his presence, with great blessedness resulting.

How are we to live in right relation to the Holy Spirit? First, abstain from all that

would repel him. He is a Holy Spirit. He loves holiness. He will dwell with those with broken and contrite heart and who make no allowance for sin. Secondly, cultivate the sense of dependence upon him. Our dependence upon the Spirit is absolute. Too often we do not recognize the fact. We try to get along without him. How prone we are to depend on ourselves, upon our good resolutions, upon our own wisdom and strength rather than upon the power of the ever-present, loving and almighty Spirit. And in our Christian work, as parents, as teachers, as preachers, as church officers and members, how prone we are to put faith in machinery, in instrumentalities, in new methods, and in sensational excitements rather than in the Holy Spirit!

Christ did not heal the sick until they had given up hope that they could heal themselves. Christ does not convert us until we give up the hope that we can convert ourselves. He does not, through the Spirit, work salvation in any church or community until the people give up the thought that it is by their own skill, or eloquence, or powers, or machinery the work can

be done. The first thing of importance is for us to recognize our absolute dependence upon the Holy Spirit. The next thing is to work with all our might. He uses human instruments, that is true. But he only uses such human instruments as first look to Him in dependence. Mr. Moody once told a man who was expecting conversion through his own works to give up the effort. He said: "The first thing for you to do is to depend upon Christ alone to save you. After that you may work, work, work, with all your might."

Then, too, pray. Ask for the Holy Spirit's help and blessing. Pentecost was preceded by prayer. God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. But prayer, the asking, is a condition of having the Spirit in any degree of power. We are in a right relation to the Spirit only when we are in the attitude of prayerfully seeking his presence with us.

Also plead the promises. The disciples in the upper room, before the day of Pentecost, had a right to plead Christ's promise to send

the Spirit. They could say, "You said that you would send him. We wait here. We wait the fulfillment of the promise." The Spirit did come in mighty power. We can have him too, in answer to prayer and promise-pleading.

Then grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. He is a loving Spirit. We may grieve him just as we grieve any other friend — by neglecting him, or slighting him, or going contrary to his wishes and interests. We may grieve him by showing lack of confidence in him. We may grieve him by resisting his gracious influences, his teachings, his woosings, his warnings. He is an infallible guide. Very often we are in trouble and he brings to our minds the precious promises of God, the strong consolations of the gospel, but we refuse to be comforted and complain and cry when we ought to wipe our tears away and sing. He counsels us to set our affections upon things above, but we spend our time and strength scraping together the things that perish. He points us to friends and companions who have chosen the narrow way to life eternal, but we say, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season I

will call for thee." In these ways and other ways we grieve the loving Holy Spirit, the friend who has done so much for us, and upon whom we are dependent for the future.

We have read an account of a boy who had a dove so tame that it would perch upon his shoulder and take food from his hand. One day he held out a tempting morsel, and, being in an ill-natured mood, just as the dove was about to eat, he closed his hand. The bird turned away disappointed. He held out his hand again. The dove came forward timidly, but once more the hand was closed. With drooping wings the dove went to the further corner of the room. Once more the hand was extended. This time the bird hesitated. Finally it came forward slowly, hesitatingly; it was just about to take the food when the hand was again closed. Then the dove spread its wings and flew away, and the boy never saw that dove again.

The Holy Spirit may be grieved, effectually grieved. His gentle monitions may be so slighted, his wooing influence so evil-treated, that in sorrow he will suspend his gentle min-

istry. The Holy Spirit is a tender Spirit, and no violent resistance or gross form of conduct is necessary to cause his departure from the soul. Let us watch our hearts, our thoughts, our conduct. Let us not resist him, grieve him, quench him. Instead, let us ally ourselves with him. He will work with us if we do. He will make his strength perfect in our weakness. He will comfort us. He will enlighten us. He will guide us. He will cleanse and sanctify us. He will make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in the light if we will give him temple room in our hearts and will live in such relation to him that he can consistently reach us and bless us.

XXVI.

THE FANCIES OF LIFE.

There is an element in human nature which continually longs for things to be otherwise than as they are. “ If only we were differently placed, how much better lives we could live! ” We are all more or less afflicted by these fancies, and injured by them. Indeed, there are some of us who spend more time in imagining what we would do under altered circumstances than we earnestly devote to performing what we ought to do situated just as we are.

These fancies of life are the source of much discontent. “ Oh that I had — what? What I have not! Oh that I had—what some one else has! ” This is the attitude of these malcontents. In summer they wish it was winter; in winter they pine for the warmth of summer. If they live in the city they long for the country; when there they pronounce it too “ slow ” and hurry back to town. In the valley they yearn

for the mountain tops; when they reach them they cry for the valley again.

A lady walking with her husband, and seeing a carriage go by, said to him: "Look at that splendid carriage Judge H— — — and his wife are driving about in. I only wish we could be so lucky." Up in the carriage the judge's wife was saying to him: "I am getting positively ashamed of this old rig. Look how the people stand and stare at us in contempt. If you do not wish to drive me to despair you must buy a new turnout."

A king riding along a highway passed the stone-breaker by the wayside. Thought the stone-breaker: "Oh that I were like that king, possessed of all that heart could wish!" The monarch, glancing at him, was murmuring to himself: "Would I were like that man, so free from anxiety, with so little worry and care!"

Did you ever read the fable of the beetle, and the weather-cock? "How fine," said the beetle, "to be up there; what splendid views; how clear the atmosphere!" "Yes," said the weather-cock, "and if you were up here, you would know how keenly blows the wind!"

The fancies of life keep us poor. Discontent is poverty. The less-favored woman we mentioned as walking was poor. The judge's wife also was poor. The stone-breaker was poor, and the monarch was poor. Poverty is largely a matter of fancy. The real poverty is in the mind—in the mind's attitude. There is such a thing as being "rich without money." That man is rich whose mind is rich, whose heart is rich, who is rich in integrity, and who has that best of all blessings, a contented mind—Christian contentment. This last great boon is gained through making the least of our little lacks, through making the most of our little enjoyments, through doing the best with our little duties and through trust in God and doing the right. To be sure, we cannot all be money rich. Some money-rich people are very poor. But we can all be millionaires of character and of faith, possessing that "godliness" which with "contentment" is great gain — the real gain — the highest riches.

It need scarcely be added that the fancies of life cause us great unhappiness and make us ungrateful.

“ True happiness is to no place confined.
But still is found in a contented mind.”

A philosopher who was passing through a mart filled with articles of taste and luxury, we are told, made himself perfectly happy with this simple yet sage remark: “ Lord, how many things are in the world of which Diogenes hath no need!”

We have somewhere read that the late and greatly beloved Dr. John Hall, of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, used to say that he liked to look into the windows of the stores at Christmas time, *to see how many things he could do without!*

The unhappy, discontented mind is always an ungrateful mind, failing to recognize the abundance of God's favors. A man of really good circumstances once said: “ I look at what I have not and count myself unhappy; others look at what I have and count me happy.” What an ungrateful attitude it is toward our Heavenly Father, to be looking all the time at the things we have not! It is a sin as well as foolish and the source of untold measures of misery.

Indulging the fancies of life renders us useless. Not only do we envy what other people have; but we often impractically wish we had what others have not. "Wings," for example—something to differentiate us from our neighbors, to give us some advantage above the crowd, to make people stare and gape with envy! If only we had "wings"—what wonders we would do! What folly! How useless this building of castles in the air renders us! And spiritual castle-building is no better than any other sort. Even the disciples watching their Lord ascend had to be called from idle gazing. An angel was sent to say to them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Too much of Christian life amounts to little more than standing gazing, yearnings after wings!

What is true in religion is true in business; and what is true in business is true in religion—the castle-building, star-gazing, fancy-filled life is a useless life.

Therefore let us think less about the fancies of life and bravely face its facts. Let us make the best of things as they are.

An Arabian guide once told an American traveller a story, which, in condensed form, we will relate. Its application the reader can readily make.

There lived in the banks of the Indus River an ancient Persian by the name of El Hafed. From his beautiful and comfortable cottage on the hillside he could look down upon the gleaming river and out over the glorious sea. He was a man of wealth. His fields and orchards yielded plentifully, and he had money at interest. A beautiful wife and lovely children shared with him the joy of a happy home.

One day there came to the cottage a Persian priest. That priest sat down with El Hafed and told him how diamonds were made. "If you had a diamond," said the old priest, "as big as your thumb, you could purchase many farms like this, and if you had a bushel you could own the whole country."

That moment El Hafed became poor. All his possessions seemed to lose their value, as the feeling of discontent filled his soul. He said: "I must have a mine of diamonds. What is the use of spending one's life in this way, in

Conwell "Aves
of Diamond"

this narrow sphere? I want a mine, and shall have it!"

That night he could not sleep. Early the next morning he went to the priest and asked where he could find those diamonds. "If you want diamonds," said the priest, "go and get them." "Won't you please tell me where I can find them?" said El Hafed. "Well, if you go and find high mountains, with a deep river running between them, over white sand, in this white sand you will find diamonds."

The enthusiastic, restless, and dissatisfied farmer sold his farm, took the money, and went off in search of diamonds. He began through Egypt and Palestine. Years passed while he was pursuing his useless search. At last he went over through Europe, and, one day, broken-hearted, in rags, a hungry pauper, stung with humiliation, and crushed by his bitter disappointment, he stood on the shore of the Bay of Barcelona. He looked at the big waves as they came rolling in, and listened to the whisper that invited him to peace, and in the moment of despair, threw himself in and sank, never to rise again.

The man who purchased El Hafed's farm, led his camel out one day to the stream at the edge of the garden to drink. While the camel buried his nose in the water, the man noticed a white flash of glittering, glistening, sparkling something at his feet. Out of curiosity, he reached down and picked up a black stone with a strange eye of light in it, which seemed to reflect all the colors of the rainbow. He took the curiosity to the house and laid it on the mantel, and soon forgot all about it.

One day this same old priest came to visit El Hafed's successor. He noticed the flash of light from the mantel and sprang toward it in amazement, and exclaimed: "Here is a diamond! Has El Hafed returned?" "Oh, no, that is not a diamond. It is a stone we found out in the garden." "But I tell you that it is a diamond," and the two men went out in the garden and stirred up the white sand, and there came up in their hands beautiful diamonds more valuable than the first.

This is all historically true. It was the discovery of the wonderful mines of Golconda, and the founding of the line of Great Moguls. The

guide swung his cap and said, " Had El Hafed remained at home and dug in his own garden, he would have been the wealthiest man of his time, and the most honored."

XXVII.

SAFEGUARDS AGAINST SIN.

Every Christian has, or should have, a strong desire to avert sin. That he has an evil bias and propensity toward evil is the sad experience of every individual. The heart is corrupt. The fountain head of moral action is impure. All believers know and feel this. Then, too, we are surrounded by many temptations to sin. The world is full of enticements and snares, which often attract and overcome the unwary. The heart of the Christian, therefore, needs fortifying by the Divine Word and the Divine Spirit. Knowing both the evil nature and the evil effects of sin no wonder Christians welcome any means of safeguard against it. It is a happy fact that there are many such safeguards. We mention two that are among the most important, suggested by an expression of the Psalmist David when he said, "Thy Word

have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

One safeguard suggested is that of strategy. This is the way many battles have been won,—by strategy. And so it is one of the best ways of winning in the spiritual warfare. The Word of God is in its very nature expulsive of sin and cleansing in its workings. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word.” It is the light that scatters both the darkness and the creatures that come with the night. Possession is by dispossession. Put in the good and the evil will be kept out. Use strategy. It is hard to get sin out of our lives by main force. The better way is to use this divine strategy of overcoming evil with good.

We once saw Mr. Moody hold a glass before an audience and say: “How am I to get the air out of this glass?” No one answered. He turned, and from a pitcher poured the glass to overflowing with water. “Now,” said he, “the air is all out.” Let us learn to use strategy. Let us put in the good, that the evil may be kept out.

Our souls are very like a picture gallery. If we cover the walls of them with things noble and beautiful and pure, the foul and fleshly will only seem revolting. "Hang this upon the wall of your room," said a wise picture dealer to an Oxford undergraduate, as he handed him an engraving of a Madonna by Raphael, "and then all the pictures of jockeys and ballet girls will disappear." Let us try the same experiment with our souls. Let their walls be hung with all things pure and perfect, as the thought of God, the image of Christ, the lives of God's saints, the inspirations of good and great men, the memories of golden deeds, the noble passages of poetic thought as found in God's Word, and there will be no room for the things that defile and deprave. When a bottle is full of water you cannot pour oil into it. The best way for us to resist evil is to leave no room for it in our hearts. Let us learn David's strategy, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee."

Another safeguard suggested is that of swift attack. The Word must be hid in our hearts; but it must be like a sword in its sheath, ready

to be drawn out at a moment's notice. We must use it as Christ used it against Satan when he parried every attack by the words, "It is written." For this use of the Word an intellectual perception of it is not enough. It must be "hid in the heart," hid like the leaven in the meal, wrought into our thoughts, our purposes, our passions, becoming a part of us, and so making over and transforming our dispositions that they become holy instead of sinful. It must be hid like a guard in a house, like a sentinel in a fort, to watch diligently against the approach of temptation.

It is a saying in war, "The best defence is a swift attack." This is true in resisting temptation also. I cannot tell when my enemy will come against me, but I can tell whether I will march against him at once, or foolishly wait till he has chosen a good position, and fortified himself strongly. We need to crush temptation as soon as we see it. Take it by surprise; give it no quarter; dally with it not one instant. A swift attack is the best defence. It sometimes pays to be "fast," as in the case of a railroad train in the West, of which we recently read.

By virtue of its great speed it passed unharmed through a cyclone that would certainly have wrecked stationary cars. Even so it is with the Christian. If he is standing still, the storms of temptation have a specially good chance at him; but if he is busily moving on in the right direction, his very momentum will carry him through some sudden strain that may fall upon him. To dally with sin is a sure way to be overcome of sin. To have God's Word hid in the heart, and then, when temptation comes, use it in swift attack, is the way to victory.

XXVIII.

SELF-DISCOVERY.

The prodigal son of Christ's meaningful parable had not only run away from his father and his family and his home; but he had run away from himself. He had run away from the voice of reason, and of conscience,—from his better nature, from all that constituted him a man. Presently his money was spent; his capacity blunted; his character gone; and then the reaction came. His real manhood was famishing. It was not only food that he wanted, but the hunger of home was upon him, the yearning for sympathy and respect and love; and this brought him to his senses. He “came to himself,” found himself, made a real self-discovery of himself.

But the prodigal son was not the only man who has needed to discover himself. It is a common need, much more common than many suppose. There is often no one of whom a man

knows so little or whom he understands so imperfectly as himself. He is a world to be discovered. He is born with a body possessing certain faculties, but he must find out their uses. He has a mind, but it is full of mysteries. Some few men seem to be born with positive instincts of genius that point out their powers, but most people seem to have only the faintest conception of what they are and what they can do. From parents or wise friends they may gain some knowledge of their strong and weak points; but it is largely by self-observation that they can attain to self-knowledge; and it must be self-observation that is keen and honest, that takes note of weaknesses and limitations as well as strong points. We are born with a spiritual nature, too; and it is remarkable what strange misconceptions, apart from the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we have as to our spiritual nature and condition. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and one of its deceits is to hide its own deceit, and thus prevent a man from discovering his own wickedness. "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" asked

Hazael, in his need of self-discovery. "Although all men should be offended, yet will I never be offended," was the proud, sincere, mistaken boast of even a Christian apostle. The need of knowing ourselves, of self-discovery, is a very general need, much more so than many think.

What are the means to self-discovery? There are at least three, of which we name first the being left to run our course in sin. In this way we bring forth our own fruit, show our real selves, and thus by and by come to know our real selves. The prodigal went on his own way and came to self-knowledge. His fancy picture of himself was of an independent, enterprising, capable young man who could manage his own affairs admirably and make his mark in the world, if only he were liberated from the trammels of the old home. He was given the chance to find out, when lo! the fine gentleman turned out a vile sinner and the very independent and capable young man a poor, starving, enslaved swine-feeder. It was then, when he touched bottom, that he came to the knowledge of himself, made real self-discovery, and knew who

and what he was. Out in the far country of experience, when sin has come to its fruition, sinners find out that they are sinners.

Peter found himself out in this way. He had been well warned by Christ himself of the weakness that was in him; but he would not believe it, until he went on to find through base denial, falsehood and blasphemy the tremendous possibilities of evil that dwelt within him. In some similar way thousands of people have been led to know themselves, their weakness, their tendency to sin, and their need of grace from above.

Another means of self-discovery is by contrast. Self-discovery is promoted by anything that throws our sinful nature in contrast with God's holy nature. Job justified himself until he saw the glory of God, and then he exclaimed: "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips." Peter, when the glory of Christ flashed upon him in the miracle of the great draught of fishes, cried out: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Each case was one of self-discovery by contrast, and so men come to know themselves still. In the presence of purity we see our own impurity.

Still another means of self-discovery is through the workings of God's Holy Spirit. The divine Spirit opens our eyes, causing us to see ourselves in a true light. Then we judge ourselves as God judges us. When you see yourself as moved by unholy motives, agitated by sinful passions, seeking selfish ends, not honoring God, then you may know that the Holy Spirit is working within you, bringing you to a wholesome and hopeful state of self-knowledge.

There are some very desirable results that may come from self-discovery. They should be the same as in the case of the prodigal,—conviction, contrition and conversion. Back to the Father's heart and the Father's house and the Father's help! Whether we are Christians or among the unsaved this is what self-discovery should always mean, the causing us to flee to God for his grace, mercy and help. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

XXIX.

ENTHUSIASM AS AN ATTAINMENT.

A Chinese convert said: "We want men with red-hot hearts to tell us of the love of Christ." Dr. Mason said that the secret of Dr. Chalmers' success in the ministry was "his blood earnestness." That was the secret of the success of Mr. Finney, and it was the secret of the success of Mr. Moody. "A bank never becomes successful," said a noted financier, "until it gets a president that takes it to bed with him." It was enthusiasm that enabled Napoleon to make a campaign in two weeks that would have taken another a year to accomplish. "These Frenchmen are not men, they fly," said the Austrians in consternation. Phillips Brooks well said: "Let us beware of losing our enthusiasm. Let us glory in something, and strive to retain our admiration for all that would ennoble, and our interest in all that would enrich and beautify our life."

If we would desire to get and to maintain enthusiasm, let us not forget this — enthusiasm has its foundation in faith. We must believe in the cause if we would maintain enthusiastic devotion to it.

In an art gallery in Paris is a beautiful statue conceived by a sculptor who was so poor that he lived and worked in a small garret. When his clay model was nearly done, a heavy frost fell upon the city. The artist knew that if the water in the interstices of the clay should freeze, the beautiful lines of his model would be distorted. So he wrapped his bed clothes around the clay image. In the morning he was found dead, but his idea was saved, and other hands gave it permanent form in marble. Just so has many a good work been accomplished through an enthusiastic adherence to an ideal. To a soul throbbing with an enthusiastic purpose nothing seems able to turn it aside, and mighty results are sure to be accomplished. The inventor's persistent enthusiasm for his machine is founded upon faith in its ultimate success. Columbus persisted because he believed in a Western Continent to be discovered.

So also in religion; enthusiasm is founded upon faith.

But enthusiasm must be fed. A lamp must be replenished with oil or it will go out. It is impossible for us to keep up enthusiasm unless enthusiasm has something to feed upon. A bubbling, showy, emotional enthusiasm cannot last long. You cannot laugh and you cannot cry all day long. But there is such a thing as a sustained and rational enthusiasm. The thing upon which honest enthusiasm lives is truth. It is when the mind is brought to dwell upon such truths as the evil of sin, the immortality of the soul, the possibility of salvation, etc., that there comes an enthusiastic interest in the things of God. Enthusiasm is kindled and enthusiasm is maintained as we place before our minds the great facts and truths of religion, and give them their due weight.

Enthusiasm must be watched. If not, it is very liable to run away with us. Unwatched, unguarded, it makes cranks and fanatics and one-sided, lop-sided people out of us. Enthusiasm shades off so gradually from sense towards non-sense, it passes so imperceptibly

from a desirable to an undesirable condition of character, that we need to be on our guard.

There are two special sources of safety. One is in contact with healthy, hearty men and women. If we associate with level-headed, sound, all-round people our enthusiasm will be regulated, and more liable to be kept in safe bounds. Another source of safety is through the study of the Bible, and the comparing of Scripture with Scripture. Indeed, this should really have been named first. But the two must ever go along together. The influence of the Bible is wholesome, and the influence and contact with sensible Christians is wholesome, and the two are mutually helpful. There are people who seem to be able to make the Bible mean anything. They fail in the duty of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and over-emphasize disconnected truths. We might take a photograph of a portion of a man's body; say his nose. Suppose that it were taken life size, and then pasted upon a picture of the man's face taken in smaller form; though a true picture of that member of the body, it would be all out of proportion, and the whole face would seem to

be nose! It is the same way many people exaggerate single truths of the Bible. They see them out of proportion. The secret of safety is in the comparing of Scripture with Scripture, and taking the Bible and its teachings as a whole.

Enthusiasm is contagious. An enthusiastic person begets enthusiasm in others. Therefore, we should arouse ourselves in order to exercise a wholesome and helpful influence. Do not permit yourself to be a drain upon others, but be yourself a source of enthusiasm. It is noticeable how many people there are who depend upon their leaders for their enthusiasm. Public speakers and pastors and Christian workers often feel the weight of being depended upon by others to generate their enthusiasm for them. Many people are like a sponge; they take in all the time. Instead, we should be like a power-house, actually generating force. We should each become a centre of enthusiasm and strive to make ourselves an inspiring force to others.

XXX.

MY NEIGHBOR.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan Christ introduces us to our neighbor and makes known to us the true neighbor spirit as we should display it. The world has been a long time finding out who the neighbor is. In past time if a stranger came into a village they set the dogs on him. A "stranger" or a "foreigner" always meant an enemy; one to be treated as such. But in the parable of the Good Samaritan Christ teaches us very clearly that our neighbor is any man, woman or child in any part of this world, near or far, who is in need of our help, whether in a temporal or spiritual way.

In the parable he tells us, for one thing, that the man with the neighbor spirit is sure to have opportunities to manifest it. There are people who claim they cannot see any suitable objects upon which to bestow benevolent assistance. They talk about being imposed upon, and can

see no deserving cases. So the priest and the Levite probably felt. But the reason for such feeling is not that there are no deserving objects, for they are everywhere lying in our path, as the poor man was lying in the road to Jericho; but it is because so many do not possess the true neighbor spirit within them. Suitable objects are everywhere, at home, abroad, within our family circle, in our community, in our country, throughout the world. Our neighbor is suffering in the famine in India. He has fallen by the roadside in the heathenism of China and Africa and the islands of the seas. He is prostrate in the slums of our great cities. Have you the neighbor spirit? You can find plenty of opportunities to display it.

In this parable Christ tells us, also, that the man with the neighbor spirit will rise above questions of nationality and religious prejudice. These are among the most powerful influences that tend to divide men. As we have said, it is easy to regard a foreigner as an enemy. Citizens of other nations we may call brothers; but it is very seldom that they are regarded in a practical way as brother men, possessing a like

nature and equal rights with ourselves. Too often they are thought of as monsters to be fought and plundered. Religious prejudice is also no less bitter and difficult to overcome. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans; and too often even Christians display something of the same spirit toward one another if they happen to go to different churches or belong to different denominations. Instead of being kind to those of another religion men in times gone by have even thought it their duty to inflict upon them pains and penalties. But it is these two powerful prejudices the neighbor spirit is bound to break through. What the good Samaritan saw at the road side was not a Jew or a foreigner, but a suffering man. He asked no questions about either his religion or his country. It was enough for him to know that here was a fellow man who needed his help. The world yet needs more fully to learn this lesson.

In this parable Christ tells us, furthermore, that the man with the neighbor spirit will have respect to the material as well as the spiritual needs of those he would help. There are people

not a few who will profess to weep over the spiritual needs of others and yet are practically regardless of their temporal sufferings. If this poor man had talked about his soul maybe the priest and the Levite would have paused in sentimental sympathy. But Christ distinctly warns against saying and not doing. He tells us that it amounts to nothing for us to say to a hungry man, "Depart and be ye filled," while at the same time we fail to give him any of the things that are needful. It has often been said that you cannot put religion into the soul of a hungry man. The saying is extreme; yet it points out a danger and a duty. Christ healed and fed and helped people as well as preached to them. Having respect for people's temporal needs will often prove a John the Baptist in the way of preparing their hearts for the acceptance of spiritual things. In other words, the man with the neighbor spirit will be a practical man, and will use practical means, having respect to both the material and spiritual needs of those he would help. He will not neglect the spiritual in his engrossment with the temporal, nor the temporal as a means to the spiritual.

In this parable Christ tells us again, that the man with the neighbor spirit does good at the cost of self-sacrifice. The good Samaritan displayed utter unselfishness in the way he rendered his aid. For one thing, he rendered his help personally. He bound up the man's wounds with his own hands, and poured in the oil and the wine. He did the work alone, where there were no witnesses to look upon or applaud his deed. Many people will do good if there are plenty of on-lookers to cheer and praise them. Under such circumstances even the priest and the Levite probably would have helped the man half-dead. The help of the Samaritan was all the more praiseworthy in that it was also rendered in the midst of peril. That was a desolate road, infested with robbers. How could he know but the very ruffians who had perpetrated the injury on the poor man were near at hand and might assault him too? Then he might also have said to himself: "Now, if I am found in contact with this man, who can tell but what I myself may be charged with the crime that has been committed, and, if so, I have no way to clear myself." But his neigh-

bor spirit rose above all selfishness. In the face of danger and at the cost of both trouble and expense he rendered the needed aid.

It is a picture to warm any soul to see that Samaritan, the owner, the man of means, walking at the side of his beast, with the weak and wounded man in his place, thus journeying along the rough highway, steadying this stranger lest he fall. He "brought him to an inn," and he there "took care of him." "On the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host." The sum was ample to provide for the man several days. But lest it might not prove sufficient he charges the inn-keeper: "Take care of him; (that is, be sure you give him every needed attention) and whatsoever thou spendest more, (that is, Take the best of care of him, whatever it may cost) when I come again I will repay thee." In other words, the help was rendered, alone, in the face of danger and without regard to cost. It was at the cost of great self-denial, and was therefore thoroughly unselfish. Besides, the help was rendered in an absolutely practical and sensible manner — something much needed to

be learned by would-be philanthropists in these days.

There is a spurious philanthropy very popular now-a-days, which spends itself in talk and prayers and speeches and newspaper notices and contributions for the use of some newly invented society for the help of the distressed. It deals with need at long range, sits in parlor meetings and conference halls, talks much, writes many signed articles for the press; but it never "comes where the man is"; "goes to him"; and with its own hands "binds up his wounds." It was the personal, practical, trouble-taking, unselfish help-rendering, the true neighbor spirit, that Christ was commending so highly in the parable. And he did it so tactfully and well that the lawyer, who would have revolted had he been told at first that a Samaritan could be a neighbor to a Jew and deserve his kind consideration, was voluntarily brought to admit it. His Jewish prejudice would not permit him to name the Samaritan, but there was no impropriety in his view, or escape from saying, that the man who showed so much mercy was really the neighbor to the

man in distress, and not those who though professing to be his neighbor would do nothing for him.

In the parable Christ tells us, also, very definitely, that the cultivation of this neighbor spirit is the duty of us all. This is what he said: "Go thou and do likewise." There is a very wide sphere for such deeds, plenty of deserving cases, and you have both the means and capacity to help them. The test of the lawyer's piety is the test of your piety also. Go and break the fetters of the slave. Go and preach the gospel to the poor. Go rescue and defend and teach and save the children. Help the fallen fellow man in heathendom. Make the city in which you live a safer one for the weak and easily tempted to live in. Lift up the fallen, cheer the discouraged, bind up the broken hearted,

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the
grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save."

The opportunities lie all about us, and

Christ's command is plain: "Go thou and do likewise." That is, "Go, you, and display this neighbor spirit." Oh, that everywhere the spirit of obedience to the teaching of this beautiful parable might take hold of men!

XXXI.

LIFE AND THINGS.

Can it be possible that “ a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth ”? From the way we see men seeking possessions we would suppose the opposite. See what men will sacrifice and undergo and do in order to get possessions. Not the cold of the Klondyke; not the heat of the tropics; not the fevers of South African jungles; not the perils of the depths of the sea; not the loneliness or privations of prairies, the height of mountains, the dangers of war, nor the diseases and discomforts of city slums can deter men in their mad rush to possess “ things.” And yet we are plainly told, and lack no conviction of the fact, that “ a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” Is it not strange that so much energy on the part of so many people should be so greatly misdirected?

But let us at the same time make sure to notice this, that the Bible nowhere discourages the possession of things. It says nothing whatever against it. But what it does say is this, that a man's life does not consist in things — in the abundance of the things which he may possess. He may possess things; that may not be wrong, and may not do the man any harm; but it is very wrong and of very great harm when the things begin to possess the man, or when the man begins to estimate his life by the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

In what then does a man's life consist? In the first place, it consisteth in being a Christian. However simple it may sound, and however often one may have heard it, yet the fact is that that is the principal thing — the being a Christian. Whether he have things or not matters but little; but whether he be a Christian or not matters altogether. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom." And this means the sort of wisdom of which the wise Solomon wrote when he said: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

In the second place, a man's life consisteth

in leading others to be Christians. The foolish man was going to tear down his barns and build greater and there store up his goods that he might keep them for himself. Selfishness is death. Every selfish man is standing in the shoes of "the rich fool." The trouble with the man was that he had somehow gotten the mistaken idea that a man's life consists in the abundance of the things which he possesses. The fact is that a man's life consists in helping other people to possess. The best possession any one can have is life eternal, and the best use any man can make of his money, his time, his influence, his social powers, his efforts, is in the way of directly or indirectly leading others to be Christians. There is abundance of opportunity for every one of us to become thus "rich toward God."

In the third place, a man's life consisteth in the perfecting of his Christian character. There is one kind of covetousness God encourages in us. He even commands it. "Covet earnestly the best gifts." A man's life consisteth in coveting earnestly the best gifts, and in acquiring them, — gifts of patience, meek-

ness, gentleness, faith, charity, power to be, and power to bear, and power to do. No man is ever better occupied than when engaged in the use of means for strengthening and polishing and perfecting his character. " Things " are trivial. Character is extremely important. A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the " things " which he possesseth, but in the number and quality of the graces he acquires, and the strength and beauty of the character he develops.

In the fourth place, a man's life consisteth in helping others to perfect their characters. The poorest men in all the world are not the men who own the least money, not even those who possess in themselves the least character, but those who lay stumbling-blocks or use means to drag down the characters of others. The richest men in all the world are not those who own the most money; but those who are Christians themselves and who do the most to lead others to be Christians, — who use the greatest endeavor to perfect their own Christian characters, and who do the most toward helping others in perfecting their characters. Poor indeed is

every one who “ layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” Rich indeed is every one who is rich in faith, rich in hope, rich in love, rich in good works, “ rich toward God.” Whether rich or poor in this world’s goods you may be a millionaire of character, and an heir of eternal glory.

XXXII.

LIFE MARRED AND MADE OVER.

When the prophet Jeremiah was once watching a potter he saw that the vessel he was making was marred in his hands, and “ so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.” Both in Egypt and in Palestine we saw the same thing happen. We watched the potter for a good while, but by and by it happened as we had anticipated. From some defect in the clay, or because he had taken too little, the potter suddenly changed his mind, crushed his growing jar instantly into a shapeless mass of mud, and, beginning anew, fashioned it into a totally different vessel.

The making and use of these stone jars is a striking feature of Eastern life. The finished vessels are light and thin and are literally dashed to pieces by the slightest stroke. Water jars are often broken by merely putting them down upon the floor or the pavement at the

fountain. The servant frequently returns from the well or spring empty handed, having had all his jars smashed to atoms by some irregular behavior of the donkey. The coarse pottery of the country is so cheap that even poor people throw it aside in contempt, or dash it to pieces on the slightest occasion, as, for example, when one of a hated sect has made use of it.

But Jeremiah's reference was, of course, to the unfinished, unbaked vessel. As the potter was turning the wheel with his foot and moulding the clay on the upper disc with his hand, the vessel was marred in the making; "so he made it again" into another vessel, "as seemed good to the potter to make it."

God has a plan for every life. The potter has a plan — a pattern after which he proposes to fashion his vessel. So we believe that for every life there is a divine pattern, something God means us to become, some possible ideal which is very beautiful and desirable. But it is sadly true that a life may be marred in the making. In living it out life may fail of coming up to God's beautiful ideal. For let us not try to make the illustration "walk on all four."

There is a difference between a lump of clay and a human life. A lump of clay is helpless in the hands of the potter. It has no will, no power of choice, no chance to make a decision. But we have will. We can therefore resist the potter. We can defeat God's purpose for our life. We can spoil the design. It is our own fault when we sin and rebel and make such sad work of ourselves, when God desires that we shall be good and beautiful and useful.

But it is a glad and happy fact that it is possible for a marred life to be made over again. It may not be so good as the designer at first intended, yet nevertheless good. "So he made it again." It was marred and made over. How much better than to have thrown the clay away! How much kinder toward the clay! And it is ever thus God deals with human souls. He does not cast off the life that has failed of its first and best possibilities. God is always wishing to give us another chance.

When Rev. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman was conducting union evangelistic services in Rochester, N. Y., a few years ago, he was accompanied by the noted singing evangelist, Mr. Peter B. Bil-

horn. We recall how Dr. Chapman preached one evening to an immense audience on the theme of "Life's Second Chance." At the close of the address Mr. Bilhorn sang with wonderful expression and effectiveness a solo entitled, "A Bird with a Broken Wing." The words tell of a bird with a broken wing which was found in a woodland meadow:

I healed its wound, and each morning
It sang its sweet old strain;
But the bird with a broken pinion
Never soared as high again.

Then the words go on to tell of a broken life and its second chance:

I found a young life broken
By sin's seductive art;
And, touched with a childlike pity,
I took him to my heart.

He lived with a noble purpose
And struggled not in vain;
But the life that sin had stricken
Never soared as high again.

But this does not mean that the broken life was not a useful life. Though marred it was

made over and was of blessed service in the world:

Yet the bird with the broken pinion
Kept another from the snare;
And the life that sin had stricken
Raised another from despair.

Has your life been marred by sin? Is it "a life which sin has broken"? It is certainly true that it must show some scars, that the flight cannot be as high as if sin had never hurt it. The bloom cannot be put back on the peach. The lost innocence cannot be restored. You are not better off, but worse off, for having sinned. But this is not a reason for discouragement. The bird with a broken wing was not useless. It kept another from the snare. The life that sin had stricken raised another from despair. There is no doubt that marred lives can be very useful lives. Those who have had sorrow know best how to comfort others. The converted drunkard can plead with burning eloquence with other men who are approaching the snare of intemperance. Spend no time in regretting the past. "So he made it again." There is al-

ways another chance. Do the best with what remains of life. Submit yourself to the divine Potter, that the marred life may be made over. The vessel may not be so beautiful or useful as at first intended, but still may be very beautiful and very useful. Thank God for life's second chance!



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